

A MORPHOSEMANTIC ANALYSIS OF THE KAMUE PERSONAL NAMES

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ABSTRACT: *A morphosemantic analysis of Kamuə personal names was examined in order to show the Kamue (Kamuə) norms and values as expressed in their naming patterns. A sample of 128 names for both male and female were used for the analysis. The data was derived from native speakers of Nkafa in twelve (12) selected villages. The analysis shows birth-order terms indicating a child's birth position and sex; circumstantial names, showing the circumstances surrounding a child's birth, and twins' names. Structural components such as noun-based compounds, verb-based compounds, preposition-based compounds, conjunction-based compounds, adverb-based compounds and adjective-based compounds and their sub-categories were also identified in Kamuə proper names. It was also found that, the meanings of some of the proper names are predictable from their structural components. Kamuə native personal names should be reserved as a mark of culture and tradition.*

KEYWORDS: *Morphosemantic; Nkafa; Kamuə; Onomatology.*

INTRODUCTION

The study of names which is equally referred to as onomastics or onomatology is of great importance to human existence, especially in Africa where people value culture, language and communication. In some languages, it is synonymous with the word noun. Names are used as labels to identify persons, places or things, and are equally historical witnesses. The name of a person may be used to trace his family genealogy, culture, language, occupation or town and as well communicate information to others. In Africa for instance, a person may have up to three names, which sometimes reflect the tradition and historical experience of his/her people (Heinrich, 1987; Onietan et al, 1998; Lawson, 2007; Horlacher, 2000; Bright, 2003; Wikipedia, 2007; Mohammed & Badejo, 2000).

Names are not just given; givers of any name consider the surrounding circumstances before naming a referent. Despite the fact that names are words and words as lexical items have

meanings, while names do not. Only when words relate or associate with referents or objects, they will still remain as lexical items, but the act of relating or associating with the referents or objects will make words lose the lexical status to become names. Those words that become names will refer to specific referents (Nilsen & Nilsen, 1975; Kempson, 1977; Lyons, 1977; Koopman, 1987; Strazny, 2005).

Personal Names of the Kamuə people of Michika local government area of Adamawa state is the subject of this study, as they are given to children according to the order of their birth, or according to the events and circumstances surrounding their birth. Like many other personal names, Kamuə personal names can be analyzed at the phonological, morphological as well as semantic levels. This study will specifically be concerned with the morphological and semantic analysis for now.

WHAT IS A PERSONAL NAME?

Name reveals the identity of an object; therefore, a child in an African society assumes some particular cultural significance (Thipa, 1982). Nicolaisen (1980b) states that 'the very act of naming has both communal and personal importance'. African names have always been there, and their innovation and creativity have always been very prominent within an onomastic context (Neethling, 1990). Personal names reflect the sociology and psychology of the era in which they are or were used; such that Kripke sees proper names as 'rigid designators' in the sense that they designate the same individuals across possible worlds (Liu, 1996 & Van Langendonck, 1983). One can bear more than one personal names; it is as a result of such that it is possible for Nigerian children to have more than a single personal name (Onietan et al, 1998; Oseni, 1981 & Waziri, 2000). It also helps in identifying or differentiating an individual from another (Waziri, 2000).

MORPHOSEMANTIC ANALYSIS OF KAMUƏ PERSONAL NAMES

Morphological analysis is an attempt/is made to capture the structure of language at the word level or concerned with the 'forms of words' (cf. Matthew, 2000). Morphology has its origin in Goethe according to Lyons (1968:195) as cited in Agbedo (2000), and that it was first used in the study of the 'forms' of living organisms in biology. It has the basic concept of word and morpheme. Mohammed and Badejo (2000) satisfy that names depict the beliefs and cultural values of a people. They also identify that it is possible to add prefixes to other lexical items to form names.

