

## Notes on Dime Personal Naming System\*

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### Abstract

This paper addresses the description of Dime personal names as an important feature of the Dime community. The present study discusses Dime personal names from the linguistic, sociolinguistic, and anthropological linguistic perspectives. Dime proper names are important elements that are connected to every field of Dime people activities such as historical, cultural, and religious and varieties of arts and experiences practiced in the community. Giving a name of a child has a significant meaning which expresses the situation and the circumstances around when the baby is born. The typology of Dime names includes names derived from places, months, natural events such as disasters, famine, names derived from different appearances in the life of family portrays special physical appearances and behavioral characters at birth, names reflecting joy and happiness, names reflecting conducts of the father or the mother, names refer to the wealthiest or the poorest of the family, names refer to wedding situation of parents etc. Thus, personal names in Dime are vital indicators of individual life in the community.

### 1 Introduction

Dime belongs to the South Omo administrative region. According to Siebert (2002: 3), “the Dime people’s territory comprises a mountain range of less than 20km’s width and 55km’s length, which stretches from north to south with Mt. Smith (8,294ft) as its highest elevation”. According to 1994 census the Dime constitute a population of 5,462 people. Surprisingly, the 2007 National Census reports that the population of Dime is 895. The language communities surrounding the Dime area are the *Charato* to the north (across the river Omo), the *Basketto* to the north-east and east, the *Aari* to the southeast, the *Mursi* and some *Surma* to the south-west, and *Bodi (Me'en)* to the west. Fleming(1990:520) states that “during the reign of Emperor Menelik II, around 1910, their territories

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embraced all the highlands and lowlands from Us'nu River to the Omo River". However, the Dime people were unable to protect themselves against their enemies, consequently, their territories declined and they only occupy now the most mountainous areas.

Dime is an endangered language. The term Dime refers to the name of the language, the land and the people who speak it (Mulugeta 2008a: 2). According to the classification of Fleming (1976) it belongs to the Omotic language family, which forms the South-Omotic branch of Omotic together with the "Hamer-Banna dialect cluster", and the "Aari dialects"

Most Dime people speak one or two languages in addition to their mother tongue, especially those who live around the border with *Basketo*, *Aari*, and *Bodi*. These are multilingual groups, but there are also monolingual groups in Dime, which are in the middle of the Gerfa area. One of the most important reasons for the urgency of undertaking linguistic research in Dime is language endangerment (Mulugeta 2008a: 4). Competition for resources in the neighbor community contributes to the endangerment of the Dime language. The violence between the neighboring community and disease results in economic crises and migration. Abbink (2005) expresses a similar generalization "since the early years of 20th century Dime has been a society in crisis and demographic decline, due to violence, disease, economic decline and immigration." This paper mainly focuses on Dime personal naming. Some examples of Dime names are treated by Mulugeta (2015e: 147) but not described well. This is the first attempt to describe and analyze the Dime naming system. Names are very important and they are part and parcel of every culture. Every year hundred millions of babies will be born in this planet. Except some of the non-survival ones, most of the survival babies will receive their personal name either sooner or later after birth. The way to give names for children is different from one culture to the other. In most cases people give names for their children from different events that happen during pregnancy, or after the birth of the children. It also can be related to some events happening around the village, family, and country unrelated to their daily life. Regardless of how, when and why the event happened in each community, the giving and receiving of a name for a baby is considered to be very crucial. Personal name can be considered a kind of symbol or identity between the society and the individual. In Dime personal name is given to the children in different ways. This will be discussed later in this paper.

## **2 Research methodology and theoretical framework**

In this research qualitative research and Ethno-linguistic research methods are employed. Qualitative inquiry such as in-depth interview and direct interaction was used to generate the data. The native informants are also one of the main sources of information in the study. The collected data are analyzed using qualitative data analysis.

Moreover, the research focuses on participant observation through direct interaction and participation in natural social and cultural settings in order to gain an understanding of the people's worlds. The researcher has been studying Dime for the last two decades. This gives an opportunity to contact the people's and observe their social and cultural activities.

