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Luvale Personal Names and Naming Practices: A Socio-Cultural Analysis

Sylvester Mutunda

Department of Literature and Languages, University of Zambia, Lusaka, Zambia

Email address:
musvester@yahoo.com

Abstract: It is widely accepted that, in all societies, personal naming practices and culture are intertwined (Ngubane & Thabethe 2013). However, this reality is more pronounced in African society in that personal names are not just labels or appellations put on individuals to identify them in the community but rather words that reflect the world-view of people. This is also applicable to the Luvale people of Zambia. Indeed, among the Luvale, when a name is bestowed upon a child, the name-giver chooses a name that truly not only identifies the child as a person, but reflects the socio-cultural context or environment where the child is born. Using onomastics as its main theoretical base, this paper discusses the use of personal names and naming practices among the Luvale people of Northwestern Zambia. Data for analysis were mainly collected from native speakers in Zambezi District of Northwestern Zambia namely Kasoka Samusuwa, Kapindula Sayini, and Kutemba Samafu, to whom I am so grateful. I also used the available written literature on Luvale people as well as electronic sources.

Keywords: Luvale Culture, Luvale Nomenclature, Zambian Ethnic Groups, Naming System

1. Introduction

Personal naming is a universal cultural practice [2]. Every society in the world gives name as an identity tag to its people. However, the selection and interpretation attached to the names vary from society to society and from one culture to another. The distinction between African and European personal naming practices is mainly base on the motivation for naming [18].

Liu [10] observes that, in the Western culture, when selecting a personal name, people go through a dictionary of names and pick out a name from the stock that would satisfy them. Very often the name chosen has no meaning; it is just charming and melodic to the ear. This corroborate with Adamic [1] view that in Western culture, name is merely a tag, pointer-out which in itself has next to no meaning. In this sense, personal names are just arbitrary words, more the same as words like 'book', 'computer' or 'table'.

However, in the African culture, personal names and naming practices offer important insights into the patterns of social and cultural organisation of communities. A name is viewed as a message the name-giver conveys to society through the name bearer. According to Mutunda [17], a name

is like a document where one can read the history, culture and heritage of the individual or the family in time and space. Similarly, in his study of African Muslim Names, Zawawi [25] points out that, personal names provide an important component of African cultural identities. He further argues that, besides having a psychological role in establishing a person's identity, name conveys to those who know their origin and meaning, the social and cultural experiences of the people who created them. [...] Above all, names depict how members of a community regard themselves [25]. To put it differently, names reflect values, traditions and events in people's lives. This view is echoed by Mashiri, Chabata and Chitando [12] who assert that naming in African societies often reflects socio-cultural and ideological realities of these societies [12]. Writing about Zulu personal naming practices, Suzman [21] observes that:

> Traditionally, personal names were unique and meaningful, emerging from circumstances at the time of the child's birth. Fathers and grandparents were the namegivers. The giving of a name to a child has significance within the larger family, with the consequence that the child was rarely the focus of his or her name.

Another study on naming was conducted by Matee, cited in Letsoela [9]. She studied the significance of Sesotho

personal names and observed that Sesotho personal names are a reflection of circumstances, experiences and events that surround the birth of the mew born child. She thus concluded that, in the Sesotho society, a name is not given for the sake of naming [9].

And yet in another study, Mbiti [13] avers that in African societies, the birth of a child is an event of greet significance. Therefore, great significance is attached to the naming of a child. This is also applicable to the Luvale where naming is considered to be of great significance in that the name-giver chooses a name that not only identities a child as a person, but also reflects the socio-cultural context where the child is born.

Fundamentally, in Western society, naming is primarily a system of reference, not symbolisation, while choosing personal names in Africa go beyond the narrow limits and confines of seeing them as mere tags that distinguish one person from another. The bestowal of names is rather a conscious decision than a random process. Mushangwe and Madzokare [16] rightly point out that name givers do not arbitrary bestow names on children; rather they observe situations around them and express their feelings, wishes etcetera through names. To put it differently, the name giving process in Africa is sensitive to various factors such as physical, socio-cultural, historical and religious; hence the conclusion that names are never neutral.

