

**A SOCIO-SEMANTIC ANALYSIS OF SELECTED  
TUMBUKA ANTHROPNYMS**

**BY**

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## **ABSTRACT**

This study was an attempt to investigate the meanings and sociocultural implications of selected Tumbuka anthroponyms. It sought to identify and analyse meanings of selected Tumbuka personal names; establish the kind of naming system that the Tumbuka of Lundazi District have in place; and to find out the socio-cultural implications of the names and naming patterns and/or strategies that are used among the people in the study area.

The study was purely qualitative. Through the use of semi-structured interviews, focus group discussions, interaction with the study population and introspection, the researcher was able to gather primary data. On a large scale, purposive sampling was the employed technique, supplemented by simple random sampling to select participants. Secondary data was obtained from existing Tumbuka literature including school and village registers. Using the unified theory of names, the generated data was analysed and thereafter names grouped according to themes.

Findings showed that, among the Tumbuka people, the first name is bestowed on a child after detachment of its umbilical cord. Traditionally, the grandfather and great grandfather to the new-born child are the sole name-givers. However, there are circumstances under which another person might be requested to name a child. The bestowal of first names arises from different factors including events or circumstances surrounding a child's birth such as: a child's place, period, order and manner of birth; death; fertility; religion; marital disputes and physical appearance of the newborn among others. In addition to this, names are sometimes given to children to honour dead relations. Unlike first names, most of the Tumbuka surnames began as nicknames. Later, such names became permanent surnames and/or clan names.

In relation to the findings, it was deduced that personal names in Tumbuka-prone speech communities go beyond being mere personal labels. They are expressions and stories that mark the various social and psychological milestones and circumstances that surrounded the birth of the child to be named as well as the family and community into which the child is born. This in turn makes personal names an integral meaningful part of the Tumbuka cultural heritage.

*Key words: anthroponyms; sociocultural; bestowal; implications; naming system.*

## **DEDICATION**

I dedicate this dissertation to my family. Special gratitude to John C. Chanda and Annah Gondwe my parents for their unconditional support, and whose push for persistence will forever inspire me. My siblings Wezi, Ngoi, Kalunga and Sokalikwenda who have always been my favourite cheerleaders, I love you all so much.

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## Table of Contents

AUTHOR’S DECLARATION .....	ii
COPYRIGHT DECLARATION .....	iii
APPROVAL .....	iv
ABSTRACT.....	v
DEDICATION .....	vi
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS .....	vii
CHAPTER ONE .....	1
INTRODUCTION .....	1
Overview	1
1.1 The Study of Names .....	1
1.1.1 Ethnolinguistic Background of the Tumbuka People .....	2
1.1.2 Names and Naming Patterns in African Societies .....	3
1.2 Statement of the Problem .....	5
1.3 Significance of the Study .....	5
1.4 Aim .....	6
1.5 Research Objectives .....	6
1.6 Research Questions.....	6
1.7 Theoretical Framework .....	6
1.7.1 A Unified Theory of Names .....	6
1.8 Scope of the Study .....	9
1.9 Definition of Terms .....	9
1.10 Structure of the Dissertation .....	10
1.11 Conclusion.....	10
CHAPTER TWO .....	11
LITERATURE REVIEW .....	11
Overview	11
2.1 Studies on Names as Part of Language Systems.....	11
2.1.1 Meaning of Names.....	14
2.1.2 Studies on Names in Zambia .....	16
2.1.3 Studies of Names Based on Various Themes.....	21
2.1.4 Conclusion.....	28
CHAPTER THREE: .....	29

METHODOLOGY .....	29
Overview	29
3.1 Methodological Approach.....	29
3.1 Research Design .....	30
3.1.1 Descriptive Research Design .....	31
3.2 Study Area and Sample Size .....	32
3.3 Data Collection Instruments .....	32
3.4 Data Collection Procedures and Timeline.....	32
3.5 Data Analysis .....	33
3.6 Conclusion.....	34
CHAPTER FOUR.....	35
PRESENTATION AND DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS .....	35
Overview	35
4.2. Semantics of Tumbuka Names.....	37
4.2.1 Personal Names .....	38
4.2.1.1. Order of Birth Names .....	38
4.2.1.2. Names Related to Fertility .....	41
4.2.1.3. Names Related to Marital Disputes .....	44
4.2.1.3.1. Names Linked to Bad Occurrences in Marriage.....	44
4.2.1.3.2. Names Related to Reconciling a Couple .....	46
4.2.1.3.3. Names Related to a Couple Standing up for Itself .....	48
4.2.1.4. Manner of Birth Related Names .....	48
4.2.1.5. Names Related to Happiness .....	51
4.2.1.6. Names Related to Death .....	52
4.2.1.6.1. Names with Connotations of Hopelessness and Lamentation .....	52
4.2.1.6.2. Names with Connotations of Suspicious Death .....	53
4.2.1.6.3. Names Depicting Victory over Death .....	55
4.2.1.7. Names Related to Social Caution .....	57
4.2.1.8. Names Influenced by Religion.....	58
4.2.1.8.1. Names Attributed to Ancestors and the Supreme Being.....	59
4.2.1.8.2. Names Adapted from Characters in the Bible .....	60
4.2.1.9. Names Related to Bad Occurrences.....	61
4.2.1.10. Names Meant to Promote Unity.....	62

4.2.1.11.	Names Related to Physical Appearance.....	63
4.3.	Surnames and Clan Names .....	64
Overview	64	
4.3.1.	Semantics of Surnames and Clan Names.....	65
4.4	Sociocultural Implications of Tumbuka Personal Names and Naming Strategies .....	69
4.5.1.	Conclusions .....	70
4.5.2.	Recommendations for further research .....	72
APPENDICES	.....	81
Appendix A:	Participant Information Sheet.....	81
Appendix B:	Consent Form .....	85
Appendix C:	Interview guide .....	87

# CHAPTER ONE

## INTRODUCTION

### Overview

This chapter is designed to give a synopsis of the study into *a Socio-Semantic Analysis of Tumbuka Anthroponyms*. It begins by giving a general account of the study of names, followed by an ethnographic background of the Tumbuka people. It then proceeds by highlighting the statement of the problem as well as the aim of the study. The objectives and the research questions which guided the study and the theoretical framework that was used have also been presented. Thereafter, information pertaining to the scope and definition of the key terms that have been used in the study has been given. The chapter ends by giving an outline of the dissertation.

### 1.1 The Study of Names

According to Alford (1987:268) “the study of names is a multidisciplinary age-old subject that has attracted the attention of philosophers, linguists and anthropologists, among other scholars from various disciplines.” This assertion could partly be explained by the fact that since personal names are indicators of the patterns of societal sociocultural organisations and worldview, scholars from various fields have taken interest in trying to understand some of the important insights that names might offer by studying various types and/or categories of names.

