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MORPHOLOGICAL PATTERNS IN INDIGENOUS KĨĨKAMBA ANTHROPONYMS

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ABSTRACT

This paper investigates morphological processes involved in the formation of the indigenous Kĩĩkamba personal names. It utilizes Lieber's (2009) Word-Formation Theory to analyze some of the names obtained from six Kĩĩkamba elders from Kitui, Machakos and Makueni counties representing the major dialect zones of Kĩĩkamba. Data was collected by use of semi-structured interview and focus group discussion and was subjected to qualitative analysis. The findings of the study show those indigenous Kĩĩkamba personal names are created using morphological mechanisms such as prefixation, derivation, nominalization and agentive formation. The study identifies Mu- as the most productive morphological process acting primarily as a human-class and agentive marker. Morphological construction also determines semantic meaning as some names signify the societal role, natural setting and beliefs and values. The results add to African onomastics as they show that Kĩĩkamba personal names are linguistically motivated constructions and not just random lexemes.

Keywords: Kĩĩkamba, personal names, morphology, word formation, onomastics, anthroponymy.

1. INTRODUCTION

Personal names form an integral part of human and linguistic identities in most African societies. In African societies, personal names carry much more than their purely identificatory function, but also carry socio-experiences, world-views, historical events and community values, "Naming is a deep social phenomenon linked to the organization of African societies and their understanding of the world...personal names reveal much of the linguistic and cultural characteristics of African societies" (Mbiti, 1969). Among Akamba people of Kenya, indigenous names carry information on birth events, the environment of origin, the character of the parents/family and future wishes. Studies have been carried out on socio-cultural contexts of naming practices in Africa; however, little has been done on the morphological structure of Kamba personal names, which is vital in understanding the structure and derivation of linguistic forms, thus carrying linguistic and social information within them. This paper is a study on the morphological processes which govern indigenous Kamba personal names based on Lieber's (2009) Word-Formation Theory in an attempt to reveal that Kamba names derive in a patterned and productive way that mirrors the overall word-formation processes in Kamba.

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2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Morphology and Word Formation

Morphology studies the internal composition of words and word formation processes. Liebers (2009) argues that word formation is a matter of joining morphemes via a process of derivation, compounding and affixation. A morphological analysis of words allows an exploration of the internal parts which are productive for the creation of lexical meaning.

Mbaabu (1996) observes that Bantu languages display a higher degree of morphological richness compared to the languages of the world, with prefixes and suffixes used systematically. So while there are general grammatical sketches of Kĩkamba (e.g. Nzunga, 2002), there exists few studies focusing entirely on how these processes take place in personal names. This study sought to understand how Kĩkamba names are constructed morphologically. Morphology in Bantu languages, such as Kĩkamba, is agglutinative (Katamba, 2003). Therefore, words (in this case personal names) are formed by serially combining morphemes. The majority of personal names in Kĩkamba are formed through affixation, derivation, and compounding. Investigating these morphological processes assisted in providing more explanations on how personal names are constructed morphologically in Kĩkamba.

In Bantu languages, the central importance of morphology in word formation has been driven by the agglutinative morphology of the languages (Nurse & Philippson, 2003). It is common for noun class prefixes, derivational affixes and nominalization processes to be employed in the formation of personal names. Gerba, (2014) in analyzing Oromo Personal Names determines the structure and meaning of Oromo personal names. The focus of the study was to describe features of the Oromo Personal names as a subcategory of the word. The study shows that Oromo personal names originate from nouns, adjectives, pronouns, verbs. The analysis indicates that the affixes which are attached to the personal name denote the sex and act as marking morphemes. Further, Oromo personal names have meaning that is descriptive, associative or referential. Gerba does not explicitly employ a morpho-semantic theoretical model; his study is more ethnolinguistic. The current study fills this gap by connecting morphological processes to semantic structure.