2. Motivation and Purpose

Although there has been considerable amount of literature on onomastics across Africa, as far as I am aware, there has been no literature on anthropomastics (the study of personal names) of the Luvale speaking people of North-western Zambia. Thus, his study seeks to examine the meaning of Luvale personal names and the customs involved in the naming of newly born children. It is hoped that the study will shed some light on the meaning of names and naming practices among the Luvale people, as well as their cultural implications.

The objective of this study is not to delve on the denotative nor connotative aspects of names but on what is relevant to the Luvale speaking people in regards to the meaning of names, their naming practices and factors that govern the selection of names. In addition, the present study shall concentrates not only on Luvale names but also how the given names are connected to the Luvale culture.

3. Methodology

This paper is mainly a semantic analysis of the Luvale personal names by bringing to the reader's attention the circumstances that led to the name given to the name bearers. Mouton commented that the research design is a blueprint of how one intends to conduct research and the direction it will take [15]. This paper mainly used the qualitative approach as it is located in the interpretative paradigm. The paper employs a primary data research approach, which involves interviews I had with three native-speakers namely Kasoka Samusuwa, Kapindula Sayini, and Kutemba Samafu. The paper also draws on my knowledge, experience and introspection, based on being a Luvale native, as well as on findings by other scholars who have conducted research into personal names. Furthermore, I made use of the available published source on Zambian names including *Zambian Traditional Names* (2006) by Mwizenge Tembo and *Encyclopaedia of Zambian Names* (2013) by Chanda Penda. Finally, I used electronic material related to naming in Zambia specifically among the Luvale people. It should be mentioned that, the English translations provided are glosses and should therefore be handled with utmost care.

4. Theoretical Framework

This study is situated in the larger framework of onomastics, which is the study of names. Under the umbrella of onomastics come two branches namely anthropomastics and topomastics. Anthropomastics deal with the study of personal names while topomastics is devoted to the study of place names [7]. In his study on Yemeni Personal names, Al-Zumor [3] argues that anthropomastics studies are based on the theory that there is a strong interface between a language that people speak and their cultural practices. This implies that anthropomastics mirrors how language is used as cultural practices and how it is used as a powerful tool to view and understand the world view of a particular linguistic community. One can therefore use language as lens to view and understand the daily activities of a society.

5. Ethno-Linguistic Profile of the Luvale

Luvale is one of the major ethnic groupings in Zambia [8]. It is spoken by the people called Baluvale. Luvale is a tonal language and belongs to a larger Niger-Congo language phylum and is spoken by the Luvale people of Angola where they are called Luena, and by those of North-Western Zambia [27].

In Zambia, the Luvale are found in the North-western area, particularly in Chavuma and Kabompo districts as well as the western part of Zambezi River, known to the Luvale as *Yambeji* meaning "place of plenty of water". As documented by Wele [24] and Ellert [6], the Luvale are a matrilineal group of Bantu that migrated from the once –famous Kingdom of Mwata Yanvwa in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC). Aside from north-western Zambia, the Luvale are also found in the watershed highlands of north-eastern Angola and south-western DRC. Wele [24] further notes that the Luvale, Chokwe, Luchazi and Mbunda are historically closely related to the Lunda and Luyi. However, linguistically and culturally, they have a close relation with the Luchazi and Mbunda.

The Luvale economy is manly agro-fishery based. Agriculture is chiefly centred on staple crops such as cassava (pl. *mikamba*; sing. *mukamba*), yam (pl. *vilingo*; sing. *chilingo*), and peanuts (*vyelu*). Tobacco is grown for snuff,

and maize is grown for brewing. Farming and processing of agricultural product is done almost exclusively by women [28]. In order to naturally conserve the land, the Luvale practice splash and burn techniques as well as crop rotation. They also domesticate livestock including sheep, goats, pigs, and chicken. Meat supplement is obtained through hunting, which is exclusively a male activity.

