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**Name Structures and Name Survival**

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## 1. Introduction

Approaches to the study of names tend to focus either on names in contemporary use, or on their origins and historical development.[1] The former is central to the emerging field of socio-onomastics, which includes work on commercial names, critical toponymy, identity and linguistic landscapes (see e.g Puzey and Kostanski 2016). The latter underpins most traditional scholarship, including national place-name surveys such as the Survey of English Place-Names. In the introduction to her classic textbook, Gelling (1978: 11) emphasised that 'The study of English place-names is a philological discipline which is based mainly on written evidence'. This statement has held good through subsequent editions (1988, 1997), and similar principles inform other national surveys including the recently inaugurated Survey of Scottish Place-Names (see e.g. Taylor 2016).

Both kinds of approach are closely concerned with typology. As Ainiala (2016b: 371–372) explains in a global context:

> From the late twentieth century onwards, onomastics has aimed strongly at constructing a typological overview of nomenclature. The structure of names and of name systems has been investigated, and name-giving grounds have been classified according to semantic criteria. Research in the field has thus developed from the analysis of individual names towards the investigation of larger entities. …
>
> Socio-onomastic research is, in a sense, a natural continuation of typological research. In constructing a *structural and semantic picture* of nomenclature, questions about name use and variation were asked almost inevitably. [my italics]

The semantic picture often tends to take centre-stage, particularly in English name studies (see e.g. Coates 2013). Indeed, Anderson (2015: 604) remarks that 'Much of the discussion of names by grammarians, as well as philosophers, is again focused on the semantics of names'. This article will attempt to redress the balance by highlighting the importance of the structural picture for traditional as well as more innovative approaches to name studies.

Within onomastic theory, most attention has been paid to names in contemporary use, at least as regards the study of grammar. The other main branch of onomastic theory, the study of meaning, is also primarily concerned with use, but encompasses origins and development in order to investigate how names make the transition from being lexical items, and how far etymological meanings continue to be accessed by name users (see e.g. Nyström 2016). The grammatical transition from one word class to another has received comparatively little attention, although the complexities are equally great. The purpose of this article is to explore the potential of a similarly holistic approach to names and grammar, drawing on both diachronic and synchronic evidence.

The argument will have two main thrusts. The first is that the extent of variation in the original name structures sometimes goes unnoticed, so that etymologies do not always conform to the patterns that current scholarship tries to fit them into. A more bottom-up rather than top-down approach towards typology may be needed to ensure that round pegs are not put into square holes. The second is that the grammatical structure of a name may impact on its chances of survival. A name with an atypical structure may be more likely to disappear over time than one that fits a familiar pattern, and this could help to explain the high level of attrition for certain types of name. The following sections will begin by outlining current views on the grammatical status of names as linguistic items, move on to examine cross-linguistic and cross-categorial variation in the etymological structure of names, and then turn to evidence that less prototypical structures are less likely to survive. Throughout, the

discussion will draw on insights from the prototype model of categorisation, a theoretical framework that has informed much research within disciplines such as linguistics and psychology since being developed in the 1970s by Rosch (e.g. 1973, 1978). Many overviews of prototype theory are available (e.g. Cruse 2011: 57–68, Geeraerts 2010: 183–203, Taylor 2003: 41–83), and the key points are summarised as follows by Saeed (2009: 37):

> This is a model of concepts which views them as structured so that there are central or typical members of a category, such as BIRD or FURNITURE, but then a shading off into less typical or peripheral members. So *chair* is a more central member of the category FURNITURE than *lamp*, for example. Or *sparrow* a more typical member of the category BIRD than *penguin*.

These 'central' or 'typical' members are known as 'prototypes', and the relevance of the model to the understanding of name semantics has been suggested in recent studies (e.g. Hough 2007, Nyström 1998). It also underlies much work on name phonology, particularly as regards phonaesthesia, a form of sound symbolism whereby, for instance, certain sounds are associated with feminine names and other sounds with masculine names (see e.g. Whissell 2015: 681). It may have equally important implications for name grammar.

## 2. Names, nouns and prototypes

As Anderson (2015: 602) explains, there is a 'near-consensus on the grammatical status of names', in that they are regarded as a sub-type of noun.[2] Although challenged by Coates (e.g. 2005, 2006), who argues that names are all expressions that refer nonintensionally (i.e. without connoting semantic properties),[3] debate focuses mainly on the status of the sub-type. According to Langacker (1991), for instance, names are less typical of the category than

common nouns, whereas Van Langendonck (2007) considers that names are less marked than common nouns, and hence form the prototypical class of nouns. Anderson himself (2007, 2015) has put forward an alternative categorisation as 'entitatives' encompassing both names and deictic pronouns, on the grounds that these identify entities (i.e. individuals), whereas nouns denote classes of entities.