A study by Marjie-Okyere (2015) on "A Linguistic Survey of Types of Names among the Babukusu of Kenya" examined types of names used in the community from a linguistic context. The study uses an inflectional and derivational approach to describe the morphological patterns of names. The findings of the study show that among the Babukusu, place names, personal names, and names of things tended to consist of some form of morphological pattern. Further, the findings show that Kibukusu personal female and male names consist of prefixes used to draw differences by gender although they share the same root. The findings of this study provide the basis to conduct a morphological analysis of Kĩkamba personal names, to ascertain how gender differences could be determined from prefixes. However, while Marjie-Okyere (2015) uses a linguistic survey to study toponyms, her analysis remained largely descriptive and ethnolinguistic. The study did not examine how morphological structures within the names contribute to their meanings. Consequently, there remains a gap in understanding the morpho-semantic processes underlying name formation in Kenyan Bantu languages and particularly Kĩkamba language.

Ifeoma (2018) examined a linguistic appraisal of Igbo Anthroponomy. The study discourses personal names among the Igbos of Nigeria and considers naming as an important aspect of the Igbo society. The analysis focused on the grammatical categories of Igbo names. The findings of the study reveal that Igbo names were mostly lexical, phrasal or compound and consisted of sentential underlying structures making them distinct and unique from European personal names.

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Ifeoma's study is largely syntactic and ethnolinguistic. It did not investigate the morphological processes involved in name formation or the role of morphemes in generating meaning. Furthermore, being based on a *Kwa* language with analytic tendencies, it does not reflect the rich morphological nature of the Bantu naming systems. Consequently, a morpho-semantic study of indigenous Kĩĩkamba personal names fills this gap by providing a detailed account of how morphological structures and affixation patterns encode meaning and cultural information within a Bantu context.

Mbaka and Kirigia (2023) uses a morpho-syntactic approach to analyze place names in the proximate sister languages, Gikuyu, Kiembu, Gichuka and Kiimenti. The study focuses on their structural constituents. The study utilized a descriptive research design underpinned by Filmore's Frame Semantics. The findings of the study show that toponyms can be categorized into morphosyntactic complexes with a rich myriad of meaning applications in several contexts structurally classified as simple, affixed, compound and complex, with a reflection of historically, culturally and environmentally inspired morphological and semantic content. The study further indicates an intricate between place names and linguistics showing that place names constitutes linguistic processes in the interactive components of grammar: morphology, phonology, syntax and semantics. Mbaka and Kirigia's study focused on structure with limited attention to the semantic and cultural dimensions of naming. Furthermore, their analysis was on toponyms rather anthroponyms and provided broad comparative coverage at the expense of in-depth analysis of individual languages. This paper fills this gap by examining how morphological structure interacts with semantic and cultural meaning in a single Bantu language, thereby extending onomastic research to morpho-semantic interpretation and from toponyms to personal naming systems.
Tarus, Opande, Mecha and Aberi (2024) study on Morpho-semantic analysis of extrinsic and intrinsic linguistic features in personal and kinship names of the Nandi adopted an exploratory research design. The findings of the study reveal that the Nandi naming system is guided by the nature of childbirth and activities depicted and that the names were in relation to various circumstances such as the presence of visitors, migration, harvest, famine, locust invasion, among others. Further, Nandi names are assigned based on time, season, place of birth, nature of labour, pregnancy, birth of twins and order of birth. The study provides insights on social cultural meanings of words.

