



RESEARCH PAPER

Urdu Nick Names and their Social Implications

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ABSTRACT

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Names are social identity markers. They change their social dimensions through the insertion of different morphemes in the base word. Urdu, an Indo-Aryan language, is unique in the sense that the personal names in that language present three social dimensions such as diminutive, derogatory and augmentative with three morphemic insertions such as /i/, /u/ and /a/ respectively. For example [Majeed] has diminutive, derogatory and augmentative forms as [Majeedi], [Majeedu] and [Majeeda] respectively. Similarly, [Kareem] has diminutive, derogatory and augmentative patterns as [Kareemi], [Kareemu] and [Kareema]. Sometimes the matter goes beyond simple affixation and there can be seen the operations of truncation and base modifications which generate newer patterns. In this way a single name exhibits three dimensional sociomorph patterns. These formations show linguistic productivity and social diversity of the language. The data, in the form of various proper names of Urdu, have been analyzed with the help of Distributed Morphology (DM), a sub-field of Generative Grammar. This research may work as the yardstick in comparative and contrastive linguistics.

Introduction

Linguistic researchers, most of the times, devoted much attention to the etymologies, i.e. the semantic origin of names (Langendonck 2007), while their sociomorph domains have been given least attention. Names also have distinctive internal structures, which vary between language systems. Diachronically within the same language, name creation patterns evolve and change, just as the language itself and the surrounding society to which they are closely linked. Lipka (2000) dedicates an article to the neglected field of names and their formations. He points out that names are highly productive regarding their metonymic and metaphoric processes, and hence result in a variety of morphological structures.

Nicknames are the names given to someone for affection or love such as *Nomi* from *Noman*, *Gullu* from *Gulfam*, *Zulfi* from *Zulifqar*, etc.

Eponymy is the name derived from some personal name such as *Makki* 'one who belongs to Makkah', *Madni* 'one who belongs to Madina', *Sialvi* 'one who belongs to the area namely Sial', etc. Todea (2019) says that eponymy may be regarded as a resourceful process of vocabulary enrichment. The names derived from the personal name of some person is called anthroponomics eponym, the one derived from the personal name of some place is called toponymic eponym and so forth. Even the nicknames, derived from the names of some person, are put under the head of anthroponomics eponyms. Mencken (1919) says that nicknames are important and deeply embedded with cultural elements in some society. In this way the nicknames have their morph semantic importance apart from their social stratification. The study is concerned with eponym, and so there is need to have a general idea about it.

Distributed Morphology (DM)

Halle (1990), Marantz (1993, 1994), Harley and Noyer (1999) introduce Distributed Morphology, commonly known as DM, as a foil to Lexicalist approach of Chomsky which focuses that the words are the lexical items with their pre-loaded meanings. Halle (1990), Marantz (1993, 1994), Harley and Noyer (1999) contradict that it is not the lexicon that is stored in human mind; it is rather the data in the form of meaningless and abstract roots. They are given phonological and semantic realizations after syntax. It means syntax is prior to lexicon. This very shift of paradigm from fixed set of lexicon to abstract morphemes is called Distributed Morphology.

Halle (1990) divided morphemes into two kinds: 'concrete' morphemes and 'abstract' morphemes. Later on Harley & Noyer (1999) suggested an alternative type. That is 'f-morphemes' and 'l-morphemes'. And these types correspond to the conventional division between 'functional' and 'lexical' categories or closed-class and open-class categories. This also shows that, the traditional division of 'free' and 'bound' are not recognized in DM. In nutshell, morphemes in DM are divided into two categories: functional head morphemes indicated as (<>) and roots symbolized as ($\sqrt{\text{ }}$). In Urdu language, a proper name 'Riaz' can be described as: [$\sqrt{\text{Riaz}}$ <N^o, Gen, Num>]. Here both functional head morphemes as (<N^o, Gen, Num>) and root $\sqrt{\text{Riaz}}$ are abstract in nature which means that they have neither syntactic nor phonological realizations and even their semantic dimensions are opaque (anti-Lexicalism). The syntactic features are inserted as [$\sqrt{\text{Riaz}}$ <N_{prop,mass,sing}>] from the UFI of Urdu language. After that the root $\sqrt{\text{Riaz}}$ becomes a proper noun, masculine in gender and singular in number. It means the features are inserted through LVI (lexical vocabulary insertion) and FVI (functional vocabulary insertion). It does not make difference which feature gets its insertion first and which one later. The features that are inserted are called active features and the ones that are deleted are called non-active or impoverished ones. According to Embick (2015), "Sometimes the active

