Naming by Reference: A Socio-Semantic Analysis of Selected Namwanga Personal Names

Bruce Lungu[1], Stuart Hirst[2], Humphrey M. Kapau[3], John Simwinga[4]

[1]*Muchinga Secondary School*

[2,3,4]*University of Zambia*

*Corresponding Author: *Bruce Lungu*, *Muchinga Secondary School*

Abstract: *This study investigated the meanings and socio-cultural implications of selected Namwanga personal names. It sought to establish the kind of naming system that the Namwanga use in giving names, identify the meanings of selected Namwanga personal names, and determine the socio-cultural implications of the names. The qualitative approach was used to collect data through semi-structured interviews and focus group discussions with the study population in order to collect primary data. Purposive sampling technique was employed with participants who were considered sufficiently knowledgeable in the Namawanga language to provide an accurate explanation of the data. Secondary data was obtained from existing Namwanga literature including school and village registers. Using the unified theory of names, generated data was analysed and thereafter names grouped according to their themes. Findings showed that, among the Namwanga people, the first name is bestowed on a child either before or after the detachment of the umbilical cord. The bestowal of first names is determined by several factors including events or circumstances surrounding a child's birth such as ethical and social values; child's place; period; order and manner of birth; death; fertility; expression of social caution and conflict; modern innovations; religion; as well as connotations of love, hope, requests, and consolation. Concerning the findings, it was deduced that personal names in Namwanga speech communities go beyond being mere personal labels, to expressions and stories that mark the various socio-psychological milestones and circumstances surrounding the birth of a child to be named. This in turn makes personal names an integral meaningful part of the Namwanga cultural heritage which should be explored by scholars.*

Keywords: *Socio-semantic, analysis, system, Personal Names, Namwanga*

1. INTRODUCTION

The expression 'Socio-semantic analysis' entails examining linguistic aspects of a given phenomenon taking into account the relationship between social and semantic factors. In the current study Namwanga personal names constitute that phenomenon. Namwanga is one of the Bantu languages spoken by people in Muchinga province of Zambia, particularly Nakonde and Isoka districts. They are said to have come from Mfipa and Nyika. People with names like Simwanza, Sichalwe, Simukanga,and Musyaniare said to be the founders and owners of Namwanga land. Those with names like Simutowe, Simwinga, Sichula, Sinyangwe, and Simfukwe came from Mambwe, whereas the Simukondas, the Silwimbas, and the Siwales came from Nyika (Sinkamba 1984:3).

Despite the language being widely spoken in Zambia, it can also be traced in other parts of the African continent, such as Tanzania in the Mbeya region and the north west part of Malawi in the Chitipa district. According to the 2010 Zambia census, there are 140,000 speakers of the Namwanga language. Other languages that are similar to Namwanga include Mambweand Lungu spoken by people of Mbala and Mpulungu districts of the Northern province of Zambia as well as Lambya, Nyika, Iwa, and Tambo spoken in Isoka, Nakonde,and Mafingadstricts. According to Guthrie's (1948) Classification of Bantu languages, Namwanga is coded M22 in group 20 of Zone M-Nyiha-Safwa, where it is the seventh of the 21 languages, along with the Wandya, Nyika, Malila, Safwa, Iwa, and Tambo.

While both surnames and personal names exist in Namwanga society, this article focuses on personal names and naming practices in relation to socio-semantic aspects. A surname is referred to as a name that is shared by all the members of a family group. Surname practices are primarily patronymic, implying that they are derived from a male ancestor.

2. STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Personal names are a universal human possession, but methods of naming vary across cultures and traditions. Both in Zambia and elsewhere, studies have been carried out on various aspects of names. In Zambia, such studies have looked at personal names in Tonga, Lamba, Luvale, Lozi, Tumbukaand Bemba speech communities. However, no known study has addressed the socio-semantic aspects of Namwanga personal names, hence the present study.

3. RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The study attempted to answer the following questions:

(i) What patterns for giving personal names exist in a Namwanga community?

(ii) What are the semantics of Namwanga personal names?; and

(iii) How do the semantics of the names relate to social factors?

