

Research Report

Naming practices in contemporary Machame-Chagga culture

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Abstract - Naming practices were cherished in African communities and personal names bestowed to children used to carry some semantic content usually determined by circumstances at birth. An examination of formal names of school children from the Machame-Chagga families exhibits an increasingly diminishing trend of naming practices. Most names of pupils are of English and/or Christian origin and just a fraction of names from a sample of 421 full names appear to be the typical Machame-Chagga names. In addition, Islamic names are numerous, which is another testimony that religion has dismantled the traditional naming system of the Machame-Chagga community. During the integration of foreign religious names, two patterns emanate. On the one hand, many Christian names are expressed in words with semantic content, e.g. *Aikaeli* ‘thank you God’, *Aminaeli* ‘thank you God’ and *Ndumiakunde* ‘the Lord tends to love’. On the other hand, Islamic names in Hai District have been Swahilized, for example *Azizi* and *Mustafa*. All in all, the imposition of foreign religion in Machame-Chagga community has eroded the indigene naming system.

Keywords: Personal-names, Cultural-change, Machame-Chagga, Onomastic-approach, Tanzania

Introduction

The Chagga people of Tanzania inhabit most of the land around the slopes of Mt. Kilimanjaro (Nurse 1979) and practise two kinds of beliefs and sacrifices, namely Christianity and traditional sacrificial rituals (Christian 2017; Hasu 2009). These practices manifest amidst the development of the education sector in Kilimanjaro Region which is historically a hub of western education and Christian civilisation (Mangia 2003; Lema 1973; Mushi 2012). Consequently, two layers of traits exist in this society, i.e. undertakings associated with traditions and customs on the one hand and modern lifestyles on the other. This phenomenon can well be exposed through examination of their naming practices.

Most of the existing literature come to the conclusion that an onomastic account of personal names amongst African societies today tend to yield at least three kinds of names. On the several strands most African societies maintain native names which remain in the clan and/or family names, importation and imposition of Christian and/or Islamic nomenclature, and bestowing modern (European) names to children (cf. Agyekum 2006; Chauke 2009; Lusekelo 2014; Makoni et al. 2007; Moyo 2012; Mutunda 2011; Swilla 2000, among many others). Since the Chagga people of Tanzania practice both traditional spiritual rituals and Christian and/or Islamic beliefs, perhaps an investigation of their naming system will yield fascinating results made of strands of names which resemble the three patterns of their religious life.

The modernisation and transformation policies and implementation strategies warranted Tanzanian societies to change from traditional cultures to modernized and/or westernized cultures (Madsen 2000; Snyder 2005). This phenomenon is evident in the naming practices in that western names are obtained in schools (Makoni et al. 2007; Lusekelo 2014), around the church mainly during baptism (Ikotun 2014; Muzale 1998) and in urban centres (Moyo 2012; Pongweni 1983). It is fascinating to learn whether the circumstances at birth, which determined naming in most African societies (Agyekum 2006; Akinnaso 1980; Muzale 1998; Swilla 2000), are still maintained by the Chagga people.

The Machame-Chagga culture at the verge of foreign religion and western education

The Machame-Chagga as a unitary cultural group

The Machame-Chagga people formulate a section of the large Chagga tradition (Lema 1973), which maintain Chagga beliefs and sacrifices amidst Christianity and European civilization (Christian 2017). The existing literature suggest that the Chagga people settled in the slopes of Mt. Kilimanjaro and practiced traditional Chagga home-gardens in the high slopes (Fernandes et al. 1985; Hemp 2006; Soini 2002) and irrigation farming in the lower slopes (Mayo & Nkinawe 2013). The crops grown in the Chagga home-gardens included about 25 species of banana (*Musa sp.*) (Hemp 2006: 1194), beans (*Phaseolus vulgaris*), cow pea (*Vigna unguiculata*), maize (*Zea mays*), potato (*Solanum tuberosum*), sweet potato (*Ipomoea batatas*), and arid yam (*Dioscorea*spp) (Fernandes et al. 1985).

