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Lexical Computation: The Case of Lamnso' Personal Names

Abstract. Lamnso' personal names are generally assumed to be single lexical items, composed of lexical units drawn from a pool of lexical resources of the language. The choices available as candidates for name computation are numerous and varied. The combination of the chosen lexical units is governed by the grammar of the language, semantic limitations, and socio-cultural restrictions among others. This paper examines the derivational processes of personal name constructions in Lamnso'. It investigates the realities represented by the structures of personal names and traces the specific linguistic processes prevalent in the derivation of these names. Lexical items acceptable as personal names can be derived through the addition of affixes to nouns, verbal extensions to verbs and other morphological processes that derive semantic extensions of the words in use. Verbal extensions contribute to the length limitation of personal names through the retention of features representing the argument structure of clipped NPs in sentence names. The lexical choices in preference for personal name computation are pointers to the socio-economic orientation of native speakers. This paper introduces an insightful analysis of the structure of Lamnso' personal names. It demonstrates that in deriving these names, interpretation and computation have an asymmetric relation with computation being determined by interpretation but not vice versa.

Key words: *Lamnso', Personal names, lexical computation, affixes, verbal extensions*

1**. Background**

 Nso' refers to the people as well as the land, while Lamnso' is the language[1] of the Nso' people. It is spoken by about 125,000 people (Grimes 2000) in the greater part of Bui Division, which is 150 kilometers. from Bamenda, the capital of the North West Province of the Republic of Cameroon. Lamnso' is also spoken in Nigeria, specifically in Taraba State, Sarduana Local Government Area. Lamnso' belongs to the Ring subgroup which is subsumed under the Grassfield branch of the Southern Bantoid languages. Kom, Oku, Aghem, Babanki and Noni are other languages of the subgroup (Walter and Leroy 1989, Welmers 1973: 159). Lamnso' and Oku are closely related. Lamnso' does not have prominent dialectal variations (Grebe 1984). The languages commonly referred to as Bantu are also classified as Southern Bantoid languages. They are considered to be Narrow Bantu, whereas Lamnso' and other Grassfield languages are non-Bantu (or Wide Bantu). Like Fula (Annot 1970), Swahili (Mkude 1995, Welmers 1973) and many other languages of the Wide Bantu family, Lamnso' nouns and nominals fall under different classes on the basis of agreement operated by concord markers which vary from one class to another (Grebe and Grebe 1975, Eastman 1980, Yuka 1998,1999, McGarrity and Botne, 2001).

Among the Nso' people, giving a name to a child is a very important occasion for the newly born as well as to the family of the child. The naming ceremony which takes place on the morning of the seventh day after the birth of a child offers families an opportunity to make a statement about their interpretation of the world and the lives they have led. Each personal name among the Nos' people provides some piece of information which contributes to establishing a semantic representation of the utterance through a combination of lexical information. Unlike the traditional forms of expression, a name is a unique expression that is very economical with lexical resources and yet explicit enough to relate a complete thought process. The ability to effectively achieve lexical economy and explicitness calls for competence in the language in use. Social and cultural context analysis reveal that personal names are "… iconic representations of composite social variables that indexicalise and relate the name to the person" (Agyekum, 2006: 209). Personal names in most African settings do not simply identify an individual; they are lexical items that designate in addition: circumstances of birth, sex, family hierarchy, physical

features of the baby at the time of birth, day of delivery etc. A closer look at personal names in Nso'

reveal that these names are not just viewed as the personal property of the bearer, the lexical choices in

preference for the composition of these names are good pointers to the socio-cultural leanings of the

native speakers. If a personal name encodes much more than its basic components semantically relate, it

should be interesting to investigate the linguistic process of name derivation in Lamnso'.

1.1 Data Collection

I started collecting the data employed in this paper in 2004 while cross-checking lexical entries for the

Lamnso' Dictionary (an ongoing project). As a native speaker, it has been interesting to notice that a

majority of Nso' names are basic sentences rather than lexical items. These sentence names exhibit the

principal components of a fundamental sentence in Lamnso'. The categorical restrictions that limit the

adoption of all well-formed sentences in Lamnso' as personal names, are as reported in Yuka (2007).

Most of names in this paper belong to family members and friends as well as to individuals from

my village and to associates from various villages in Nso' whom I have met in my numerous interactions

in the past. Some of the personal names were collected from entries in the registers reflecting the monthly

financial contributions of Christians in two Catholic churches in Nso'. Also, most of the names are taken

from the 2007 Advanced and Ordinary Level results (for schools in Nso') published by the board of the

General Certificate of Education (GCE) . Academic papers on anthroponomy written by African scholars

were also consulted: Koopman (2002), Kishani (2006), Ekundayo (1977), Adéníyì (1997), Agyekum

(2006), Ota (2002), Mphande (2006), Akinaso (1980), Ben (2006) and others.