4. LITERATURE REVIEW

According to Mandende (2009), African personal names play an important role in society, reflecting what happens in day to day life. For this reason, personal names follow different patterns. Different scholars have written on the aspect of naming patterns in different cultures as well as languages. Therefore, this section intends to review some of the literature conducted on the patterns of naming systems.

Mathangwane and Gardner (1998), in their study of personal names in Botswana, found that names play an important role in conveying cultural values and traditions. It is from this perspective that Koopman (1989) provides these patterns of personal names among the AmaZulu: names referring to the structure of the family, names referring to the role of God in the birth, names referring to the perceived relationship between parents and children, names referring to the circumstances of the parents, names referring to the wider clan. The information provided in previous studies on naming patterns provided a springboard for the current study.

Like other scholars cited above, Dickens (1985), who researched on Zulu personal names, suggests that the following patterns are followed when personal names are selected in Zulu society: a synoptic history of the circumstances surrounding the child's birth, the emotions related to the birth, the family's attitude to the birth, the place where he or she was born, his position in the family, the time he was born, the parents' spiritual attitudes, his appearance at birth, his parents' wishes for him, the parents' social expectations, the country's situation at the time of his birth or the clan into which he was born. Although these two studies seem to be similar to the current study, this study looks at the personal naming patterns in a different language reflecting the circumstances of the family of the name giver.

Suzman (1994), in her study of Zulu personal naming practices, concurs with Dickens (1985) on the factors that influence the choice of personal names: These names document several significant events in the family's history, their happiness at having first-born , a boy and then a girl, their aspirations for continuing the family line, problems in the marriage, the mother's uncomfortable pregnancy and the birth of a child relatively late in life. Further, they determine the patterns into which a particular name can be categorised. The study by Suzmanis similar to the present study in that the factors that underlie the naming system are almost the same, despite the current study beingonNamwanga.

A study conducted by Mönnig (1967, about the selection of personal names among the Pedi, reveals that personal names are normally chosen from events occurring on the day of the child's birth. If it rained on that day, the child may be called Mapule or Modupe from pula "rain" or Modupe "soft rain". Children may also be named after famous people, visitors and for outstanding physical features, like Ratsebe for a child with large ears. However, the current study focuses on the naming patterns that are revealed from the circumstances surrounding the family before the birth of the child.

Similarly, Mandende (2009), who conducted a study on Tshivenda personal names, says that the patterns that personal names in most African societies follow have been divided into different categories among them those reflecting traditional beliefs and meanings, cultural practices, ancestry, re-incarnation, and commemoration, derogation (to demean) and name changes or substitutions. The study also demonstrated how the meanings in the morphological composition of personal names can convey messages from and experiences of the name-giver and the community at large. Africans, Vhavenḓa in particular, arrange and rearrange different morphemes from different word categories in the expression of their deepest feelings such as pointing to the circumstances of the family or community at a particular time in their lives.

A study of the morphology of Tshivenḓa personal names reveals that the structure of a personal name and its meaning are related, that is, when a negative construction is used in the formation of a personal name, such a personal name may refer to an unhappy experience. The Vhavenḓauses the negative construction in names to be less direct when addressing serious issues and concerns. An example of such a name is Athifhelimilu (I do not worry), which indicates that the name-giver is not concerned about the bad treatment he or she has received. However, through the use of this name, the name-giver appears polite and no one will take exception to this expression, although the message is clear to those who have ill-treated him or her.

Most Tshivenḓa personal names are gender-neutral and those that are gender-specific , usually start with the prefixes Ṋe- and Ra- refer to males, and those that start with the prefix Nya- and Ṅwa- refer to females. In Tshivenḓa, unlike in isiZulu and isiXhosa, suffixes are not used to determine gender. Personal names that refer to power, that is, Thavhayamipfa (Thorny Mountain), are bestowed on males only. This is a characteristic of a patriarchal society. The study by Mandende is important and similar to the current study in terms of gender identification, though the present study was done in a different language, that is Namwanga, and in a different locality.