Algeo (1992: 727) points out that the study of personal names is referred to as anthroponomy. It is related to genealogy, sociology and anthropology and falls under the umbrella of onomastics that deals with the study of proper names including their forms and use. This paper discusses the issue from the anthropological linguistic and sociolinguistic perspectives. In this regard, it is obvious that there is a strong interface between a people's language and their cultural practices. Kofi Agyekum (2006: 210) pointed out that how language is used as cultural resources and practices, and how language is viewed as a powerful tool to view and understand the worldview and philosophy of a particular society. He further discussed that one can therefore use language as a microscopic lens to view and understand the social practices and day-to-day activities of a society. Moreover, Foley (1997: 3) briefly discussed about linguistic anthropology and its instrumental function as shown below:

Anthropological linguistics is that sub-field of linguistics which is concerned with the place of language in its wider social and cultural context, its role in forging and sustaining cultural practices and social structures. It views language through the prism of the core anthropological concept, culture, and as such seeks to uncover the meaning behind the use, misuse or non-use of language, its different forms, registers and styles. It is an interpretive discipline peeling away at language to find cultural understandings.

In linguistic anthropology, language is considered as a social tool. Duranti (1997: 337) points out that there is a strong relationship between the world, which is reality, and the word, which is language. A society's world is fitted to words and words may also be fitted to the world.

Since the world and cultural practices are dynamic, the naming system of the Dime people is also affected by this dynamism. The knowledge about Dime names gives insight into Dime culture, philosophy, thought, environment, religion, language and culture. The symbolic nature of Dime names and their interpretation depicts Dime beliefs, and their interaction with their cultures and the real world.

### **3 Dime personal naming system**

There has been almost nothing written about the meaning, cultural and social significance of the Dime personal names. The only Dime literature concerning naming is the Dime clan name (Mulugeta 2012: 1-2). Dime proper names are important elements that are connected to every field of Dime people activities such as historical, cultural, and religious and varieties of arts and experiences performed in the community. This study mainly focuses on the cultural study of personal names and investigates the social or pragmatic meanings encoded in personal names.

Zelalem (2003) argues that the name given to a baby distinguishes him/her and also incorporates him/her into a wider community. He further mentioned that “in most of Africa, naming a child is a big ceremonial event involving the immediate family or villagers”. However, in Dime there is no such kind of culture involved in the community. Moreover, Baye (2006) pointed out that name in any culture have the role of identifying an individual, group, race, ethnicity, etc. He further discussed that names have referential role in one side, and are markers of social identity on the other. Giving a name of a child has a significant meaning which expresses the situation and the circumstances around when the child is born. The typology of Dime names includes names derived from places, months, natural events such as disasters, famine. Moreover, names derived from different appearances in the life of the family portrays special physical appearances and behavioral characters at birth, names reflecting joy and happiness, names reflecting conducts of the father or the mother, names refers to the wealthiest or the poorness of the family, names refers to the wedding situation of the parents etc. Thus, personal names in Dime are vital indicators of individual life in the community. In this regard parents of the child are principal actors in reflecting their life and experiences through the names of their children. The followings are the different ways or an event that has been mentioned above concerning Dime name typology.

- Personal names can be derived from place names or months,
- Personal names derived from natural events or disasters
- Personal names which refer to wedding situation
- Personal names which refer to good or bad conduct of a father
- Personal names which refer to good conduct of a mother
- Personal name which express the beauty of the baby
- Personal name which express the strength of a father

#### **3.1 Personal names can be derived from place names or months,**

Names given to the child that express the place or month names where the child was born include the following.

**Maikro [maikro] ማደክሮ** (M) Lit. meaning: *farming land* ‘he who was born in a place called *Mikro farming*’

**Bulku [búlkú] ቡልኩ** (M) Lit. meaning: *clearing* ‘he who is born at the time of land clearing at the months of February and March.’

**Tuketo [tuketo] ቱኪቶ** (F) Lit. meaning: *spring* ‘she who was born at the place where the spring water called *Tuketo*. It is found in Dime Gencherekebele.’

**Kuro [kuro] ኩሮ** (M) Lit. meaning: *kuro village* ‘he who is born in place called *Kuro* village.’

**Denan [denan] ደናን** (M) Lit. meaning: *inside the sorghum* ‘he who was born at the place called *Denan* that is inside the garden of Sorghum.’