features in particular language may be the non-active features in another language. No language contains every feature of UFI.”

The second important part in DM is the list of Vocabulary Items (VIs). Vocabulary items provide the phonological material or form of the l-morphemes and f-morphemes. So vocabulary items are morphemes that receive phonological form by particular language. According to Marantz (1997) only morphemes are generative but vocabulary items are not yet they are expandable. This clearly shows that DM adopted ‘Separation hypothesis’ which means that VIs in DM are divided into two types:

a. Functional vocabulary items (FVIs) which consist of only functional vocabulary items, which are traditionally inserted into the terminal node but through competition. The concept of competition can be understood on the pattern of Optimality Theory (OT).

b. Lexical vocabulary items (LVIs) which consist of roots, which are traditionally inserted in DM base on choice. (De Belder, 2011; De Belder & Craenenbroeck, 2011, 2014)

After the Insertion of the VIs into roots and the readjustment rule, the final realization is called phonological form as PF.

Three patterns- with one example from each- of the personal names from Urdu (only anthroponyms and male genders) have been discussed to show how the social dimensions of names get changed after the insertion of different VIs.

Pattern 1 Diminutives: Insertion of Vocabulary Item /i/

Pre Spell-Out/Syntactic Opr		Spell-Out/morphological Operations			Post Spell-Out/Semantic Opr	
List A Abstract Morphemes	Feature s Bundle s	Voc. Deletion & voc. Insertion	Merger and Readjustment	PF	LF	List C Semantic dimension/s
Rasheed				/SheedI	Sheed	
Saif				/	i	
Bilal				/SaifI/	Saifi	
Ramzan				/BillI/	Billi	
Faiz				/j ^h anI/	j ^h ani	Eponyms referring to some extra-linguistic meanings of eponyms
Ghulam				/FaizI/	Faizi	
Majeed	<N°, Gen, Num>	/a,i,o/	Base modification and insertion of vowel /i/	/GhamI	Gham	
Hameed				/	i	
Noman				/Maj ^h I/	Maj ^h i	
Javaid				/MeedI/	Meedi	
Rafiq				/NomI/	Nomi	
Sharif				/JaidI/	Jaidi	
Shair				/FeeqI/	Feeqi	
Saith				/SharfI/	Sharfi	
<N°, Gen,				/ShairI/	Shairi	

Num>

/SaithI/ Saithi

Only one example from the given pattern has been analyzed and discussed.

Pattern 1 (Example 1)

Syntactic Operations		Morphological Operations				Semantic Operations		
List A: Abstract Root	List A: Abstract Feature bundles	Active & Impoverished Features	VIs	Morpl Merger	Readjust	PF	LF	List C
√RASHEE D	<N°, Gen, Num>	Acti:<NPr op, mas, sing > Impr:<Nco m, fem, pl>	Red of Root+ [i,u,o]	√Sheed+i Truncati on	/Ra- SheedI/	Sheedi		The eponyms is diminutive and refers to Hameed

Analysis and Discussion

A. Syntactic Operations, (Pre Spell-Out Operations)

In the List A, [√RASHEED] is an abstract morpheme and <N°,Gen, Num> are abstract feature bundles. The abstract root is specified through LVI where [√RASHEED] becomes [√Rasheed]. Similarly, the feature bundles are specified where <N°,Gen,Num> surface out as <NProp, mas, sing>. The root [√Rasheed] gives extra-grammatical information. It is through the feature bundles that the syntactic nature of the root is determined. The features that do not match with the root [√Rasheed] such as <Ncom,fem,pl> are impoverished. Now the root morpheme [√Rasheed] is a proper noun, masculine and singular but without any specific phonological and semantic realizations.