Neethling (2007) states that the study of personal naming or names of people, known as anthroponymy, is often dictated by an existing tradition or convention of name-giving in any given culture or community. Once this tradition has taken root, most members belonging to that particular culture or community will tend to stay within the general parameters. Surnames or family names are, generally speaking, hereditary, and hence remain stable over long periods . First names, by contrast, are not as stable, and it is in this area that name-givers at times 'digress' from the convention, or even "experiment" when it comes to the choice of a name. Hereditary aspects may play a role here too, such as patronymics, for example, where the father (or grandfather) of a child might be commemorated through naming. However, the current study focuses on surnames or family names that distinguish gender by adding a prefix, 'Si-' for male and 'Na-' for female. This is unique in that it distinguishes the Namwanga culture and traditions from others.

A study conducted by Saarelma-Maunumaa (1999) On Name Sharing system of the Ovamboof Namibia reveals that the personal naming system of the Ovambo in Namibia, was based on the idea of name sharing. He indicated that when a child is born, he or she is first given a temporary name, a birth name that usually indicates the time of the day the baby was born. For instance, Angula (boy) and Nangula (girl) would mean 'born in the morning' while names like Usiku (boy) and Nuusiku (girl) would mean 'born in the night'. In other instances ,names relate to events occurring at the time of birth, for example: Unkongo (boy) and Nuukongo (girl) would mean 'hunting'.

Saarelma-Maunumaastates further that after a few weeks, a child is then given a real, permanent name, which is used together with a patronym. It is always the father who chooses the name. Moreover, he remarks that the prevalent custom is to name a child after a close friend of the father and the name becomes public only after the friend visits the child to greet him or her. If the parents die, the namesake is expected to take care of the child. However, in the current study, temporary names are not applicable in Namwanga, but rather real, permanent names are given when the child is born and any elderly member of the family can bestow the name on a child.

Mphela (2010) in his dissertation entitled, An Analysis of Personal Naming in the Moletjie Area of the Limpopo Province: An Onomastic Approach, indicates that personal naming was regarded as a very serious matter among the Bapedi of Moletjie and was, in most instances, influenced by the context prevailing during the birth of children. Thus, names are given to children taking into account

issues such as status, marital wealth, health, biological and social relationships, nature, and the environment. Though the findings were of great value to the current study, this particular research did not focus on the aspect of naming concerning status, marital wealth,and environment.

Langendonck (1990) investigated Dutch personal names. It was observed that personal names constituted the most diversified category of proper names. Proper nouns and pronouns are better means of reference than common nouns. This is the case both cross linguistically and even within one language (dialect). Several patterns were encountered. Functionally, primary names are those that fulfil the three main functions of personal names: address (talk to), identification (talk about),and a wide variety of sub categorisations as to gender and expressivity (especially combinability with diminutive and argumentative morphemes) (Langendonck 2001). Langendonck further points out that personal names display rich derivational functions of a classificatory and expressive (emotive) nature. The formal diversification ultimately derives from the fact that personal names constitute the unmarked subcategory of proper names since they refer to humans. The feature 'human' has been said to be the unmarked one vis-à- vis other features. From an experiential-cognitive viewpoint, indeed, it is obvious that human beings interact most with other human beings. This fact causes the extensive use of personal names and the increase of sub-classes (Langendonck 2001). However, the current study is different in that certain aspects of name categorisation were not dealt with, instead it focused on the aspect of naming in relation to the circumstances that the family passed through before the birth of the child.

Gerba (2014) carried out a study on Personal names among the Oromo in Ethiopia. His study found that names were given in terms of gender, though there are names that can be used for both sexes such as kennaa (gift), siifan (you and me), naafjaad (think for me), and many more. Such names have no gender markers. Personal names that end in _aa, -a, -is, and –oodenote male, while those that end with morphemes –ee, tii, and –tuu,- denote female. Names, like any other words, may have conceptual, descriptive or lexical meanings, but these meanings become irrelevant when the connotative or pragmatic meaning is attached to the name. For instance, k'eeramsoo means 'the leopard'. Yet its extended meaning is 'arrogant' or 'quarrelsome and impatient'. This study shows that Oromo people do not choose names at random without attaching something important in their life. Gerbafurther indicates that Oromo names carry some important message apart from the literal meaning. It is very rare for an Oromo to have a personal name that is meaningless. Such a name cannot be regarded as a real one. This particular study is relevant to the current study in that it does not only focus on the names in general but it has also discussed the aspect of semantics.