In the field of Linguistics, Onomastics is the study of proper names, especially the names of people (Anthroponyms) and places (Toponyms). A person who studies the origins, distributions and variations of proper names is called an Onomastician. Scholars have argued that Onomastics is both an old and a young discipline. It is old in the sense that since ancient Greece, names have been regarded as central to the study of language, illuminating how humans communicate with each other and organise the world. The investigation of name origins, on the other hand, is more recent, not developing until the twentieth century in some areas, and is still in its formative stages in certain parts of the world. (Hough and Izdebska 2016).

Shakespeare once inquired, “What is in a name?” The answer to this long-standing question depends on the particular culture from which it is framed. Among many African cultures, a

personal name carries information about the individual that it signifies, the language from which it is drawn and the society that ascribes it. A name may carry such information as the linguistic structures and phonological processes found in the language, the position of the name bearer in society, and the collective history and life experiences of the people surrounding the individual to be named (Mphande, 2006).

### **1.1.1 Ethnolinguistic Background of the Tumbuka People**

Literature on the history of the Tumbuka is relatively limited. This has been acknowledged by scholars such as Chondoka and Bota cited in Mushibwe (2009:15) who have claimed that “their book is the first to give a correct historical account of the Tumbuka speaking people and have argued that it contains valid historical information.”

The Tumbuka people are a distinct ethnic group found in Malawi, parts of Tanzania and Zambia. In Zambia, they are one of the six major tribal groupings found in the Eastern Province. According to Guthrie’s classification of languages, Tumbuka has been classified as (N21), and belongs to the same language group as Chewa and Sena in Zone N. While Tumbuka as a language is locally referred to as Chitumbuka, which loosely translates to ‘language of the Tumbuka people,’ the people are known as Batumbuka, that is, ‘Tumbuka people.’ This group has a rich array of cultural beliefs, customs and practices with slight variations from other groups in the province Mushibwe (2009).

The Tumbuka are part of the many and earliest waves of the Bantu immigrants from the Proto-Bantu center in Kola region of the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC). Like many other tribes in Zambia such as the Bemba, Chewa and the Nsenga, the Tumbuka left the Luba Kingdom in the early 1400s because they did not like the embarrassing menial work they were expected to perform by their leaders. They then settled in Malawi, but due to population growth, there was need for more land for purposes of agriculture and settlement which prompted one group to settle in present day Lundazi and Chama Districts of the Eastern and Muchinga Provinces of Zambia, respectively. The Tumbuka co-existed with the Saan who slowly left the area, settling in Namib and Kalahari Deserts of present-day Namibia and Botswana respectively. This study, however, focuses on the group that settled in Lundazi District of Zambia. (Brelsford, 1965; Chondoka and Bota, 2015).

When the Tumbuka people were conquered by the Ngoni people and their chiefs reduced to positions of headmen forcibly seizing their authority, there were changes in their lifestyle (Chondoka and Bota, 2015). Due to the conquest, scholars such as Munthali (2008) have argued that the coming of the Ngoni people and their interaction with the Tumbuka people changed the social organisation of the Tumbuka. For instance, the Tumbuka people that were previously a matrilineal group took up the Ngoni patrilineal system. Other changes included the centralised form of chieftainship, the system of descent and the payment of the bride wealth all as a result of the contact with the Ngoni.

In addition to what has been highlighted above, the Tumbuka people largely depend on agriculture as the main source of livelihood with the major economic crops being maize, tobacco and cotton. Cattle rearing is another important aspect of the Tumbuka socio-economic life.

### **1.1.2 Names and Naming Patterns in African Societies**

Stewart (1997) and Parham (2002) cited in Liseli (2012:25) postulate that “The African continent is a vast landmass consisting of diverse peoples, ethnic groups, cultures, some 2000 languages, splendid landscapes, and 54 countries.” Undeniably, while Africans are by no means a monolithic people, given their varied components (ibid: 25) “when it comes to indigenous naming practices, there are common threads that can be traced throughout this rich tapestry of peoples and their cultures.” There is a spirituality that binds African people together, and guides their physical existence. In the African cultural worldview, the essential ingredient and essence of everything, including humans, is spirit. This therefore implies that for Africans, your name is your soul – it has celestial powers and embodies spirit. It is known from the ancient times that names carry some magical power and can influence character and model the fortune of a person. According to the teachings of African spirituality, as noted by Liseli (2012), when one bestows a name upon a child, one is not simply naming the flesh of the child, but rather, the name is for the person’s soul.

According to Bizhkenova (2014:81) “Proper names are an important category of words in any language. The origin and the history of proper names (*nomina propria*) is studied in different fields, but the linguists are interested in proper names the most.” This is presumably because they consider this category of words an inalienable part of language and speech. In spite of this

assertion, scholars have argued that the process of giving names to a person is deeply social because of the customs and traditions particularly knitted towards the naming process. It is no wonder research into several generations would largely show that the whole history and development of a society are reflected in the proper names. For instance, people might react to changes in their life by deliberately selecting children's names with the meaning that reflect those changes. Hence, making personal names have a living etymon and motivation. This holds true for many African societies.

In another anthroponomastic study carried out in South Africa by Kahari (1990), it has been observed that the choice of a personal name among groups such as the Xhosa, Sotho, Tswana and Pondo is influenced by several factors. Among them are religious, commemorative (names marking an event, date or person), derogatory protective names (used as distracters) to make the ancestors think the child is unwanted, owing to previous deaths or misfortune in the family and names which encode social commentary.

In Zambia, a study carried out among the Ng'umbo people by Kabaso (2016:5) reveals that "there are situations when a name is bestowed on a child and the child cries persistently." For the Ng'umbo people, this is regarded as rejection of that name by the ancestors. This prompts the elders to rename the child by trial and error; continuously changing the names for reincarnation of the fallen parents until the baby stops crying. This is one of the ritual ceremonies conducted when naming the child. In other circumstances, names are bestowed following the context in which the bearer of the name was born, such as season of the year and others are gained through religious rituals. Kabaso (2016:5) further writes that "bearing twins also makes parents to change their names to '*Shi Mpundu* and '*Na Mpundu*' for the father and mother respectively, as twins are highly valued and considered a special gift from ancestral spirits in Ng'umbo society.

From the foregoing, it can be observed that African cultures have various ways of naming children, ranging from the Akan naming system based on the days of the week to the Egyptian more cosmic one. Primarily, many ethnic groups in Africa have shown preference for "cultural-bound meaningful personal names that act as badges of ...basic group identity" (Isaacs 1957:27) "that produce... a web of signification" (Wittenberg, 2000:2). To borrow from Pritchard, it could be argued that personal names are "... social documents which fix a person's position in the

social structure” (Pritchard, 1939:237). They define who one is, where one comes from, make reference to events surrounding a child’s birth, the child’s identity and that which the name giver(s) and bearer(s) hates or cherishes in their lives. From this perspective, it can be noted that personal names serve a number of social and interactional purposes besides being reference devices. Just like any other category of proper names, personal names are oral records. This therefore makes an investigation into African names and naming practices paramount as it helps in the recovery and/ or reconstruction of the African heritage as these are closely linked to a people’s culture (Makondo, 2008).

