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THE PROSODIC AND MORPHOLOGICAL SURVEY OF SISWATI PERSONAL NAMES

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ABSTRACT

This article explores how personal names are granted to EmaSwati nation. Personal naming system is a significant practice among Africans and it differs greatly from language to language. Personal names belong to the science called onomastics and to a further category named *anthroponomastics,* while place names belongs to *toponomastics.* The rationale of this work is to provide the structural meanings, interpretations and principles of unity from structural to functional views. The morphological principles and structures are expected to ensure that they are linguistically combined for harmonized connotations and meanings. Morphological structures of Siswati personal names are investigated, with a focus on prefixes, suffixes, and infixes that convey information about gender, age, and social status. Morphological patterns are analyzed to discern any historical or sociolinguistic influences. The study also delves into the semantic layers of Siswati personal names, uncovering the meanings, associations, and cultural connotations attached to specific names. This semantic analysis sheds light on how names reflect the values and beliefs of the Siswati-speaking community. The bestowal of personal names are influenced by the process of enculturation and socialization which are shown by multiculturalism. They are looked at from social and cultural life of the society and morphologically delineated. The prosodic features such as stress, intonation and rhythm are vital for correct pronunciation of sounds. The linguistics and textual analysis are adopted for this research work.

Keywords: Connotations; Enculturation; Multiculturalism; Onomastics; Socialization.

1. INTRODUCTION

The study of personal names within a linguistic framework offers valuable insights into the cultural, social, and linguistic dimensions of a community. Siswati is a language spoken primarily in Eswatini and South Africa. Personal names hold a significant place in Siswati culture, reflecting historical, religious, and societal influences. This prosodic and morphological survey of Siswati personal names seeks to explore the phonological and morphological features of these names and their cultural significance within the Siswati-speaking community.Naming is as old as the creation of humankind and people, including the emaSwati, have bestowed names on individuals at different stages of their lives, the naming of new-borns being the most common practice. The emaSwati named their creator *Mlentengamunye* or *Mvelinchanti* long before the arrival of Europeans and foreign religions such as Christianity in areas occupied by emaSwati. Giving names in Siswati was and is still not limited to personal names but to all things that exist. Personal names are not mere labels or codes to differentiate one person from the other but have various meanings which express the socio-cultural and religious traits of emaSwati. Few scholars have written on Siswati personal names. [1] (2004) and [2] (2015).

A personal name, is a multicultural difference among human societies, here are some features of life that are shared to all. One of these is name, a phenomenon that is recognized as worldwide, although it is also remarkably particularistic. It is particularistic in the sense that the style and pattern of naming varies across human societies. In Africa, personal names play a substantial role in virtually all aspects of human life. In real life names are usually chosen by parents or godparents or in the case of some nineteenth century servants imposed by employers. In the course of history, the aptness of names has in general diminished. The limitations of

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1 Dlamini Thusile, 'Name giving in siSwati. Kwaluseni' (University of Swaziland unpublished BA dissertation 2004)

2 Mazibuko Bethusile, 'Name giving in siSwati.Kwaluseni (University of Swaziland unpublished dissertation, 2015)

historical knowledge make it impossible to determine quite how far early names were meaningful. Nevertheless, many names originated in nicknames. And there can be no doubt children used often to be given names that might inspire, them names with "good signification" that might be "as a thread tyed about the finger, to make us mindful of the errand we came into the world to do for our master. [3]

The research outline is as follows: Section 1 is the introduction. Section 2 is the research methodology and theory underpinning. It includes research objectives, research questions, statement of the problem and the theoretical underpinning. Section 3 talks about results. It includes personal names reflecting morphological marking, personal names of females from their biological fathers prefixing La-, the use of suffix -se, the use of formative Lo-, the use of extension -an-,, palatalization occurs when dimmunitives are formed, possessives, selected classes from meinhoff's classification,, umu-/imi-class(class 3 and 4), pairs, objects in large numbers, national names, foreign words, miscellaneous, the si-/ti-class (class 7 and 8), foodstuff, plantations, personal deverbatives, impersonal deverbatives, instruments, the in-/tin- class class 9 and 6), animals, deverbatives, miscellaneous,, the lu-/tin- class (class 11 and 10), long objects, abstracts and persons. Section 4 is discussion. It includes uniqueness, identification, denotation versus connotation, distinctive sound and grammatical criteria. Section 5 deals with the conclusion. Section 6 deals with recommendations.

2. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY AND THEORETICAL UNDERPINNING

2.1 Research objectives

They are as follows:

- To match and compare personal names that are bestowed to males and females.

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[3] A. Fowler, Literary Names Personal Name in English. (Oxford University Press, London, 2012)

- To outline and analyse the personal names according to their morphological, semantic, and syllabic constructions.
- To distinguish and categorize the similarities and difference in naming practices.
- To know the history of personal names among the Siswati people.

2.2 Research questions

They are as follows:

- How to match and compare the personal names that are bestowed to males and females?
- Why are the personal names outlined and analysed according to the morphological, semantic, and syllabic constructions?
- To what extent are the similarities and differences in naming practices are distinguished and categorized?
- What is the history of personal names among the Siswati people?

2.3 Statement of the problem

- It was a trend to bestow personal names without checking the negative or positive, real or unreal implications of their meanings.
- Indigenous names were usually compound words or the grammatical sentences that have the subject predicate and object. They usually took a form of praises.
- They currently reflect the contemporary situation within the family; whether negative or positive, without future implications of the unfolding situations.
- People have been called by their personal names not only in Swazi society but in the world at large. These names have been taken for granted and used as mere tags to differentiate one person from the other. Siswati names are not just labels given to people for the sake of giving a name.[4]

2.4 The theoretical underpinning

The linguistics approach is selected for this work as a systematic study of the combined elements of language principles. The level of analysis involves the morphemes in morphology and the meaning of words in semantics. Textual evidence is noted in

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[4] Matfunjwa Muzi, 'A Pragmatic exploration of naming practices in Siswati' (Unpublished thesis, University of South Africa 2022)

literature review and Meinhof's classification of noun classes.[5] mentions the linguistic structuralism where a word or words are analysed in details of components or forms.[6] define structuralism as follows:

> An intellectual enterprise characterized by attention to the systems, relations and forms the structures –that make meaning possible in any cultural activity or artefact.

The word text, is derived from Latin *textus*, meaning something woven together. Texts can be oral or written segments of language which can be extended to be known as discourse [7]. An essential step in any research project is the literature review that provides a background information on the research questions and to identify what others discovered about the questions. This is supported by [8] where he quotes the *Oxford English Dictionary,* where they define research by saying:

> Research is 'study and investigation, especially to discover new facts', "to research into (a matter or subject) to investigate or study closely" aimed at discovery and interpretation of new facts' and "to search again".

For a research to be acceptable, there must be searching or investigation again on the same work or a close study of it again. This is what this research is all about. Many studies have been conducted in this topic but a search again is vital in order for one to discover and interpret new facts about it.

Another aim of literature review is to identify if there exists a gap on prior study which has been left by lack of interest or by lack of information which may assist scholars in the said study. It is also the objective of this research, to try to close a gap left out by prior studies on the onomastics. Naming practices differ from one society to another. A society is defined as a cohesive group of people that are bound by a common culture. It is a transmitted, learned and shared common culture that provides a framework for

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[5] H. Dethier, 'Het Gesicht en het Raadel.Profielen van Plato tot Derrida' (Brussel: VUB, 1994)

[6] T. O'sullivan and others, Key concepts in Communication and Cultural Studies (Routledge Publisher, London, 1994)

[7] P.J Fourie, Media history media and society (Juta Publishers, 2012)