Like Gerba, Ahinful(1997) also indicates that Akan personal female names usually have a man's name as the root plus a suffix 'a', 'aa' or 'wa' which reflects the morphology of Akan female names. The variations in the suffix are determined by the phonological conditions of the root name. This simply means that the morphology of personal names is connected to other linguistic categories such as syntax, phonology,and others. Through Ahinful's study, the present study gains some hints on morphological analysis through the affixation process: Namwanga might have the same pattern, although the Namwanga use prefixes to denote gender.

Ekah (2016) did a study in Nigeria on Morpho-Syntactic Analysis of Ibibio Personal Names, on which she observes that personal names among Ibibio undergo generational changes and those changes cause the names to be transformed from lexical items to phrasal and sentence - like constructions through prefixation and suffixation. For instance eno +abasi-enobasi – (God's gift), toro +obon –torobo (praise God). However, Ekah focused on how the forms and words are arranged in names and not the naming patterns.

Similarly, Houis (1983) observes that names are practically not distinct from other linguistic signs [words] at the level of form and morphology. Therefore, it is from this background of Houis that Nkolola (2013) asserts that names can be analysed from morphological, syntactic, semantic or etymological perspectives among others. Shona anthroponyms fall into this category of substantives in Shona Morphology.

Mwizenge (1988) also carried out studies on indigenous Tonga names among the Tonga-speaking people of Southern province of Zambia. He observed that Tonga personal names fall into four broad categories linguistically, these being nouns, adjectives, verbs, and adverbs.

According to Klerk (2002), personal naming is mainly a linguistic act, intimately linked with hopes, fears, values, thanksgiving, and events in people's lives. Similarly, Lupenga (2006) also adds that personal names are an interesting opportunity to reveal the semantic and morphological processes involved in constructing them. Constructing names, in general, depends largely on the semantic significance that the name-giver wants to convey followed by the morphological processes which largely depend on the deployment of a network of affixes that are harmonized by relevant phonological rules.

In the same way, Abdul's (2014) study in Ghana concentrated on morphologically and conventionally gender-distinct names. The morphologically marked gender names are the circumstantial birth names, twin names, the traditional religious names, and some birthday names whilst clan names, order of birth names,and traditional names are conventionally marked for gender. Beside the age-based variations, the study also revealed that there are some gender distinctions in Ewe personal names.

The study by Mwangi (2015) in Kenya focused on the linguistic structure of Gikuyu personal names in terms of morphological constructions, their modifications, and general development. According to him, names are morphologically analysable following the same agglutination principle of Bantu morphology and demonstrated that Gikuyu grammar is largely contained in personal names. His study has revealed various morphological processes in the language that include affixation, derivation, compounding and reflexivization. The current study is different from that of Mwangi (2015) on account of the languages investigated. Further, the current study also considered aspects of patterns or categorises in which personal names were grouped.

Chola, Ngalande and Simwinga (2019) conducted a study on Daring Death among the Tumbuka: A Socio-Semantic Analysis of Death-Related Personal Names. The major findings showed that, among the Tumbuka people, the first name is bestowed on a child after detachment of its umbilical cord, with the father and grandfather of the child's father being the sole name-givers. First name bestowal arises from different factors, but the study focused only on those names that are influenced by death, with particular reference to those that are used totaunt death. In relation to the findings, it was deduced that "personal names in Tumbuka-prone speech communities go beyond being mere personal labels, to expressions and stories that mark the various social and psychological milestones and circumstances surrounding the birth of a child to be named" (Chola, Ngalande and Simwinga:2019:1). This finding is in tandem with Samuel Gyasi Obeng (1998:1) who observed in an article entitled Akan Death-Prevention Names:a pragmatic and structural analysis that "Death-prevention names are shown to be meaningful and to refer to the lives of both their bearers and the name-givers". This observation, in turn, makes personal names an integral meaningful part of the Tumbuka cultural heritage which should be explored by scholars.