1.2 Theoretical Orientation

The assumption of Chomsky (1995) is that computational economy in the derivation of lexical items and

phrases requires that outputs contain as few lexical units as possible and that syntactic derivations involve

the fewest possible grammatical operations. Maximally economic convergent derivations which satisfy

output conditions remain the goal of each computation. The selection and mergers of lexical units are

therefore enhanced with convergence specifications at the *working area[2]* where computation is assumed

to occur.

This paper interprets Nso' personal names as lexical items. Each personal name is understood to be constituted of a bundle of features. A name is considered the most meaningful lexicon in the vocabulary of the language. A personal name is generally assumed to be primarily nominal with the principal function of identifying an individual. Such a name singles out its bearer from a group. Names do not therefore require being indefinitely long. Ekundayo observes that the full meaning of a name can be implied by the recognisable parts of its full version (1977). A personal name that consists of five long sentences will be ludicrous in length and cumbersome in use.

The economy of name derivation requires that at the computational level, a comparison of identical derivational outputs with a matching semantic value be compared. Preference is given to the most economic derivation (assumed to be the derivation with the least set of constituents, the smallest number of grammatical derivations and a minimum sum of syntactic operations). Section 5 of this paper examines the computation of Nso' personal names in an attempt to proffer reasons for their structure and to understand how the grammar of the language organises personal names and accommodates them within the language.

2. The Internal Structure of Lamnso' Personal Names

The general understanding is that names are nouns. Chomsky's (1986b) feature specification ([±N, ±V]), for categorical distinction is very deceptive for personal names in Lamnso'. Yuka (2007) has shown that Lamnso' names manifest as lone words, phrases and sentences. It should be interesting to identify the lexical units employed in personal name derivation and the grammatical selectional restrictions that must be respected in personal name computation in the language. The following sections of the paper, examines the lexical units employed in personal name computation, how these units encode semantic import, contribute to discourse and interlocution, reveal the organisation of Lamnso' grammar as well as bring to the fore the language habits of' native speakers.

Names are assumed to be nouns and are therefore expected to exhibit nominal features. Lamnso' nouns display a system of (C)V affixes that attach to the noun stem. These (C)V affixes mark noun classes, and are identical in agreement with the (C)V prefixes carried by adjectives that qualify such a noun at the phrasal level (Yuka, 1997; McGarrity and Botne 2001). The implication is that computing a noun in Lamnso' requires selecting the noun stem and selecting an appropriate affix from the pool of lexical items for the chosen noun stem as well (for now, I make no assumptions as to which is selected first). Once the two lexical units are merged, a Lamnso' noun results. Deriving personal names involves more than selecting an appropriate affix for a nominal base form. The internal structure of these name forms is therefore not homogeneous.

2.1 Nominal affixes

If in spite of what we already know about types of personal name forms in Nso', we still proceed to assume in this section that all Nso' personal names are nouns, then we will expect that these names take the C(V) affixes as all nouns in the language do. (C)V affixes have been employed to classify Lamnso' nouns. These nouns fall into ten major classes as shown in 1 below. We follow the Bantu system of noun class numbering.

class	Affix	Gloss
1	ø-	shwà' 'a knife'
1	ø-	shwà' 'a knife'
2	à-	àshwà' 'knives'
3	-ø	wum 'egg'
5	-ø	luŋ 'a song'
6	me-	mejíy 'stars'
7	ki-	kikun 'a bed'
8	vi-	vikun 'beds'
9	-ø	yo 'a snaek'
10	-si	yosi 'sneaks'
19	shi-	shijíy 'a star'

Table 1: Lamnso' nominal prefixes

Classes 6, 7, 8 and 19 take CV prefixes while classes 1, 3, 5 and 9 have no affix on the noun. Class 2 is marked by a V suffix and 10 by a CV suffix. Table 1 above, shows that classes 1 and 2, 7 and 8, 9 and 10, as well as 9 and 6, can each constitute a pair. While the odd number of the pair represents the singular

form of the prefix, the even number indicates its plural form. The following names[3] take the affix for class 7 nouns.