[8] R.G Burgess, An Introduction to Field Research (Routledge Publisher, 2006)

social groupings. This means that not only the whole nation, but also the ethnic or racial groups within a nation can be referred to as a society, or sub-society, each with its own way of life, ideas and habits that include knowledge, beliefs, arts, morals, laws, and customs. [9] describes culture as follows:

> Culture "refers to society and its way of life. It is defined as a set of values and beliefs, or a cluster of learned behaviors that we share with others in a particular society, giving us a sense of belongingness and identity". Culture may be defined as unique practices and activities that are shared by a particular set of inhabitants in a certain area and are maintained over time. Language, music, dances, myths, folklore, medicines, attire, acceptable behaviors, and values are all examples of culture. It also encompasses the socioeconomic way of life that people in the community practise and experience.

Siswati language is spoken by Emaswati. The nation came from Embo, a mountain range which is 110 km north-east of Nairobi and 42 km south of Mount Kenya in the central part of Kenya. Known as Bembo-Nguni, the nation moved south under the leadership of Dlamini I (Matalatala). Dlamini means to eat at noon and Matalatala, one who continuously gives birth [10]

3. RESULTS

In linguistics, morphology is the study of the formation of words, and their relationship to other words in the same language. It structurally analyzes the words and parts of words, such as stems, root words, prefixes and suffixes. It is a field of linguistics that is focused on the study of forms and formation of words in a language. Personal names are morphologically looked at from various affixation processes, morphological structures and morpheme classes. The classes that are selected from Carl Meinhof, the German linguist who looked at noun classes of African languages. The specific classes that are cited are 3 -11

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[9] Antonio Lebrón, 'What is culture? Merit' (2013)1 Research Journal of Education and Review 126, 132

[10] H. Bornman, 'Pioneers of the Lowveld' [2006] Barberton: SA Country Life

where ordinary nouns can be changed into classes 1(a) and 2(a) and become personal nouns. The morphology of the word relies on language morphemes or elements. The prefixes stand before the normal stems and the concords before the predicate stems which carry the lexical meaning of the word [11]

The starting point for morphological processes is the word. Each word category has its own unique fundamental morphological structure. The basic structure of a noun is: Preprefix + true prefix + root (stem + suffix). It refers to the mental system involved in word formation or the branch of linguistics that deals with words, their internal structure and how they are formed. Morphology plays a pivotal role in our understanding of the nature of language. This is because words are at the hub of language and hence linguistics. Linguistics is centrally concerned with the syntax, the study of how words patterns in sentences; with semantics the study of words and sentences meanings; and with phonology the study of how words are pronounced, both in isolation and in utterances.

3.1 Personal names reflecting morphological marking

Certain morphemes such as prefixes and suffixes have become specifically associated with either the male or the female sex when used in personal name. The prefixes **So-** and **Lo-** mark male names and female names respectively.

Personal names with suffix **-ile** is marked as female:

- *Khul**ile*** (She has grown up)
- *Thulis**ile*** (She silenced them)
- *Fundzis**ile*** (She taught)

The female names are marked with the passive perfect suffix **-iwe,** as in:

- *Simph**iwe*** (We are given them)
- *Fundz**iwe*** (You are read)
- *Hlul**iwe*** (You are defeated)

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[11] F. Katamba, Morphology Critical Concepts in Linguistics (Routledge Publishers, Vol.6 London 2004)

The females names marked with the neuter perfect suffix, depicted in the three names:

- *Kholwakele* (Being trusted)
- *Khetsakele* (Being selected)
- *Khohlakele* (Being naughty)

Verbal structures restricted to male names, and as a result they become male markers

- *Mkhetseni* (Select him)
- *Mbuteni* (Ask him)
- *Mtondzeni* (Hate him)

The male personal names that are marked by prefix **So-** are the following:

- *Emagala* (Branches) ***So****magala*
- *Bantfu* (People) ***So****bantfu*
- *Sivuno* (Harvest) ***So****sivuno*

The female personal names that are prefixing **Nabo-** or **Labo-** depicting belongingness are the following:

- ***Nabo****Bukiwe/****Labo****Bukiwe* (Mother of Bukiwe)
- ***Nabo****Boniwe/****Labo****Boniwe* (Mother of Boniwe)
- ***Nabo****Mandla/****Labo****Mandla* (Mother of Mandla)

[12] point out that there are personal names that are bestowed on archaic tendency which traditional naming practice are reflecting the prefixing of the formative **La-** that stands for a daughter of. This is a unique Siswati tendency that is not shared by broader Nguni classes.