Chola and Simwinga (2021) in their article entitled: Sokalikwenda – 'Calamity That Moves': Some Social Aspects of Tumbuka Personal Names examined some social aspects of Tumbuka personal names. This researchs ought to establish the social aspects that influence the selection and bestowal of Tumbuka personal names within the Tumbuka social and cultural setting. From the findings, it was established that among the Tumbuka people of Lundazi District Zambia, personal names are a reflection of various aspects of their society. Some of the messages reflected in the names analysed in this study show how Tumbuka culture and traditions influence the naming practices. Based on the findings, the study concluded that "sociocultural motivation plays a critical role in the choice of personal names among the Tumbuka people" (*Chola and Simwinga, 2021:1). This finding resonates with previous findings by Mpela (2010), Mandende (2009) and Suzman (1994) which reflect the role of social factors in child naming.*

5. METHODOLOGY

5.1. Data Collection

The study employed the qualitative approach to data collection within which purposive and snowballing sampling was used in selecting the key informants. The study was conducted in Isoka district of Muchinga province. One hundred (100) personal names were collected from 16 informants among whom were: five males, five females, five village headmen,and one chief from five different villages, who were not less than 50 years old and had resided in the area for more than 45 years. Four specific techniques were used for data collection: simple face to face interviews, focus group

discussions, introspection, and document analysis. Both face-to-face interviews and focus group discussion sessions were recorded and transcribed before being analysed. Subjecting these data to focus group discussions helped the researcher establish the authenticity of the data. Focus group discussions also helped with the confirmation of accuracy in data interpretation. The above procedures were supplemented by introspection, based on the researcher's knowledge of Namwanga.

5.2. Data Analysis

The data were analysed thematically in line with the research questions and discussed in relation to the literature review. Specifically, every name was considered in terms of both literal and non-literal meaning. Thereafter the analysis had to establish whether or not the non-literal meaning of the name related to any circumstances surrounding the child's birth and what these circumstances were. This process facilitated the determination of the socio-sematic aspects of the selected Namwanga personal names.

6. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

6.1. Naming Practices

Among the Namwanga personal naming is not given lightly in that it represents the thoughts and feelings of the name-giver. It is for this reason that Namwanga personal names follow different patterns. Patterns in this case refer to something (name) that represents a class or type. The research concluded that among the Namwanga personal names are not given at random, but according to Namwnga traditions and culture. Namwanga names are categorised into various patterns in relation to the circumstances or situations surrounding the families before the birth of the child. The following are the patterns of names among the Namwanga: names expressing religious affiliations of the parents, surnames, clan names, names expressing the ability to fight, persist and conquer, names expressing character or personality. Others are those that reflect gossiping or rumour- mongering, names expressing a complaint , displeasure, and regrets, names expressing ownership, names expressing respect, care or protection, names expressing unity, special names and names expressing hatred. Namwanga people express what they approve and disapprove in society, express hope for the future, inform others about their past, and express endearment. In addition, through personal naming, one can tell what the family believes in as well as their religious affiliation.

6.2. Meaning of Names

6.2.1 Names Expressing Religious Affiliations of the Parents

These are names given that reveal the religious affiliation of the family of the name-giver or the name-bearer. According to Obeng (2001:144) 'African religious names reveal the African beliefs that God is the giver of joy, wealth, happiness, and peace and also the protector of humankind.' Through religious names, the Namwanga show their reverence and gratitude to God for his mercies and kindness towards them and it is through the name that one can be identified as belonging to a particular religion. Presented below are some of the religious names that the participants gave as representing the religious affiliations of the parents.

First names

1. *Alinani* 'God is with me'

2. *Alinjavwa* 'God will help me'

3. *Ndosilwe*- 'God has blessd me'

4. *Pepanji*- 'keep on praying'

5. *Salifyanji*- 'keep on thanking God'

6.1.3. Gender-Specific Names

Gender-specific names are names that are given to persons of particular sex that is either male only or female only. In this section, Namwanga personal names that are surnames, in particular, are usually marked with gender-specific prefixes. In an interview conducted, when asked about gender-specific names some respondents indicated that, Namwanga personal names, surnames, in particular, are

gender marked specific, meaning there are names that are only given to males or females and they are usually marked through the use of the prefix 'Si-,' for males and 'Na-,' for females.