2.2 African Personal Names

As indicated in the introduction, African names are typically characterized by semantic opacity and cultural embeddedness. As Mbiti (1969) notes, African names typically bear witness to the events surrounding one's birth, and events during childhood; social context and values associated with such events and conditions. Agyekum (2006) states that African names are cultural texts which carry meanings of the society, memory, and cultural identity.
Finnegan, (2012) and Obeng (2001) state that in a number of African communities, personal names of individuals are influenced by social events, historical situations, and family legacy. As an example, names might represent conditions surrounding the birth of an infant, or feelings that parents or siblings held toward the baby, or collective important social experiences. For example, the names of children from a study about names in Yoruba culture indicate these names may be influenced by the circumstances mentioned above. Oladunjoye & Adeyemi (2012), divided children names into current families' situations, and children's life in the first week of existing or

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living in the world-what could be composing "see or do", the condition of the child at birth to the current structural conditions of that family is produced as a name. These circumstances were sometimes seen in examples like the Kamba: Mumbua (born during the rain), and Musyoka (born after a sibling's death) which all point to cultural meanings.

Notwithstanding the increased focus on African onomastics, the morpho-formation of personal names in Africa, has not been a popular subject of research. This study fills this vacuum by describing the structure and form of native Kkamba names.

3. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

This paper is driven by Lieber's (2009) Word-Formation theory, where a word is conceived as a construction of morphemes, whose structure is responsible for the meaning. Words are viewed as the combinations of affixes and roots, whose derivation and lexicon are crucial to meaning. Lieber's model can be used effectively to demonstrate how Kĩĩkamba personal names are morphologically structured and also to illustrate how the word structure conveys meaning.

4. METHODOLOGY

A qualitative approach to research design was employed in the study. The data were obtained from six elders chosen from Kitui, Machakos and Makueni districts which encompass the three main dialectical zones of Kkamba. Semi-structured interviews and focus group discussions were used to obtain indigenous personal names and their etymological backgrounds. Data obtained from elders known to be well-versed in traditional naming processes was analyzed through morphological decomposition based on Lieber's (2009) guidelines.

5. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

5.1 Affixation

Kĩĩkamba uses affixation as one of the most significant morphological processes in how it develops and understands original personal names within an indigenous context. Affixation is the addition of bound morphemes to the base stem to form new words or change grammatical groupings (Lieber, 2009). The adding of bound morphemes onto an existing word is referred to as the process of affixation and creates a new term that has different grammatical classifications than the original. Many names have prefixes, including noun class identifiers which are also used for their grammatical (and, in some cases, semantic) purposes. The data collected reveals that the most common processes include noun class prefixes, derivational prefixes, and augmentative or diminutive affixes.

5.1.1 Noun Class Prefixes as Person Markers

Kĩĩkamba and other Bantu languages designate (define) nouns (personal names included) with prefixes that reflect the noun's class. Prefixes carry meanings pertaining to important aspects of the noun, such as personhood, size, gender (based on culture not biology) and social classifications.

Here are some examples;

Noun Classes 1 and 2

In relation to Class 1/2 (Human Names) :/ *M-*/ → Singular / *a-*/ → Plural. These prefixes are attached to names referring to human beings.

Example 1: Mutua → *Mu-tua*

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Mu- : class 1 noun prefix (person)

-tua : "one who is delayed / born late"

Example 2: Muthiani → *Mu-thiani*

Mu- : class 1 prefix *-thiani* : from the verb' thiana' which means to keenly scrutinize an issue.

Example 3: Mũ-teti (one who quarrels; from *teta* "quarrel"

In these cases, the prefix /***Mu***-/ expresses the human property of the subject, which is consistent with the general morphological structure associated with Bantu languages. The root or stem contains most of the semantic content of the word. This supports Lieber's (2009) assertion that while affixes often provide a categorical meaning for a word, roots are where we find the lexical meaning of a word.

The researcher found out that though there are many Kĩkamba personal names that begin with prefix /***Mu-/*** denoting the human property, there are no plurals of such names for class 2.This, therefore, means that the Akamba perceive a person as a single entity and therefore a personal name has no plural.