Most recently, Van Langendonck and Van de Velde (2016: 33) propose a 'grammatically relevant cline from more to less typical types of names'. Taking personal names as 'arguably the most prototypical names' (a view shared by other scholars including Anderson), their discussion moves through names of months, trade and brand names, and numbers, to names of diseases and biological species. Within the broad category of place-names, they also identify a hierarchy from city and town names, through country names, field, region and river-names, to the names of seas, oceans and deserts (2016: 34). Alongside this is a cline of grammatical structures, from zero marking in city and town names (*London*, *Berlin*), through suffixing in country names (*Fin-land*, *German-y*), article preposing in field, region and river-names (*the Highlands*, *the Rhine*), to the use of classifiers and possibly an article in the names of seas, oceans and deserts (*the North Sea*, *the Gobi Desert*).

The examples cited are of course all forms of names in contemporary use by English speakers, and indeed Van Langendonck and Van de Velde (2016) draw attention to the synchronic distinction between cross-linguistically applicable concepts and language-specific grammatical categories. On the diachronic axis, there is an equally important distinction to be made between the grammatical status of a name in use, and its etymological structure. As Anderson (2015: 602) observes, the consensus view of names as a sub-type of noun 'is apparently shared among languages themselves, which mostly lack the facility for simple differentiation offered in English by the two words "noun" and "name"'. Languages share no such consensus, however, regarding the grammatical structures from which names derive. In

Mohawk, as Anderson (2007: 100) points out, both personal names and place-names are characteristically from verbs. The African dog names discussed by Batoma (2009) are based on polemical speech acts, while Okoh (2009: 139) describes Enuani personal names as 'generally long sentences, shortened into single words'. Since many English names derive from nouns or noun phrases, the grammatical distinction between use and etymology may become blurred in a way precluded by languages whose names have made the transition from a different word class. This blurring may be a factor leading to the tendency for appellatival origins to be posited inappropriately, as discussed in section 5 below.

Like other categories, name structures contain peripheral as well as prototypical members. As Geeraerts (2010: 188) explains:

> The concept of prototypicality, in short, is itself a prototypically clustered one in which the concepts of non-discreteness and non-equality (either on the intensional or on the extensional level) play a major distinctive role. Non-discreteness involves the existence of demarcation problems and the flexible applicability of categories. Non-equality involves the fact that categories have internal structure: not all members or readings that fall within the boundaries of the category need have equal status, but some may be more central than others; categories often consist of a dominant core area surrounded by a less salient periphery.

Another term often used in the scholarly literature is 'fuzziness'. While categories may have a clear core, their boundaries are fuzzy. The implications for our understanding of the grammatical structure of names will be explored below in relation to two axes of comparison: languages and denotata.

**3. Variation across and within languages**

As briefly indicated in the previous section, there is a good deal of variation across languages regarding the grammatical categories that contribute to the onomasticon. Crucially, though, there is also much variation within languages. As with the African dog names mentioned above, some of the Zulu homestead names discussed by Koopman (2016: 641) derive from polemical speech acts such as *kwaMuntungifunani* 'what does [that] person want from me?' and *kwaPhumuzumlomo* 'give the mouth a rest'. Others, however, represent different types of structures, including exhortatory verb phrases such as *Phumphele* 'get out right now' and *kwaDeqheluka* 'keep on shifting', and locative noun phrases such as *eLangeni* 'in the sun', *eNkungwini* 'in the mist' and *eNdini* 'on the heights'. Koopman (2016: 641) observes that the latter group 'are very similar to the descriptive names … for English house names', while names such as *eKuthuleni* 'place of peace', *eKuphumeleni* 'place of rest' and *eKujabuleni* 'place of happiness' 'are the direct equivalents of English house names like *Friendlea*, *Seventh Heaven*, and *Merriedean*', but states that he 'can find no equivalents in the English data' for the polemical names. Similarly, Zulu personal names range from noun phrases such as *uNtombenhle* 'beautiful girl' and verb phrases such as *uSibusisiwe* 'we have been blessed' to injunctions such as *uTholimfundo* 'get education' and *uBhekumuzi* 'look after the family' (Koopman 2009: 70). Again, those from noun phrases more closely resemble the structures characteristic of English names, but they comprise a smaller proportion of the onomasticon than in England.

Turning to Ghana place-names, Patterson (2014: 2) comments that although 'there seems in some areas at least to be a much greater tendency than in Europe to name places with expressions like the optimistic "all will be well", the disturbing "the slaves died", or the memorably comic *Mayera*, "I have got lost"', these co-exist with topographical formations more familiar to European toponymists, such as 'river-name + mouth' or 'at a hill'.[4] Here

too, the structures prototypical in England are still present within the onomasticon, but are more peripheral to the category of place-names.

Also in Africa, Van de Velde's (2009) study of name structures in Kirundi, one of the Bantu languages, identifies phrases such as Bisuumbagutiira < *bisuumba gutiira* 'it is better than to borrow' used as a car name and Giramahoro < *gira a-ma-horo* 'have peace' and Tibiyaáge < 'let's talk about it' used as group names,[5] alongside noun phrases such as Gashamba < *a-ga-shamba* 'little bush' used as a personal name, and the abstract noun Rukara < *urukara* 'blackness' used both as a personal name and as a dog name.[6] Again, there is some limited overlap with English and wider European naming systems.