From this perspective, gender-specific names in Namwanga are divided into two categories; those that are morphologically marked and those that are conventionally marked. Generally, the majority of Namwanga first names are not morphologically marked for gender. But there are specific personal names that are morphologically marked and these are surnames or family names.

Morphologically Marked Gender Names

These are names that are formed by adding prefixes to the root or stem of the name. Mostly, morphologically marked gender names in Namwanga are formed by adding the prefix 'Si-' (male), 'Na-' (female). Below are the model and the table showing the morphological marked gender-specific names (surnames)
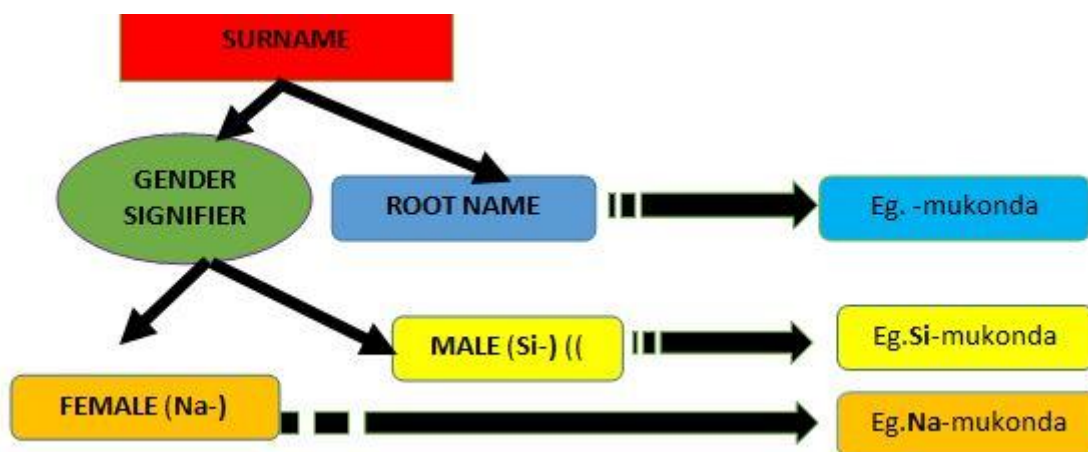

Figure1. *Morphologically Marked Gender Anthroponyms model*

Table1. *Morphologically Marked Gender Names*

S/N	MALE	FEMALE
1.	SIWILA	NAWILA
2.	SIMUKONDA	NAMUKONDA
3.	SILUNGWE	NALUNGWE
4.	SICHALWE	NACHALWE
5	SIMUNTENDA	NAMUTENDA

Conventionally Marked Gender Surnames

Conventionally marked gender surnames or family names are names whose gender is not determined by affixation. The knowledge about this type of gender marking is inherent to the Namwanga people. Table 2 below shows some selected conventionally marked gender surnames in Namwanga.

Table2. *Conventionally marked gender surnames*

S/N	MALE	FEMALE
1.	SICHONE	NAMONJE
2.	SIKOMBE	NAKAPONDA
3.	SILWIZYA	NAKALUMBI
4.	SIKALANGWE	NACHONA
5	SIAME	NAKAMBA

The names in Table 2 above are perceived to be gender-distinct names among the Namwanga.

Gender-neutral names

These are unisex personal names, meaning that the names can be given to both male and female persons. However, the Namwanga consider some first names to be gender-neutral and in this regard, different respondents interviewed on some names gave different gender identity of the same name presented to the researcher. The following are some Namwanga selected gender-neutral first names;

Table3. *Gender neutral names*

S/N	MASCULINE	FEMININE
1.	NKUSUWILA	NKUSUWILA
2.	SUWILANJI	SUWILANJI
3.	TETELANJI	TETELANJI
4.	WATUPA	WATUPA

In relation to the findings on gender-neutral names, the respondents interviewed said that, despite the names being gender-neutral and having the same semantic meaning, the pragmatic meaning differs according to different individual families, societies, communities, and even the circumstances in which they are given. For instance, Suwilanji; semantically means 'faith' or 'believe' and could be given to both males and females. Pragmatically, different respondents interviewed separately gave different interpretations. One respondent said that the name was given to a female child because thought the family had had male children consecutively, they had faith or believed that one day God would give them a female child, hence, that name Suwilanji (faith). Another respondent said that the name is given to the male child in that they believed that it was this child who is going to liberate or rescue them from the challenges that they were encountering.