2.　　a) Kibver　　　　ki-bvə́r　　　　　　'dust/loose soil'
　　　　　　　　　　　cv + loose
　　　　b) Kintati　　　　ki-ntatì　　　　　　'a gathering'
　　　　　　　　　　　cv + close
　　　　c) Kintang　　　　ki-ntáŋ　　　　　　'a scramble'
　　　　　　　　　　　cv + scramble
　　　　d) Kighah　　　　ki-ghà'　　　　　　'a difficulty'
　　　　　　　　　　　cv + difficult
　　　　e) Kinkinin　　　　ki-ŋkì-nìn　　　　　'a disagreement'
　　　　　　　　　　　cv + dispute + VE
　　　　f) Kimeng　　　　ki-meŋ　　　　　　'ignorance'
　　　　　　　　　　　cv + unaware

The names in 2 are personal names with two basic components: the **ki**- affix and the nominal stem. The choice of the **ki**-affix is dependent on the class of the stem. Curiously, the gloss of each stem cannot be said to be totally bereft of verbal features ([-N, +V]). Once the stem is presented in isolation, (i.e. without the CV affix) the native speaker of the language will immediately recognise it as a verb as shown in example 3.

3.　　a) bvə́r　　　'loose'
　　　　b) tátí　　　'unite/join'
　　　　c) gha'　　　'difficult'
　　　　d) kinin　　　'deny'

From 3, we can say that it is the dominant nominal features of the **ki**- affix that convert the verb stems into nouns once the **ki**- affix merges with the verb stem. A closer look at 3c however will indicate that the stem has the features [+V, +N] which reflect adjectival features. If 3c is an adjective, our claim should then be that once the **ki**-affix is merged with any stem, the categorical features of the stem are completely dominated by the nominal features of the affix and the output becomes wholly nominal. 2e is an odd form given that it bears a suffix (-**nin**). Precipitated judgment can lead us to interpret –**nin** as a nominal suffix. Such a split nominal affix is unlikely in Lamnso' grammar because nouns in the language have not been shown to exhibit this morphological characteristic. In addition, the nominal features of the subject NP have not been shown to have agreement relations with the predicate of the clause. This line of argument can lead us to explore the identity of nominal features between the **ki**- affix and the –**nin** suffix. Such an

identity of features does not immediately exist. But if we interpret the stem in 2e as being identical with that in 3d, the suffix –**nin** can be understood as part of the verbal form. This alternate interpretation leads us to view –**nin** as a verbal affix. We return to this line of argument in the following section of the paper.

Notice that 2b, 2c and 2e have a nasal element introduced in-between the affix and the stem. The element surfaces as [n] before alveolar plosives and [ŋ] before velar plosives. The articulatory transition between the initial [k] of the affix, and the first consonant of the stem ([n]/[k]) separated by the vowel of the CV affix accounts for the introduction of the nasal element given the points of articulation of the two consonants.

The different lexical units employed to compute the names in 2 are as represented in 4.

4.

```
              N
            /   \
       affix     V'
               /    \
            ŋ/n       V'
                     /   \
                   V     (-nin)
```
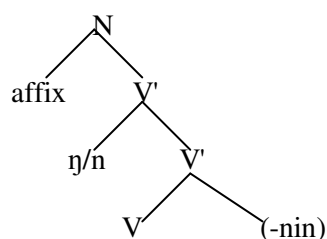
To compute 2c, for example, two principal lexical units are required: the affix (**ki**-) and the stem (táŋ). Once merging begins, a third element is introduced ([ŋ] or [n]). The native speaker of Lamnso' may not consciously recognise the combinatorial requirements and the role each lexical unit plays but it is not in doubt that the same native speaker will reject the same name as ill-formed once any of the lexical units above is either missing or wrongly computed. The following strings are unacceptable as personal names in Lamnso':

5. * Ki-táŋ, *ki-tatì, *ki-kòy

The stems in 2 can easily be employed to compute other lexical items in the language by simply opting for the plural form of the **ki**-affix (vi-). (vi-ŋki-nin, vi-táŋ, vi-ntatì, vi-ŋkòy). *vi-ghà', and *vi-bvə́r will be ill-formed because, *gha'* (difficult) is an adjective that cannot be pluralised. ki-bvə́r, is a mass noun generally considered as a single entity.

However, there exist few names that take the **vi**-affix.

6.   Vifəm   vi-fə̀m   'abandoned homesteads'

Viban	vi-ban	'hatred'
Vidzəm	vi-dzə̀m	'all'
Vinyo	vi-nyò	'issues'
Vishaani	vi-shaà-ni	'it (pl) have passed'

Such words in the language refer to abstract concepts, geographical locations or attitudes. Such names could be motivated by family history, or occurrences at the time of birth.

The following names are morphologically similar to the names discussed in 2.