Indeed, although most Mohawk names are from verbs, others, as Anderson (2007: 100) goes on to point out, are descriptive; and although most English names are from nouns or noun phrases, there are other kinds, including some from adjective phrases or verb phrases. Padel (2014: 19) defends the integrity of the Ordnance Survey form *Hard-to-Find* in Buckinghamshire by comparison with names such as Hard-to-Come-by (four occurrences) and Little-in-Sight (two occurrences) in Cornwall, Seldom Seen (three occurrences, respectively in Cumberland and Westmorland, and as a field-name in Wiltshire) and Come by Chance (two occurrences, as a field-name in Cumberland and seemingly a coastal name in Newfoundland). Taylor (2008: 275–276) notes that Pennycomequick (*Pennicomequicke* 1646), the old name for Falmouth Bay in Cornwall, represents a verb phrase [noun + verb + adverb], and he identifies no fewer than five different syntactic structures for verbal place-names in Scotland, as follows:

1. verb + direct object: Catch a Vote, Catchpenny, Clathywas (Cla-thy-was), Coup-my-horn, Ga(i)thercauld, Pluck the Crow, Scatterpenny (Rox), and probably Bickram.

2. verb + direct object + adjective or adverb: Cleikimin(n), Hungerhimout, Makemrough, Pilkembare.

3. verb + adverb or adverbial phrase: Bakebare (Abd), Blinkbonny, Cock-ma-lane, Cowp Owr (Park), Cuffabout, Lodgemylane, Mounthoolie, Scrapehard (Abd), Stand-Alane, Stoukthin (Abd), and probably Warout.

4. verb + verb: Mackfend ('make do').

5. verb + preposition + noun: Lookabouthim or Lookaboutthee, Glourourhim.

We shall return to some of these examples below.

In English, some personal names can also be verbs; others, adjectives. In their study of virtue names in Early Modern England, (Nair and Scherr 2012: 29) observe:

It is noticeable that *Modesty*, *Obedience*, *Patience*, *Silence*, *Submission* occur both as abstract nouns and – although perhaps less frequently – as adjectives; in the case of *Submit* (and *Tacet*) even in an imperative verb form.

Other pairs in the appendix to their article include *Constance* and *Constant*, *Faith* and *Faithfull*, *Modest* and *Modesty*, *Obedience* and *Obedient*, *Truth* and *True*. The phrasal names associated with the Puritan movement of the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries also reflect a wide range of structures. Examples mentioned by Redmonds (2004: 154–155) include adjective phrases (Safe-on-High, Stedfast), noun phrases (Freegrace, Love, Much-Mercye) and verb phrases (Search-the-Scriptures, Seekepeace, Standfast).

So too, some bynames and surnames are from phrases (including verb phrases), a point made by McKinley (1990: 165–166):

A considerable number of surnames derived from phrases can be found, each of which was already widely distributed before about 1400. Some such surnames or by-names found in the Middle Ages have now disappeared, but among those which still survive, and which were already present in several regions by 1400, are: Sherwin,[7] … Breakspear, …. Drinkwater, … Fairwether, …Goodall ('good ale'), … Makehate ('make joy'), … Parlebien ('well spoken'), … Passavaunt ('go before'), etc.] …

Further examples can be found among the early Scottish bynames listed by Black (1946: lii), which are even more varied in structure than the ones cited by McKinley:

Adam Aydrunken (Tyne, 1279)

William Conquergood (Edinburgh, 1665)

Johannes Excommunicatio[8]

Ricardus Hangpudyng (Glasgow, 1293)

Robert Luggespick (Dumfries, c.1290)

John Oute with the sword (Deer, 1402)

William Spurnecurtoys (Aberdeen, 1274)

Again, these exist alongside others from noun phrases, such as Andro Goddiskirk (Edinburgh, 1423) and George Swynhouse (Over Blainslie, 1575).

## 4. Variation across and within denotata

This leads into the second axis of comparison: the denotatum of the name. As reflected in the synchronic cline suggested by Van Langendonck and Van de Velde (2016: 34; see above, section 1), grammatical structures may be not only language-specific, but specific to groups

of denotata even within the broad category of place-names. The examples of derogatory English field-names listed by Cameron (1996: 237) are as follows:

> Awkward Croft, Bare Arse, Barebones, Beggarall or Buggerall, Clam Croft, Dangerous Furlong, Famish Croft, Goodfornothing Acre, Hard Bargain, Hunger Hill, Isle of Want, Judas Field, Labour in Vain, Little Worth, Long Purgatory Meadow, Nasty Field, Peck and Hope, Place of Pain, Sorrowful, Starveall, Thirsty Field, and Unlucky Leasow.