The Machame-Chagga people inhabit Hai District, which is located at the western edge of the slopes of Mount Kilimanjaro (Mayo & Nkinawe 2013). The indigenous persons of these areas practice banana culture in that families own banana groves as sources of food (Mangia 2003; Rabiél 2009) and for sacrificial rituals (Hasu 2009). Irrigation farming takes place in the lower slopes where maize and legumes are cultivated (Mayo & Nkinawe 2013). It means that the Machame-Chagga appear to maintain communal kind of livelihood in that the banana culture ties the people together and irrigation farming is practiced communally.

As it is the case of all Chagga people, the Machame-Chagga people were organized into chiefdoms ruled by Mangi (Christian 2017; Malipula 2014). During the arrival of Germans, the Chagga people lived in chiefdoms. Lema (1973) mentions chiefs of Masama and Machame as prominent chiefs in the area. Iliffe (1979) found that the Chagga people, ruled by chiefs, formulated one of the strongest and organized societies in Tanganyika.

In most of the Chaggaland, God was traditionally referred to as *Ruwa* in East and Central Kilimanjaro and *Iruva* in the Machame and Masama chiefdoms (Lema 1973: 233). Mosha (2000) affirms that traditionally the Chagga people recognized a supernatural power whose name is suggested to be *Ruwa*. While Mosha (2000) suggests

that the word *ruwa* is associated with a chief preserver, Lema (1973) argues that the word *ruwa* has the meaning sun. Rugemalira (2008: 24) lists the words *irubha* (singular) and *marubha* (plural) as a noun for sky and god and *irubheu* as heaven. This means that traditionally the Chagga people believed in supernatural powers vested in a spiritual being, which sits in the sky or heaven.

In the course of the discussion in a section below, it will become evident that the Machame-Chagga people adopted the word *Eli* to refer to God. Therefore, the essence of the “sun” i.e. *Ruwa* or *Iruva* being treated as the source of faith-related name for God, as suggested by Lema (1973), is not confirmed in this research.

To communicate with *Ruwa (Irubha)*, a sacred place was set aside in the banana groves. In most cases, families had family shrines and sacred groves through which sacrifices to the “supreme being” and ancestors were conducted (Hasu 2009). The traditional practice of sacrificial rituals is maintained to date despite the imposition and influence of Christianity and Islam in Hai District.

The predominance of Christianity and western education, which penetrated Hai District before 1890s, is apparent amongst the Machame-Chagga. This happened because Christianity, which is associated with western education, was introduced earlier in Hai District. Christian (2017: 58) reports that “the British Church Missionary Society did send missionaries to Uchagga between 1848-1892”. However, the establishment of earlier mission stations began in the 1890s. It is reported that the main Protestant mission efforts was under Lutheran Church of Leipzig Mission Society, which built missionary stations in Machame and Siha in 1893, and other places in Kilimanjaro (Christian 2017:58). Consequently, today about 70 percent of all Chagga people are Christians (Christian (2017: 58).

The penetration of Islamic Region into Machameland is also experienced. Kiondo (1994:50) highlights the presence of Islamic organization which runs Kibohehe Secondary School in Masama area of Hai District. Mshana, Hampshire, Panter-Brick and Walker (2008: 38), whose study used in-depth survey highlights that about 79 percent of inhabitants of Hai District are Christians and Muslims, which constitute about 21 percent. It follows; therefore, an examination of the amount of Islamic names in Machame-Chagga, which usually penetrated into Tanzanian societies via Swahili (Swilla 2000), is a welcome contribution to make in this study.

According to Mosha (2000), the traditional education system allowed young persons to be molded by elders in a manner that fits the traditions, customs, rites and means of livelihood of the Chagga people. The whole worldview of education surrounded *ipfumba* which entails to enlighten and awaken members of the community to the morals, manners, work and life cycle of the Chagga society. The research output by Mangia (2003) and Rabiël (2009) point out the remaining traditional practices include female circumcision which is highly practised in western Kilimanjaro, inheritance of widows, division of labour in a family, subordination of women over men etc.

The modern school system which was introduced by foreigners, mainly German missionaries and colonial administrators, marked the transformation of the indigenous education system of the Chagga people. Historically, the first mission school in Kilimanjaro was built at Nkwarungo village in Machame in 1894 (Lema 1973: 131). By 1899, many schools were erected in Machame and Masama, including Nkuu mission school (Lema 1973: 419). Both boys and girls of Chagga descent were registered as boarding pupils. The expansion of mission schools in Machame and Masama was supported by chiefs and colonial administrators. After independence in 1961, Machame and Masama became the centre of western education in Kilimanjaro (Mangia 2003; Rabael 2009).