## **1.2 Statement of the Problem**

Research on personal names, especially in non-Western societies has attracted scholarly attention in the recent past. Despite this move, there is scanty known literature on personal names in Zambia. Examples of a few comprehensive studies that have been conducted in Zambia include Lisimba’s *Lozi names in Language and Culture (2000)*; Mwizenge’s (2006) work entitled *Zambian Names: The Meaning of Tumbuka, Chewa, Nsenga, Ngoni and Tonga Names; Luvale Personal Names and Naming Practices: a Sociocultural Analysis* by Mutunda (2011); *a Morpho-Semantic Analysis of Tonga Given and Nicknames* by Hang’ombe (2015); and *A morphological and semantic analysis of nicknames in Ng’umbo* authored by Kabaso (2016). However, among the Tumbuka-speaking people of Lundazi District Zambia, little scholarly attention has been given to the naming system, meanings behind personal names and the sociocultural functions that these names might serve. In this regard, the problem under investigation is that we do not know what the socio-semantic contents of Tumbuka personal names are.

## **1.3 Significance of the Study**

Personal names exist in any language and basically change, develop, and die out because they have a life cycle similar to that of the other lexical items of a given language (Rosenhouse, 2002). This makes the study of names imperative. As such, this study sought to partly bridge this gap and stimulate further investigation in what can loosely be considered a neglected field of inquiry, in Zambia. It may also be used to provide another point of reference on indigenous African names in general as the findings may be a contribution to the already existing literature on Anthroponomastics, and particularly Tumbuka Anthroponomastics. It may further be useful to

any audience that might take interest in knowing something about the Tumbuka culture, as the naming systems of most African cultures are inescapably intertwined with culture.

#### **1.4 Aim**

The aim of this study was to establish the meanings of Tumbuka personal names within the Tumbuka social and cultural setting.

#### **1.5 Research Objectives**

The study sought to achieve the following objectives:

- i. To compile a list of selected Tumbuka personal names (forenames and surnames) that have both denotative and connotative meanings;
- ii. To identify and analyse the meanings behind the selected names;
- iii. To find out the sociocultural implications of the names and naming patterns and/or strategies.

#### **1.6 Research Questions**

The study attempted to answer the following questions:

- i. What are the names to be compiled?
- ii. What is the denotative meaning of each name?
- iii. What connotations do these names have?
- iv. What kind of a naming system do the Tumbuka people have in place?
- v. What are the sociocultural implications of the names and naming patterns and/or strategies used?

#### **1.7 Theoretical Framework**

##### **1.7.1 A Unified Theory of Names**

Theoreticians of names are currently split into the Fregean and Millian camps. Frege's (1892) *Sense and Reference Theory* holds that names have referent-determining senses. That is, a name has a sense and a referent. By sense, Frege meant that proper names have metalinguistic senses

that are known to competent speakers on the basis of their competence. This qualifies Swian (1957)'s assertion that the various attributes and characteristics associated with a name and its sense is what makes that name meaningful. The challenge that Frege had was to state these senses, which are denotative and connotative. However, the Sense and Reference theory fails to account for the fact that names never change referents with a change in the circumstance of evaluation because it sees the sense borne in a name as an attribute independent of the name itself. In other words, it sees names as having connotative sense only. This lapse could be because Frege did not see that there are two sorts of sense - connotative (term-independent) and denotative (term-reflexive) due to his persistent conception of content as independent of language (Justice 1998).

Mill's (1874) *Direct Reference Theory* on the other hand, argues that names have no senses. This means that proper names are just names that simply refer to the bearers and have no linguistic function. His followers such as Kripke (1980) have added that names have no sense, instead they are rigid designators. The theory further argues that if names had senses, their referents would vary among possible worlds. The weakness of this theory is that it fails to account for the apparent cognitive content of names which can only be explained when names are seen as having senses. Therefore, Kripke (1980) was right to assert that names are rigid designators but opposed himself by agreeing with Mill that names have no senses. He may have overlooked the fact that rigid designation is the same as denotation (Justice 1998).

Based on the two theories, Justice (1998) suggests that when the views of Mill and Frege are understood as complementary instead of clashing, the challenges faced by the divided theorists of the two camps cease to exist. In a way, a Unified Theory of Names is a theory which reconciles Frege (1874)'s Sense and Reference Theory with Mill (1874)'s Direct Reference Theory. It argues that the Sense and Reference and the Direct Reference Theories of names have both strengths and shortcomings, but once viewed as complementing each other, they provide an insightful framework in the study of names, especially the meaning of personal names. In line with this view, the study employed the Unified Theory of Names for the theoretical framework.

According to the Unified Theory of Names, a denotative term is one which signifies a subject or an attribute only. A connotative term is one which denotes a subject and implies an attribute. The

difference between the two terms is that the connotative term does something in addition to what the denotative term does. The condition of application is the crucial difference between the terms. A connotative term is one that applies to an individual because of some term-independent attribute that the individual possesses. A denotative term is one that applies to an individual simply because the term has been bestowed on an individual as a label. One consequence of this distinction is that a connotative term may either be general or singular depending on whether the attribute that "gives the name" is shareable, but a denotative term will always be a singular term applying just to the individual that bears the term as a proper name. To establish a connotative term is to ascribe an attribute. However, denotative terms also denote only the individuals that bear the terms as names. Consequently, to predicate a denotative term is to ascribe the attribute of bearing the term as a name (Justice 1998).

From the foregoing, it can be argued that the Unified Theory of names sees denotative and connotative senses as intimately knotted, as they are both meaningful and information conveying. This explanation of the close relationship between the two senses should, however, not be interpreted to mean that denotation is the same as connotation; that the two give exactly the same information in a similar way so much that the absence of one of them cannot affect the meaning of a name. In fact, the two types of senses depend on and complement each other in arriving at a precise and detailed meaning of a name. In light of this view, it is tempting for one to argue that connotation begins where denotation leaves off. This perspective can be supported by the observation made by scholars such as Ntahombaye (1983), who contends that the linguistic meaning does not exhaust the onomastic meaning of a name. That is, it can only help construct, deconstruct or comprehend it. Like most African Onomasticians, Ntahombaye (1983:18) has written that "the linguistic structure of the name offers a basis for the first level explanation from which the other levels will branch off." Here, this first level explanation is understood as the first meaning, semantic meaning, denotative meaning, or literal meaning while the second level is described as second meaning or connotative meaning. This second level is fundamental to the onomasticians and is reached through a reconstruction of the motivations behind the name, that is, the reasons why a name has been bestowed on a name bearer.