B. Morphological Operations (Post Spell-Out Operations)

The post spell-out operations occur in two cycles as:

Cycle 1: Truncation of Root

Nominal Root	Possible Truncations	Readjustment	PF
√Rasheed	*Rasheed		
√Rasheed	Ra -Sheed	Reduction of root;	/Sheed/
√Rasheed	*Rushd	base modification	
<Nprop,mas, sing>			

The root is reduced to /Sheed/. It is the optimal realization which works as terminal host and lets the VIs to be inserted under the specified environment. It is important to note that even there is competition in LVI like the FVI and it is under the Elsewhere Principle (Kiprasky 1973) that the less specified form /Sheed/ has the highly specified features. As a result of lexical choices, we find √Sheed as a terminal node for Cycle 2.

Cycle 2: Insertion of vocabulary item/i/

There is morphological merger or insertion of phonological exponents (from List B) into the terminal node $\sqrt{\text{Sheed}}$. The phonological exponents such as [i, u, o] come into competition for insertion. After the morphological merger, the morpheme [$\sqrt{\text{Sheed}}$] gets its PF as [$\sqrt{\text{SheedI}}$]. Only that VI is inserted whose features are the subset of the terminal node. The morphemes are pieced together, and sometimes they are modified, to make complex word forms. There are no complex word forms that are stored in human mind; every time the roots undergo generative process to make more complex words.

See the insertion of VIs under the specific environment:

Terminal	Node	VIs in competition	Readjustment	PF
$\sqrt{\text{Sheed}}$		/i/		/Sheedi/
$\sqrt{\text{Sheed}}$		/u/	Insertion of /i/	*/Sheedu/
$\sqrt{\text{Sheed}}$		/o/		*/Sheedo/

At spell out, the morphemes are given the phonological features. There is the principle of readjustment. It is important to note that the phonological features are given to the morphemes after the morphological process. Phonologically, the vocabulary is pronounced as /Sheedi/.

C. Semantic Operations

Towards the LF, there is [Sheedi] as the derived name from [Sheed]. This derived name is derived from some personal name (though in the form of diminutive) for which we may place it under the umbrella of anthroponymic eponymy.

Finally, it is the List C in the form of encyclopedia that helps to understand the referential concept/ meaning of the eponym. In the form of diminutive, this name shows intimacy or frankness with the name-bearer. When the truncated names become diminutives in English, they are meant for intimacy and smallness (Plag 2002). In other words, the same morphological formation presents the meanings of close association as well as littleness, but in Urdu the case is different and the diminutives /name+i/ are used for closeness only. For smallness or derogation in Urdu, there is different pattern as /name+u/. There are three different formations in Urdu with three different markers to show three semantic domains i.e. **diminution, augmentation and derogation**. See the following example as:

Rasheed>Rasheedi (diminution; with the regular marker /i/ at the terminal position): sense of **closeness** or **frankness**.