**Yidan [yidan] ዩዳን** (M) Lit. meaning: *start*. If a child born at the first starting day of clearing of Teff farming, the father will call a new born child *Yidan*.

**Garub [garub] ገሩብ** (M) Lit. meaning: *Grawa tree*. A child who was born under this tree is called *Garub*.

**ጎጃየሩ [ጎጃየሩ] ጎጃየሩ** (M). Lit. meaning: *airplane*. A child who was born while a plane flies over during the baby birth is called *ጎጃየሩ*.

As can be seen from the above examples the name-givers are expressing the place, the months and specific time where a child is born. The entire naming pattern above marks the day on which and the place where a baby is born. The name reflects the information during the birth of a child.

### **3.2 Personal names derived from different events, challenges or disasters**

The following examples of names express different events that are conducted in Dime which reflects the challenge or disasters of the community.

**Komadin [komadin] ኮማዲን** (F) Lit. meaning: *whirlwind*. If a child is born during a strong whirlwind blowing, it is given the name *Komadi*.

**Malgan [malgan] ማልጋን** (F) Lit. meaning: *measurement*. Whenever there is an event either mourn or wedding, local beer will be prepared and it needs a kind of cup to

drink with but the family may not have it. To remind the situation the father will call the new born child *Malqan*.

**Mannan [mannan] ማንኛን** (F) Lit. meaning: *very thin*. If the mother is very thin during her pregnancy due to various reasons, the new born child will be called *Mannan*.

**Motan [motan] ጥታን** (M) Lit. meaning: *argument, accusation*. If the child is born when the father come back from judge, he will call the new born child *Motan* to. It recalls the situation during the birth of the child.

**Mashan [majan] ማሻን** (M or F) Lit. meaning: *my curse*. If the father of the child was a cursed person, he will call the child *Mashan*. The connotative meaning is that having the child the father will remind the cursing.

**Shanga [janga] ሻንጋ** (M) Lit. meaning: *small mushroom or dwarf*. A father who is being insulted by neighbors as he is dwarf he will name his child *Shanga*.

**Bullob [bullob] ቡልቡል** (M) Lit. meaning: *sunny season*. If a baby is born during sunny season a father will call the new born child *Bullob*.

**?ashan [ʔajan] ዓሻን** (M) Lit. meaning: *rude*. While a father is coming from somewhere, someone may insult him on his way to his home. To refer to this situation he will call the new born child *?ashan*.

**Bunkan [bunkan] ቡንካን** (M) Lit. meaning: *draught*. If a baby is born during dry season, the family called him *Bunkan*.

**Tokan [tokan] ቶካን** (F) Lit. meaning: *poor season*. If a child is born during poor situation, a father will call him *Tokan*.

**Bals'ind [bals'ind] ባልጽንጅ** (F) Lit. meaning: *strong smell*. A mother who encounters a cruel and wicked person that bothers her all the time during her pregnancy, will call her new born child *Balis'ind* to refer to her bad situation.

**Maddan [maddan] ማጅዳን** (M) Lit. meaning: *helper, supporter*. If a father is alone without a child, he will call his new born child *Maddan*. This refers father's happiness to have a new born child that will help or support him.

**Mok'ob [mok'ob] ሞቆብ** (M) Lit.meaning: *reception*. A father went to some other places during the time of his wife's pregnancy. She was waiting her husband to receive him before her delivery. However, a mother got delivered a baby in advance of his coming back. During his arrival, he noticed that he got a baby, after having some food and drinks with their neighbor he will call him the new born child *Mok'ob* which refers that it is a good reception for him that he got a child.

**Shukan [jukan] ሸካን** (M) Lit. meaning: *One who churns*. If a baby is born when the family is churning milk, a father will give the name *Shukan*, which means one who churns milk.

**Shit'an [jit'an] ሸጣን** (F) Lit. meaning: *sudden*. If a mother gives birth to a child before the expected delivery, the new born baby will be called *Shit'an*.

**Tujar [tudzar] ተጃር** (M&F) Lit. meaning: *wealthy*. If a father becomes wealthy at the birth of his child, he will call the new born child *Tujar*.