7.	Kibong	ki-boŋ	'May it be good'
	Kishaani	ki-shaà-ni	'It has passed'
	Kidzeru	ki-dzə-rú	'It is true'
	Kidzənwah	ki-dzə-ŋwà'	'It is in the book'
	Kidari	ki-dà-rì	'It is getting longer'

Unlike the names in 2, **ki**- in 7 is not the class 7 nominal affix. It is a lexical unit recognized as an expletive in Lamnso' grammar generally glossed as 'it'. **ki**- fills the slot of the subject NP in the Lamnso' basic clause. It derives its semantic reference from some unnamed item in previous discourse. It is employed in personal names as a reference to an understood subject within family history.

In the examples in 8, the lexical unit **ki-** is neither the class 7 nominal affix nor the nominal place filler in the grammar of the language, but the verb 'to know'.

8.	Kila	ki-la	'who knows'
	Kiven	ki-ven	'You (pl) know'
	Kinyuy	ki-nyuy	'God knows '
	Kimu	ki-mu	'I know'

The names in 8 are verb phrases headed by the verb **ki** 'know'. Again the correct and complete interpretation of the subject for which knowledge is expected in each of the names in 8 depends on background information concerning the circumstances of birth of the name bearer, family history or events related to the life being led by the name bestower or those around him.

9a.	ki	nyuy	kem
	Know	God	mine
	'God knows mine'		

9b.	ki	la	ke
	know	who	yours
	'who knows yours'		

Phrasal names abound in the language where the head verb selects two nouns as shown in 9a and 9b. It can equally select a sentence, but such a construction will violate the name derivation restriction of length limitation.

The plural of class 1 nouns is the prefix **a**-. Nouns that take this affix belong to class 2 nouns.

10.	Afòni	á-fò-nì	'they have given (mu, ver)'
	Abuhnimu	á-bù'-ni-mu	'they have honoured me'
	Ashujika	á-shù-ji-ka	'what have they named (it).
	Asoni	á-sò-ni	'they have won'
	Aloni	á-lò-ni	'they have left'
	Adzeayee	á-dzǝ-á-yèé	'what can they do'
	Ashehri	á-shé'-rì	'they are happy'
	Ajume	á-jum-e	'the are chasing (me)'

The initial vowel of the personal names in 10 appears identical with the prefix of class 2 nouns. Lamnso' nominal affixes do not bear tone. Curiously, the prefixes in the names in 10 bear a high tone. The semantic interpretation of the prefix reveals that **á-** is the short form of the pronoun **áwuni** 'they'. It is used to refer to people in general when mentioning things people do or say. Many personal names take this prefix, which is also employed as an honourific reference. For instance:

11. á   wìy   ka   kí fo   kwa' ghan
     they non-prog-come what sm from bush journey
    'What have they brought from the journey?'

Elders, title holders and traditional rulers are not called by their names in Nso'. They are respectfully referred to using a non-specific pronoun (**á**). Notice that the examples in 10 are inherently sentence names whose object NP has been clipped. The beneficiary of the action specified by the predicate is covert. The missing element is understood within family circles and those who understand the circumstances that determined the choice of the name.

The second person singular pronoun in the language is almost identical with the **a-** in 10. It is an indefinite pronoun, it bears a low tone, and it is a complete lexical item in its own right. Pronouns are often interpreted through anaphoric dependencies with other expressions in context. Names are freer. They retain anaphoric properties which can be freely updated without recourse to context. Names project internal semantic structures, much like a qualifying expression

The selection of the appropriate lexical units for name computation requires that the various principles and operations within the working area be guided by the conceptual-intentional restrictions that operate at the interface level. Computed names will be rejected by the grammar of the language once the tenets of computation are at variance with the well-formedness conditions of the interface levels.

12a. à   yén   ne   súm   fə̀r   Kila   á[4]
      You non-prog-see compl farm   brother/sister Kila Q-part
      'Have you seen Kila's brother's/sister's farm?'

12b. à   du   Bàmíndà vèn   la
      you prog-go Bamenda with   who
      'Who are you going to Bamenda with?'

Yuka (2006) claims that question formation in 12a is signaled by the question particle **á** in clause final position. In 12b, the interrogative wh-word (**la**) replaces **á**. **á** (the question particle) and **á**, (the short form of **áwuni**) are morphologically identical, but while the short form of **áwuni** always occurs at clause initial position, **á**, (the question particle) is always at clause final position.

There is evidence that name derivation requires native speaker competence to distinguish between **ki**- (the class 7 noun class affix, **ki-** (the Lamnso' expletive) and **ki-** (the verb 'know), **a-** (the class 2 noun prefix and **á-** (the short form of áwuni 'they') and **à**, (the second person singular pronoun) and **á** (the question particle).