As for their social-political structure, the Luvale are matrilineal and uxorilocal. They live in villages divided into manageable sections, which are governed by family headmen. Chieftainship is restricted to a single clan among the thirteen, that of the *NamaKungu*. All children of female chiefs are therefore chiefs (pl. *vamyangana*; sing. *mwangana*). A child of a male chief is called *Mwana Uta* ('child of the bow'); and as per tradition, he can never become a *mwangana* [28].

There exist two most important rites that every Luvale man or woman experiences in his or her life, these are *Mukanda*, the boys' circumcision ritual and *Wali*, the girls' puberty ritual. The objective of these ceremonies is to turn boys into men and girls into women. As Ellert [6] observes, from pre-pubescence through to the teens, Luvale boys are inducted into the *Mukanda* School in order to prepare them for manhood. And Wele [24] explains that, the *Mukanda*, where the penis surgical operation is performed, is normally held by a single village and other surrounding villages are invited to participate [24]. There are three distinct stages, the first being preparation, which usually begins when a village headman (*chilolo*) or important elder, having reached consensus with the families of young uncircumcised boys, publicly announces that the time for the mukanda has come. The candidates are then gathered together at the *Mukanda* where they are circumcised. At this stage, the initiator of the *Mukanda* ceremony becomes known as *chijika mukanda* ('planter of mukanda'), and the invocation of the spirits before the *muyombo* tree is done to bless and purify the children who will undergo the operation [24].

The second stage is the seclusion, during which the initiates (*vatundanji*; sing. *kandanji)* are taught skills such as *makishi* (masquerades) making, wood-carving, basketry, smithing and other practical skills. They are also allowed to play games and indulge in sports. The curriculum also includes cultural training and instruction in the ancient form of design and calculus known as *tusona*, which is a tradition of ideographic tracings that are made in sand.

The third and final stage is graduation, or *kulovola*, which is marked by various activities as the boys are welcome back into their community, where they are received joyously as newly born and real men. An interesting feature of *kulovola* is the ceremony of symbolic sexual intercourse with *kashinakaji* – a costume that resemble an old woman covered with a blanket who has an enlarged vagina that has been fashioned from a dried calabash. The purpose of this symbolic sexual intercourse – considered as form of masturbation – is to test the virility of each of the initiated boys [6].

The girls' initiation ritual (*Wali*) differs in many respects from that of the boys. According to Wele [24] and Ellert [6], while boys are initiated in groups in the bush, girls are initiated individually in the village. Whereas boys are subjected to hard labour and harsh discipline, girls are pampered, sung to, and relieved from doing most daily chores. Boys are circumcised, but girls do not undergo clitoridectomy as in other ethnic groups in West Africa. And Wele [24] further explains that "*Wali* is an educational process which a girl who has attained maturity undergoes [24]. The main determining factor to hold *Wali* is the first reported menstrual period by the girl to her grandmother or a close elderly female relative. The purpose of *Wali* is not to enact any physical change in the girls but, to prepare the young girls for their position as women in society [6]. Just like the *mukanda* for boys, *wali* goes through distinct stages. First, the preparatory stage then seclusion, and finally the graduation. In the preparation stage a special shelter known as *litungu* is erected next to a particular type of ficus tree called *muulya*. The second phase is when instruction begins; this is provided by an appointed instructress (*chilombola*) who should have had years of experience in this form of educational process [24]. Each girl spends the first day of seclusion making a girdle (*zeva*) that she will wear for the duration of the *wali*. As Eller [6] observes, Seclusion lasts between four and six months and includes all aspects of women's work, womanly arts and crafts, with emphasis upon how to please one's future husband sexually and on being obedient and hard-working wife and mother. It should also be mentioned that, during seclusion, the girl has to observe certain rules such as not running quickly, lying on her stomach and avoiding being slapped on her buttocks. She has also to avoid eating certain types of food. [Additionally], she has to constantly refrain from contact with fire which is closely associated with life and its absence (coldness) is symbolic of death – only her grandmother kindles the fire for her [24]. By graduation, the young woman is ready to re-join her family and the community in her newly acquired role.