Traditional naming practices of the Machame-Chagga culture¹

The traditional naming practices of the Machame-Chagga people begin with the childhood names called *irigina la kyen* ‘home-name’ in Mashami, the tongue spoken by Machame-Chagga people. Technically, these are forms of address which connect children with their paternal and maternal lineages. These names are commonly used within a family, though they are also used by members of the village. The childhood names are associated with gender and the number in birth within a family.

On the feminine side, three home-names are common. The first born daughter may be called *Nka X* or *ma X*, e.g. *Manshau* ‘mother of Ndanshau’, *Nkamasawe* ‘wife

¹ An ethnographic account provided in this section is based on long-term encounters by the second author in Machame area. She was born and brought up in Kisereni village. The second author stayed in Masama area for three months between 2002 and 2003. Some names were gathered during this stay.

of Masawe' or *Malema* 'mother of Lema'. *Nka* is a paternal name because it refers to the grandparents from father's descent. The second born daughter is called *Manka*, which is blend of *mae wa mka* 'mother of wife'. This name is maternal because it has reference to the mother's descent. The third born daughter obtains the name *Kyekue* 'grandmother's name' which is associated paternal descent.

On the masculine side, three home-names are commonly bestowed to newly born children. The first born son is called by the name of the paternal grandfather, e.g. *Ndanshau* 'bull', *Masaawe* 'hailstorm' or *Lema* 'disobey, revolt'. The second born son is given a maternal name *Ndeanka*, which is a blend of *nde wa mka* 'father of wife'. The last born son is called *Nkuukyen* 'head of the family'. Traditionally, the last borne son inherits *kihamba* [*kyaamba*] in Mashami language (Rugemalira 2008: 38] 'the Chagga home-garden' hence he inherits the name of the father as well.

Almost every Machame-Chagga person obtains a first name, similar to personal names as per Swilla (2000), which is called *irigina la upatiso* 'baptism name' in Mashami. It should be noted that about 70 percent of people in Kilimanjaro Region are Christians (Christian 2017). It follows that most of the first or personal names of the Machame-Chagga people aged probably between 80 and below are associated with Christian religion. Thus, the imposition of western culture is apparently visible in personal names.

An examination of the first (personal) names of the elderly persons (dead and alive, hence aged 100 and above) reveals both traditional and modern naming practices. In Table (1) below, we offer exemplary cases of first (personal) names of individuals in Machame and Masama villages.

The names of the elderly persons reveal two kinds of nomenclature. On the one hand, the circumstances at birth appear to have determined bestowing of personal names perhaps before the arrival of missionaries and colonial administrators. For instance, perhaps *Masaawe* was born during hailstorm; *Ndanshau* perhaps was born and given a name related to bull; *Simbo* was born during harvesting season etc.

Foreign religious beliefs, on the other hand, influence naming practices. In fact, the predominance of Christianity and Islamic religions tends to erode the traditional environments and contexts of name giving. In most African societies, crops (harvests), trees, famine, rivers, stones, mountains, whether etc. determined name giving (Agyekum 2006; Akinnaso 1980). These contexts have been replaced by contexts of

Christianity, e.g. baptism hence appearance of names such as *Shisaeli*, 'God guide me'. In addition, grandparents of Mashami-Chagga descent had already obtained Islamic names such as *Athumani Nsanya Urasa*, *Hamadi Addis Kweka* and *Hawa Omari Ndosi*.

Names	Gender	Meaning
<i>Athumani</i>	Masculine	Islamic name
<i>Abednego</i>	Masculine	'Abednego: Christian'
<i>Akedesuwa</i>	Feminine	'She is being prepared'
<i>Hawa</i>	Feminine	Islamic name
<i>Masaawe</i>	Masculine	'hailstorm'
<i>Mwanaidi</i>	Feminine	Islamic name
<i>Ndanschau</i>	Masculine	'bull'
<i>Ndewangisio</i>	Masculine	'get confirmation'
<i>Nsanya</i>	Masculine	'teeth gap'
<i>Nturu</i>	Masculine	'forest'
<i>Simbo</i>	Masculine	'harvest, divine gift'
<i>Shisaeli</i>	Masculine	'God guide me'
<i>Tikisi</i>	Feminine	'reward, gift'
<i>Weransia</i>	Feminine	'hope, wait for hope'