Personal names of females from their biological fathers' names are prefixing **La-.**

- ***La****Langa* (Daughter of Langa (Sun)
- ***La****Siphepho* (Daughter of Siphepho (Hurricane)
- ***La****Maweni* (Daughter of Maweni) (Hill slopes)

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[12] Thwala Jozi Joseph and Mayisela Jabulani Joshua, 'An Explication of Personal Names in Siswati Society of Msholozi Settlement: An Anthroponomastic Approach' (2020)5 International Journal of Arts Humanities and Social Sciences Studies 2582, 1601

The use of suffix **-se** is depicted in the following examples:

- *Msindvo**se*** (A noisy person)
- *Ndlela**se*** (A traveller)
- *Khuluma**se*** (A talkative person)

The use of formative **Lo-** is prefixed as follows:

- *Emanti* (Water) ***Lo**manti*
- *Umoya* (Air / wind) ***Lo**moya*
- *Imfundvo* (Education) ***Lo**mfundvo*

The use of extension **-an-** is noted for diminutives in the following examples:

- *Imbasha* (A drying maize) *Mbash**an**a*
- *Sandla* (Hand) *Sandl**an**a*
- *Intfombi* (A girl) *Ntfomb**an**a*

Palatalization occurs when the diminutives are formed:

- *Ingubo* (Blanket) Ngu**tj**ana
- *Umlomo* (Mouth) Mlo**ny**ana
- *Sigubhu* (Musical drum) Sigu**j**ana

Possessiveness is evident in the examples by prefixing **Te-:**

- *Temangcamane* (Of the Maseko's)
- *Temantimandze* (Of the Shongwe's)
- *Tebenguni* (Of the Nguni dynasty)

In their simplest form, names are derived from nouns by eliding the initial vowel of a noun with the class 1(a) prefix: *inhlanhla* (luck) becomes Nhlanhla; *emadvodza* (men) becomes Madvodza, *emantfombatane* (girls) becomes Mantfombatane. The male marker **-so-** is prefixed to the noun. Somfana from *umfana* (boy) and Sobantfu from *bantfu* (people). It is commonly noted that female name uses the female marker **-lo-** is likewise prefixed to a base noun: Lonhlanhla from *inhlanhla* (luck), Lomvula from *imvula* (rain).

The names derived from verbs: *Tsemba* from *litsemba* (hope) and *Bonga* from *bonga* (thanks). The full range of possible subject and object concords, tense, mood and implications can be used as the

base for personal names. The example below, encompass possibilities derived from the verb root, *bong* (thank).

- Bongani (Be grateful) Plural imperative
- Bongekile (having felt grateful) Neuter extension with perfect
- Bongeka (feeling grateful) Neuter extension
- Siyabonga (we are grateful) Present tense positive
- Asibonge (let us be grateful) Subjunctive (hortative)

It is also noteworthy that the following names are bestewed specifically for girls in Emaswati, EmaZulu and EmaNdebele, but for both sexes in EmaXhosa:

Fikile (The one who has arrived)
Tsembekile (The trusted one)
Sibongile (We are grateful)