Semantic analysis generally deals with meaning in language, as the relationship between word form and extralinguistic entity it represents (referent) its traditional meaning. The relationship is regarded as being 'psychologically real' since it manifests in the speaker's or hearer's mind as a concept, which is regarded as a crucial intermediary between word form and its referent (Agbedo, *ibid*), just as Raper (1983:105) cited in Ntuli (1992a) points out that "connotation is a psycho-linguistic concept having to do with the association of a name with some extra-linguistic entities which the hearer sometimes makes upon hearing a name". Proper names according to

Várnai (2003) do have a kind of semantic content and it has to be cultural in meaning. The establishment of this meaning according to Raper (1990:267) cited in Ntuli (1992a) is considered as the first necessary step required in onomastic investigation.

Below are the types of personal names in the Kamuə language as well as their morphological and semantic features in which their cultural norms and values are depicted. The morphological and semantic examinations of personal names reveal the techniques of compounds prevalent in their formation as well as the application of these word formation tools. The categorization is made according to parts of speech depending on their structural components. The meaning of words arising in this way may be predicted, sometimes (Matthews, 1993).

KAMUƏ PERSONAL NAMES

Personal name is a kind of name that refers to an individual. It is a name, a word or group of words, often used by people to identify a particular person. They reflect the concerns and values of the society. The Kamuə personal names, as identified in this research, are divided into three, and each of the categories of names has various morphological and semantic features, depending on their structural components which give different compound formation. Viz:

a) BIRTH ORDER NAMES

The birth order names are given to all children born to a Kamuə family. These names show a person's birth position as well as the person's sex, except for some few ones, which are neutral. This class of names is noun based, though they are not all compounds.

- i. **Noun-based compound** is made up of a noun plus another item(s) to give a personal name. But in the case of names within the first born child to the tenth born child in the Kamuə naming system are all single terms, but are all nouns and refer to specific individuals or persons. Those born within birth positions one to ten are not compounds in nature and are sex specific, while those of five, eight, nine and ten birth positions are unisex or neuter names and are not compounds. **Example 1:**

ii.

Birth Position	Male Birth Name Order	Female Birth Name Order
First born	T®zhé	K f vè
Second born	Z☐rà	M↔s☐
Third born	Tëmb↔↔	Kwàr↔↔mbà
Fourth born	V↔↔nd☐	Kwànyè
Fifth born	Kwàj☐	Kwàj☐
Sixth born	T↔↔r☐	Kwàt↔↔
Seventh born	S®n☐	Kwàs®n☐
Eight born	Kwàdà	Kwàdà
Ninth born	Dràmb☐	Dràmb☐
Tenth born	Kwàtr☐	Kwàtr☐
Eleventh born	T☐h↔↔lè	K f vèh↔↔lè
Twelfth born	Z☐ràh↔↔lè	M↔s☐h↔↔lè

Thirteenth born

Tèmb↔h↔lè

Kwàr↔mbàh↔lè

1. Noun + Age Adjective: Those born in the eleventh, twelfth and thirteenth birth positions will have morphological and semantic formations, which are noun-based compounds, having noun plus an age adjective-“h↔lè” to make up personal names, that is, the birth order term plus the age adjective. Even if other children were to be born after them, what they will have is the above morphological formation of having a birth order name plus the age adjective “h↔lè” indicating been born in parents’ old age. **Example 2:**

Names	Morphological Composition	Gloss
T↔h·lè	T↔ (T↔zhé) + h↔lè First born child male + old	first male child born in old age
K↔vèh↔lè	K↔vè + h↔lè First born child female + old	first female child born in old age.
Z↔ràh↔lè	Z↔rà + h↔lè Second born child male + old	second male child born in old age
Kwàr↔mbàh↔lè	Kwàr↔mbà + h↔lè Third born child female + old	third female child born in old age

b. TWINS’ NAMES

The twins in Kamuə traditional setting have their kind of names; even if they were to be born first in the order of birth position, they will still retain their kinds of names. The twins’ names have structural compositions such as:

i. Verb-based compound: This set of name is the only verb-based compound structured twins’ name. The sum total of the product of the morphological features of the name is not the meaning of the name. It is a unisex name for a twin that is born first. **Example 3:**

Names	Morphological Formation	Gloss
Tl·kém·	Tl· + kém· Cut + face/front	unisex name a child born first

ii. Noun-based names: The twins’ names are a noun structure based names but the first below are all monosyllabic names. Though they are regarded as noun based because they are all nouns in nature and refer to specific category of bearers/reference. **Example 4:**

Birth Position	Male Birth Order Name	Female Birth Order Name
Second	Pèmbí	Kw·lghà
Third	Bùgì	Kw·gwè

c. CIRCUMSTANTIAL NAMES

This category of personal names constitutes the majority of Kamuə 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. The following morphological and semantic formations were discovered in the Kamuə circumstantial names.