Table 1: First names from Machame and Masama villages

Methodology

Hai District is the centre of research for the information reported in this paper. In fact, the majority of residents of Hai District are Mashami by descent. This is confirmed by population of the district which was estimated to be 210,533 persons in 2012 (URT 2013: 40). Of the 194,868 persons who speak Mashami (LoT 2009: 2), a total of 134,440 inhabit Hai District (LoT 2009: 36). It means that about 68.99 percent of all Mashami speakers dwell in the district. The same is true for the percentage of the inhabitants of the district in that the Mashami speakers constitute about 63.85 percent.

The data for this study were obtained from rural areas in Hai District of Kilimanjaro Region in Tanzania. According to LoT (2009: 36), about 134,440 inhabitants of this district speak Machame-Chagga as their mother tongue. It is the assumption of this study that school children in rural areas of Hai District come from families of Machame-Chagga descent hence a proper laboratory for examination of naming system.

The basis of the information provided in the section above is the names of persons who live in Masama and Machame divisions in Hai District of Kilimanjaro Region. The personal names of elderly people were gathered from people of Machame-Chagga descend².

When a list of names is drawn from primary school pupils, we obtain a total of 421 full (three) names which have been examined in this paper. When this list of names is split into individual names, we obtain as three times as many names. Consequently, a total of 1238 individual names have been analysed in this paper. These data sets were obtained from six (6) primary schools located in the wards mentioned below. These schools, which are located in rural areas, were purposefully selected because they are located in typical Machame-Chagga villages. In line with Lema (1973), both Machame and Masama traditional Machame-Chagga chiefdoms have been represented by schools in three wards given below (URT 2013).

S/N	Name of school	Ward	Total Names
1.	Kisereni	Machame Mashariki	76
2.	Machame	Machame Mashariki	38
3.	Masama-tema	Masama Kusini	65
4.	Nkuu	Machame Mashariki	42
5.	Nkwasinge	Machame Kusini	93
6.	Uswaa	Machame Uroki	107
Total			421

The children's names used herein were for the 2014, 2015 and 2016 primary school examinees. Having entered Primary I at age 6 and/or 7, it is assumed that these persons were aged 13 and/or 14 at Primary VII. Given this scenario, these children were born around 2000.

The choice of these schools was purposefully conducted on the basis of historical background. Firstly, Nkuu and Kisereni are schools located in villages which obtained missionary education as earlier as 1899 (Lema 1973). Secondly, traditionally Hai District was split into Masama chiefdom, which is represented by Masama-tema Primary School, and Machame chiefdom, which is represented by Machame, Nkuu and

² We are grateful to Hija Urusa and Benedictor Lema for the provision of names from Masama area. The second author gathered names from Machame area.

Kisereni Primary Schools. Thirdly, Nkwasaringe and Uswaa schools represent primary schools built by independent Government of Tanzania.

Findings

The distribution of clan names

Of the three names per person (full names), most of the primary school pupils maintain a clan (family) name. The family names of typical Machame-Chagga origin constitute about 88.35 percent of all the data. This entails that naming in this community maintain names of ancestors which are inherited by the children in formal institutions. However, these clan names split into three categorized as discussed below. Firstly, there are common names among members of this community. The composition of the commonly used clan names is summarized in Table 2. The fourteen clan names given below constitute about 76.95 percent of all clan names used by the sample of pupils. This is a testimony that these clan names are distributed all over Mashami speaking community.

S/N	Clan Name	Frequency	Percent
1.	Mushi	50	11.87
2.	Munisi	42	9.97
3.	Swai	38	9.02
4.	Masawe	28	6.65
5.	Lema	24	5.70
6.	Urasa	24	5.70
7.	Ulomi	22	5.22
8.	Mwanga	20	4.75
9.	Nkya	16	3.80
10.	Muro	16	3.80
11.	Shoo	14	3.32
12.	Umburi	10	2.37
13.	Uroki	10	2.37
14.	Kweka	10	2.37
Total		321	76.91

Table 2: Common clan names in Machame-Chagga

Some of these clan names bear semantic content. For example, *Masaawe* is associated with hailstorm, which might have been a common natural phenomenon on the slopes of Mt. Kilimanjaro. *Lema* is associated with revolt or disobedience.