Noun classes 3 and 4

The nominal prefix for this class is /***Mu***-/ for class 3 in singular with prefix /***Mi-/*** for class 4 plural. This class comprises mostly names of trees. In Kĩkamba, there are personal names with the meaning of trees. For example,

Example 4: Muti-(tree)

Example 5: Muamba (baobab tree)

Example 6: Musuu (pigeon peas)

These names, when used as personal names, do not have plurals but when used to refer to trees, they form plurals in class 4.

Noun classes 5 and 6

The researcher found out that the nominal prefix for this class is /***e***-/ 'i' but when affixed to a stem starting with a vowel, it takes the form /***i***-/ 'y' in singular and prefix /ma-/ in plural .Most nouns in this class refer to farm fruits. From the data collected, the researcher found out that in Kĩkamba, there are no personal names beginning with 'i 'that refer to farm fruits but there are personal names that refer to farm fruits though they begin with other prefixes. For example,

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Example 7: Kasungwa (a small orange)

Example 8: Kanyanya (a small tomato)

Example 9: Ndula (a wild fruit)

Additionally, there are names in class 6 that can be analyzed into a prefix and a stem but which do not have singular matches in class 5. Majority of these are mass nouns and other sets of uncountable nouns. For example,

Example 10: Mauta (***Ma***-uta which means oil)

Example 11: Mawathe (***Ma***-wathe which means evils/one who has been hurt or injured in a manner that cannot be healed)

Example 12: Mathina (***Ma***-thina which means problems)

Class 7 uses /***Ki***-/ before consonant stems and /***Ky***-/ before vowel stems in singular and /***i-sy-*** / in plural. Nouns in this class are names of: man-made objects like, parts of the body, natural phenomena, birds and insects as shown in examples 13-15

Example 13: Kilunda (***Ki***-lunda which is an arrow)

Example 14: Kiseve (***Ki***-seve which is wind)

Example 15: Kimangau (***Ki***-mangau which is a type of a bird)

Noun classes 9 and 10 use the nominal prefix for this class is /***N***-/

Example 16: Nguku (chicken)

Example 17: Nzamba (cockrel)

Example 18: Nthenge (billy goat)

Noun class 11

Nominal prefix for thus class is /***U***-}.For example,

Example 19: Uswii (a strand of hair)

Example 20: Ukungi (whirlwind)

Example 21: Umanyi (wisdom)

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Noun classes 12 and 13

The prefix for this class is /***Ka***-/ which is called the diminutive affix. This class comprises of names which serve to express smallness, affection and endearment. Examples of names in this class include:

Example 22: Ka-vuku (a small book)

Example 23: Ka-vuli(a small goat)

Example 24: Ka-tunge (born after the death of a sibling/relative)

Examples 22 and 23, though diminutive, they do not carry the semantic feature of affection or endearment but they show the pitiful side of affection.

Noun class 14

The nominal prefix for this class is /***U***-/

The majority of nouns in this class are abstract nouns. Personal names that refer to abstract nouns in this class, as found out by the study include:

Example 25: U-manyi(wisdom)

Example 26 U-kumu (authority)

Noun class 15

Nouns in this class are formed from verbs by use of the infinitive/gerundive prefix /***Ku***-/ and /***Kw***-/.For example,

Example 27

Ku-metethya (from the verb 'metethya' which means to make cry)

Noun classes 16 and 17

The prefix for this class is /***Va***-/. These are names of specific places. From the data collected, the researcher found out that in Kĩkamba, there are no personal names that begin with prefix /***Va***-/ that mean specific names of places. However, there are Kĩkamba personal names that begin with prefix /***Va***-/ but do not mean name of a place. For example,

Example 28: Vaati (luck)

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Example 29: Valua (a letter)

Example 30: Vaita (profit)

5.1.2: Derivational Prefixes in Names

The study found out that semantic fields are created through the process of derivation by adding meaning to the base of a word through derivational prefixes. The prefix /***Ki-***/ is frequently used with 'thing of/object of or 'manner /style of.' Examples of names formed from this prefix include:

Example 31:

Ki-oko (from -*ooka*, "to arrive early in the morning"; given to children born early in the morning or those born when people were about to start morning duties)

Example 32:

Ki-thome (from – 'thome,' a place outside a homestead where men would sit around a bonfire in the evening for evening meals and storytelling to the young generation.)