Our analysis indicates that some lexical resources required for the computation of personal names in Lamnso' are morphologically similar but semantically varied. It is therefore imperative that computational operations within the Working Area saddled with the responsibility of selecting and merging lexical units be enhanced with the potentials to distinguish the semantic relevance of each lexical unit that is a candidate for personal name computation; their morphological realization notwithstanding. This theoretical requirement (for the grammatical computation of Lamnso' personal names) is informed by our understanding that computational outputs converge at the Interface Levels; a point where the Phonetic Form (PF) and the Logical Form (LF) of each derivation is assessed for well-formedness. The computation of any personal name in the language, that selects and merges lexical units oblivious of the

LF requirements is likely to violate well-formedness conditions and will expectedly *crash* and be rejected

as ill-formed by the native speaker of Lmanso'

3. Verbal Extensions

Lamnso' verbs are basically monosyllabic but when peripheral syllables that mark various grammatical

phenomena are suffixed to the nuclei syllable, 'complex' verbs are derived. The verbs in example 13

indicate that Lamnso' verbs fall into two basic groups: the basic verbs and the complex verbs. [5]

13.	lem	lem**kír**
	gbù	gbù**kìr**
	kav	kav**nin**
	toy	toy**nin**
	way	way**sín**
	mày	mày**sì**
	lum	lum**sì**
	tav	tav**ír**
	nyom	nyom**èr**
	ga'	ga'**ám**
	la'	la'**ám**
	ghem	gheé**me**
	rom	roò**mè**
	sho'	sho'**óy**
	mvə́'	mvə́'**ə̌y**

In 13 above, the bold prints represent Verbal Extensions (henceforth VE). Yuka (forth coming)

has attempted an analysis of VEs in Lamnso' and notes that these VEs impose selectional

restrictions on argument distribution in clauses.

Adherence to economy of name derivation requires that lexical units that can be omitted

and yet implied in the output, be omitted from the computation. VEs in Lamnso' personal names

function like verbal affixes to Pro-drop[6] languages. The examples that follow show Lamnso'

personal names with VEs.

14.	Kinkinin	ki-ŋki-**nìn**	'disagreement'
	Kishehri	ki-shé'-**rì**	'happiness'
	Kintati	ki-nta-**ti**	'togetherness'
	Kwahti	kwá'-**ti**	'thought'
	lamri	làm-**rì**	'musing'
	woome	woó-**me**	'shame'

| ntuhtin | n-tù'-**tin** | 'confusion' |
| Laysin | lay-**sin** | forgetfulness |

The VEs in 14 bear referential features that indicate argument distribution within the clause. These arguments have been clipped for reasons of economy. The VE –**nin/-tin**, for instance is reciprocal. It requires two or more agents to be mutual participants in the action specified by the verb. Their action is either interdependent or non-associative. The VE -**ri** is iterative. The action spelt out by the verb is progressive and repetitive. Its agents can either be singular or plural. The VE –**ti** is applicative. Its object NP must be in its plural form and there must be an overt NP in subject position. –**sin** is a contactive VE that describes two or more element, involved in a fitting or disengaging contact activity. The NP in subject position must be in its plural form.

What the example 14 reveals is that two basic types of VEs exist in Lamnso': those that restrict argument structure and those that limit event structure. 14 clearly shows that Lamnso' grammar permits the exclusion of arguments in name computation which can be semantically recovered from the VEs affixed to the verbal base. The VEs signal the feature composition of argument(s) that are part of the overt lexical units of a name but have been economically excluded.

4. Clipping in Nso' Personal Names

Among the Nso' people, it is common to find personal names that have been truncated. Such shortening is informed by either phonological economy, an indication of emotional attachment with the name bearer, socio-cultural restrictions etc. A personal name is said to be clipped when a shorter form of the name is derived through grapho-phonemic reduction, or the deletion of one or more syllables from a poly-syllabic name. The clipped form of the personal name is generally understood to share an identical semantic and paradigmatic relationship with the full version. This section of the paper construes clipping as a form of lexical derivation through deletion. Clipping therefore, is interpreted here as the reverse process of name computation through the affixation of lexical units which we examined in section 3 of this paper.

We argue that the clipping of Nso' personal names has a pattern that is largely determined by the form of the name in question, the syllable structure of the language, the Head (position) parameter, semantic

and socio-cultural restrictions and others. We proceed to examine each of these factors to ascertain how each contributes to the clipping pattern of Nso' personal names.