Secondly, some clan names are scattered in the data (Table 3). The obvious reason here is that such clan names are not indigene in Hai District. The clan names *Makundi*, *Tarimo*, *Kesi* and *Tesha* are immigrants from Marangu and Rombo in north-eastern Kilimanjaro. The clan name *Mbwambo* is a Pare name from Same and Mwanga Districts. *Mbise* is a Meru name by origin. Thus, only five clan names given in Table 3 are indigene to Hai, namely *Kimaro*, *Malya*, *Ndosa*, *Ndosi* and *Ngowi*. It follows, therefore, that eighteen clan names identified in the list of pupils are typical Machame-Chagga.

S/N	Clan Name	Frequency
1.	Kimaro	6
2.	Malya	4
3.	Ndosa	4
4.	Kesi	4
5.	Mbwambo	4
6.	Ngowi	4
7.	Ndosi	2
8.	Tesha	2
9.	Mbise	2
10.	Makundi	2
11.	Tarimo	2
12.	Ngulo	1
13.	Ulotu	1
TOTAL		42

Table 3: Least used clan names in Machame-Chagga

It is important to underscore the amount of clan names identified from the data. First, it appears that 26 clans are apparently revealed by the data above. Second, statistics demonstrate that about 86.45 of all family names constitute clan names provided in tables 1 and 2 above. Nonetheless, the presence of foreign names is subsumed by the existence of the names related to supernatural powers as presented below.

Thirdly, some school pupils bear family names which manifest as Christian faith-oriented names (Table 4). One of the diagnostics to its identification is the word *eli* 'God' which is attached to most of these names. These names comprise about 1.90 percent of all family names of the pupils.

S/N	Family Name	Semantic Content
1.	Aminaeli	'thank you God'
2.	Elibariki	'God bless'
3.	Kundaeli	'love God'
4.	Kusiriye	'persevere'
5.	Aseri	'nativized Christian name'
6.	Wera	'wait'

Table 4: Family names with semantic content in Machame-Chagga

The penetration of foreign names is also obvious in the data, as shown in Table 5. Most of the foreign names come from English, Christian inspired Hebrew and/or Islamic names, which comprise about 3.08 percent of all family names analysed herein.

S/N	Family Name	Source
1.	Abisalum	Christian
2.	Bethuel	Christian
3.	Ernest	English
4.	Humphrey	English
5.	Mustafa	Islam
6.	Rabson	Christian
7.	Raymond	English
8.	Solomoni	Christian

Table 5: Foreign family names in Machame-Chagga

To conclude, we will highlight two issues here. First, it remains obvious that the Machame-Chagga maintain their clan names. This is evident in the high number of native names used by pupils. The penetration of foreign names, which is low in rate as compared to other communities such as the Hadzabe (Lusekelo 2014) and Bantu people

of Lake Victoria (Muzale 1998), appears to be hindered, perhaps by the respect of their clan names.

Secondly, the penetration of Kiswahili names, which is reported elsewhere in Tanzania (Lusekelo 2014; Swilla 2000), is absent for the clan names in Machame-Chagga. This is supported further by the demise of the *Mboro* clan name whose translation in Kiswahili is *penis*. Most of the *Muro* and *Mushi* clan members are originally of *Mboro* descent but opted out due to the *penis*-meaning of this name in the lingua franca Kiswahili.

Personal names between 1960s and 1980s

The data presented hereunder involves first names of parents of pupils who we assume were born after independence and/or during *ujamaa* period in Tanzania, i.e. from 1960s to 1980s. The basis of the assumption is that these are parents of these children. The marriage age of males in Tanzania is between 20 and 25; plus the age of Primary VII leavers is between 13 and 15 (URT 2013). The data suggest five categories as follows.

The first pattern is the presence of names of Islam by origin. These names are numerous and constitute about 104 entries hence making about 24.70 percent of all parents' names. Most of these names have been nativized into Machame/Bantu structure, as shown in Table 6 below.