6. Basic Principal of Luvale Naming Practices

To the traditional African people, naming practices are very important since names are often given to mark the testimony of what a society holds dear in a given community. In other words, names bear testimony to the history and culture of a particular nation or people. Odebode asserts that naming is a critical business in traditional African society because names comprise meaning and history apart from being the intimation of hope and affirmation of origins [4]. As in other African societies, personal names among the Luvale give rich insights into the Luvale society and provide evidence about the cultural, political, religious and historical events that have impacted on the society.

Among the Luvale, immediately following the child's birth, the midwife also known as *Chifungiji*, bestows a temporary name or birth name upon to a newly born child.

When the baby's umbilical cord drops off, parents, usually the father, bestow names upon new-born children; but the mother is allowed to name the second child, grandparents and uncles may also name subsequent children. Once a child is given a name by its parents, it will continue permanently and is used in interaction. If it happens that the child cries continuously and inhabitually, this is an indication that the name is inadequate to satisfy some demand of its existence. The spirits indicates through this crying that the name must be changed and another selected. This stems from Luvale's belief in reincarnation.

Like in Lunda traditional society [20], the Luvale world view revolves around the belief that the living, the dead, and those yet to be born are all linked like an unbroken chain. The spirits of the ancestors, *mahamba*, are always among the living in their day-to-day life. These spirits may belong to the individual, the family, or the community and neglecting them may result in personal or collective misfortune. The ancestral spirits are present at daily communal meals, assist women through the difficult process of childbirth, and help settle disputes, protect and guide men when they are hunting in the forest. They also make their displeasure known by inducing illness in those who breach the moral code or break promises. Therefore, as Pritchett [20] further observes, to discover the name the child wishes, the one that reflects the person the child is already born to be, parents will greet the baby in words and songs, using a variety of different names; the one that mostly makes the baby smile or soothes the agitated state is assumed to be the "right" one. Sometimes the name is changed if a child becomes seriously sick. In that case, the *chimbanda* (traditional healer) who treats the sick child selects the new name, because it is believed that misfortune is connected with the previous name.

7. Typology of Luvale Names

The Luvale, like other African people, make use of different naming practices to give names to their children. When personal names are chosen, different societies take different factors into consideration. Personal names are not chosen at random; they are typically bestowed upon children according to the circumstances surrounding the birth of the child, social aspects of the family, hopes, traditional beliefs, and wishes for the child, or the expression of gratitude to a deity. The wishes, happiness and sufferings endured by the family are also taken into account when a personal name is chosen. Suzman [21] in her study on factors that influence the choice of personal names among the Zulu observes the following: These names document several significant events in the family's history, their happiness at having first 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 [21].

Naming a child after kinsmen

Luvale names are often bestowed upon children with the purpose of remembering their late relatives. Parents may name a child after their late parents because of the love they had for them, thereby feeling as if their parents were still alive. As Mohome [14] has noted in Sotho culture, when a grandparent shares a name with a grandchild, the relationship between them becomes even closer. For the Luvale, a male child born after the preceding one died is named *Kahilu* (who has returned/come back) while a female child is called *Omba*. It is believed that such children are a replacement of those who dead. Sometimes children are named after their paternal or maternal relatives because of their physical appearance or human attributes, conduct. In this regards, Mbiti [13] rightly observes that a person's name in African societies generally has a meaning descriptive of personality and being. Thus, we have Luvale names such as *Chiminyi* (stingy person), *Weyecha* (generous person), *Chipoya* (stretcher) that is someone who does all he can to help others, *Lwenyeka* (a wasteful person). Sometimes Children may be bestowed with personal names that refer to talents or skills of the grandparents; this can be exemplified by names such as *Chiyambi* (hunter), *Chitengi* (builder), *Kasoka* (house roofing expert) – derive from verb *Kusota* (to thatch a hut or roof house), *Chivinda* or *Libingi* (someone who plaits hair).