4.1 Name Forms

Yuka (2007) categorises Nso' personal names into four classes: the lone word names, verb dominated names, noun dominated names and sentence names. This ranking is akin to the Scale and Category Grammar of Halliday (1961) and Tomori (1977). It will be interesting to investigate which of these name forms is prone to clipping and to determine whether once clipped the name form undergoes a shift in the ranking.

Clipping in Lone Word Names

There is evidence that the nominal CV affixes examined in section 3, are identical to the CV concord at the phrasal level. These affixes and extensions elongate lexical items and render them subject to clipping. There exist few monosyllabic personal names in the language that are never clipped: *Ndze*, *Sheè, Ntaŋ, Bìy, Lukoŋ, ŋgo, Chin* etc**.** Our data reveals that these names have unique characteristics. First, rather than represent the interpretation of the world and events around it by the name giver (as is the case with other personal names in the language) these names are affiliated to the spirits of traditional gods. They are usually given to children who are constantly being afflicted by sickness. The name is given to ward off the evil spirits and place the child under the guidance of some god. These names are unisex, but they can be gender sensitive through the addition of *yeè*[7] (mother) for female children and *taà* (father) for male children. For instance, *Yee Bìy*, *Taà Bìy*. These names do not undergo clipping because nobody is eager to distort a reference to a god, less his supplications do not go to the correct destination because of a wrong address (so to speak). It will not be wrong to say that the structure of Nso' names contribute to discourse and interlocution in Nso' society since the realities of beliefs of the native speakers can be discerned from name structures.

Clipping in Verb-Dominated Names

Most Nso' names tend to relate either past events or events expected to occur in some future. In a basic sentence, the predicate spells out the activity of the element in subject position. Central to the verb phrase is the verb. These verbs take object complements as shown in example 15.

15.
Name	**lexical components**	**Clipped Form**
Koyka	kòy ka	Kòy
	happen what	
	'What is happening'	
Buhven	bú' ven	Bu'
	restless you (pl) '	
	'You are the restless ones'	
Tongla	toŋ la	Toŋ
	cry who	
	'who is crying'	
Kaimu	kái mu	Kai
	underrate me	
	'I am being underated'	
Sunjo	sù njò	Njò
	wash iniquity	
	'cleanser of iniquity'	
Shiynyuy	shíy nyuy	Shíy
	wait God	
	'Waiting on God'	

The names in 15 are composed of two lexical categories: V + N. When each name undergoes clipping, the verbal component is retained. The names in 15 can be said to be activity names. They describe situations, or specify actions. The verb is therefore the head of such phrasal projections. The noun bears the effect of the action specified by the verb. Of more semantic importance is the predicate which spells out the event in focus. The verb has a stronger distinctive link to the circumstances guiding name bestowal than the qualifying object noun. In the event of the most economical derivation, the noun is clipped, while the verb is retained.

Clipping Noun Dominated Names

Unlike the personal names in 15, those in 16, focus on the agent in a clause or sentence. Most of the personal names in the group are noun-noun constructions.

16.

Name	lexical components	Clipped Form
Fonlon	fòn	lòn	Fòn

king   misfortune
'King of misfortune'

| Nsahwir | nsa' | wìr | Nsa' |

dispute   person
'Personal business'

| Tarngwah | tàr | ŋgwa' | ŋgwa' |

father   (contributory) organisation
'Leader of organisation'

| Nsohyeni | nso' | yén-i | Nso' |

Nso'   prog-see
'The Nsò (people) are watching'

| Nsohtahka | nso' | ta' | ka | Nso' |

Nso'   prog-find   what
'What are the Nso' (people) looking for?'

| Fonjay | fòn | jày | Fòn |

king   mistake
'The king of mistakes'

| Fonkpu | fòn | kpú | Fòn |

king   death
'The king of death'

In 16, most of the examples reflect back-clipping in which lexical units are truncated from the end of the name. The abridged version has an identical semantic value with the full version of the name. The *Tàrŋgwa' example* is an exception, in which the clipped lexical unit is from the beginning of the name. The only explanation we can proffer for now is that, tàr (N_1) qualifies the head of the NP, N_2 (ŋgwa') which is retained during clipping. The rest of the examples show that in each case, where N_2 qualifies N_1, N_2 is clipped. Notice that there is an identical clipped version in 16 for three different personal names. There is no known method to semantically distinguish the clipped forms from the different meanings of the full version. It cannot therefore be denied that clipping sometimes obliterates the full meaning of names.

Clipping the Sentence Name

The declarative sentence names convey the belief of the family in their reading of the circumstances of birth. Sentence name forms are more like the verb phrase name forms with the basic

difference being that sentence names exhibit all the components of a basic sentence in the language. The examples in 16 reveal that when sentence names are clipped, the most semantically relevant constituent is retained.