They are clearly different semantically from settlement names, with a higher proportion of metaphorical constructions and evaluative terms, but they are also different grammatically, including a higher proportion of adjective phrases and verb phrases alongside nouns and noun phrases. In his discussion of verbal place-names (see above, section 3), Taylor (2008: 275 n.4) notes that:

> English examples of this category are the exhortatory field-name Have a Good Heart, Shropshire, and the complimentary field-name Fill Barns …; the derogatory field-names Break Back (found in 7 counties), Carry Nothing (Cheshire) and Mockbeggar (Cheshire and Hampshire) …; also the settlement-name Pityme, Durham and Cornwall.

While the formation is more prototypical of field-names, then, it is also evidenced in settlement names; and in fact a doublet Pity Me occurs in the Scottish Borders (Hough 2005).

The names of other kinds of toponymic denotata are different again. A selection of inn names first recorded between 1800 and 1849 in Cox (1994: 91) is as follows:

10

Abbey Arms, Air Balloon, Axe and Saw, Bacchus, Barley Mow, Ben Jonson, Bird in Hand, Case is Altered, Cock and George, Cricketter's, Crispin, Duke William, Ferry Boat, Flash, Hammer in Hand, Harlequin, Hit or Miss, Hope, Last, Nelson.

Here the most noticeable feature is the sheer variety of semantic and syntactic formations. As with field-names, structures include adjective phrases, noun phrases and verb phrases. Unlike field-names, however, the names are not descriptive – either literally or metaphorically – of the referent, and the structure [modifier + headword] is much rarer. Moreover, where a headword does exist, it does not identify the referent: whereas *Croft*, *Field*, *Furlong*, *Leasow* and *Meadow* all designate types of field, here there is no term for an inn. In other words, whereas the structure [qualifier + generic] is prototypical for settlement names, it is much less common in field-names, and vanishingly rare in inn names.

The names of major landscape features too may derive from a range of parts of speech. Discussing river-names of English or Scandinavian origin, Cameron (1996: 164–165) cites examples from adjectives, as well as from nouns and verbs:

Many such names are simply adjectives, or more often derivatives of adjectives, descriptive of the particular river, as with Blyth (Nb, Nt, Sf) 'pleasant, cheerful', i.e. 'gentle or pleasant river'. Others of similar origin are Brun (La) 'brown', Rede (Nb) 'red' and Skerne (Du) 'clear'. Belah (We), a mountain stream is apparently derived from an adjective meaning 'roaring'. Cave (ERY) and Tale (D) both mean 'swift', Stour (C-Ess, K, O-Wa, St-Wo, W-Ha) apparently 'strong' and Tove (Nth) 'slow'. … From nouns are derived Greet (Nt) 'gravel', Mease (Lei-St) and Meese (St-Sa)

'moss', … and from verbs Lymm (Ch) perhaps 'resounding', Smite (Lei-Nt, Wa, Wo) perhaps 'dirty' and Swale (K, NRY) 'rushing'.[9]

Adjectival formations may also be prototypical of earlier hydronyms, comprising the largest group of uncompounded pre-English river-names identified by Ekwall (1928: l–li). Many may originally have included suffixes comparable to those discussed by Strandberg (2016: 109–111) to signal the change from adjective to name. However, it does not follow that this also comprises a change from adjective to noun.[10]

## 5. Dummy generics

The divergent structures discussed in the previous section are sometimes disguised by a tendency within mainstream scholarship to gloss names as noun phrases – perhaps partly through attraction to the prototypical structure for English toponyms in general, and partly through a blurring of the distinction between contemporary usage patterns and etymological structure, as suggested above (section 2). This is often accomplished by the insertion of a dummy generic identifying the denotatum. Hence Mills (2011: 63–64) glosses Blyth as 'the gentle or pleasant one', while Watts (2004: 67) gives 'pleasant river' for one occurrence and 'the gentle or merry one' for another. Similarly, Skerne becomes 'the clear or pure stream' (Mills 2011: 422) or 'bright stream' (Watts 2004: 553). Mills (2011: 311) explains Lymm as 'the noisy stream or torrent', while Watts (2004: 389) follows the Cheshire Place-Name Survey in giving 'the torrent' (Dodgson 1970: 36).[11] Both occurrences of Swale are glossed as 'rushing water by Mills (2011: 455), although Watts (2004: 593) prefers 'the rushing stream' for the Kentish river-name and constructs a four-word noun phrase for the one in Yorkshire: 'the whirling, rushing river'. No criticism of either publication is intended here. As the leading dictionaries of English place-names, they are simply representative of the

long-established and hitherto unquestioned practice of constructing headwords for names that appear to lack them.