1. Noun-based compounds: This type/class of names is noun based, and is subdivided into different categories depending on their structural components. In Kamuə personal names, the following noun-based compounds are discovered.

i. Noun + Noun: This is composed of two items. Those composed of birth order name plus a noun; and those composed of any other noun. Those composed of birth order terms and a noun include as in **Examples 5:**

Name	Morphological composition	Gloss
Zírághè	Zírá + ghè Second born male + absence of menstruation	second born male child born without the normal monthly menstruation experience.
Tárisíkwì	Tárisí + shíkwì Sixth born male + market	sixth born male born in the market.
Kwájíbadlè	Kwájí + badlè Fifth born unisex name + beer	born on the day the mother sales local beer.
Kwájíghwì	Kwájí + ghwì Fifth born unisex + fire	fifth born who suffered severe fire burnt.
Másídèlè the	Másí + dèlè Second female born + river	second born female born by river bank.

The first set above has the birth order terms plus the “ghè”, “shíkwì”, “badlè”, “dèlè” giving an extra explanation or information about the child's situation of birth. The second set of the above composition is that which is made up of a noun and another noun outside the above set. **Example 6:**

Names	Morphological formation	Gloss
Trímcè	Trí + mcè Month + friend/friendship	born in the month of friendship, the fifth month.
Wánjè	Wá + njè Who + he/she	who is he/she?

ii. Noun + Verb: This class of personal names is made up of a noun plus a verb to give Kamuə personal names. Such names have morphological and semantic features as in **Examples 7:**

Name	Morphological composition	Gloss
Wyàgè	wyè + gè Mouth + say	mouth will say/confess.
Wávècè	wá + vècè What + talk/speech	forget what people say.
Mám̀bè	Má + mbè Hunger/famine + managemanage	famine/born during famine

iii. Noun + Verb + Noun: This group is made up of three items or components, which include noun, verb and noun, to give personal names. This is not much in Kamuə circumstantial names from research made so far see **examples 8:**

Name	Morphological composition	Gloss
Njéngàrà	Njé + ngè + rà He (God) + gave + me	He (God) gave me
Kwádèméshì	Kwá + dèmé + shì Person who + dislikes + grandparent(s)	born shortly before/after the death of a grandparent.

iv. Noun + Verb + Question maker: Such names normally end with a question maker “n·” after having a noun and a verb at the beginning making the first two items of the name. Such a name is normally asking a rhetorical question as in **Example 9:**

Name	Morphological composition	Gloss
Mdínglén·	Mdí + nglé + n· Human/man + control + ?	Is it man/human that control?

v. Noun + Noun + (Verb) (Noun) (Preposition): The next group is that which has two nouns which are basic in the names but have verb, noun and preposition that follow as options. As in **Example 10**

Name	Morphological composition	Gloss
Wámdívé	Wá + mdí + vè Who + person + have/has	who do (es) they, he/she have/has
Wámdítè	Wá + mdí + tè Who + person + on	who will protect them/him?
Tírím̀àlè̀b̀àdlè̀	Tírí + m̀àlè̀ + b̀àdlè̀ Sixth born male + woman + beer	sixth son of the woman who sales beer (local beer)

vi. Noun + Head adjective: This sub-category has the birth order term plus head as an adjective modifier indicating the child as having been born with a little bit bigger head than the normal the head size a child should have at birth. That is why “ghì”-head adjective is added to the birth order term for both male and female names, as **Example 11:**