3.2 The selected classes from Meinhof's classification

The classification that was made by the scholar from African languages begins from class 1 to class 23. For this study only, the examples are selected from class 3 to class 11 to depict personal naming. It is apparent to note that Siswati parts of speech entails: The substantive that signify anything concrete or abstract, the qualificative that qualifies a substantive, the descriptive that describes a qualificative, predicative and substantive, the predicative that signifies an action or the state of other parts of speech; an interjective as an emotional word and conjunctive that links up sentences [13]. The study centres on the classification of nouns that are selected according to the scholar Meinhof's classification. They are specifically selected to be structurally examined for proper or personal names formations. The selected examples are the following:

3.2.1 The *umu-/imi-* class (class 3 and 4)

Nouns in this class have the singular prefix *umu-* before monosyllabic stems and *um-* before other stems. The plural prefix is *imi-* regardless of the number of syllables of the stem. It indicates living or moving objects which are not regarded as acting

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[13] C.M Doke, Textbook of Zulu Grammar (Maskew Miller Longman, Cape Town, 1997)

independently. This class categorizes the phenomena which are dynamic. There are a large number of miscellaneous nouns in this class, such as rivers, names of plants, parts of the body and even persons.

3.2.1.1 River:

Umfula	(a river)	*imifula*	(rivers)

3.2.1.2 Plants:

Umutsi	(a tree/medicine)	*imitsi*	(trees / medicines)
Umkhiwa	(a wild fig tree)	*imikhiwa*	(wild fig trees)

3.2.1.3 Part of the body:

Umuno	(a finger)	*imino*	(fingers)
Umlomo	(mouth)	*imilomo*	(mouths)

3.2.1.4 Moving objects:

Umhlambi	(a herd/flock)	*imihlambi*	(flock)
Umkhumbi	(a ship)	*imikhumbi*	(ship)
Umlilo	(fire)	*imililo*	(fire)

3.2.1.5 Persons:

Umhlobo	(a friend)	*imihlobo*	(friends)
Umlindzankhosi	(a bodyguard)	*imilindzankhosi*	(bodyguards)

3.2.1.6 Miscellaneous:

Umuti	(a village)	*imiti*	(villages)
Umkhuhlane	(a cold/flu)	*imikhuhlane*	(cold/flu)

Personal names are morphologically formed by eliding the initial vowel to all words on the ***umu-*** and ***imi-***.The initial class prefixes are capitalized. The prosodic features such as tone and stress are changing.

3.2.2 The *li-/ema-* class (class 5 and 6)

The singular prefix for this class comes from the full prefix *li-* and the plural prefix *ema-*. This class contains objects found in pairs or in large numbers.

3.2.2.1 Pairs:

Lihlombe	(shoulder)	*emahlombe*	(shoulders)
Lidvolo	(a knee)	*emadvolo*	(knees)

3.2.2.2 Objects in large numbers:

Litje	(a stone)	*ematje*	(stones)
Licandza	(an egg)	*emacandza*	(eggs)

3.2.2.3 National names:

LiNgisi	(an Englishman)	*emaNgisi*
LiSwati	(a Swati)	*emaSwati*
LiBhunu	(an Afrikaner)	*emaBhunu*

3.2.2.4 Foreign words:

Libhuluko (a pair of trousers, from the Afr. *broek) emabhuluko* (trousers)
Litafula (a table, from the Afr. *tafel) ematafula* (tables)
Libhayisikili (a bicycle) *emabhayisikili* (bicycles)

3.2.2.5 Miscellaneous:

Libhubesi	(a lion)	*emabhubesi*	(lions)
Lisango	(a gate)	*emasango*	(gates)

Personal names are formed by eliding the prefix ***li-*** to class 5 and pre-prefix ***e-*** to class 6 and capitalize the immediate consonant.

3.2.3 The *si-/ti-* class (class 7 and 8)

There are singular class prefix ***si-*** and plural class prefix ***ti-***. This class contains material objects, especially those classified as instruments and deverbatives, both personal and impersonal.