Rasheed>Rasheeda (augmentation; with the regular marker /a/ at the terminal position): sense of **exaggeration**

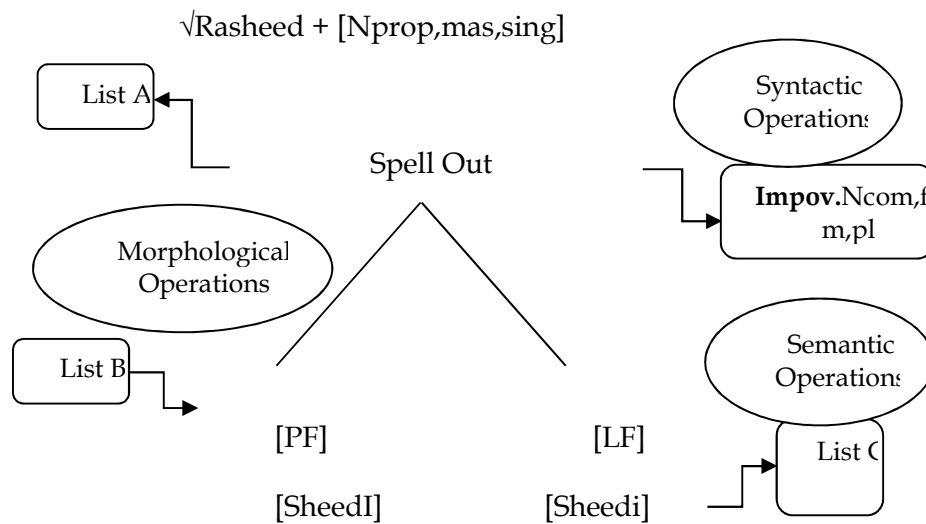
Rasheed > Rasheedu (derogation; with the regular marker /u/ at the terminal position): some sense of **derogation** or **smallness** (socially)

This phenomenon, if viewed morphologically, can be taken as suppletive allomorphy as the VIs /i/, /a/, /o/ generate the general category of s though having different phonological forms as /Sheedi/, /Sheeda/ and /Sheedu/.

The issue is debatable in the case of common nouns such as *kitab* 'book', the diminutive is *kitabri* 'little or small book' but here the smallness is the size of the book. In the case of proper names (human beings), the issue of smallness is not of size or stature but it is social smallness or derogation, which is represented through derogatory pattern as [name+u] such as *Kareemu* 'someone in socially low position'.

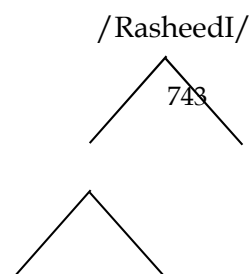
The eponym [Sheedi] is commonly and conventionally used in our social and domestic circles in order to show closeness.

The whole mechanism can simply be shown as:



List C: An allusion to the closeness association with Rasheed

If the whole process is viewed through syntactic fashion (syntactic hierarchical structure all way down), we may find it as:



√Sheed /i/

/Sheed/ **/-Ra/** (Reduction)

The above given diagram shows that the eponym [Sheedi] is formed through the three operations (with the three lists) of DM how the pieces are joined together to make some morphosemantic formation. In this way the LF and PF come as finale. In other words, the PF and PF find their realization after syntax and the syntactical hierarchy is sketched through the diagram.

The long list in the pattern 1 has the shred features as the nominal ones, singular and masculine. The syntactic features are mostly similar. Anyhow, they undergo different morphological operations ranging from Truncation+Insertion to base modification and from vocabulary reduction to vocabulary insertion (See above the Formative List of pattern 1). The most general pattern is the insertion of VI /i/ as the marker of an addition to diminution. During all such operations, the sounds also change under the rule of readjustment. Semantically, all the patterns denote the diminutive features of the name bearer. The diminution in Urdu antroponymic eponyms is not simply the case of size or volume; it is rather social closeness or friendship. Urdu antroponymic eponyms are unique in the sense that they present the three dimensional morphological as well as semantic nuances as diminution, augmentation and derogation.