This theoretical position is supported by a considerable number of research results that have proven the embodiment of connotative as well as denotative or associative meanings. The study

used the Unified Theory of Names which argues that names have both denotative and connotative senses and that each of these senses has a range of correct applications – it can only be extended to certain contexts. As observed by Justice (1998:6) “names are truly proper, and they are individuated by their origins. Each name is custom made to serve as a mark of an intended bearer.” The meaning of a name may be chosen as homage or allusion to some other individual bearing that kind of name, but still the result will be a distinct name with its own origin, its own bearer and its own history of occurrences.

### **1.8 Scope of the Study**

There are many types of personal names given names, surnames, clan names, matronyms, patronyms, teknonyms, nicknames and ethonyms among others. However, this study was limited to given names, surnames and clan names among the Tumbuka people of Lundazi District in Zambia. Male, female and unisex names were captured. In addition, the names as gathered and presented in this study are not an exhaustive list of Tumbuka personal names but just enough to allow for an informed study. Based on the fact that the levels of linguistic analysis are dependent on each another, the study also exploited other branches such as morphology, syntax and pragmatics to help analyse certain segments of data.

### **1.9 Definition of Terms**

- Onomastics - the study of origins and forms of proper names (Raper, 1987).
- Anthroponyms - derived from *anthropos* ‘man’ or ‘human’. Anthroponyms refer to personal names (Koopman, 2002:10).
- Anthroponomastics - the study of personal names.
- Given names – forenames or first names.
- Surnames – family names or names passed down from the father’s side.
- Clan names – commemorative names shared within a particular culture on the basis of similar ancestry.
- Naming system – refers to how names are given to new born children. It encompasses information such as (a) When are new-born children named?; (b) Who names them?; (c) How are the names selected?; (d) Is there any special ceremony dedicated to child naming?; (e) What are the circumstances that influence the selection of baby names?; (f) Is there a rigid

set of names readily available or people are free to coin new names?; (g) What are the attitudes of people towards these names and the naming system?

- ❑ Surnames – family names
- ❑ Denotative meaning – the literal, obvious, linguistic, or first level meaning
- ❑ Connotative meaning – extended meanings or meanings that might be oblique due to external factors such as culture or social context.

### **1.10 Structure of the Dissertation**

This dissertation has been divided into four chapters. The first chapter gives a general background to the study. The second chapter presents the literature that has been reviewed within the confines of the research topic, while the third chapter presents the methodology as has been used in the study. The fourth chapter then presents and discusses the findings coupled with the conclusions and recommendations based on the entire study.

### **1.11 Conclusion**

The chapter has provided an introduction to the investigation into the linguistic analysis of selected Tumbuka Anthroponyms. The presentation started with the information on the subject of names and some details on other studies to help understand the context within which the current study was undertaken. It then gave a sociolinguistic account of naming patterns in African societies. Thereafter, the chapter presented the problem under research, aim and the significance of the study. In addition were an outline of the theoretical framework and the scope of the study. The chapter has ended by giving the structure of the dissertation.

## **CHAPTER TWO**

### **LITERATURE REVIEW**

#### **Overview**

Over the past few decades, studies devoted to exploring different categories and aspects of names have been conducted from diverse perspectives and in different languages. To the best knowledge of the researcher, no study has been conducted in Zambia or anywhere else to investigate the socio-semantic contents of Tumbuka personal names as well as their sociocultural implications. However, some studies covering many other aspects of names have been conducted outside and within Zambia, and these have been reviewed for the purpose of this study. It should be noted that these studies also include recently published works such as theses and dissertations. Further, the literature review has been divided into the following themes: Studies on names as part of language systems, Studies on meaning of anthroponyms, Studies on names in Zambia and Studies of names based on various themes.

#### **2.1 Studies on Names as Part of Language Systems**

Names, as will be observed in this section exist as part of a sociolinguistic setting that uses them. This means that they are part of every society that gives them and act as windows through which the world is understood and appreciated. Through names, members of a community can express their experiences and emotional state (Mutunda 2016).

Mapara (2009: 9) has suggested that “names function as conduits of information, especially on society’s attitudes or observations towards the named.” This therefore necessitates that for one to appreciate these names there is need to have good knowledge of the imagery and metaphor of the language under consideration.

According to Mazrui (2004:41), “the value of names as a case of language in action is very well captured in the Sapir-Whorf hypothesis which states that human beings are very much at the mercy of the particular language, which is part of the medium of expression of their society.” For Sapir, what people consider to be the real world is largely built upon the language habits of the group involved. He goes further to express the idea that there are no two languages that are ever sufficiently similar though they can be considered as representing the same social reality. Whorf

in (Mazrui 2002:41) shares a similar opinion with Sapir and states that “speakers of different languages will map the world in different ways because each person’s basic worldview is structured or determined and organised by language.” According to Whorf, each language is encoded with a particular mode of thought, a metaphysics that affects the speaker’s experience at the level of perception. The views that are expressed in the Sapir-Whorf hypothesis ring true when they are applied to the study of Shona names (Nyota and Mapara 2010).

From the foregoing, it can be noted that language emanates from society and the same society uses language to communicate through words and symbols which enable people to evaluate and appreciate the world that they live in. One of the ways in which people use language to this appreciation is through the names that they adopt (Nyota and Mapara 2010). As an aspect of language, names can be used to fuel or minimise conflict because they become conduits through which people communicate their emotions and perceptions. Finnegan (1970: 170) pertinently captures this value of names when she stresses that different interpretations of names have ranged from the psychological functions of names, in providing assurance or working out tensions to their connection with the structure of society, their social function in minimising friction, or their usefulness in expressing the self-image of their owner or in providing a means of indirect comment when a direct one is not feasible.

A study of Shona names by Mapara, Mutasa and Nyota (2011: 9) also reveals that “names like the languages that carry them are dynamic.” They compared this dynamism of names to a river that picks what it can and some items along the way remain behind. They have further argued that in an environment where new objects and experiences are constantly coming up as a result of language contact, it is imperative that new names and terminologies to reflect and carry new realities do come up. Some of these realities are captured in the names that the Shona people give to their newborn children, or as nicknames to members in their society. In line with this, Yakubu (2012:40) posits that “language is an embodiment of African native languages, as embodied in names, beliefs, history and worldviews of the people.”

According to Mabotja (2005), naming is a linguistic act intimately linked with values, traditions, hopes, fears and events in people’s lives. He notes that the onomasticon that refers to the corpus of names in any given language is forever on the increase due to the fact that naming activities of

humankind and that of the country as well, are continuously faced with situations that call for the coining of names.

Mabotja (2005) further states that names as a source of language form and reflect various social relationships, language attitudes and other aspects of society. He continues by stating that the question of identity has been and still is a major issue of debate within and outside South Africa. At the very center of his emphasis is the activity of naming which provides the starting point for the individual and thus defining him or her. The above indicates how important names are to particular societies. The identity that people associate themselves with is constructed through the process of naming, and this argument would be pushed further by delving into various analyses of personal names from different societies.