Azizi	Mustafa
Abdu	Nasoro
Habibu	Rajab
Hashimu	Ramadhani
Iddi	Rashid
Mohamed	Swaibu

Table 6: Islamic names in Machame-Chagga

The second category is composed of Christian names whose origin is typically Biblical names. Some of the names have been incorporated into the Bantu structure, as illustrated in Table 7. These names are numerous, with 135 entries, which make 32.06 percent of all parents' names.

Daudi	'David'
Elia	'Elijah'
Hosea	'Hosea'
Ibrahimu	'Ibrahim'
Jeremia	'Jeremiah'
Joramu	'Jorum'
Joshua	'Joshua'
Meshaki	'Meshack'
Nikodemu	'Nicodemus'
Zablon	'Zablon'

Table 7: Biblical names in Machame-Chagga

Another set of foreign names are English ones. These are names borrowed from English language, as shown in Table 8. English names constitute about 113 entries, hence 26.84 percent.

Aggrey	Frank
Aireen	Godbless
Alex	Geoffrey
Angel	Godfrey
Bernard	Jasper
Calvin	Innocent
Charles	Julius
Collin	Humphrey

Table 8: English names bestowed to Machame-Chagga

The forth category is composed of Kiswahili names (Table 9) which constitute about 7.36 percent. In most cases, these names have faith-related semantic content.

Amani	'peace'
Almasi	'diamond'
Ashukuriwe	'Let him be thanked'
Nuru	'light'
Ombeni	'pray, ask'
Sikudhani	'I didn't imagine'
Tumsifu	'let us praise him'

Table 9: Kiswahili names with semantic content

The last category comprises names of Machame-Chagga words, which constitute about 9.02 percent. Most of these names are associated with *eli* 'God', *isa* 'to shepherd', *kunda* 'to love, to favour', *ndumi* 'Lord', *aika* 'thank' and *ana* 'thank you' (Rugemalira 2008). Compounding process is the main word-formation process attested in these names (Table 10).

Aikaeli	<i>aika</i> 'thank you', <i>eli</i> 'God'
Anamwikira	<i>ana</i> 'thank', <i>mwikira</i> 'the healer/saviour'
Anandumi	<i>ana</i> 'thank', <i>ndumi</i> 'Lord'
Elinisa	<i>Eli</i> 'God', <i>nisa</i> 'irrigate'
Elipokea	<i>Eli</i> 'God', <i>pokea</i> 'receive'
Elifuraha	<i>Eli</i> 'God', <i>furaha</i> 'happiness'
Eliashikundye	<i>Eli</i> 'God', <i>ashikundye</i> 'He loves me'
Eshikaeli	<i>Eli</i> 'God', <i>eshika</i> 'exalt, praise'
Eshiwakwe	'He (God) knows his people'
Isawafo	'to guide/herd your (flock)'
Isaweni	'Be herded, Be shepherded'
Lalashowi	'be obedient, be honest'
Ndumiakunde	'The Lord tends to love'
Ndesario	'who has been forgiven'
Nduminsari	<i>ndumi</i> 'Lord', <i>nsari</i> 'forgiver'
Oshoraeli	<i>oshora</i> 'seek', <i>Eli</i> 'God'
Shiwaryaeli	<i>Eli</i> 'God', <i>shiwarya</i> 'receive me'

Table 10: Compounded native names with semantic content

What might be remnants of the names emanating from circumstances at birth do manifest in the data. The circumstances surrounding food substances and natural events are illustrated by *simbo* 'harvest' and *Masaawe* 'hail'. The circumstances involving difficulties and/or conflicts within a family or clan are represented by *Letare* 'to settle a dispute' and *Lema* 'revolt/disobey'.

As hinted in the section above, the label *Eli* 'God' is used prolifically by the Machame-Chagga people. This is evident for the names of the parents of children. Likewise, the names bearing *eli* 'God' are abundant even for the first names, as discussed below.

In reading through the data presented above, two cautions turn obvious here. On the one hand, some names in the list are Christian inspired Hebrew names which resemble Machame-Chagga in structure, namely *Adonaeli*, *Elikana* and *Elimeleki*. Some sections of the morphology of these names appear to carry the morpheme *-eli-*. However, this morpheme should not be confused with the Mashami name for God, namely *Eli*. On the other hand, the presence of the Pare (Chasu) name *Nikundiwe* ‘I am loved’ in the list is another indicator of their immigration into Hai District.