Name	Morphological composition	Gloss
Kwájìghì	Kwájì + ghì unisex + head	fifth unisex name given to a Fifth born child born with big head
Vándíghì	Vándí + ghì Fourth born male + head	fourth male child born with big head
Màsíghì	Màsí + ghì second born female + head	second female child born with big head

vii. Noun + Colour Adjective: This class has a noun plus colour adjective such as “*be*”-white, “*ngèlé*”-black, “*ghèa*”-red, as a modifier showing the child's complexion at birth. As in the formation in **Example 12:**

Name	Morphological composition	Gloss
Kwádàbe·	Kwádà + be· Eight born unisex name + white	unisex name for eight child born with extra fair skin complexion
Wzhàngèlé	Wzhà + ngèlé Daughter + black complexion	a girl child having a black skin
Wzhàbe·	Wzhà + be· Daughter + white	a girl child born with extra fair skin complexion
Kwàsìníghèa	Kwàsìní + ghèa Seventh born female + red	seventh born female with reddish skin complexion

2. Preposition-Based Compounds: This category has a structure composed of a preposition and other components, with preposition as the base. The categories of names here generally show a kind of location where the child was born or the situation surrounding certain circumstances around the child's birth. It has sub-categories.

i. Preposition + Noun: This category is made up of two items of a preposition indicating location, which is not physical location but psychological, plus a noun. This sort of names reveals what is in the minds of the parents when choosing names for their children for reasons best known to them. That is why prepositions such as “*Kwà*”, “*Mè*”, “*Vàré*”, “*Tè*”, “*Nyá*”, “*Và*” are used by the parents in trying to define their state of the mind as at the birth of the child and as well as considering the family's condition. **Example 13:**

Name	Morphological composition	Gloss
Kwànkwà	Kwà + nkwà On/inside + road/path	born along the road/path
Nyámpá	Nyá + mpá	born when the community

	At + war/fight/battlewar/when	was at war or when the father was at the war front.
Vàréwá	Vàré + wá Near + who	near who/he is along
Mègwà	Mè + gwà In + body	inborn
Mèghì	Mè + ghì In + head	it is in the heart/mind

ix. Preposition + Noun + Verb: This category of personal names has three components of preposition, which is the base, noun and a verb. The meaning of the name is the sum total of the product of the name. **Example 14:**

Name	Morphological composition	Gloss
Tèwàngó	Tè + wà + ngó On + who + depend	depends on who

x. Preposition + Noun + Noun: This particular category has three components having the preposition as the base, and two nouns to have formation. **Example 15:**

Name	Morphological composition	Gloss
Tèkwànjé	Tè + kwà + njé In/on + place + he/she	in his/her place or a replacement for him/her.

Both names in examples 13 and 14 have the preposition “Tè” indicating their level of hope. It should be noted here that the Nkafa dialect has same gender for male and female, that is why “njé” above stands for both genders.

xi. Preposition + Numerical Adjective: it is made up of a preposition plus numerical adjective to form a name having morphological formation, such a name is common in the Kamuə naming system. **Example 16:**

Name	Morphological composition	Gloss
Vàkùté	Và + kùté Year/with/in position of/because of + one	because of oneness

3. Conjunction-based Compound: This category has its structure formed with conjunction as a base followed by some components to form personal names. It has been classified into sub-categories.

i. Conjunction + Noun: The category identified here is made up of two components each, having a conjunction as the base, and then a noun. This category discusses mostly condition surrounding the family as well as that of the child. It is either such names are given because the family were called names or they have faith that the child will change their situation. The conjunction “Và” is used to indicate that reason or condition they believe is the course of their condition, and these conditions are second components of the subcategory.