3.2.3.1 Foodstuff:

Sinkhwa (bread) *tinkhwa* (breads)
Sidvudvu (pumpkin porridge) *tidvudvu* (pumpkin porridges)

3.2.3.2 Plantations:

Sikhova (a banana plantation) *tikhova* (banana plantations)
Sigwayi (a field of tobacco) *tigwayi* (tobacco fields)

3.2.3.3 Personal deverbatives:

Sihambi (a traveler) *tihambi* (travelers)
Sisebenti (a worker) *tisebenti* (workers)

Sigijimi (a messenger) *tigijimi* (messenger)

3.2.3.4 Impersonal deverbatives:

Sidvumo	(a calamity)	*tidvumo*	(calamities)
Silimo	(cultivated harvest)	*tilimo*	(cultivated harvests)

3.2.3.5 Instruments:

Sitja	(a plate)	*titja*	(plates)
Sicatfulo	(a shoe)	*ticatfulo*	(shoes)
Sibaya	(a cattle-fold/byre)	*tibaya*	(byres)

Personal words are formed by capitalizing the initial consonant and effect the prosodic elements of stress and tone.

3.2.4 The ***in-/tin-*** class (class 9 and 10)

This class is called the 'animal class'. The people who are designated in this class are there because of the status they have attained in life. The singular prefix appears as ***in-*** with the corresponding plural form ***tin-***.

3.2.4.1 Animals:

Inja	(a dog)	*tinja*	(dogs)
Inkhomo	(cattle)	*tinkhom*	(cattle)

3.2.4.2 Deverbatives:

Inkhulumo (a dialogue/speech) *tinkhulumo* (speeches)
Imphilo (life) *timphilo* (lives)

3.2.4.3 Miscellaneous:

Tindlu	(house)	*tindlu*	(houses)
Imvula	(rain)	*timvula*	(rains)

Personal names are formed by eliding the initial vowel which is a pre-prefix in ***in-,*** capitalize the immediate consonant and apply the prosodic elements for ***tin-*** class.

3.2.5 The ***lu-/tin-*** class (class 11 and 10)

The singular form of this class is ***lu-***. This class contains a variety of objects, *inter alia* long objects and abstracts.

3.2.5.1 Long objects:

Lutsi	(a stick)	*tintsi*	(sticks)
Lunwele	(hair)	*tinwele*	(hairs)
Lukhuni	(fire wood)	*tinkhuni*	(fire woods)

3.2.5.2 Abstracts:

Lutsandvo	(love)	*no plural*
Lusango	(progeny)	*no plural*

3.2.5.3 Persons:

Luhlanya	(a madman)	*tinhlanya*	(madmen)
Luphuya	(impoverished person)	*timphuya*	(impoverished persons)

Personal names are formed by capitalizing the initial consonant and applying the prosodic elements of tone and stress. It is evident that most personal names are semantically reflecting informative, regulatory, persuasive and integrative functions. They are, however, bestewed on either denotative or connotative meanings and concrete or abstract attributes. They cover the functions of the language that were identified by the linguist,[14]

4. DISCUSSION

Naming practices vary considerably from group to group, nation to nation and country to country. The baby may be named at the end of seclusion period amidst elaborate ceremony or the name may be made public before a small inner family group when the child is a few weeks old. The name given at infancy stage is usually changed when the child goes through initiation at puberty, or if the child fails to make progress, the incorrect naming is diagnosed to be the cause and source of these misfortunes. In Christian families, the child is given a specific name at baptism, while pagan families give the child a European name in addition to a tribal one, either as an infant, or when he or she goes to school.

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[14] Roman Jakobson, 'Linguistic and poetics', in T. Sebeok (Ed) style in language (Cambridge, MA: M.L.T Press 1960)

The basis for choosing a name varies from group to group and guided by cultural beliefs Swati commonly name children after grandfathers or important lineage members. It is believed the baby is a reincarnation of a dead relative and it is important to choose the right name, lest by calling the child by the wrong one the wrath of the offended ancestor be incurred and illness brought to the child. The child is also named after some important national or cultural event which occurred at the time of the birth.