**Genob [genob] ጌኖብ** (M) Lit .meaning: *faction, group kin, member*. If a father is become victim of people who group them together by avoiding him, he will call his new born baby *Genob* to express his bad feeling or a loneliness towards them.

**Goshtani [goftani] ጎሽታኒ** (M) Lit. meaning: *defender of me*. If somebody quarreled with a father and made threats, a father will call the new born baby *Goshtani*, which refers it.

The names given for a baby so far in the above examples carried different messages that may refer to situations of natural events at the time of birth or some disasters that affect the life and the feeling of the family as stated above. In this sense, names reveal a particular emotion on the parts of the givers.

### **3.3 Personal names which refer to wedding situation**

**Masan [masan] ማሳን** (M&F) Lit. meaning: *twins*. When two persons fall in love with a lady and compete to marry her, one of them will win and will get marry her. The other person who lost the competition says to the one who married her "Let you give birth to twins". Consequently, the father will call the new baby child *Masanto* recall or retain the saying.

**Shalan [ʃalan] ሻላን** (F) Lit. meaning: **satisfaction**. This refers and to express the husband satisfactory gift for his wife during their marriage. The husband would like to remember it through his baby name.

**Bulsan [bulsan] ቡልሳን** (M&F) Lit. meaning: **abandon**. This refers that father costs too much to marry her due to her beauty. Even though he has been affected in his income due to the marriage gift and cost, he is happy about the new baby that he got and call him *Bulsan* to refers to his marriage situation.

**Balub [bálub] ባሉብ** (M) Lit. meaning: **special**. When a father tried to marry his wife, somebody advised her not to marry him. Regardless of all the challenges, he managed to marry her and finally got a child from her. Thus, to express that his success of marriage her is special he calls the child *Balub*.

**Busha [buʃa] ቡሻ** (F) Lit. meaning: **a name given by husband's family** to the bride (culturally it is called bread name). It is a special name given to a married lady by her husband's family. The name is given in relation with her beauty or complexion.

**Bargel [bárgəl] ባርገል** (M&F) Lit. meaning: **enemy**. This name reflects that a father who has many enemies before and after his marriage, consequently, the father bestows this name to the new born child to recall it the father's situation and indicate that his life is changed and become successful.

**Bazinds [bazinds] ባዚንድስ** (F) Lit. meaning: **cursed one**. This name reflects that a father forced his wife to marry him. He overcame all the challenges and became successful in married her and have a new born child. Thus, he calls his child *Bazinds* to express his success regardless of the challenges he encountered and to have a child from his wife.

**Birinsan [birinsan] ብሪንሳን** (F). Lit. meaning: **don't hesitate**. This name is bestowed to a new born child when the family of a lady now and then hesitates regarding her marriage. The lady's family allows a request him to marry her and advised him not to hesitate. Finally he will marry her and will have a child. Consequently, he bestows a name *Birinsan* for this child to recall his hesitation and the family's advice.

**Welk'itan [welk'tan] ወልቂታን** (M&F) Lit. meaning: **forced marriage**. This reflects that when a husband marry's his wife forcedly without her permission. Thus, the neighbors express the event through their cultural singing and poem in the wedding ceremony.

Finally, when the mother delivered a child they come together in their house and give a special name to a new born child *Welk'itan*, which recalls the marriage situation.

**Wek'asu [wek'asu] ወቃሱ** (M) Lit. meaning: *complain, accusation*. When a person plans to get marry with a lady and his friends declines his plan as he is poor and old to get married with her. However, by overcoming such challenges when he becomes successful with his plan and has got a new born child he bestows the name *Wek'asu* to his child, to recollect the event and his success.

As can be seen from the above names given so far Names can reflect joy, happiness and marriage situation in Dime community. The types of name given expresses that the Name-givers want to express their positive feelings after the birth of the child.

### **3.4 Personal names which refer to good or bad conduct of a father**

The following names express the conduct of a father. It can be express either bad conduct of him such as **turina, koltob, tobab, kutan, kufan, korbab, tʃuban, digan, gatjub** or good conduct of him such as **barazbab, tutʃi, tʃiltʃan, gaman, dufan**. Each of the above personal names are described below:

**Barbab [barbab] ባርባብ** (M) Lit. meaning: *duteous* 'one who is dutiful'. This name reflects that the child's father is duteous and pitiful; therefore the neighbors give a name *Barbab* for a new born baby.