Example 33:

Ki-vuva (which means 'to blow' from the verb 'vuva').

The prefix /***Ny-*** / and /***N-***/ are alternative prefixes which are sometimes used as diminutive prefixes indicate association with a quality or condition as found out by the study.

Examples of Usage:

Example 34: Ny-iva ("becoming few or small")

Example 35:

Ny-amai ("one who is going through difficulties or trouble" often given to a child born in difficult conditions or a troubled pregnancy)

Example 36: N-zioka (from 'syoka' to return)

Example 37: N-thenya (to shine/appear-meaning 'the shining one or one who appeared')

Examples 34-37 show that by changing the class of a word through derivation and suffixation, one is able to maintain semantic relationships between related words and their derivatives, illustrating the characteristics of derivational affixes creating a completely new lexical unit as stated by Lieber (2009).

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5.1.3 Locative Prefixation (W- and Mw-)

This study found out that within some Kĩĩkamba names are locative prefixes that signify a connection to a specific location, time, or historical moment. Locative meaning is conveyed by the prefixes /mw-/ and /w-/, alluding to many semantic characteristics such as [+locative] or [+born-at/born-during]. Examples of these prefixes are:

Example 38:

w-ayua (from 'yua'-famine, meaning born during famine)

Example 39:

W-anza (from *nza*, "indicates "an area of open ground, pasture or fields, metaphorically one associated with openness or freedom-often given to a child born outside the house/home probably while the parent(s) were travelling to someplace or born before the mother could reach the hospital.

Example 40:

W-ambua, literally "the one born during the rain" (i.e. 'mbua' means rain).

The significance of environmental factors and the associated names is evident within the naming culture of the Akamba in the three counties.

5.1.4 Augmentative and Diminutive Affixes

In Kĩĩkamba, diminutive affixes also serve as expressions of affection or expressiveness. The current study found out that the Kĩĩkamba prefix /Ka-/ indicate some combination of the following semantic features: [+small], [+affection], and/or [+endearment] as shown in the examples below:

Example 41: Ka-nini(the small one; from *nini*, "small")

Example 42: Ka-laa (one who is tiny but strong)

Example 43: Ka-suki (a small bee-meaning 'small but fierce')

These are often used for children or as pet names.

The data collected shows that augmentative/diminutive morphology is common in nouns. However, it can appear in personal names to express affection, smallness, or emphasis. Many of these names are used for babies, but several of them continue to be used even when the child becomes an adult, showing that the diminutive prefix has become a part of the lexicon rather than simply descriptive.

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5.1.5 Verb-Based Agentive Prefixation

This study also found out that many native Kĩĩkamba names come from verbs that have been changed to make their agentive name versions by the use of prefixes. The prefix /***Mu-***/ is used frequently to create agentive names out of other types of names. Some examples of ***Mu-* + Verb Root (Agentive) are:**

Example 44: Mũ-sili (a name that indicates a person who gives judgement over an issue; from *sila*, "judge")

Example 45: Mũ-vandi (from the verb 'vanda' which means "to plant")

Example 46: *Mu-latya (from the verb 'latya' which means "to go for something*

5.1.6 Suffixation in Kĩĩkamba Names

In contrast to the use of prefixation in the majority of Kĩĩkamba name formation, some suffixation processes aid in creating nominalised forms and differentiating meaning. From the data collected, the researcher found that in Kĩĩkamba, suffix/-ni/ is used to form personal names as shown in the example below:

Example 47

Nzilani (nzila+ni which means a path)

The researcher concluded that the lack of more examples shows that suffixation is not as productive as prefixation in personal name formation.