The Bhaca, for instance, favors derogatory names because they believe that. "Children who are given good names do not live" [15] They prefer derogatory or unflattering names. Where a boy is born after a long succession of girls, especially where most male children have died young, the boy is dressed as a girl, given derogatory name and sent to his maternal grandparents for safety.

Naming practice has been in existence from time immemorial and is a privilege of every human being. No one, whether of low or high degree goes nameless once he or she has come into the world. Everybody is named by his parents or grandparents the moment he is born. Names play such significant part in human relations that they are endowed with magic potencies, elaborate customs, superstitions and taboos. Among the Masai of Africa, the name of a dead person is never mentioned or uttered and if an ordinary word happens to sound like that name, it will have to be replaced. Those are superstitions that are by no means confined to other societies or nations. The name is so closely identified with its owner and stand for his reputation. The synonymy of name and fame is attested in Homer, and recurs in various Greek and Roman authors.

The concept of proper name is rooted in culture and tradition. We have no difficulty in recognizing names and distinguishing them from common nouns. A number of criteria for the definition of a proper or personal name are the following:

a. Uniqueness

The Greek grammarian Dionysius Thrax summed up the

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[15] W.D Hammond-Tooke, Bhaca Society: a people of the Transkeian uplands, South Africa. Cape Town (Oxford University Press 1962)

difference between proper name and common noun in the following terms: 'A name is a part of speech that is signifying a body or an activity. The same writer defines a proper name as that which signifies individual being. They are used with references to a specific person or thing with the criterion that coincides with the expression of the same idea in precise terms.

b. Identification

Linguists regard proper names as identification marks. Unlike common nouns whose function it is to subsume particular specimens under a generic concept. A proper name serves to identify a person or object by singling it out from among similar items. Another comparison which illustrates the same idea to identify it by distinguishing it from similar elements.

c. *Denotation versus connotation*

The 'denotative' function of proper names are opposed to the 'connotative' value of common nouns. Proper names are not connotative but they denote the individuals who are called by them. They do not indicate or imply any attributes as belonging to those individuals. The specific function of a proper name is to identify and not to signify, so that this is not really a new criterion but a special aspect of the previous one.

d. Distinctive sound

The identification as the essential purpose of proper names, adds to it another criterion of distinctive sound. The distinctiveness of proper names are of special significance. Proper names are members of a set in which the resemblances considerably outweigh the differences. A proper name is a word or group of words which is recognized for identification or tends to achieve, its distinctive sound alone, without regard to any meaning.

e. Grammatical criteria

The semantic and functional difference between proper names and common nouns is reflected in certain grammatical peculiarities. They vary from one language to another and from one period to another in the same language. Some are purely conventional and others are dictated by the special function of proper names. The grammatical criterion which has been adduced is that the great majority of proper names have no plural. As a general tendency this is no doubt true and even

inevitable since the identifying function of proper names does not go easily with the idea of plurality. There are however, numerous exceptions. For Siswati language, the idea of plurality is there for historical background, meanings and identification of incidents, for examples:

Maswati (Emaswati nation)
Bafana (boys)
Mantfombatane (girls)

A name in Swati society is given to a child linked to some person, event, or the character the parents want the child to develop. The major belief is that names determine the destiny of those who carry them. The child may be named after a dead grandparent. A child can be named by any national or clan hero who may be related to him or her. It is believed that the spirit of that ancestor, after whom the child is named, will possess it and that the child will inherit the ancestor's qualities. At other times, the name given to a child may be determined by the circumstances surrounding its birth. It is a usual practice for parents to embody in a name the expectations they might have of that child's in the future. The child name serves as an inspiration to him or her. The name might reflect the extension of the family as reflected in ([16], 1993). [17] (2005) is cited in ([18] 2005) as follows:

It is common according to Jewish custom to name a child in relation to a Jewish holiday or commemorative event that coincides with the child's birth. For the boy born on Purim (Friday the 13th March), one might use Mordechai; on Chanukah (Monday the 26th December or 2nd January), Mattisyahu or Yehudah; on Pesach (Sunday or Monday the 24th or 25th April), Mosh; on Yom Kippur (Thursday the 13th October), Rachamim (mercy); on Tishah B' Av (Sunday the 14th August), Menachem (comforters) or Nehemiah (God

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16 Neethling S. J, 'Xhosa Nicknames in South African' (1994)4 Journal of African Languages 88, 92

17 M.D Krohn, The Encyclopedia of Theoretical Criminology (John Wiley & Sons, London, 2005)

18 Mabotja M.L, 'The origin, meaning and impact of names in the post-apartheid South Africa: rethinking naming strategies- a case of Limpopo (Unpublished MA Dissertation. Polokwane: University of Limpopo, 2015)

comforts); on Succos, the name of the special guest (ushpizin) corresponding to that individual day which could be the first or the last day, Avraham.

At birth a Swati child is accorded the status of a new member of the family. The child receives his or her first infancy name. This name is chosen by the mother although it also has to be decided on by the family of the father, particularly by the elder sister. Such a sister is the one without whom final decisions cannot be taken. She holds position of authority and is the most influential member of the family. The family of the wife also regards her with high esteem. She is known as *umafungwase* (one called upon on oath).

The name's importance is only in the registration of the birth. It is a name of acceptance into the family group. The names are usually chosen from the events occurring on the day of the child's birth. Some names may come from incidents which occurred prior the mother's delivery. If it was the rainy season, the baby will be *Lomvula* (mother of rain). If there is starvation, the names will be *Ndlaleni* (famine). At times the child is named after famous people in the family.

Dlamini (2004) noted that there are different reasons for giving people names. In most cases a name of an individual portrays the situation surrounding his/her birth. She highlights that only the elderly family members, usually the parents of the baby, are responsible for giving the child a name. The names given to children are used as identities in society from birth onwards. She is known as *umafungwase* (one called upon on oath).

[19] focused only on names given by parents and conducted a morphosemantic analysis of names. She discovers that most Siswati names originate from Zulu words, compound nouns, and Zulu phrases. Personal name giving in Siswati has changed over time and names of young ones differ from those of elders both morphologically and semantically. If it was the rainy season, the baby will be *Lomvula* (mother of rain). If there is starvation, the names will be *Ndlaleni* (famine). At times the child is named after famous people in the family.

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[19] Ngubane S, and Thabethe N, 'Shifts and continuities in Zulu personal naming practices' (2013)34 Literator 1,7

5. CONCLUSION

The objective of this research work on affixation process are accomplished. Meinhof's classification is cited to depict how personal names are formed from ordinary words. The two classes 1 (a) and 2 (a) are playing a major role in enhancing personal naming in the classes. The identification of morpheme classes is made in respect to a particular word category. The morphological structures and processes are vital in attaining the goals. But if added after the word, is called suffixation. The prefixation can take place in two possible positions in the word, namely before the root called pre-root prefixation and after the root call post-root affixation.

Generally, the classes where the pre-prefixes are elided to form the personal names are dominating the classification. Most classes reflect personal names after the implementation of prosodic features such as stress and tone. All Siswati anthroponyms belong to the noun class 1 (a) with the noun latent class prefix and class 2 (a) with the prefix ***bo-*** denoting plurality.

6. RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that the bestowal of personal names should be made after the positive and real implications of their meanings are discussed. The analysis of naming practice must be done from phonetic, phonological, morphological, syntactical to semantic domains. Their differences and similarities should be distinguished and explored. It is important to note that not much attention has been given to personal names in Siswati, therefore there is a need to explore the realistic relevance of the meanings of some *Siswati* personal names, as well as to establish the traits embedded in Siswati naming practices. Put differently, this study will explore the messages that are conveyed by *emaSwati* when giving names to their children.