In Kenya, a study carried out by Mwangi (2015) shows how names are part of language by having looked at an exposition of Gikuyu grammar through personal names. The researcher was able to establish the roots of the names in the data by separating the prefixes from the roots. Having found the roots of all names in the study, it was established that there are various linguistic structural transformations and processes that go into the study of the structure of personal names. The study showed that Gikuyu personal names are mostly derived from nouns and noun phrases, verbs and adjectives. Other names were nativised foreign words which have been assimilated into the Gikuyu language. Using some insights from this study, the current study attempted to assess if there are instances in Tumbuka names when personal names are derived from various parts of the Tumbuka language.

The foregoing argument is also true at grammatical level as noted by Yakubu (2012)'s work which shows how Agatu personal names reflect the grammar of the Agatu people. What this means is that to understand the structure of Agatu personal names, it is essential to understand the grammatical structure of the language. The lists of the structural properties of Agatu reflected in names are as follows: noun phrase, sentential names, questions, declaratives and desententialisation or calquing (a process of nominalisation, which involves writing or reducing a whole phrase or even a sentence to form a single noun) . This process is common mostly in the realm of human nouns in the Agatu language (Yakubu 2012).

In another study, Akinnaso (1980) cites an example of Yoruba names as being derived from nouns, noun phrases and complete sentences. Based on the findings, he discusses the sociolinguistic principles that underlie the construction of Yoruba personal names and gives two general conclusions on the naming practices among the Yoruba people: (a) a personal name can be meaningful or meaningless depending on the differences in expectations on the sociocultural significance of personal names and; (b) the linguistic manifestation of a personal name will differ in degrees of complexity according to the types of meaning they encode. Hence, the construction and analysis of Yoruba names require the integration of both sociocultural and grammatical knowledge in order for the exterior linguistic form to be derived. Reviewing this research was significant to the present study because it helped to establish what holds true for Tumbuka people, especially taking into consideration the role that structures of a society's sociocultural and linguistic knowledge plays in influencing the framing of personal names.

Among the Tonga people of Zambia, Hang'ombe (2015) discovered that some of the Tonga anthroponyms are drawn from proverbs or maxims. These are important parts of African culture and language, and it is such instances that make it difficult for scholars to detach names in general and personal names in particular from language systems. Finnegan (1970) and Campbell (1972) confirm this connection between naming and proverbs in African communities when they observe that most African communities draw most of their names from proverbs. Proverbs are known to give advice, say something which is generally true and teach. This analogy holds substance only to the extent that some Tonga names, just like proverbs, teach, advise and make statements about life and most of them are figurative. Among the names that were presented as drawn from proverbs include: *Simunyewu* [black ant] from the proverb *Simunyewu uleenda angoma yakwe* [a black ant moves with its drum], *Kabuca* [as it dawns] from the proverb *kabuca uleta tunji* [each day has its own happenings], *Mazuba* from the proverb *Mazuba ngunamasandu* (days are never the same) and many other names whose address is motivated by proverbs and maxims such as *Lumba* from *Uutalumbi mubwa* [He who does not appreciate is a dog].

### **2.1.1 Meaning of Names**

As stated in the introductory pages, the existence of names is important in social communication because names together with the meanings that they carry are directly linked to their social

functions. This can be illustrated by Olawale (2005:9), who states that “in Africa, there is so much meaning in a name. If you are given the right name, you start off with certain indefinable but very real advantages.” This means that, given a name that has positive connotations attached to it, there is a likelihood of an individual developing a positive outlook on life and the people around are likely to say positive things about that individual, thereby making the opposite true.

Giving names among the Bantu cultures reflects the sociocultural boundaries of a group and/ or clan. This can be supported by Moyo’s (1996) study in which he observed that the Ngoni-Tumbuka speaking people of northern Malawi prefer names with historical importance like Mapopa (i.e. Wilderness, named after the death of several children) and Tafwachi (What is wrong with us) because these names comment on the societal or family condition.

Having carried out a study on the meaning of names among the Zulu people, Koopman (1990) discovered that both name givers and bearers are aware of the meanings that names carry, and in most instances the literal meanings of the names are directly related to the reason for giving them. The ability to read between the lines depends upon a cultural continuity in which language is embedded, which is not always open to all. This is where pragmatics comes into play complemented by semantics by looking at the use of context to make inferences about meaning. Epstein and Kole (1998:266) refer to this prerequisite condition as “context of situation or - context of utterance;” which means that the meaning of a name can only be understood by understanding the context in which naming occurs. This is imperative as “meanings of names are as a result of complex social negotiations, learned and interpreted through socialisation” (Leslie and Skipper 1990:273). This in turn necessitates that only those who grow up within the community can, perhaps, participate fully in this expanded communicative interaction. (Beattie 1957:37) adds that “it is well known that African names have meaning and that speakers readily identify that meaning.”

De Klerk and Bosch (1996:69), in their work have pointed that “African names retain their meaning-bearing function and are much arbitrary, their meaning transparent and accessible and often recording complex details about their bearers.” This claim has a weakness in the sense that African names are not always transparent and fully accessible because one needs to understand the language and social context from which the name(s) under consideration was framed. This

then means that in order to qualify De Clerk and Bosch (1997)'s assertion, it would be rephrased that for names to be transparent and accessible is a conditional feature, with the context of utterance or situation being culture. This is to say, they are transparent and accessible only to those who participate in the expanded communicative interaction. Otherwise it is not true that outside of social context, African names are transparent and accessible.

Despite what has been brought forward, it is important to acknowledge that there are names whose meanings are difficult to arrive at. In line with this, Finnegan (1970: 173) has suggested that "the colourful often figurative quality of many of these names should be brought out. There are, of course, many names which are relatively straightforward with little overt meaning. Others, however, are richly allusive." This is what makes it necessary that for one to successfully decipher the meaning of names of a particular language, one should have adequate knowledge of that language's imagery and metaphor.

### **2.1.2 Studies on Names in Zambia**

In Zambia, one of the known comprehensive studies that have been carried out is the work by Lisimba (2000), who in his work titled *Lozi Names in Language and Culture*, asserts that Lozi names have meanings that mainly fall into two clear categories. The first category involves names that arise from the circumstances of birth, while the second category consists of names that arise from the socio-psychological environment. These names are derived from noun and verbal constructions. Despite this clear-cut distinction, it is difficult to categorise Lozi names definitively but can be grouped broadly according to their themes because most of them are concerned with the transience of life, its sufferings and the circumstances at the time of a child's birth.