Pattern 2 Augmentatives: Insertion of Vocabulary Item /a/

Pre Spell-Out/Syntactic Operations		Spell-Out/morphological Operations			Post Spell-Out/Semantic Operations	
List A Abstract Morphemes	Features Bundles	Voc. Add/Red	Merger and Readjustment	PF	LF	List C Semantic dimension/s

			Voc.insertion					
			Voc.insertion					
			Voc.insertion					
			Voc.insertion					
Basheer			Base	/Basheera/	Basheera			
Raheem			modification	/Raheema/	Raheema			
Faqeer			Base	/Faqeera/	Faqeera			
Kabeer			modification	/Kabeera/	Kabeera			
Javid			Base	/Jaida/	Jaida			
Ghulam			modification	/Gama/	Gama		Eponyms	
Majeed			Base	/Maja/	Maja		referring to	
Bilal	<N°,		modification	/Billa/	Billa		some	
Rehman	Gen,		Truncation	/Rehma/	Rehma		extra-	
Ahmad	Num>	/a,e,o/	Trun+ base	/Ahma/	Ahma		linguistic or	
Rasheed			modif	/Sheeda/	Sheeda		idiomatic	
Rafiq			Trun+ base	/Feeqa/	Feeqa		meanings of	
Khushi			modif	/Khusha/	Khusha		eponyms	
Shair			Substitution of	/Shaira/	Shaira			
Deen			vowel	/Deena/	Deena			
Pervaiz			Voc.insertion	/Paija/	Paija			
Shareef			Voc.insertion	/Sharfu/	Sharfu			
			Trun+ base					
			modif					
			Trun+ base					
			modif					

Only single example has been analyzed and discussed.

Pattern 2 (Example: 1)

Syntactic Operations			Morphological Operations				Semantic Operations	
List A:	List	Active & Impoverished Features	Voc. Mod	Root mod	Readjust	PF	LF	List C
Abstract Roots	Act	re	bund	les				
√GHULAM	<N°, Gen, Num>	Acti:<NProp, mas, sing > Impr:<Ncom,f em.pl> √Ghulam	Red. of root	√Ga ma	Modifica tion root	/Ga ma/	Ga ma	The eponyms isaugmentati veand refers to the wrestler Ghulam Mohammed

Analysis and Discussion

A. Syntactic Operations, (Pre Spell-Out Operations)

In the List A, there is an abstract root as √GHULAM with bundle of abstract features as <N°, Gen, Num>. The abstract roots are specified through LVI where

√GHULAM becomes √Ghulam. Similarly, the feature bundles are specified where <N°, Gen, Num> surface out as <NProp, mas, sing>. The root √Ghulam provides extra-grammatical information. It is through the feature bundles that the syntactic nature of the root is determined. The features that do not match with the roots such as <Ncom, fem, pl> are impoverished. Now the root morpheme √Ghulam is a proper noun, masculine and singular but without any specific phonological realization.

B. Morphological Operations, (Post Spell-Out Operations)

The Post Spell-Out operations occur in two cycles as:

Cycle 1: Drop of N°2

N°1	Reduction	Possible Forms	Optimal PF
√Ghulam <Nprop,mas, sing>	Reduction of root	/Gam/ */Lam */Hulam	/Gam/

In this way, the root is reduced in the favor of the most specific form /Gam/. The other possible forms as */Lam/ and */hulam/ are impoverished under the Elsewhere principle. So the less specified form is preferred against the regular forms. This process of the selection of some particular less specified form is language specific.

The optimal realization /Gam/ works as terminal host for cycle 2 where the root finds insertion of a VI.

Cycle 2: Insertion of VI/a/

See the process of insertion here:

Root	VIs	Optimal PF
√Ghulam	/a/	/Gama/
√Ghulam	/e/	*/ Game/
√Ghulam	/o/	*/Gamo/

So the optimal candidate, under the Elsewhere Principle turns out as /Gama/. The other forms are blocked against the less specified form /Gama/. It is important to note that the phonological features are given to the morphemes after the morphological process and this is called late insertion. Phonologically, the vocabulary is pronounced as /Gama/ as an eponym with the features as <Ncom, mas, sing>.