Names associated with events and circumstances of birth

This category of personal names constitutes the majority of Luvale personal names. They are given to children based on the circumstances surrounding the child's birth, from his/her pre-natal to postnatal as well as that of his/her family situation/condition. Commenting on circumstantial names, Blum [5] asserts thus, these names are viewed as governing the child's fate in some ways; they are harmonized with the time and often place of the child's birth [5]. For example, among the Luvale, a child born when it is raining is called Vula (rain) and if birth of the child occurs during rainy season, the child will be called Mulombwe or Mungole (persistent rain).

The Luvale as a people have a tendency to enshrine any event that is considered memorable in a name. Names are, therefore, chosen for their beneficial influence on the life and character of the bearer. Thus, when the birth of a child coincides with a calamity that has befallen the community such as hunger; it will be named Kamwengo for a girl and Muzala if the child is a boy. A baby born during flood is named Libaji (flood). The name Chimupi is given to a child born after something bad happens. On the other hand, a child born during fortune time is called Sakuwaha; those born during celebration may be given the name Chisengo, Chilunga or Chiseke (joy). Often people will refer to an event whenever one asks for their dates of birth. In this regard, it could be said that naming after events serves as a "recording" system. Therefore, individuals embody the meaning associated with their names and in the process try to live up to the expected behaviour or personage that is dedicated to the name.

A death within the homeland may also affect naming. Parents sometimes name a baby Kahilu "the one who has come back", from the verb ku-hiluka "to come back", if the child is born soon after the death of any member within the homestead. This is because such a person is thought to have

returned to the homestead where he or she once lived as a family member. A child is named Masoji (tears) for a boy and a girl respectively, if the child's birth is concomitant with the death of a family member. When it happens that a mother dies after giving birth, the surviving child will be called Kasemuka.

Names associated with manner and position of birth

Manner and position of birth may relate to the sequence by which the mother has given birth; more specifically the order in which children come. Thus, the first-born child is called Ndoyesa or Twatwa, while the last-born is named Kasulasongo (the very last on the line). The birth of twins also falls under this category. The arrival of twins in a family brings different reactions. According to Musere, cited in Mutunda [17], Africa's reactions to the birth of twins vary from culture to culture. In some cultures, such births are treated as bad omen or as mysterious occurrence, while in others they are regarded as a special gift of good will from God or the ancestors. In the same breath, Mbiti [13] correctly observes that the birth of twins [...] is an event out of the ordinary. Therefore, in African societies twins [...] are treated with fear and care [13]. Furthermore, Mbiti [13] contends that in other societies, the birth of twins is greeted with great joy and satisfaction, as sign of rich fertility. Among the Luvale, twins, vapamba or vapasa (pl.) are not viewed with disfavour, rather they are regarded as miraculous gifts from the ancestors; they are welcomed and cherished. The arrival of twins in a family indicates that the ancestral spirits are happy and proud about the parents. Fixed names are given to the twins; the first-born is called Mbuya, Makumbi or Likumbi (light), while the second-born twin is named Kapya or Kakweji (moon). The child who comes immediately after the twins is called Chijika from the verb ku-jika meaning "close" or "shut". It is believed the Chijika is the one to "shut" the womb and stop any further birth. However, in case another child is born after Chijika, it will be called Chikomba from the verb ku-komba "sweep" or "clean". This reflects the Luvale belief that such a child has the power of "cleansing" or purifying the womb.

While the birth of birth of twins causes excitement, it could also be a source of concern for parents. The cause of concern stems from the belief that twins are delicate and therefore frail; they are not expected to reach adult age without one or the other dying. Therefore, to ensure their survival, great precautionary and protective measures are taken. For instance, the mother receives special care by being given plenty of food in order to maximize her lactic capacity, Rituals and taboos are elaborate. For example, each time the first moon appears, obscene songs and dances are performed for the twins and white clay powder 'phemba' or cassava flour is smeared on both the twins and parents foreheads. One taboo imposed upon the parents is to unsure that there is peace, tranquillity, and harmony in the household, for it is believed that if parents argue and fight one or even both twins may die. In the event that one of the twins dies, the remaining one will be called Kahalu or Katalu. If the child comes out with umbilical cord around the neck or body it

will be called Mujinga/Muzhinga – derived from verb Jinga (to curl, twist).