Mutunda (2011) carried out a study among the Lunda people of the North-western province of Zambia where he attempted to provide an interpretive analysis of traditional Lunda personal names. In his research, Mutunda indicated that among the Lunda people, personal names are the foundation of one's identity. Their meanings and circumstances in which they are chosen suggest that they are not mere linguistic phenomena or arbitrary labels without any meaning. Rather they convey the social and cultural existence of the Lunda people. In his findings, he established that

names are rarely given to children randomly but rather are carefully chosen by parents and relatives so as to reflect and reveal the social circumstances under which the baby is born.

Mutunda (2011) has further argued that 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. This is a similar view to other views discussed in the paper from scholars that have pointed out that personal names provide an important component of African cultural identities. He states that besides having a psychological role in establishing a person's identity, names convey 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 because they reflect values, traditions and events in people's lives.

In addition to the study of Lunda names, Mutunda in his (2016) work, delved into a sociocultural analysis of names and naming systems among the Luvale people, another group found in the North-Western province of Zambia. Here, it was established that 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 based on the motivation for naming. In light of this, Mutunda (2016) then explored aspects deemed 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 to this, he also looked at how the given names are connected to the Luvale culture.

In his findings, Mutunda discovered that among the Luvale, immediately following the child's birth, the midwife also known as *Chifungiji*, bestows a temporary name or birth name upon a newly born child. However, once the baby's umbilical cord detaches, parents, usually the father, bestows a name upon new-born children. 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 in habitually after a name has been given, it is an indication that the name is inadequate to satisfy some demand of its existence. The spirits indicate through this crying that the name must be changed and another selected. This stems from Luvale's belief in reincarnation. In addition, Mutunda (2016) explored the different types of names, and among

them were names given to children after kinsmen; names based on the manner, time, place and position of a child's birth; names expressing gratitude; those given with the aid of induced pregnancy and proverbial names.

Both Mutunda's studies and Lisimba's work are extensive Onomastics compilations, and the fact that they were carried out in the geographical location (i.e. Zambia), where the present study was undertaken makes it cardinal because it would provide points of reflection on convergent and divergent ideologies pertaining to Zambian Anthroponomastics. However, the three studies inclined more towards a sociocultural perspective as opposed to a linguistic one (that offers both denotative and connotative meanings). Even after taking on the sociocultural dimension, they scholars did not give meticulous explanations of the social effects that some names might have on the name bearer. This is the knowledge gap which the current study explored by looking at the naming system which the Tumbuka people of Lundazi District have in place, identifying and analysing the denotative and connotative aspects of the selected names respectively as well as establishing the sociocultural effects that these names might have on both the name bearers and the communities in which they (i.e. name bearers are found).

Another study that has looked at personal names in Zambia is that by Chishiba (2017), titled *"The Naming Process among the Lamba People of Zambia: A Sociocultural Study."* Using a qualitative approach, Chishiba set out to find out whether Lamba names carry any meaning and how these names are arrived at. In his findings, it was revealed that naming of a child among the Lamba people of the Copperbelt Province in Zambia takes place as soon as the child is born and after the navel has been cut and the new born baby washed in warm water by a midwife. An elderly person from the family is chosen to name the newly born. The name given to the new born baby is usually taken from one of the deceased relatives and it is commonly referred to as the spirit name, implying that the spirit of the dead relative has been reincarnated. It should however be noted that a name given to the child at birth may be changed at a later stage in life. It may be changed during early adolescence or adulthood. However, the changing of names is more common among boys and not girls. Clement Doke (1931) explains that when a child has reached the age bracket of 10 to 12 years, he has a possibility to choose or be given a new name to replace the spirit name which was given to him at birth. The new name can either be chosen by the child himself or it can be given by an elder member of the family such as the grandmother or

maternal uncle. The new name has great significance and is closely linked to the character or personality of the child.

Chishiba (2016) further indicates that unlike the western World, the Lamba do not name their children arbitrarily. Instead they choose names based on the cultural meaning they convey. This then makes culture central to understanding the meanings of Lamba names. Chishiba's study, just like Mutunda's and Lisimba' works has focused more on the sociocultural components and only incorporates the linguistic aspect when giving the literal meanings of the names considered in the study.

In addition to the work presented in this section is Hang'ombe's (2015) work, *The Morphology and Semantics of Tonga Anthroponyms: the case of given names and nicknames*. Morphologically, Tonga given names and nicknames can be divided into deverbals, denominals, deadjectivals and denominals plus deverbals in addition to the common morphological structure of a common noun and proper nouns. Semantically, the study presented the meaning of names based on themes; these included order of birth, character, clan, appreciation, request, travel, work, fertility, social conflict, health, gestation period, social caution, occupation, hope, love, death and religion. The results showed that a vast majority of Tonga given names and nicknames are devised from the already existing stock of Tonga vocabulary. Most of the given names are unisex while most of the nicknames are masculine because most of the speech acts are directed towards men.

Kabaso (2016) looked at *a morphological and semantic analysis of nicknames in Ng'umbo*. The results suggest that the meanings expressed in the selected nicknames in Ng'umbo have great social and cultural significance. They convey messages to the society about the namer, nicknamed and the society that has created it. The nicknames just like personal names are documents where one can read the history of the individuals in time and space. They are marked by subjectivity, affectivity and critical sense, sense of humour or ridicule. Some conceal and create new identities. It was also observed from the data analysis that while there is a teasing and aesthetic dimension, there is also a pedagogical dimension to the meanings of these nicknames to the general society. Through the meanings of these nicknames people are taught about the culture and values of the Ng'umbo people. There are also teachings and sensitisation to people

on issues such as the dangers of HIV and Aids by telling society about the sexual behaviour of the name bearers. This helps in the prevention of sexually transmitted diseases.

The two studies have specially been reviewed because they have a close link to the current study and their theoretical underpinnings and methodologies have informed the current study. So far, they are the only studies that have provided insights into the semantic analysis of names although in languages different from the language under consideration. However, while Hang'ombe focused on given names and nicknames and Kabaso exclusively on nicknames, the current study proceeds by looking at given names, surnames and clan names.

Another study that has looked at names is Wakumelo's (2013) work, which discusses the sources of names, their meanings and naming systems for cattle among the Tonga people of Zambia. Although this is an animal onomasticon (Zoonymy) study, it looks at the role of cattle names in reconstructing Tonga culture, shedding light on the Tonga people's social world view, socio-economic milieu and the value they attach to cattle" (Lisa, 2013: 81-82). It also reveals that the more times certain types of names appear, the greater the value they express. Multiplicity of names in a given category thus signals subject matter of greater relations and social importance to the community.

In her findings, Wakumelo (2013) states that cattle are not simply viewed as collective possessions. This comes as no surprise when one reflects on the special individual identity that each cow receives. Like personal names, names of cattle among the Tonga people are not given haphazardly; they relate to the immediate natural environment and social setup and reflect the beliefs and customs of the Tonga people. She writes that some cattle names are inherited from other cattle while some derive from circumstances such as birth or upbringing and others have origins enshrined in an event. Borrowing from Lisa and Virginia (2013: 108), "Cattle, in this study, are synonymous to human beings in value". Thriving on this assertion, it can be observed that Wakumelo's work still remains relevant to the current study because it has rich insights on the sociocultural perspective of names that are relevant to this work.