C. Semantic Operations

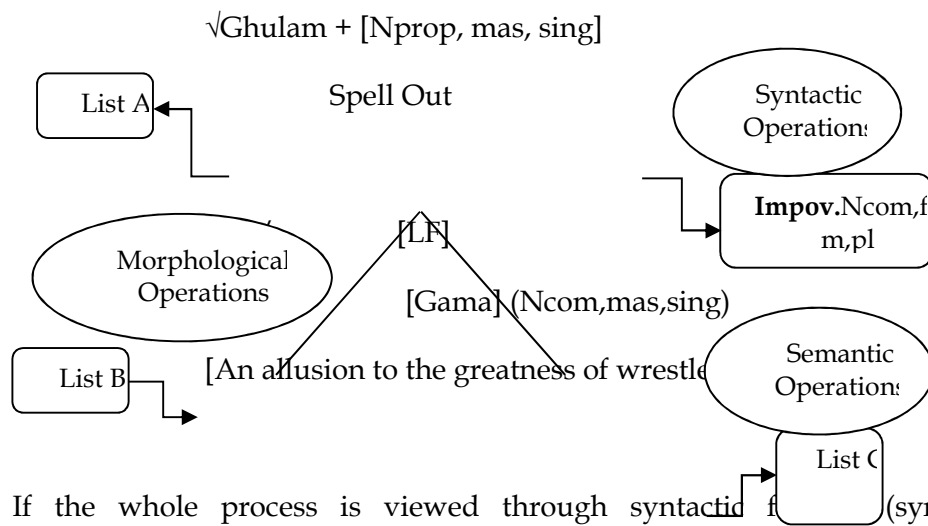
Towards the LF there is [Gama] as the derived name from [Ghulam]. This name is derived from a personal name (though in the form of augmentative) for which we may place it under the umbrella of anthroponymic eponymy.

Finally, it is the List C in the form of Encyclopedia that helps to understand the referential concept/meaning of the eponym. In the form of augmentative, this name shows an exaggeration or eulogizing the name-bearer. When the augmented names become eponyms, they are meant for eulogy.

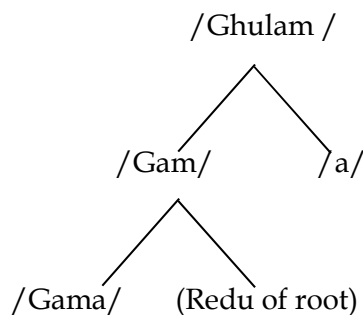
The eponym ‘Gama’ is commonly and conventionally used in our social and cultural circles in order to show highness and pride because of Ghulam Mohammad Baksh Butt (22 May 1878 – 23 May 1960), better known by the ring name ‘The Great Gama’. He was an Indo-Pakistani wrestler who remained undefeated champion of the world. He lived for the rest of his days in Lahore.

In 1878, he was awarded the Indian version of the World Heavyweight Championship on 15 October 1910, and went on to defeat grappling champions across the world. Undefeated in a career spanning more than 52 years, he is considered one of the greatest wrestlers of all times.

The whole mechanism can simply be shown as:



If the whole process is viewed through syntactic hierarchical structure all way down), we may find it as:



The mechanism of the formation of augmentative eponym [Gama] has been

shown through diagrammatical representations. The first diagram shows the syntactic process where the grammatical properties are allocated to the abstract root √GHULAM which is realized as √Ghulam. After the allocation of these features, there occur voc. drop and voc. merge to reach PF and LF as /Gama/ and [Gama]. The LF is given semantic color with the help of encyclopedia. In this way the meanings are determined later than syntactic and morphological operations. The second diagram shows the syntactic way down to the basic elements as [Gam+a].