Table 1: Summary on how Affixation Functions in Kĩĩkamba indigenous names

Affix Type	Function	Examples
Noun class prefixes /mũ-/	Mark personhood, produce agentive forms	Mũteti, Mũtua
Derivational prefixes /ki-, ny-/	Create new meanings, mark qualities/conditions	Kioko, Nyiva
Locative prefixes /mw- w-/	Link names to events or places	Mwanzia, Mwanza, Wanza
Diminutive prefixes /ka-/	Convey smallness/affection	Kanini, Katunge
Verb-based agentive affixes	Derive names from actions/roles	Mũsili, Mulatya
Suffixes /-ni, -/	Nominalize roots into names	Nzilani,

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Table 5 shows that in Kĩĩkamba, the use of affixation to create personal names is a major morphological method that represents personhood, agency, quality of life, the conditions under which one was born, love, and passion. The systematic connections between root words (roots) and derived forms (affixes) in Kĩĩkamba personal names can be seen through Lieber's (2009) analysis of affixation as a structure. With the help of Lyons' Componential Analysis Method (1968), the meaning(s) of affixed words can be explored, providing insight into how morphological structures function as tools for cultural identity formation and understanding for Kĩĩkamba speakers. The dominance of prefixation in Kĩĩkamba indigenous names corroborates earlier findings on Bantu morphology, which identify noun class and derivational prefixes as the primary means of nominal formation (Nurse & Philippson, 2003; Lieber, 2009). This study extends these observations by demonstrating how such prefixes are systematically deployed in personal naming to encode social roles, birth circumstances, and affective meanings.

5.2 Compounding in Kĩĩkamba Indigenous Personal Names

According to Lieber (2009), compounding is the formation of a new word through the joining together of two or more free morphemes resulting in a single lexical unit that has a single meaning. From the data collected, Kĩĩkamba compound personal names illustrate another productive morphological process. When creating compound names in Kĩĩkamba culture, compound names typically incorporate one or more nouns, one or more verbs, and/or one or more adjectives as a means by which to convey culturally significant concepts related to the circumstances of birth, social ideals/values, environment, and community goals. Lyons' Componential Analysis outlines how to deconstruct the meaning of these compound names into the individual meaning of their constituent parts by breaking down the compound name into the different components that contribute to the combined meaning of the compound name itself.

5.2.1 Noun + Noun Compounds

The data collected shows that noun-noun combinations or compounds are commonly used in Kĩĩkamba names, especially when referring to social and environmental factors as shown below:

Example 48:

Mwendandu ('Mwenda' meaning 'lover' + 'andu' meaning 'people'. The name means a person who loves people)

Example 49:

Munywoki ('Munywa' meaning 'drinker' + 'Uki' meaning 'alcohol'. The name means a person who drinks alcohol)

5.2.2 Verb + Noun Compounds

Kamba people use their personal names as a means of expressing actions related to various social or natural entities through the combination of verb roots and noun elements. Some examples of this practice are:

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Example 50:

Mutwotwii (Mutwa +utwii meaning blacksmith)

Example 51:

Mutyambai (Mutia + mbai)

The name means 'the one who rejects/leaves his clan', which consists of the verb root '*mutia*' meaning 'to reject/leave'' and '*mbai*' meaning 'clan'.

The compound names contain features such as [+action] and [+social function], which provide insight into how individuals may define themselves according to their roles in the community.

5.3 Adjective + Noun Compounds

The use of Compounding in Akamba culture allows for the combination of adjectives with nouns to demonstrate the high esteem in which certain attributes are held.

Example 52:

Nge'tumo (ng'e means 'of' and 'itumo' means 'spear'. This name is given to a lady after she is married to a certain family. The in-laws refer to her as 'daughter of her father.'