Example 17:

Name	Morphological composition	Gloss
Vàfíkí	Và + tíkí Because/out of/in position of + poverty	out/because of poverty
Vàldè	Và + Idè Because/out of/in position of + jealousy	out/because of jealousy
Vàhyàlò	Và + hyàlò Because/out of/in position of + sprite (God)	in God's position
Vànglè	Và + nglè Because/out of/in position of + abuse	because of abuse

ii. (Noun) + le + Noun: This category will either have a noun plus a connective (le) meaning “and/with”, plus a noun or connective (le) plus a noun. These names too end with a question “w.?” asking a kind of rhetorical question. Which the givers of such names may be aware or have the answers to such questions. **Example 18:**

Name	Morphological composition	Gloss
Lèwá	Lè + wá With/and + who	with/and who
Hyálèwá	Hyá + lè + wá They/them + with/and + who	they are with who

4. Verb-based Compounds: It is verb-based and followed by other components. It is categorized into:

i. Imperative + any constituent other than a verb + (any constituent): The third component may be absent in some structures and present in some. This category of names is a kind of statement made referring to no particular person or people by using nouns such as “hyá”, and “wà” which is a reference for plural pronoun “you”, which ordinarily should be “yè”-you (plural/singular) but cannot be used in constructions such as those above. Though as individual lexical item it cannot be used as plural pronoun “you”. It is a kind of blanket statement made about the family situation or the child's. The denotative meanings of such names may not easily be known but there is always connotative meaning to such names. **Example 19:**

Name	Morphological composition	Gloss
Gèhyá	Gè + hyá Say + they/them	let them say
Pàtéwà	Pàté + wà Settle/reconcile + water place	you should settle/reconcile
Làntúwà	Làntú + wà Throw away + water place	you should throw him away

ii. Verb + Noun: This category is made up of a verb and a noun to form proper names. The use of nouns such as “wà”, “hy.”, “ghì”, “ntsé” along side verbs such as “Tàyè”, “Fútè”, “Pà”, “démé”, etc gives an idea that a lot of people are involved or been talked about in the condition surrounding the family situation which includes even human parts to give proper names. The use of “wà” is same as that in example 19. **Example 20:**

Name	Morphological composition	Gloss
Zèzíghì	zèzí + ghì Thinking + head	thinking of oneself
Déméwà	démé + wà Dislike + water place	you should dislike
Vótáhyá	Vótá + hyá Help + them	help them
Fútèwà	Fútè + wà Listen/hear + water place	should hear/listen
Yàt—wà	Yàt— + wà Protect/preserve + water place	you should protect/preserve him

iii. Verb + Verb: This subcategory has two verbs to form a proper name. One of the verbs serves as the base. The meaning of such name is equal to the product of the name. As in **Example 21:**

Name	Morphological Formation	Gloss
Gwàréndz·	Gwàré + ndz· Mixed + live/stay	living/staying together imbibes all sorts of people

iv. Verb + Preposition + Question marker: This category has a question maker “n·” at the end of the components that make up proper name, as in **Example 22:**

Name	Morphological composition	Gloss
Hèwátèné	hèwá + tè + n· Shame/shy/ repect + on +?	Has he/she repect?

5. Adverb-based Compounds: The adverb-based compound structure in Kamuə personal names is categorized based on their structures, with the adverb as a base modifier in the morphological and semantic formation such as the following:

i. Adverb + Verb: this category is made up of adverb and verb as **Example 23:**

Name	Morphological composition	Gloss
Tèwávè	Tèwá + vè Why + have	why own/have it?

ii. Adverb + Noun: This is made up of only two components of adverb and noun; with a formation such as in **Example 24:**

Name	Morphological composition	Gloss
Vénjé	Vé + njé	
Time + Him (God)/it		it is His (God) time/God' time

Conclusion

The study of onomastics is sociolinguistics as well as applied in nature. The Kamuə personal names are classified into three types, these are birth order names indicating a person's birth position and sex, the twins' names as regarding twins' birth order too and then the largest group which is the circumstantial names, which explains the circumstances surrounding one's birth as well as one's family life. The morphosemantic analysis of the Kamuə personal names are based on their structural formations as their categorization is made according to the parts of speech the words belong to, this depends on their structural components which bring out their morphological and semantic features, which are, in some cases the sum total of the product of the compound names which are, in some cases, the meanings of the names while in some are not. This study will go a long way in opening up Kamuə linguistics, as it has not received much attention from linguists working on Biu mandara group of Chadic languages, to linguists and students of linguistics, as well as the native speakers of the dialect and the language at large, it will as well serve as reference material to researchers. Kamuə native personal names should be reserved as a mark of culture and tradition.

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