It may be possible that the practice of inserting headwords, in the form of dummy generics, has gone unquestioned because it has largely passed unnoticed. One purpose of this article is to draw attention to it, as an issue that also affects settlement names in mainland Britain. Here the prototypical structure is indeed the descriptive noun phrase, and hence there is a particular motivation to fit all names into that pattern. Although formally comparable to the inn name Cricketter's cited above (section 4), place-names like St Andrew's, St Asaph and St Briavels, which on the face of it comprise a genitival phrase or saint's name, are often glossed with a phrase such as 'church of' or 'place with the shrine of', traditionally placed within brackets. Thus Mills (2011: 400) explains St Andrews in Fife (*Sancti Andree c.*1158) as '(place with the shrine of) St Andrew', St Asaph in Denbighshire (*Sancto Asaph* 1291) as '(church of) St Asaph', and St Briavels in Gloucestershire as '(castle of) *Sanctus Briauel*', translating part of the surrounding context of the name in early records. Similarly, Grant (2010: 78) explains St Andrews as '(shrine of) St Andrew', and Owen (2015: 61) explains St Asaph as '(church of) St Asaph'. In these and many other such instances, the place-name may well be metonymic from the name of the church or another building, but as a settlement name, that referent is irrelevant.

Sometimes it is evident that an earlier generic has dropped out of the modern form of the name, as with St Albans in Hertfordshire, first recorded in 1007 as *Sancte Albanes stow* 'holy place of St Alban' (Mills 2011: 400). This may of course also be the case with other names for which we lack the necessary early spellings.[12] However, the weight of evidence suggests that the genitive phrase or saint's name alone was an acceptable structure for an Anglo-Saxon, Anglo-Scottish or Anglo-Welsh settlement name – so much so that it has

attracted others like St Albans to it, through the process of analogical reformation discussed by Coates (1987) in a semantic context.

The reasoning behind the traditional insertion of a dummy generic in such names is set out with beautiful clarity in the entry for St Andrews in the Fife Place-Name Survey. Giving the etymology as 'Sc *sanct* + p[ersonal] n[ame] Andrew' and the definition as 'St Andrew's (church, place, burgh etc.)', Taylor with Márkus (2009: 526) go on to explain:

> The name derived originally from the important church dedicated to the apostle St Andrew and believed at an early date to house relics of that saint …
>
> The very first reference to this burgh in 1144 identifies it as 'the burgh at St Andrew' …, where 'St Andrew' could be short-hand for 'the church of St Andrew', or could be seen as indicating the physical presence of the saint himself through that of his corporeal relics. Within a few years the burgh is referred to using a possessive genitive construction, 'the burgh of St Andrew' … In these early occurrences of the name, it is in fact very difficult to separate the locational from the dedicatory. This is particularly true of the title 'bishop of St Andrew' …
>
> The genitival construction with burgh, city, town or church either explicit or implicit, developed as the most common form of the name, and this is reflected in its earliest recorded forms in Scots. The earliest of all explicitly add *toun* (*Andrestoun* 1399 or *Andirstoun* 1412), but soon the generic is left implicit and the form *Sanctandrowis* or similar becomes the standard (from 1434 onwards).

Each of the potential generics – burgh, city, town or church – is represented in one or more early forms (Taylor with Márkus 2009: 524–526), and it is undeniable that elements often fluctuate in early spellings before a place-name becomes established in a permanent form

(see e.g. Taylor 1997[13]). However, other types of element that only appear sporadically are taken to have dropped out of the name, not to have become 'implicit'.

From here it is only a short step to formations such as the island name St Helena in the Atlantic and the city name St John's in Newfoundland, both named from the feast-days of the saints, and clearly created in that form (Everett-Heath 2005: 457). Further examples are the settlement names San Diego, San Francisco and Santa Barbara in California, described as 'second-order place-names' by Coates (2014: 12), who also discusses other types of bearers whose names characteristically do not contain a defining element identifying the denotatum. These include railway locomotives, none of whose names includes the word *locomotive* or *engine*, and fishing trawlers, none of whose names includes a word for a trawler or a boat. Prototypical locomotive names and trawler names, then, do not contain a generic. Prototypical English settlement names do, but there is much flexibility within this and other nominal categories.


## 6. Not so special cases

Nevertheless, there is a strong tendency to try to fit names into the [qualifier + generic] straitjacket. Even in the Introduction to Field's dictionary of English field-names, such a structure is presented as the standard pattern, with others as rare exceptions:

> field-names are usually two-word phrases, the single-word exceptions being far rarer than major names consisting of two or more words. Bakehouse Field, Bell Rough, Causeway Croft, Great Delight, Marl Piece, Pinfold Field, Bares Orchard, Little Rough and Wich-house Field – all these occur in the Tithe Award for Austerson, Cheshire; in the published list, thirty-one of the names consist of two or three words, and only seven are single-word names.

Apart from Great Delight, which is a special case of a name of the fanciful type, the second word in each name cited above is a generic term that occurs very frequently in every list of field-names; having been once defined, this second element, which for ease of reference may be called the *denominative* component, can be left aside when a name is being interpreted. (Field 1989: xiv)

Far from this claim being borne out by the entries within the dictionary itself, it is difficult to find a single page that does not have at least one example of what is described here as 'a special case'. Throughout, field-names containing a '*denominative* component' are certainly in the majority, but by no means overwhelmingly so.