Mwizenge (2006) in his work had looked at the meanings of Tumbuka, Chewa, Nsenga, Ngoni and Tonga names. Despite having covered the language under consideration in the current study, Mwizenge's work mainly offers literal meanings, which makes it less comprehensive. Besides

this, the work is broad in terms of data presentation but has limited attention accorded to the analyses sections as the author had incorporated names from five different languages.

### **2.1.3 Studies of Names Based on Various Themes**

One of the earliest studies on personal names was carried out by Charles (1951) who asserted that name and identity is a kind of symbolic contract between society and the individual. Understood from one side of the contract, by giving a name, the society confirms the individual's existence and acknowledges its responsibilities towards that person. The name differentiates the child from others; thus, the society will be able to treat and deal with the child as someone with needs and feelings different from those of other people. Through the name, the individual becomes part of the history of a society. He also states that the names that are chosen for children reflect the relationship between name and identity that the symbolic contract seals. Charles (1951) concludes by stating that a sense of personal identity and uniqueness that a name gives is at the heart of why names interest us and why they are important to us as individuals and to society as a whole. From Charles' conclusions, it is important to acknowledge that the study of personal names needs the attention from scholars such as linguists because names go beyond being elements of establishing individual identity tags. They usually have a message embedded in them and can only be understood if names are subjected to various analytic strategies. With this motivation, the current study explored the socio-semantic contents of selected Tumbuka personal names of the Tumbuka people of Lundazi District in Zambia.

Chauke (1992) carried out a study among the Bapedi in which he and mentions that names play a significant role in reminding the next generation that once upon a time there lived a certain group of people in a particular place. In this instance, names serve as symbols which will remain with people throughout their lives as future generations will not be in the dark as far as its culture is concerned because names are a treasure of society and should be carefully preserved since they are closely linked to a people's culture. The Bapedi, like other Africans are often guided by the circumstances prevailing at the time of the child's birth, the behaviour of the expecting mother during pregnancy, the history of the family, and religious beliefs. Therefore, people must be familiar with names as valued memories or wealth, which will stay on as historical evidence of man's existence on earth. Chauke's emphasis on the sociocultural and historical connotations as

well as circumstances surrounding the birth of a child as factors that influence the selection of personal names among the Bapedi provides insight into areas that were explored in this research.

Edwards (2009), in his work remarks that names are a part of every culture and are of enormous importance both to the people who receive and to the societies that give them. Despite their universality, there is a great deal of difference from one culture to another in how names are given. Among most pre-literate peoples, names are determined according to very definite and specific rules. Generally, in cultures with a keen sense of ancestry, children get their names from the totems and family trees of their parents. He also mentions that in some cultures, names are taken from events which happen during the pregnancy of the mother or shortly after the birth of the child, and in others, names are divined through magic and incantation. In some cases, the name given at birth is only the first of several names a person will bear throughout life. When this happens, the new names are given either to mark important milestones in life or to ward off evil spirits by tricking them into thinking that the person with the old name has disappeared. Regardless of when, why or how often it happens, the giving and receiving of a name is an event of major importance and the significance of names is usually emphasized by elaborate rituals that almost always have deep religious connotations. Edward's study has brought out insights that are cross-cultural and might be extended to other ethnic groups. This study assisted with the scrutiny of some of the important philosophies explored through a socio-semantic analysis of personal names among the Tumbuka people of Lundazi District, Zambia.

In another study, De Klerk (1999) stated that naming is specifically a linguistic act that is concerned with the culture of people and is intimately linked with hopes, fears, values and events in people's lives. Based on this assertion, she carried out a study in South Africa to account for people's preference of their indigenous South African names over the English names. The study was motivated by the fact that after apartheid, a shift from English to traditional African names occurred, especially urban areas where English was rejected on the basis that it was the language of the former colonial power. In addition to this were sociocultural reasons, reflecting the wish of the local people to associate themselves with a cultural or linguistic group, emanating from the belief that their identity as Africans had been degraded by the arrival of whites and their insistence on the use of Euro-Western names. This study shows a shift in personal naming

practices which offers fundamental information into how various factors can lead to the change in patterns of social and cultural organisation including naming practices.

Among the Kabre of Togo in West Africa, Batoma (2009) carried out a study entitled *Onomastics and Indirect Communication among the Kabre of Northern Togo*, in which he explored the communicative use of proper names among the Kabre. After a brief comparative summary of cultural and methodological approaches to the concept of proper name, Batoma (2009) identified three main categories of Kabre names: the ontological names whose purpose is to capture and express the ontological identity of the name bearers, the pedagogical names which express the plurality of their socio-cultural identities, and the allusive names which are used to convey messages in an indirect way. The emphasis of this article is placed on the last category of names because of the communicative strategies they entail. With focus on allusive names, he illustrates his analysis with examples from two subcategories of Kabre allusive names: the erotic names whose function is educational and the polemical names which are vengeance-oriented. This provides valid evidence that the Kabre, like many other ethnic groups in Africa, have developed a verbal strategy that involves the use of personal names and animal names to indirectly communicate their feelings and opinions, particularly in conflict-laden situations. This perspective was important to the current study when analysing how personal names can be used as a measure of addressing conflict among the people in the study area.

Lombard (1997) suggests that it is fascinating to recognise the origin of a name and the period when it becomes a definite family name considering that family names are created in various ways. For example, Van Deventer and Van Dyk are derived from one's occupation, Visser (fisherman). Family names or surnames among the Sepedi people of South Africa are inherited from the father and grandfather. This means that a name cannot just be integrated as a surname or family name. Similarly, it cannot be changed, but is rather carried from one generation to the next. An etymological establishment of Sepedi family names was the aim of Lombard's research despite etymological studies receiving criticism on the basis of inadequacies since certain names have origins that are no longer traceable while others have ambiguous origins especially in this era where naming strategies have changed in the light of contemporary names and the influence of religion and globalisation. Further, no attention was accorded to first names or a socio-semantic scrutiny, aspects which the current study delved into.

Katakami (1997), published an article entitled “Personal Names and Modes of Address among the Mbeere”, based on the study he carried out among the Mbeere one of the Northeastern Bantu-speaking people living in the Southeastern area of Mt. Kenya. From the study, he found that the basic principle of Mbeere naming is to name the new-born after another person and to reflect in the name its sex, its place in the birth order, the time of marriage negotiation and generation sets, which are two chronologically alternating sets. Death and events during pregnancy also affect the basic naming principle. Successive neonatal deaths often cause parents to name the latest newborn after a thing of importance. Parents are obliged to name a baby after some memorable event that happened in their lives. Although this study did not delve into an analysis of the names gathered, it established the reflections of a name among the Mbeere which was important to the current research in relating the interpretation of certain naming strategies of the Mbeere people that have similarities with certain strategies that are employed in the Tumbuka naming system.