There is a long list of l-morphemes in pattern 15 having the shred features as being the nominal ones, singular and masculine. Their syntactic features are similar. Anyhow, they all undergo different morphological operations ranging from truncation to vocabulary insertion and from vocabulary insertion to base modification. The vocabulary item /a/ is highly specified for insertion at terminal point and it works as a marker of augmentation. Semantically speaking, the augmentation in Urdu anthroponymic eponyms is not simply the case of size or volume; it is rather social highness or exaggeration. Urdu anthroponymic eponyms are unique in the sense that they present the three dimensional morphological as well as semantic nuances as diminution, augmentation and derogation.

Pattern 3: Derogations: Insertion of Vocabulary Item /u/

Pre Spell-Out/Syntactic Opr		Spell-Out/morphological Operations			Post Spell-Out/Semantic Opr	
List A Abstract Morphemes	Feature s Bundles	Voc. Add/Re d	Merger and Readjustment	PF	LF	List C Semantic dimension/ s
Kareem			Voc.insertion		Kareemu	
Basheer			Voc.insertion		Basheeru	
Raheema			Voc.insertion		Raheem	
Faqeer			Truncation+bas		u	
Kabeer			e mod		Faqeeru	Eponyms
Javaid			Trun+ base		Kabeeru	referring to
Ghulam	<N°,		modif	/Kareemu	Jaidu	some
Majid	Gen,		Trun+ base	/	Gamu	extra-
Bilal	Num>	/u,e,o/	modif		Maju	linguistic or
Rehmat			Base		Billu	idiomatic
Rasheed			modification		Rehmu	meanings of
Rafiq			Truncation		Sheedu	eponyms
Shair			Truncation		Fiqu	
Deen			Trun+ base		Shairu	
BakshDeen			modif		Deenu	
			Voc.insertion		Bakshu	
			Voc.insertion			
			Voc.insertion			

Only one example from the given pattern has been analyzed and discussed.

Pattern 3 (Example: 1)

Syntactic Operations		Morphological Operations			Semantic Operations		
List A: Abstract Root	List A: Abstract Feature bundle s	Active & Impoverished Features	VI s	Morph Merger	PF	LF	List C
√KAREEM M	<N°, Gen, Num>	Acti: <NProp, mas, sing > Impr: <Ncom, fem, pl >	/u, a, o/	√Kareem+ u	/Kareem u/	Kareem u	The eponyms is derodatory and refers to the smallness of Kareem

Analysis and Discussion

A. Syntactic Operations, (Pre Spell-Out Operations)

In the List A, √KAREEM is an abstract morpheme and <N°, Gen, Num> are abstract features. The abstract root is specified through LVI where √KAREEM turns out as √Kareem. Similarly, the feature bundles are specified where <N°, Gen, Num> surface out as <NProp, mas, sing>. The root √Kareem gives extra-grammatical information. It is through the feature bundles that the syntactic nature of the root is determined. The features that do not match with the root √Kareem such as <Ncom, fem, pl> are impoverished. Now the root morpheme √Kareem is a proper noun, masculine and singular.

B. Morphological Operations, (Post Spell-Out Operations)

During the Post Spell-Out operations, there is vocabulary insertion into the terminal host through competition. The VIs such as [u, a, o] come into competition for insertion. The VIs are deterministic in nature as they are to be attached to the abstract morpheme to determine its grammatical category. After the morphological merger, the morpheme √Kareem gets its PF as /Kareemu/. Only that VI is inserted whose features are the sub-set of the terminal node. In this way the morphemes are pieced together, and sometimes they are modified, to generate complex word forms.