As there are special names for twin children, there are also specific bynames for parents of twins and these names are known as teknonyms. A teknonymy is a term that refers to a name given in a situation where a father, mother or grandparent is addressed by the personal name of his or her child or grandchild. Alford [2] notes the following concerning teknonyms: Teknonymy is a practice whereby parents at the birth of their child cease to be known by their former personal names and are known as "father of" (child's name) and "mother of" (child's name) [2]. Thus, a mother of twins among the Luvale becomes Nyapasa, which literary means "mother of twins", and the father becomes Sapasa "father of twins". If the parents happen to have another set of twins, they will maintain their previous byname. Commenting on bynames, Thipa [23] observes that such names reflect both politeness and parental status. Their use with respect to parents is regarded as a polite form of address in as far as it reckons with their enhanced status in the community.

A name may as well be bestowed according to manner of birth or physical characteristic and appearance of the child. Thus, a baby born coming out of the mother's womb with legs first is named Kasela or Kaseka, while Mulevwana or Liseli is bestowed upon a female child born with plenty of hair. A child is named Misongo (sickness) when s/he is always sick. Other names include kapuputwa (blind person), Uhewmya (beautiful), Thachi (strong person), Malasa (child who's skin color is dark like charcoal), Chilombo (a very clean person).

Time and Place of Birth

The Luvale may name their children according to the time and place of birth as well. For instance, the name Jhita (war) is given to a child born during war. If a child is born on the way to or from the river, where the mother had gone to fetch water or collect tubers of cassava that she had soaked for making flour meal, the name-giver may name the child Kameya (from water) or Kalwiji (river). A child born in the hut is named Chisambwe, the one born at a place of rest (found especially in the wild) when going on a journey may be called Chilombo. If a child is born in the bush s/he will be named Chivunda (thick forest), while the one born on the way will be called Jila (on the way, born on transit). Such names are significant for they serve as a reminder to those who know their origin and meaning, the social and cultural experiences of the people who have created them [25].

Names expressing gratitude

Like in most African societies, child-bearing is highly valued among the Luvale. Married couples are not respected if they do not bear children; they are often laughed at. Such a marriage is regarded as incomplete. The blame for not bearing children is laid at the woman's door and this will result in divorce if a solution is not found. Tournier, cited in Mandende [11], notes the importance of the personal name in this regard: "The name, then, is of great importance. It is the key to effective relationship between two partners, both for

the one who is named and for the other who uses his name in speaking to him." Thus, a woman who gives birth to a live child after an exceptionally difficult delivery or simply a long period of barrenness will show gratitude to God or the ancestral spirits by bestowing on her child any the following names: Zangi/Chitotenema (love), Likoji (grace), Khekhe (mercy or compassion), Sachiwe (who gives a lot) implying that God is so gracious that he gives to those who don't give up asking him. Other names of gratitude include Weyecha (generous), Chipema (wonderful), Pezo (white powder) - usually smeared on someone as a blessing sign.

Names given with the aid of induced pregnancy

As noted earlier, child-bearing is of great value to Africans and particularly the Luvale people. But, if it should happen that a woman experiences fertility related complications such as miscarriages, she will be treated with the aid of traditional medicines and rituals aimed at enhancing fertility. Once such a woman becomes pregnant, she will be taken to a secluded hut where she, in her white clothes, dedicates herself to the ancestral spirits until she delivers; once the child is born, it will be named Chipango (born after prayers to the ancestral spirits), irrespective of the sex. Under the same category we have names such as Kamana (born to a mother who took long to conceive), Chisola or Kasweka (hidden) – a name given to a child born in an isolated place after the mother has had several miscarriages. When the mother has suffered repeated deaths of her infants, parents may decide to seek the help of a traditional healer 'Chimbanda'. A child born after such intervention will be given any of these names including Vihemba (born using native medicine), Kamiji (roots), Mafwo (leaves), Musole (fertility tree), Mutondo (tree), Mukumbi (medicinal tree) and Kapasa or Kahembi (baby born after administering traditional medicine to the mother).