The same is true of field-names elsewhere in Britain. A recent doctoral research project (Burns 2015) compiled and analysed a corpus of 1,552 field-names from farms in north-east Scotland, utilising socio-onomastic techniques in order to collect data through interviews with local farmers. Some of the names recorded have the so-called traditional structure [(article) + (qualifier) + generic], as with Bungalow, Middle Field and The Horse Park,[14] while many others comprise extended noun phrases, with the generic in initial position. Examples of the latter include Field Infront o the Hoose, The Field Next Old Bourtie, Kitchen Park at Redhouse and Park Next to Lairshill.[15] However, a significant proportion of the names do not fit into the structure of a noun phrase. A representative selection is: Abeen the Aul Hoose, Abeen the Big Tree, Across Line, Across the Road Fae the Ludge, Alang the Aul Road, Alex Farquhar, Angus, Aside the Trees, The Fifty, First, Five, Galloquhine, Gamekeepers, Greens, Midas, Mid Below Road, Middle, Never Plowed, Next to Coullie Park, Next to Main Road, Number Two, One, Rough, Second, Sheazer, Two in One, Under Jessie's, Under the Hill and Upper. Common themes are location, ownership, usage and size;[16] and setting aside from the Doric dialect in which the names are recorded,

most are paralleled in the field-name collections in volumes of the Survey of English Place-Names.

Even in the absence of generics, names can usually be recognised for what they are. Abeen the Big Tree is identifiable as a field-name. So is Great Delight. At the same time, Hammer in Hand proclaims itself as an inn name, and St X or St X's is likely to be a settlement name or an island name. This is what Coates (2014: 9) describes as a 'probabilistic inference':

> Names with or without classifiers … do not allow the deduction of class-membership, i.e. in logical terms class-membership is not entailed. What such names do allow is a probabilistic inference in which the probability may change over time, i.e. a conveyed meaning, or something more like an implicature, or even a stereotype/prototype. …
>
> The consequence of these observations is that the onymic categories which onomasticians set up – toponymy, anthroponymy and so on – have no rigid permanent membership, if by that we mean a membership consisting of expressions which represent a semantic type, because the membership of such categories is fluid.

Whereas Coates is discussing 'semantic type[s]', and their potential transfer from one category of name to another, there also exist grammatical types, which are similarly fluid not just across but within name categories. The grammatical structures tolerated within individual categories of name are flexible, but not unrestricted. The names cited in this article are simply illustrative examples. What would be needed for serious study is quantitative analysis of a defined corpus or corpora, to establish both the prototypes and the outer limits of the structures tolerated in the formation of names for different groups of denotata. Which structures are most common, which are less common, which are rare but still acceptable, and

which do not occur at all? These questions are specific not only to individual languages but to individual categories of name.

## 7. Grammatical types

It is certainly true that some categories allow more variation than others. At one end of the scale are horse names or hipponyms, where Coates (2014: 10) has demonstrated that 'The system of British racehorse names is one of total onymic freedom', with any linguistic material capable of serving as a horse name. His examples include adjectives (Jewelled, Patriotic), adjective phrases (Chilledtothebone, Oh So Spicy), exclamations (Diddums, Hip Hip Hooray), noun phrases (Classy Strike), prepositional phrases (Avec Moi, Beyond Conceit), imperatives (Act Your Shoe Size, Reset to Fit), verbs (Accumulate), verb phrases (Ain't Talkin') and full sentences (My Body is a Cage, *Iphi intombi* [Zulu, 'Where is the girl?']), in addition to 'complex cases' such as Only You Maggie and Humor Me Rene. Observing that 'The category of hipponyms is therefore, in principle, the same as the category *linguistic expression*', he goes on to make the intriguing suggestion that 'indeed, it may even be broader, as there is no requirement on a name consisting of a string of words to be grammatical (*Poyle Todream*) or even to be in etymologically the same language throughout (*Fleurie Lover*)'.

If hipponyms are the least restricted category, it may be more difficult to establish the most restricted. Ancient river-names, formed from a stem with a suffix, might be considered as a possible candidate, notwithstanding the danger of circularity in that the dating of such river-names is partly based on their structure (see e.g. Strandberg 2016: 106–109). However, a stronger case may be made for astronomical names such as the names of comets. As Alexander (2016: 634) explains, these are named according to a strictly regulated system:

Comets, once named haphazardly and often with a possessive (such as Halley's Comet), are now systematically named with the word Comet followed by the surnames of its discoverers (usually no more than two names); thus Comet Halley, or Comet Hale-Bopp (discovered in 1995 by Alan Hale and Thomas Bopp).[17]

This may well be the system with least onymic freedom, but the vast majority of names would come somewhere in between these and horse names. Street-names, for instance, are often treated alongside field-names, as falling within the broad category of so-called 'minor names', but whereas field-names exhibit the wide range of structures illustrated above, street-names more commonly contain a generic element designating a type of street. Thus Ekwall's (1954) gazetteer of London street-names is organised according to generic element, and even the final section, headed 'Street-names formed without a designation for "street" or the like', begins with the statement:

There are a good many such names on the modern map, but several of them in early records show forms containing a word for street, and the present name is elliptical. (Ekwall 1954: 181)

Similar structures appear to be reflected in the street-names of cities in Europe and beyond, judging from examples given in recent studies (e.g. Ainiala 2016a, Balode and Bušs 2007, Casagranda 2013, Koopman 2012, Mori 2007, Særheim 2007, Vannieuwenhuyze 2007, Wahlberg 2013). It might therefore tentatively be proposed that [qualifier + generic] is cross-linguistically prototypical of street-name structures.