17. **Name** **lexical components** **Clipped Form**

a) Verdzebah vèr dzə̀ ba' Ba'
We non-prog-be Ba'
'We are in Ba'

b) Dzelamuunyuy dzə la muu nyuy Muunyuy
non-prog-be who like God
'Who is like God'

c) Tardzewan tàr dzə̀ wán Tàr
father non-prog-be child
'The child is the father'

d) Fondzenyuy fòn dzə̀ nyuy Fòn
king non-prog-be God
'The King is God'

e) Nsaykila Nsay kì la Nsay
soil non-prog-know who
'Who does the soil know?'

f) Nsahbinla nsa' bin la Nsa'
dispute prog-support who
'Who is supporting the dispute?'

In 17a, the object NP (Ba') is retained. The clipped constituents seek to specify the geographical position of the agent (we). The Nso' people are known to have migrated from one place to the other, before finally settling on the land they presently occupy. During such movements, children born at particular locations marked their presence in such an area by giving names such that in 16a. The child becomes a symbol of their presence in the area. Clipping retains only the most important element(s) of the clause (the settlement). In 16b, the entire VP is retained. Socio-culturally, no family wants to give a name that seems to associate a name bearer with Godly qualities. The native speakers revere God. You therefore will not find clipped names where the retained lexical item is *nyuy* (God). God's qualities can however, be exalted in a name as in 17b. 17c-f make up the most common forms of clipped sentence names in the language where the entire predicate is clipped while the subject NP is retained. The clipped constituent in such names generally describes the qualities or the status of the agent. When clipped, the agent is left without its distinguishing features.

4. 2 The Syllable Structure

The choice of lexical units for name composition in Lamnso' seems to be regulated by the prosodic and syllabic structure of the language. Lamnso' exhibits a CV(C) root syllable structure which can be maximally stretched to $(N)C_1V(V)(C_2)$ form. McGarrity and Botne (2001) have observed that in such strings, the initial nasal must be homorganic with the following obstruent. The C_1 slot can be filled by any consonant apart from the glottal stop (Ĭ). The V can either be short or long (long vowels are orthographically indicated by doubling the single vowel). The final consonants within any lexical item in the language can only be any of the following: **m, n, ŋ, v, r and** Ĭ. Lamnso' names are usually polysyllabic. These syllable boundaries tend to determine the addition of nominal affixes as well as verbal extensions in name derivation. Lexical units that undergo clipping in the language are also influenced by syllabic boundaries. Name clipping also respects word boundaries as well. Example 18 reveals names that are unacceptable in the language because they violate word boundary clipping restrictions.

	Name	**lexical components**				**Clipped Form**
18.	Tardzewan	tàr	dzə̀	wán	Tàr	*Tardzəw
	father	non-prog-be	child			
	'The child is the father'					
	Fondzenyuy	fòn	dzə̀	nyuy	Fòn	*Zənyuy
	king	non-prog-be	God			
	'The King is God'					
	Nsaykila	Nsay	kì	la	Nsay	*Ykìla
	soil	non-prog-know	who			
	'Who does the soil know?'					

The illegitimate clipped forms violate word boundaries and are therefore unrecognisable as lexical items in Lamnso'.

4.3. Head (position) Parameter

Universal Grammar (UG) assumes a range of structural variation across languages. UG specifies two open value choices for every natural language: a natural language either has or does not have a given parameter. The relative position of words and their complements within phrases and sentences vary across languages. In English (for example, head nouns, verbs, adjectives etc, precede their complements. In Lamnso' the head words follow their complements. In the literature, English-type languages have been

described as Head-First Languages while languages like Lamnso' are said to be Head-Last languages. Koopman (1983) interprets the concept as Head-Initial/Head-final languages.

The clipping of personal names tends to respect Head words. Economy of derivation requires that the lexical unit that is semantically vital be retained while the lexical units that simply qualify it may be clipped. The data below show that clipping in Lamnso' personal names can have lexical items truncated from the beginning and the end of the word depending on the position of the Head word.