Example 53:

Nge'thau ('ithau' means play, which could be the name of the father to the woman in question)

Example 53

Nga'king'ondu (daughter of king'ondu)

The presence of noun–noun and adjective–noun compounds in Kĩĩkamba names supports earlier observations that compounding is a productive strategy for encoding culturally complex meanings (Bauer, 2003; Lieber, 2009). This study further demonstrates that Kĩĩkamba compounds function as compressed narratives of social experience, particularly in relation to environment and communal values

While a compound includes separate lexical items, personal names are understood to be comprised of a single lexical entity with meaning. Compounding encapsulates the history, social values and expectations of those who bear the name through their community. By analyzing in terms of the components of [+environment], [+emotion], [+action] and [+community], the study observes that the interaction of these features results in layered comprehension of Kĩĩkamba names.

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In Kĩĩkamba, compounding in indigenous personal names serves as a productive morphological technique which allows for combination of two or more lexical bases into culturally meaningful identity constructs. Compound names may be formed from noun, verb and adjective components and thus allow for encoding of complex social experience and hopes within a single naming entity. Lieber's morphological framework and Lyon's semantic model were used to provide the best understanding of compounding as a crucial means personal name formation in Kĩĩkamba.

5.3 Reduplication

According to Liever (2009), reduplication is defined as all or part of a lexical root being repeated to create new words or modify their meaning. The main forms of reduplication are either complete or partial and serve to strengthen or magnify the meaning of a personal name. Using Lyons' Componential Analysis of meaning, reduplicated names can have additional semantic properties such as [+intense], [+continuous], and [+emphasis]. From the data collected the study found that there are no Kĩĩkamba personal names that are formed through reduplication. Therefore, reduplication is not a productive process of forming indigenous Kĩĩkamba personal names.

5.4 Lexicalization

According to Lieber (2009), lexicalization in personal name formation is the process by which a productive, compositional or descriptive name becomes a single, non-compositional and conventionally established lexical unit in mental lexicon. This means that a name that may have originally been descriptive loses its transparent internal composition, becoming a single lexical unit. Some Kĩĩkamba names have experienced lexicalization when modern speakers could not see the original morphological boundaries of the names as they existed when the names were formed. Some examples of lexicalized Kĩĩkamba names include

Example 54: Nzomo
Example 55: Lwaya
Example 64: Ngonde

These names may have been morphologically complex at one time, however in their present form, these names are now viewed as one indivisible whole. This concept corresponds with Lieber's (2009) concept of Lexicalization in that over time, words can cease to have synchronic transparency and become fixed in form and meaning.

In Kĩĩkamba personal names, affixation and compounding interact to form a layered meaning, even though they are separate types of morphological processes. The primary role of affixation is to create grammatical and semantic categories. In Compounding, multiple lexemes are combined into one cultural expression. This illustrates how multiple morphological processes can be used as a resource for creating and transmitting identity and culture among the Akamba.

5.5 Discussion

These findings provide further support for Lieber's (2009) observation that morphology is related to lexical meaning in a more directly related way. The use of both prefixation and agentive derivation implies that the Kkamba personal name is a systematically organized construction, rather than the random assignation it can otherwise appear to be. The findings also establish that

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morphology can have both a grammatical and a sociocultural function by allowing names to systematically express role and community status.

The preference for the human-class prefix Mu- points to the centrality of the category person in Kkamba naming and the role that agency plays in the construction of names. The shift from a verbal root to a noun is one in which morphology expresses social status through the agentive reading of the root. The findings contribute to the body of African linguistic research by elucidating the mechanics of morphology within indigenous name formation systems and providing another look at the way word formation rules serve to encode cultural information.

6. CONCLUSION

It has been established that indigenous Kamba personal names are a product of productive morphological processes: affixation (prefixation and derivation), agentive and nominalisation. The prefix Mu- is identified as a major carrier of human agency and social identities. The results enrich the field of African onomastics by asserting that the Kamba personal names are structurally formed and lexically based, and thus an integral part of a language and a culture.

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