Proverbial names

Among the Luvale, there are names that are couched in forms of innuendoes to portray a situation that occurs before, during or after pregnancy or childbirth. They may depict the sour and bitter relationship that exists between parents and relatives, especially between the woman and her in-law's family or co-wives in case of a polygamous marriage, where each wife competes with the others to have the most children thereby winning the husband's attention and love. Thus, when a woman who remains barren for a long time eventually gives birth, she or her husband will name the child Sonyi (shame, shyness). This name carries a message for all those who used to mock the mother for her barrenness. In other instances, the name Mayiji is given to a child born unexpectedly. Other proverbial names include Chikomo (surprise gift), Chisengo (a person who is hated when around but missed when away), Chumba (very pour person).

Foreign Names

Luvale names also reveal the profound influence Western encroachment has had on African lives. Hence, name giving in Luvale society has detoured from the traditional patterns. Due to strong influence of Christianity, it has become common for the Luvale to adopt Christian names, which were thereafter "Luvalized" i.e. modified in Luvale. The "Luvalization" or modification of English/Christian names was as a result of the inability of the Luvale to pronounce such names correctly. A few examples among them are Zakaliya (zacharia), Zakeu (Zacheo), Yopa (Job), Yelemiya (Jeremiah), Tomase (Thomas), Saulu (Saul), Paulu (Paul), Petulu (Peter), Ndanyele (Daniel), Ezekele (Ezekiel), Ana (Anne), Luthe (Ruth), Eseta (Esther), Isaki (Isaac), Fulayi (airplane) – from verb fly, toloshi (trousers), Fwenete (window) - from the French word fenêtre and Fwalanga (money) – from French word franc. The modified form therefore is regarded as the variant form of the real or actual name.

Reflecting on the adoption of Christian names by Africans, Ngubane and Thabethe [18] observe that most Africans accepted Christian names when they decided to be baptised into Christianity, while others out of respect for or fear of their colonial masters adopted their masters' names. Hence, the adoption of these names contributed to the coercive power of Christianity and colonialism. This view is also echoed by Ntuli who strongly argues that colonisers use their Eurocentrism ideology, through Christianity of course, to gain hegemony over the rest of the world [18].

Teknonyms

Mutunda [17] observes that during a life time, a Lunda man or woman may acquire several names beside the given name; this phenomenon is also true for the Luvale. The most common of such names are teknonyms. These titles, taken by parents on the birth of their first child, are used by both men and women. As has already been stated, teknonymy occurs when a parent or grandparent adopts the name of the child or grandchild. Quoting Anim, Mandende [11] notes that from the day a child is shown to other members of the family and is named, the father and the mother may assume the name of this child. This system means that members of the family/community tend to "forget" the real names of the parents and grandparents. The use of this system is mostly welcome among the Luvale as it shows respect (kalemesa/kavumbi) to someone with children or grandchildren. A few examples under this category include SaChisengo ('father of Chisengo'), NyaChisengo ('mother of Chisengo'), SaLumayi ('father of Lumayi'), NyaLumayi ('mother of Lumayi'), SaKapalu ('father of Kapalu'), and NyaKapalu ('mother of Kapalu').

8. Conclusion

This article set out to investigate names and the practice of naming among the Luvale people of Northwestern region of Zambia. The study has indicated that names are meaning potentials in the universe of the Luvale people. Luvale personal name system and practice is a marker of the people's belief, ideology, religion, culture, philosophy and thought. This paper has also claimed that like most African cultures, Luvale names are not mere arbitrary and meaningless labels but rather have indexical relationship to socio-cultural meanings and functions, places, time, people and events. Luvale typological names indicate various

contexts. They may be birth names, family, circumstantial, manner of birth, proverbial names, and Western/Christian names that have been "Luvalized" for easy pronunciation.

It should be mentioned that, being the first study of its kind, it is hoped that the study will shed some light on the meaning of names and naming practices among the Luvale people, as well as their cultural implications. Perhaps the usefulness of this article lies in the fact that it presents a *status quaestionis* and provides raw data which can be useful to scholars who are interested in detailed and structured study of Luvale nomenclature.

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