		Name	lexical components			Clipped Form
19.	a)	Konglim	kòŋ	lim		Lim
			prog-love	work		
			'Lover of work'			
	b)	Nsaybirni	nsay	bìr	ni	Nsay
			soil	non-prog-bad	VE	
			'The world is bad'			
	c)	Nsohtahka	nso'	tà'	ka	Nso'
			nso'	prog-want	what	
			'What do the Nso' people want?'			
	d)	Limnyuy	lim	nyuy		Lim
			work	Gos		
			'God's work'			
	e)	Veransoh	Vèrà-	nso'		Nso'
			we	plural part	nso'	
			'The Nso' (people) and us'			
	f)	Muayuun	mu	à	yuun	Yuun
			as	sm	non-prog-hear	
			'As you have heard'			

19a-c, shows fore-clipping with lexical units clipped from the beginning of the word. In each of these cases, the Head word is retained. In19d-f, back-clipping occurs again, the Head words are retained. We conclude therefore, that the Head (position) parameter is the determinant of which lexical units are clipped, and which clipping form is applied.

4.4 Socio-cultural Restrictions

The social and cultural orientation of a people is reflected in the names they bear. Yuka (2007) has noted that names that "eulogize antisocial behaviour and activities are rejected as personal names. Words like *Shó* (thief) [**mdzeshó*] 'I am a thief'; *kibaá* (madness) [**bò kibaá*] 'madness is better'; *rím* (witch) [**rìmdzewo*] 'you are a witch', etc., are not considered worthy candidates for personal names." Some

lexical items are eligible as components of personal names, but are discriminated during clipping. No name containing the word *nyuy* 'God' is retained after clipping, regardless of whether the lexical item is a Head word or not. Derogatory terms, abusive words, taboo words, unpleasant connotations etc, are restricted from the repertoire of lexical items that are candidates for Nso' personal names. Such words are low in value on the social hierarchy. Animal names, objects or degrading items are excluded from the membership of lexical items that can constitute personal names. Since a name is a reflection of the bearer, no person wants to bear a name that places him or her lowly in society.

What section 4 of this paper reveals is that clipping has a pattern which is governed by restrictions related to the name form, the grammar of the language as well as socio-cultural interpretations.

5. Concluding Remarks

This paper set out to investigate the derivation of personal names in Lamnso' as well as proffer reasons for the structures of these names. Evidence from our investigation indicates that unlike lexical and clause derivation in the language, name computation is very economical with lexical resources. NPs whose features can be interpreted from the features of other lexical units are clipped while verbal extensions restrict argument structure as well as limit event structure. The CV affixes introduce dominant nominal features to verb and adjective dominated names. The ability to distinguish ki- (the class 7 noun class affix), ki- (the expletive), ki- (the verb), a- (the class 2 noun prefix), á- (the short form of *áwuni*), and á- (the clause final question particle) which are prominent lexical units in Lamnso' personal names requires competence in the grammar of the language. CV affixes, verbal extensions as well as the clipping of redundant lexical units highlight the feature composition of the lexical elements that are candidates for personal name computation in the language. This paper reveals a delicate balancing act between grammatical restrictions of a language and the socio-cultural restrictions of its speakers. The lexical choices open to native speakers as candidates for name computation are governed not only by combinatorial restrictions but by both selectional constraints, length limitation and socio-cultural acceptability.

Notes

[1] In the Lamnso' orthography, three 'unfamiliar' letters exist [ŋ], [ə] and [Ĭ]. The last has (for typological reasons) generally been represented as an apostrophe. Thus *Lamnso Ĭ* is written as *Lamnso'* .

[2] The operational zone containing an unlimited number of lexical units. All combinations must occur in the working prior Spell Out (See Chomsky 1995, Marantz, 1995 for a detailed of exposition of the Minimalist programme).

[3] Many native speakers are not familiar with the standard orthography of Lamnso'. More often than not, the English orthography is employed to write the language. The names in this paper are first presented as they are orthographically represented by the name bearers and those who bestow them. Such orthography is often at variance with the writing system of the language as well as its grammar. In this paper, (where necessary) a name is first presented as it is commonly written. The same name is then written following the standard Lamnso' orthography with its attendant components glossed. The literary interpretation of the name is then shown.

[4] The clause final á is a question particle in Lamnso'. The question particle is an idiosyncrasy of wh-in-situ languages (Cheng 1991)

[5] The VEs in example 13 are not exhaustive. We have employed a few VE examples here to illustrate how the language employs them for economic computation of personal names.

[6] Languages that permit empty subject positions in clauses. The features of the missing subject are however recoverable from the feature content of agreement affix. The Pro-drop parameter has been associated with agreement rich languages where the INFL is generated with nominative case features in the base. Categories such as person, number, gender (phi-features) must be recoverable from the syntactic surroundings (Wayne, 1995:221). Our argument is that the missing argument is recoverable from the appropriate interpretation of the features of the VE.

[7] The full form of yeè is *yiyà* (mother of), while *taà* is *tàrà* (father of). For phonological coalescence, they surface as *yeè* and *taà* respectively.

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