Furthermore, the findings above indicate that among the Namwanga personal names gender is grouped into two major categories: gender-specific names involving surnames and gender-neutral names involving first names as presented earlier. The findings are in line with Onukawa (2000) who stipulated that in Igbo most of the names are gender-specific. Like Onukawa, Walkowiak (2016) also found that gender-specific given names are in some cultures used for the opposite sex. For instance, in Poland, the name 'Maria' as the holy name of God's mother can be bestowed on boys and girls alike. In France, a similar practice was connected with names 'Anne' and 'Marie,' which historically could be bestowed on boys too, even as the first of the given names. For example, Anne du Bourg or Marie-Pierre Kanig.

This is also in agreement with Ahinful (1997) who states that the Akan personal female names have a man's name as the root plus a suffix '-a,' '-aa,' or '-wa' reflecting the morphology of the Akan female name. Also Gerba(2014) who conducted a study on personal names among the Oromo in Ethiopia found that names were given in terms of gender, though there were names that were used for both sexes such as Kennaa(gift), Siifan (you and me, Naafjaad(thank for me), and such names had no gender markers. But there were also personal names that end in –aa, -a, -is, and –oowhich denoted male, whereas, those that end with morphemes –ee, tii, and –tuu, denoted female. However, the current study is different in that personal names in Namwanga, surnames in particular, are the ones that are marked gender-specific and that gender-specific names are marked by adding the prefix 'Si-,' for male and 'Na-,' for female respectively. The research also discovered that surnames in most cases are marked gender specific while first names are in most cases gender-neutral.

6.1.4. Clan Names

These are names that indicate the patrilineal identity of the family. Moreover, clan names cannot be given by any particular group of people who do not belong to that particular clan, though nowadays one can find that the same names are given to people who even do not belong to that particular clan. The respondent interviewed about clan names said that, *clan names in Namwanga are given to children whose parents belong to the specific type of clan and family.* Thus, their meanings can only be disclosed to the member of the family or clan because of some beliefs attached to them. Some of the names are those of the Simwawa and the Sichilongo families.

	Simwawa		**Sichilongo**
1.	*Kapewa*	1.	*Chuusa*
2.	*Kasempa*	2.	*Kafwatula*
3.	*Mukalakata*	3.	*Muchinga*
4.	*Katwamakondo*	4.	*Chilolwa*
		5.	*Chamunda*

6.1.5. Names Expressing the Ability to Fight, Persist and Conquer

These are personal names that are given to children whose parents had the ability to fight, persist and conquer socially or physically and in the same way they thought that, bestowing such names on their children would enable them, when they grow up, to have such powers to fight problems or challenges that may come in their way. The following is an example of the said name:

      1. Kafwimbi - 'conqueror'

6.1.6. Names that Reflect Character or Personality

These are personal names that portray the family behaviour or personality of parents. Examples of such names, given to children, include:

      1. Matula-   'destroyer'

      2. Tepechela– 'careless'

6.1.7. Names that Reflect Gossiping or Rumour Mongering

These are names given to children by their parents because before their birth people used to gossip, talk evil things,and spread fake information about the lives of the couple as well as the families. The following are some examples of names that reflect gossip or rumour-mongering:

      1. Zonto-   'talking anyhow'

      2. Mbepa–   'lie'

      3. Vwanganji– 'keep on talking'

      4. Landanji-   'keep on talking'

The researcher asked one respondent as to why they give such names to the children and this is what the respondent had to say,

Cinocikalenga a twinikaa mazina kuwana wituay amusan goweyo acakuti awantuw anowalandang anantiuku wipaivy aufipal upwal wituwa liken antiwar kwivw ainsoni pavyowa wipanga.

(What made them give such names to their children was to let those who talk evil or gossip to stop and be ashamed of the vice).