**Turina [turina] ተሪና** (M) Lit. meaning: *brayer*. If a father brays frequently with various reasons in the village the neighbor recognize him as a brayer. To recall such types of his conduct he will call a child *Turina*.

**Tuchi [tuchi] ተቺ** (M) Lit. meaning: *heartily secret*. If a father is not heartily secret and expose any secretmatters for anybody, the family comment him to keep such matters secret. When he gets a new child he will call *Tuchito* recall his family's comment.

**Tolkob [tólkob] ቶልኮብ** (M) Lit. meaning: *tiger*. If a father is powerful and disturbs the neighbors they call him tiger. Consequently, he bestows a name *Tolkob*his new born child to recollect his behavior.

**Tobba [tobba] ቶባባ** (M) Lit. meaning: *uncertainty*. If people have some doubt on a father, a family will call a new born child *Tobba* to recall the father's behavior.

**Kutan [kutan] ኩታን** (F) Lit. meaning: *a temporary sack to keep crop powder*. This reflects that *Kutan* means sack which they used to keep flour of crops after grinding it. Later when they finished the grinding of crops, took the flour to somewhere and they keep the sack vacuum. This covert expression is a careless wealthy man may be empty pocket or poor later. Thus his neighbor advised him not to be like that and be careful in every aspect of his life. He will call his new born child *Kutan* to recall his neighbor's advice.

**Kufan [kufan] ኩፋን** (M) Lit. meaning: *spill*. If a father spills when he stumbled and fell on the ground his neighbors laugh at him and call him *Kufan* which means one who spills beer. The father will give the name *Kufanto* his child just to recall his name.

**Korbab [korbab] ኮርባብ** (M) Lit. meaning: *talkative*. If neighbors call a father *talkative* when his wife is pregnant, he will bestow the name *Korbon* to the new born child to recall his own name.

**Ch'uban [tʃ'uban] ጩባን** (M) Lit. meaning: *deceiver, evil, evildoer*. If a child is born while the neighbors back bit the father saying that he is a deceiver, the father bestows the name *Ch'uban* to the new born child to recall his own name.

**Ch'ilchan [tʃ'iltʃan] ጩልቻን** (M) Lit. meaning: *waiter, conveyer*. If a father serves as a good waiter in holidays he calls his new born child *Ch'iltan* to recall his previous activity.

**Digan [digan] ዲጋን** (M) Lit. meaning: *hot tempered*. This reflects the story of a wife and her husband that is before she married him people told her that he is hot tempered however; she tolerated this story about him and married him. Finally she noticed that he is better than what people told her about him. She recalls this story by giving a name *Digan* for her newly born child.

**Gaman [gaman] ጋማን** (M) Lit. meaning: *winner, champion*. If neighbor considered a father is a winner in every aspect of life, they reflect their feeling about him by giving a name *Gaman* to the new born child.

**Dufan [dufan] ዲፋን** (F) Lit. meaning: *fertile*. This name reflects that a father who improves his weakness that happens due to his previous bachelor life as the result of his marriage and a new baby. Thus, to express his improvement, fertility and strength he calls his new born child *Dufan*.

**Gachub [gatʃub] ገቹብ** (M) Lit. meaning: *glue like Cynoglossum Coeruleum*. This reflects that the neighbors considered the father never shortens his talk and he often never gave time to others. To express this conduct of a father they call *Gachub* the new born child.

A name given to a baby is expected to express the conduct of his father. That means the name of a baby in Dime is strongly connected with the conduct of his/her parents.

### **3.5 Personal names which refer to good or bad conduct of a mother**

Similar to the previous section which deals to the conduct of a father, the conduct of a mother is also discussed in this section. It can be express either bad conduct of her or good conduct of her as it is described below:

**ʔuyna [ʔuyna] ዑደና** (M) Lit. meaning: *Sorrow*. If a mother is angry or feels sorrow during her pregnancy, she will call the new born child *ʔuyna* to recollect her situation when she was pregnant.