See the insertion of VIs under the specific environment:

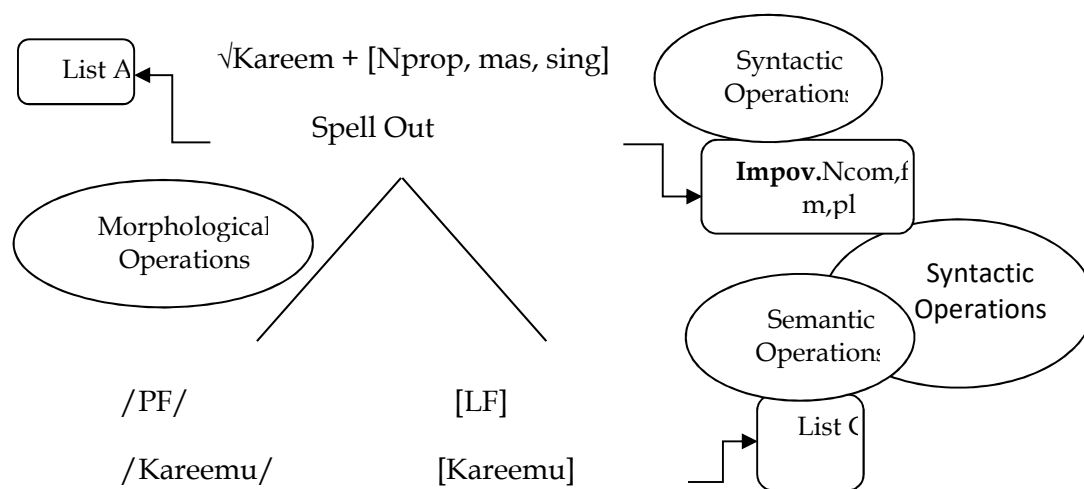
Terminal Node	VIs in competition	Optimal PF
√Kareem	/u/	/Kareemu/
√Kareem	/o/	*/Kareemo/
√Kareem	/a/	*/Kareema/

At Spell Out, the morphemes are given the phonological features. It is important to note that the phonological features are given to the morphemes after the syntactic process. Phonologically, the vocabulary is pronounced as /Kareemu/ as eponym having features such as <Nprop, mas, sing>. There can be feasibility such as /Kareemo/ but it will have features <Nprop, fem, sing>. In the case of feminine gender, the regular VI is /o/ in Urdu to form derogatory eponyms such as *Sheedo*, *Meedo*, *Anno*, *Nazo*, *Samro*, etc. In this particular example of /Kareemu/, we are to discuss it as at syntactic stage, we installed masculine features from the UHF of Urdu.

C. Semantic Operations

Towards the LF there is [Kareemu] as the derived name from [Kareem]. This name is derived from the personal name (though in the form of derogation) for which we may place it under the umbrella of anthroponymic eponymy.

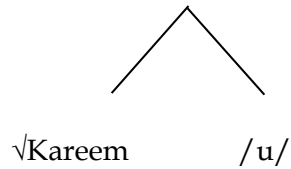
Finally, it is the List C in the form of encyclopedia that helps to understand the referential meaning of the eponym. In the form of augmentation, this name shows a sense of smallness or derogation of the name-bearer. We know that there is only the concept of diminutives in English mentioned by Plag (2002) where he takes diminutives for the sake of smallness and closeness. It is the unique feature of Urdu that it has different markers for diminutive eponyms, augmentative eponyms and derogatory eponyms. The whole mechanism can simply be shown as:



[Referring to the derogation or smallness of Kareem]

If the whole process is viewed syntactically, we may find it as:

/Kareemu/



All the examples of pattern 3 have the shared features as being the nominal ones, singular and masculine. In this way the syntactic features are similar. Anyhow, there are different morphological operations ranging from truncation+insertion to base modification and from vocabulary deletion to vocabulary insertion (See above the merger and Readjustment operations of pattern 3). The most general pattern is the insertion of VI **/u/** that marks derogation in Urdu. Semantically all the patterns denote the feature of social derogation to the name bearer. The formations of Urdu anthroponymic eponyms through derogation are very common in day to day colloquial use.

All the analyses and the discussions show that personal names of Urdu exhibit three social dimensions such as diminutive, augmentative and derogative. These names are generated under the morphological changes that occur in the base words. Apart from simple affixation, there happen even the base modifications and truncations. As a whole these morphological operations and the resulting social nuances show linguistic productivity of Urdu language.

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