Personal (first) names children born in 2000s

A close examination of first names of all primary school pupils provides three strands of findings. The first group of first names involves those names with semantic content in Mashami language. This means that some names in Machame-Chagga contain structures which resemble a clause in Bantu languages. The verb structure of Mashami language is complex (cf. Nurse 2003; Phaniel 2006), as it is the case in many Bantu languages (cf. Nurse & Philippson 2003; Nurse 2008). It permits an individual verb to realize a sentence with obligatory elements being incorporated therein. Therefore, names such as *Elinsia* ‘God is hope’ realize a complete sentence. It becomes clear now that such names in Table 11 constitute complete sentences. These names constitute about 2.37 percent of all first names. Table 11 provides a list of names with their meanings. The meaning is either associated with *Eli* ‘God’ *oraika* ‘gift’ (Rugemalira 2008).

S/N	First Name	Semantic Content
1.	Aikande	<i>aika</i> ‘thank you’, <i>nde</i> ‘father’
2.	Eliakimu	<i>eli</i> ‘God’, <i>akimu</i> ‘judge’
3.	Eligift	<i>eli</i> ‘God’, <i>gift</i> ‘reward’
4.	Elinsia	<i>eli</i> ‘God’, <i>nsia</i> ‘hope, glory’
5.	Elinensia	<i>eli</i> ‘God’, <i>nsia</i> ‘hope, glory’

Table 11: First names with semantic content in Machame-Chagga

Such names are not unique to Machame-Chagga rather it is a phenomenon pervasive across African languages. Akinnaso (1980) found that Yoruba names

formulate complete sentences. Likewise, Swilla (2000) found that Chindali names formulate complete clauses. Even the faith-oriented names in Yoruba constitute complete sentences (Ikotun 2014).

The second cluster of first names is made of Kiswahili names by origin. Most of these words are associated with semantic content in Kiswahili, as shown in Table 12. These names constitute about 15.43 percent of all first names. As compared to clan names, findings show that names of Kiswahili origin appear to penetrate into Mashami language.

S/N	First Name	Semantic Content
1.	Baraka	'blessing'
2.	Faraja	'comfort'
3.	Furaha	'happiness'
4.	Tumaini	'hope'
5.	Upendo	'love'
6.	Sikustahili	'I didn't deserve'

Table 12: First names of Kiswahili origin

The religious oriented names are numerous in the list of first names. Such names are either associated with Christianity or Islam. In both cases, the incorporation of the names is apparently visible in the data below. The amount of foreign names of this nature makes about 82.18 percent of all first names of pupils.

S/N	First Name	Religion
1.	Abdul	Islam
2.	Agape	Christian
3.	Aisha	Islam
4.	Ali	Islam
5.	Anjela	Christian
6.	Denisi	Christian
7.	Fatuma	Islam
8.	Godlove	Christian
9.	Immanueli	Christian
10.	Zuhura	Islam

Table 13: Religious oriented first names

On the basis of data sets in sub-sections above, it is plausible to argue that naming of children in rural villages of Hai District is skewed towards supernatural power. This is because a child is assumed to be a gift to supernatural powers. The circumstances at birth appear to be engulfed within the realm of supernatural powers depicted by 'God' in different forms.

Conclusions

The demise of the role of natural environment in bestowing personal names to children has dawned in Machame-Chagga families. The literature on onomastics in African societies underscores the power of circumstances at birth in determining the choice of a name (Agyekum 2006; Akinnaso 1980; Chauke 2009; Mutunda 2011; Swilla 2000). This is not the case for the Machame-Chagga families whose nomenclatures reveal the predominance of religious oriented names. The circumstances at birth no longer play part in the choice of a name rather Christianity and Islam play a great role.

The penetration of foreign names substantiates the westernization of the Machame-Chagga families. It is suggested that most of the transformation strategies in Tanzania surround Europeanization (Madsen 2000). This is made possible through the establishment of formal schools, which were opened in Chagga-land since the dawn of 1900s (Mushi 2012). Consequently, many English names penetrated into Machame-Chagga families. The role of native names, which used to carry meanings in African Societies (Akinnaso 1980; Muzale 1998; Swilla 2000), increasingly diminishes in Machame-Chagga families. It appears that western names are highly preferred by parents, which is a testimony of the domination of western culture in the Machame-Chagga community.

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