**ʔatan [ʔatan] ዓታን** (F) Lit. meaning: *burned*. If a mother's conduct is changed and she offends or burn her husband due to her bad conduct during her pregnancy, he gives a name *ʔatan* to his child to recall his bad feeling due to his wife's conduct.

**ʔach'ch'o [ʔatʃtʃ'o] ዓጭጭ** (M) Lit. meaning: *compensation*. If the first child died and she gives birth to the second one, a mother will call her new born child *ʔach'ch'o*, to mean that the second baby is a compensation of the first one.

**ʔotulan [ʔotulan] ዖቲላን** (F) Lit meaning: *one who jumps here and there*. If a father is late to marry and finally married and has got a child, he will call the new born child *ʔotulan* to commemorate his previous life (pre-marriage).

**Gilu [gilu] ግሉ** (M) Lit. meaning: *no divorce*. If a mother is insulted by her neighbors as a dependent person on her husband, a mother calls her child *Gilu* to recall this saying.

**Giran [giran] ግራን** (M) Lit. meaning: *dislike*. If a woman dislikes contacting anybody during her pregnancy, she will call her child *Giran* to recall the situation.

**Gayub/Gayond [gayub/gayond] ገዩብ/ገዮንጅ** (M/F) Lit. meaning: *incompetent*. If a mother is considered as incompetent in her kitchen activity during her pregnancy by the

neighbors, they call the child *Gayubor Gayond* based on their gender. The name *Gayubis* given to male while *Gayond* to female.

Similarly in the previous section a name given to a baby is expected to express the conduct of his/her parent specifically the Mother as shown above. That means the name of a baby in Dime is strongly connected with the conduct of his/her parents.

### **3.6 Personal name which expresses the strength of a father**

**Zeran [zeran] ሄራን** (F). Lit. meaning: *committed*. If a father is hardworker and have committed in his job and life, the neighbors will call a new born child *Zeran* to express the father's commitment.

The above name is expressing the strength, aspiration of a father through the name. In this regards, the expressions suggest that name givers express their appreciation, anticipation, etc via a name they give to a new born baby.

### **3.7 Personal name which express the beauty of the baby**

**Zobob [zobob] ዘቦብ** (M) Lit. meaning: *bright-eyed, lovely*. If the child is bright-eyed the neighbors call the new born child *Zobob*, to express his eye beauty.

The above names are supposed to look the beauty of a baby as well as the attitude of the family towards their baby. To this effect, it is safe to say that children are considered to be a source of joy and admiration of life for family. As it is demonstrated in the above examples personal names are differ by gender; however, there is a less frequent use of gender marker. For example the Dime people call the child *Gayub* or *Gayond* based on their gender. The name *Gay-ubis* given to male while *Gay-ond* to female.

## **4 Some sociolinguistic and linguistic analysis of Dime naming system**

Dime personal name system and practice is a marker of the people's belief, ideology, language and culture, philosophy and thought. The names are best understood and analyzed when one has insight into socio-linguistic norms, the language and culture of Dime. From the philosophical point of view, Dime names refer to elements of Dime human experience and ways of life. This means names are not mere arbitrary and meaningless labels but rather have contextual relationship to socio-cultural, socio-linguistic meanings and functions, places, time, people and events. Algeo (1992: 728) has points out that "People are almost invariably named, indeed, a human being without

a name would be socially and psychologically less than a fully man.”Names considered having attributes so that names to be attached to referents. Such kinds of process exist in the Dime culture where the social and cultural context analyses of personal names strongly reveal the power of names to emphasize social relationships. Dime consider during naming a person sex, hierarchy in birth, circumstances surrounding the birth, the person’s structure, power, status, etc.