6.1.8. Names Expressing Complaint, Displeasure, and Regrets

These are names that are usually bestowed on the child because of bad experiences that parents underwent, and by giving such names parents are indirectly expressing complaints, displeasure, and regrets about the situations being unfair to them. Examples of such names include:

1.	*Waimbila* 'suffering'
2.	*Musekanji 'keep on* laughing at him or her'
3.	*Mutukanji 'keep on* insulting him or her'
4.	*Chinyanyali*'dirt'
5.	*Maimbo*'problems'

6.1.9. Names Expressing Ownership

The researcher asked the respondent on names regarding ownership and this is what the respondent had to say,

Amazinangavyoyabayakapwakuwanangapamwipalupwakwalinjiivyakupokotanukulwisyanyikwakwam panga.(Such names are given to children by their parents because there were conflicts regarding the ownership of the land). The following is an example of the name that express ownership:

      1. Chiwutwe 'owner'

6.1.10. Names Expressing Respect, Love, Care or Protection

These are names given to children to convey the message to other family members that they should be respecting, loving one another, care and embrace every person regardless of whom that person is or where he or she comes from. Examples of such names include:

      1. Muchinzi 'respect'

      2. Ndolanji'keep on seeing me'

      3. Salifyanji'keep on thanking'

6.1.11. Names Expressing Unity

These are names given to children by their parents as they think that such names may bring about oneness and togetherness among the family members. Examples of such names include:

6.1.12. Names Expressing Unity

These are names given to children by their parents as they think that such names may bring about oneness and togetherness among the family members. Examples of such names include:

1. *Mengwa* 'peace'
2. *Ivwananji* 'keep on understanding each other'
3. *Chizengo* 'build or unite'

6.1.13. Special Names

According to the findings on this category of names, it was observed that some names are specifically given to children based on certain special conditions. Moreover, under this category, the respondent interviewed said that such names are given to a child born after their dead brother. In other words, it is a name given to a child who is born after another child who has passed on. For instance, the names:

1. *Musenga* 'born after the dead brother'
2. *Pawi-* 'born when there was a funeral for one of the family members'

6.1.14. Names that Express Hatred

These are names given to children by parents to reflect the hatred experienced by the family for no reason known to them and that they were not happy about the unfair treatment. Thus by giving such names parents were expressing an unhappy situation. Such expressions or situations are manifested in the following names:

1. *Wapatwa* 'you are hated'
2. *Winganji* 'keep on chasing him or her'

The above findings revealed that personal names in Namwanga are categorized according to different patterns. The study is similar to Mandende (2009), and Neethling (2007) who found that the patterns that personal names in most African societies follow are divided into: reflecting traditional beliefs, cultural practices, religious practices, and derogation (demean). This is also in agreement with Mphela (2010) who found that names given to children are given taking into account issues such as status, marital wealth, health, biological and social relationships, nature, and environment. This is also true in Namwanga society, though categories of patterns of names are based on what the name-giver experiences before the birth of the child.

7. CONCLUSION

The research concluded that among the Namwanga, personal names are not given at random, but according to Namwanga traditions and culture. Namwanga names are categorised into various patterns in relation to the circumstances or situations surrounding the families prior to the birth of the child. These provide reasons why a name is given and events at the time a person is born. Moreover, the following are the patterns of names among the Namwanga people: names expressing religious affiliations of the parents, surnames, clan names, names expressing the ability to fight, persist and conquer, names expressing character or personality, names that reflect gossiping or rumour-mongering, names expressing a complaint , displeasure, and regrets, names expressing ownership, names expressing respect, care or protection, names expressing unity, special names and names expressing hatred. Namwanga people express what they approve and disapprove in society, express hope for the future, inform others about their past, and express endearment. In addition, through personal naming, one can tell what the family believes in as well as their religious affiliation. It is the case, therefore, that in Namwanga naming is a matter of reference as the name has to refer to some event or occurrence in the community or the family.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

Considering the overall study and conclusions drawn, the following are some of the recommendations made:

    a. Research into nicknames in Namwanga and their functions

    b. Research into proverbial anthroponyms of Namwanga; and

    c. Research into the gender dimension of Namwanga names.

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