A comparative study, establishing both the prototypical structures and the limits of variation for different categories of names in different languages, could make a valuable

contribution to name theory. It might also help us to understand why some names survive while others do not. The following section will put forward a hypothesis that names which fit the prototypical grammatical structure for their particular category may be more likely to survive than the outliers.

**8. Survival of the best fit**

A recurrent theme in the discussion of variation in section 3 above is that unprototypical types of name did and do exist, but are less common now than they used to be. The early Scottish bynames listed by Black (1946: lii) are set out in the introduction to his dictionary specifically because they did not develop into surnames and are therefore not included in the main body of the work. Moreover, following his discussion of English phrasal surnames quoted above, McKinley (1990: 166) observes:

> None of these surnames was ever really common, and none is particularly numerous at the present day. Indeed, several of them are now rare. All, however, can be found in several regions from an early period.

Thus many surnames from phrases have disappeared altogether, while those that survive are less numerous than they used to be.

Also relevant is that the Puritan phrasal names are now regarded largely as curiosities, and as Redmonds (2004: 155) comments, 'the interest they arouse is probably out of proportion to the influence they had'. Similarly with regard to other Early Modern English personal names, it is striking that where there are corresponding name forms from different parts of speech, it is the more unusual structures that tend to disappear. Nair and Scherr (2012: 29) point out that '*Submission* was used more than *Submit*: *Patience* became a

relatively common name, while *Patient* never did'. The same applies to other pairs listed in their appendix, such as *Constance* and *Constant*, or *Faith* and *Faithfull*. Indeed, of the 100 most popular names for baby girls in England and Wales in 2014,[18] 14 are from recognisable English vocabulary words, all of which are nouns: Amber, Daisy, Faith, Grace, Holly, Ivy, Jasmine, Lily, Poppy, Rose, Ruby, Summer, Violet and Willow (Office for National Statistics 2015).[19] The question that arises is whether this is mere coincidence, or if grammatical structure is a factor in name survival, such that the more prototypical structures – whatever they happen to be for a particular category of name in a particular language – stand the best chance of survival. Diachronic comparison of selected corpora would tell us.

In Taylor's study of verbal place-names in Scotland, he draws attention to the fact that the majority no longer survive. Describing verbal constructions as 'a class of place-name which appears in the Lowland Scottish record in the early modern period, and which has all but disappeared from the modern toponymy' (2008: 274–275), he goes on to suggest that one reason may be the negative overtones of many such names:

> Many of the names which have obviously negative connotations seem to have
>
> disappeared, especially those which have remained lexically transparent, such as
>
> Hungerhimout 'starve him or them out', none of the three Fife examples of which has
>
> survived. However, the disappearance of the name has as much to do with the
>
> disappearance of the settlement to which it was attached, marginal or insignificant as
>
> it often was. Some of those names which have not disappeared have survived in a
>
> much modified form. An example would be *Pilkembare, Auchtertool (Fif), 'strip
>
> them bare', which already on the O.S. 6" 1st edn has been re-interpreted in two of its
>
> three elements as Pilkhambrae 'the brae or slope of a place called Pilkham' … this
>
> transformation may be due either to its pawky negative overtones, or to the

opaqueness of the underlying Scots phrase to the map-makers and their informants.

(Taylor 2008: 276)

However, neither negative overtones nor semantic opacity has resulted in the wholesale disappearance of other names. One of the longest sections in the standard textbook on English field-names is headed 'Disparagement and Despair' (Field 1993: 105–109), and references to productive land are described there as 'less numerous' (1993: 109). As regards the second possibility, opacity is the norm rather than the exception for names in Lowland Scotland as well as in England, and in any case the first sentence in the above quotation notes that lexically transparent names have also disappeared. It therefore seems appropriate to seek another explanation for the disappearance or reshaping of these verbal names, and I suggest that it may lie in their atypical grammatical structure.

## 9. Conclusion

In conclusion, prototype theory provides a context within which to examine the grammatical structures characteristic of different categories of name, as well as the less common structures that exist alongside them. While prototypical structures are by definition always in the majority, the proportion of the name stock for which they account may increase over time due to the gradual attrition of atypical, and thereby less robust, structures. Padel (2013: 30–31) has suggested syntax as a factor in the non-survival of Brittonic names in England, drawing attention to alternative early forms of Creechbarrow in Somerset and Kinneil in West Lothian as evidence that the incoming Anglo-Saxons were less likely to adopt fully place-names whose syntax was alien to them:

22

The structure means that the name inevitably incorporates a certain amount of Brittonic syntax, and in English such a name has a foreignness and awkwardness which discourages its adoption as a name in its entirety.