From the linguistic point of view as we discussed so far Dime personal names are almost bi-syllabic words except a few tri-syllabic names such as **tu-ke-to** “spring”, **?ay-ye-ru** “airplane”, **ko-ma-din** “whirlwind”, **tu-ri-na** “brayer” and **bi-rin-san** “don’t hesitate”. Moreover, in some personal names the feature of Dime adjectives is reflected in the process of Dime naming system. Mulugeta (2008: 82) pointed out that in Dime adjectives constitute a separate word class. They are characterized by gender agreement whereas nouns and verbs are not marked for gender. However, Dime naming system constitutes an adjective to be a name of a person which refers to the gender of a person as in **bullob** (M) “sunny season”, **bals’ind** (F) “strong smell”, **bazinds** (F) “cursed one”. As can be seen in these examples, in the first example the masculine gender marker **-ob** is suffixed to the name **bull-ob** “sunny season”, the feminine gender marker—**ind** is suffixed to the last two examples **bals’ind** (F) “strong smell”, **bazinds** (F) “cursed one”. Moreover, there are names which have no gender marker and employ for both Masculine and female name as in **tujar ተጃር**, which means “wealthy”, **welk’tan ወልቂታን**, which means “forced” marriage, and **Masan ማሳን**, which means “twins”, etc. We can deduce from the above discussion that Dime naming system expresses masculine, feminine genders and sometimes both using the same given name. There is also an instance that female and male names are marked with their gender marker as in **Gay-ub/Gay-ond**, which means “incompetent”. The name **Gay-ob** is given to male while **Gay-ond** to female. If a mother is considered as incompetent in her kitchen activity during her pregnancy by the neighbors, they call the child **Gayub** or **Gayond** based on their gender.

Furthermore, Dime naming system shares the morphological (derivational and inflectional) properties of the Dime language. As we discussed so far personal names are derived from Dime adjectives that they inflect for gender marker. In addition, personal names behave like nouns as **Maikro** “farming land”, **Bulku** “clearing”, **Tuketo** “spring”, like verbs as in **Yidan** “start”, **atan** “burned”, **Birinsan** “don’t hesitate”, like adverb as in **Shit’an** “sudden”, like adjective as in **Zobob** (M) “bright-eyed, lovely”, **Bals’ind** (F) “strong smell”. A difficult phenomenon in the analysis of Dime personal name is the inflectional form **-an**. As can be seen from the above examples, Dime personal names can end with vowels as in **Maikro** or **Bulku**, or end with consonant as in **Yidan**, **?atan**, **Birinsan** and **Zobob** (M), **Bals’ind** (F). It is a

common phenomenon that Dime words end with vowel or consonants as it is demonstrated in the first and the last examples given above. However, the occurrence of the morpheme **-an** is strange, which is observed only in Dime personal names. Dime nouns inflect for number, gender and case while Dime verbs inflect for different aspects and negative forms. The characteristics of **-an** in Dime personal name needs further study and investigation. It appears in Dime personal names in different word categories at word final position. There are many forms of personal names end with **-an**: for instance, **Zeran** (F) “committed”, **Giran** “dislike”, **?otulan** (F) “one who jumps here and there”, **Dufan** “fertile”, **Gaman** (M) “winner, champion”, **Ch’uban** (M) “deceiver, evil, evildoer”, **Ch’ilchan** “waiter”, **Digan** (M) “hot tempered” etc. Among the above examples **?otulan**, we can derive **?otlu** which means “jump”. As it is shown in the examples **?otulan** means “a female one who jumps here and there”. From this example we can assume that the above forms of words which end with **-an** may be word forms that are derived from verbs of Dime. This needs further study.

## **5 Conclusion**

The classification of names into various categories as presented in this study strongly supports that the choice of names is based on individual, social and cultural aspects of the community. Dime names are expressions of social or cultural identity of the people. Dime personal names express their beliefs, thoughts and their way of life. This means names that are given to children tell us how the Dime people perceive and behave in the existing world.

Dime personal names are given on the date of the child’s birth, which expresses particular time of the day, particular places, particular time and situations, family’s feeling’s and bad or good experiences and the like. The child will be bestowed a name on it’s birthday happenings, birth season, birth days of a week, and the background of the family. That means a name refers to different element of human experiences in time place and situations. Finally, we can conclude that Dime personal names that are chosen and used by children have meanings. On top of that, the Dime personal names are used as a means of communicating ideas and as a means of documentation of important events that happen during the person’s life in the community. Thus, Dime personal names are not only used to identify people from the other world or community but also it plays a vital role in addressing contextual meaning and implicit communication of ideas. Further, I would recommend that the morphological characteristics of Dime personal names needs further study.

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