Whereas this applies to the transfer of names from one speech community to another, similar factors may affect a name's chances of survival within a single speech community. The examples discussed in the present article appear to support such a hypothesis, but more systematic and extensive analysis would be needed in order to place it on a secure footing.

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[1] Versions of this paper have been presented to the English Place-Name Society (London, 8 July 2015) and the Scottish Place-Name Society (Linlithgow, 31 October 2015). I am grateful to those present for much useful discussion and feedback. The paper has also benefitted from comments by two anonymous referees, as well as editorial guidance from Rebecca Gregory. A short summary focusing on the Scottish material appears in Hough (2016).

[2] This consensus is implicit in the frequent use of the term *proper noun* interchangeably with *name*. Thus it is uncontroversial for Sjöblom (2006: 63) to begin her contribution to a special issue of the journal *Onoma* devoted to name theory with the statement that: 'In linguistics there is, at least in principle, a consensus that nouns can be appellatives or proper nouns. If an expression is an appellative, it is not a proper noun – and vice versa. It also appears to be generally accepted that the distinction between an appellative and a proper noun is based largely on semantics …'.

[3] However, Coates considers that names function as noun phrases whatever their internal structures might be.

[4] The Ghana Place Names website from which the information is taken is available at https://sites.google.com/site/ghanaplacenames/home.

[5] These are respectively the names of a dance group and of a 'theatre collective'.

[6] As Van de Velde (2009: 224) explains, the initial vowel is known as an 'augment', and functions similarly to a definite article in English: 'The absence of the augment with Kirundi

proper names is thus basically the same phenomenon as the absence of an article in English personal Names and settlement Names'.

[7] Sherwin is explained on a previous page as 'cut wind', possibly used as a nickname for a swift runner or very thin person.

[8] No location or date is given for the name, which is recorded in Dowden, John, ed., *Chartulary of the Abbey of Lindores, 1195–1479*. Edinburgh, 1903, 80.

[9] It is unclear why Cameron treats 'dirty' as a verb rather than an adjective, but the same explanation appears in earlier editions of the book, and has survived considered rewriting of this passage.

[10] The English term 'nominalisation' is particularly problematic, as it can refer to the change from another part of speech either into a name or into a noun, leading to a false association between the two.

[11] The definition is for the settlement name, explained by Dodgson (1970: 36) as 'from the noise of Slitten Brook … in its course in a ravine through the middle of the village'.

[12] Indeed, it may also apply to other types of names. As Strandberg (2016: 110) explains, for instance, some river names may represent elliptical forms. Cox's (1994: 79–88) list of 58 inn names first recorded before 1600 includes New Inn (*The New In of the Stronde* 1397) and 6 others where the historical spellings include such a generic (excluding formulations such as *the Inne called the Swanne*). These are Catherine Wheel (*Katherine Whele or Savage Inn* 1553), Crown (*the Inne of the Crowne* 1540), George (*le Georges Inne* 1454), Horn (*Horne house* 1497), Star (*Star Inn* 1605) and White Hart (*the White Harte Inn* 1571). However, not only do they represent less than 13% of the corpus, but in no instance except New Inn itself does the generic appear within the earliest recorded form.

[13] Taylor (1997: 14) refers to place-names 'which appear to consist simply of a personal name', deriving Aithernie in Fife and Madderty in Perthshire from St Ethernon. However, a

Gaelic derivation 'place at the alder ford' is preferred in the more recent Fife Place-Name Survey (Taylor with Márkus 2008: 505).

[14] *Park* is the most common word for a field in the Doric dialect spoken in the study area. Bungalow is clearly a metonymic name, along similar lines to the large number of settlement names referring to a prominent building or landscape feature.

[15] Most occurrences of this type refer to location. Old Bourtie and Lairshill are the names of neighboring farms, while Kitchen Park at Redhouse is a field visible from the kitchen window of Redhouse Farm.

[16] Alex Farquhar is the name of the farmer, although Angus may be named from the breed of cow (Aberdeen Angus) rather than a person. The Fifty refers to size: the field is 54 or 55 acres. Galloquhine is next to Galloquhine Farm. Gamekeepers is the field where the gamekeeper lived. Greens is named because of the green wood next to it. Sheazer is the name of the family whose house was opposite the field, and similarly Under Jessie's refers to the woman living in the house above the field.

[17] Other types of astronomical names discussed by Alexander (2016) are also tightly regulated by the International Astrononmical Union.

[18] These were the latest figures available at the time of writing in July 2016. None of the 100 most popular names for baby boys in England and Wales in 2014 were from recognisable English vocabulary words.

[19] Not included here are respellings and derivatives (Gracie, Hollie, Lilly, Rosie), nor names that could be associated with vocabulary words despite having other origins (Brooke, Robyn, Scarlett).