Another scholar, Saarelma-Maunumaa (1999) reveals that the personal naming system of the Ovambos in Namibia is based on the idea of name sharing. The study indicates that when a child is born, he or she is first given a temporary name, a birth name that usually indicates the time of the day the baby was born. A few weeks later, a child is then given a real, permanent name, which is used together with a patronymic name. It is always the father who chooses the name and the prevalent custom is to name a child after a close friend of the father and the name becomes public only after the father visits the child to greet him or her. If the parents die, the namesake is expected to take care of the child. Tumbuka speech communities have instances of name-sharing and this was explored in the study alongside the applicability of temporary names in Tumbuka-prone speech communities.

Schottman’s (2000) article on personal names discusses the traditional naming systems among the Baatonu people of northern Benin. For the Baatonu, a person acquires multiple names as he progresses in life and at each stage in life, some of the names are shed off. The multiple names range from a set of ascribed, unprestigious “little names”, through various character-shaping nicknames, to a prestigious, spiritually powerful name. For example, the circumstances of a child’s birth define his or her starting point in life, and they will be inscribed to the child’s file by means of a set of rule-governed birth names. These ‘child names’ are perfectly suitable for this

initial stage of life, but all Baatombu aspire to eventually replacing this original set of ‘orthodox’ name by another name, such as an inherited title name corresponding to an achieved social and spiritual status. She states that Baatonu personal names do not have etymological or referential meaning for the people who use them but they have social and sometimes spiritual meaning. This is unique to what is anticipated in most African societies when it comes to naming, and in a sense, some of the aspects to acquiring names as one makes transitions such as those into adulthood and marriage are possible among the Tumbuka people of Lundazi. However, it is not known whether or not there are instances when these names are used to mark transitions replace people’s birth names. To investigate this, the selected names for the present study were subjected to a socio-semantic analysis.

In a separate study, Obeng (2001) reveals that names in African cultures are pointers to their users’ hopes, dreams and aspirations and may reflect their geographical environments, fears, religious beliefs and their philosophy of life and death. Children's names may even provide insights into important cultural or socio-political events at the time of their birth, and also the circumstances surrounding a child’s birth may be considered when a name is being chosen. The day of the week of the birth, the time of the day, season of the year, order of birth, the location in which a person is born, the specific circumstances relating to the child and to the child’s family, the attitude of the parents as well as the gender of the child all play significant roles in the overall naming process and in the actual name given. From Obeng’s study, it can be construed that Ethno-pragmatically, African personal names may involve implicitness especially if they are reactions to problematic situations in the lives of the name-bearers, their parents and/or their communities at large.

In addition, names are perceived to be beyond words by which a person, animal, place or thing is known, and do not fundamentally connote designation, reputation or identification of one individual from the other person. To support this view, Guma (2001), cites the Basotho in Southern Africa whose names and the naming process is a sociocultural interpretation of historical events and embody individual or group social experiences, social norms and values, status roles and authority, as well as personality and individual attributes. Cultural meaning of personal names and their relationship is based on historical events. According to this scholar, names and the naming process in this society serve as social-cultural clarification of the concepts

of self, person, and individual. On these bases, the current study looked into aspects that are evident pertaining to what sociocultural elements are embedded in Tumbuka names as a definition of 'self' and how this should be interpreted. This further led to the establishment of whether or not there is a possibility to decipher the various categories upon which names are bestowed purely in relation to how the Tumbuka people experience their social life.

A study carried out by Ogie (2002), examined Edo personal names as they manifest in the Ede culture, and related them either directly or by extended interpretation to the worldview of both the ancient and contemporary Edo awareness. His argument is that names are used to affirm certain aspects of Edo culture. In his findings, Ogie established that in naming their children, Edo people make fundamental statements about their beliefs, the world around them and their everyday experiences. Naming in the Edo context is therefore a major tool for transmitting beliefs, family and communal history as well as moral and societal values in a society where tradition is passed from one generation to another through the oral medium. In particular, Ogie tried to show that Edo personal names, as part of Edo culture and oral literature, provide useful information about the ethos of the people. However, investigating personal names from Ogie's approach only would be restricting their importance since they go beyond fostering and making fundamental statements about the Tumbuka belief systems and the world around them.

Agyekum (2006) in his paper addresses personal names among the Akan people of Ghana. From the data collected and subjected to a sociolinguistic analysis, it was discovered that naming is regarded as an important aspect of the Akan society. The importance is attached to names and naming practices. In addition, names are not considered arbitrary labels but sociocultural tags that have sociocultural functions and meanings. He further attests that African names are commonly not predictable. For until the child is born, the circumstances under which it is born are known, a name cannot be determined with accuracy. In every culture, names have cultural and social contexts that identify the bearer. Agyekum's focus was on the social and cultural implications of names, aspects which the current study partly explored.

Among the Yoruba of Nigeria, Ogunwale (2012) carried out a study of personal names that are derived from proverbs by giving a description and analysis of the forms and contents of certain proverbial expressions whose linguistic forms and discursive roles have permitted their usage as

Yoruba personal names. In addition, the processes involved in the change and explanation of the interface between the pragmatic and semantic contents of this class of names have been outlined. Yoruba personal names fall into ideational, experiential/observatory, testimonial, admonitory, and monumental categories. Ideational names show the speakers' experience of the worldview while testimonial names are an evidence of a person's achievements. Experiential names express the life experience of the name giver and the society based on the changes in life. Admonitory names express advice to guide individuals and guard his present and future. Monumental names extol the remarkable personal achievements in turns of physical or socioeconomic status. Ogunwale (2012) concludes that, societal perspectives and impoverished knowledge of the indigenous language can be the reasons why people no longer take on such names. He looks at the pragmatic roles of Yoruba personal names using interpersonal illocutionary acts as a paradigm and asserts that Yoruba personal names can perform pragmatic roles as constatives, predictives, commissives, encode acknowledgements, directives and personal authority. Ogunwale's study is comprehensive and by reviewing aspects such as his theoretical framework and research design, certain aspects were integrated into the analysis of Tumbuka names in sections that had converging ideas on the sociolinguistic roles that personal names play in communities.

Rashidat in (2014) carried out a synchronic sociolinguistic analysis of personal names among Ewe people in Ghana. In this study, a variationist sociolinguistic analysis was made to determine age, gender and regional variations in personal names given among the Ewe people. It was revealed among other things that there is a shift from traditional Ewe names to Ewe Christian religious names. These Ewe personal names are marked morphologically and conventionally for gender. For the geographical variation, it is shown that some Ewe personal names vary depending on the location of the name bearer. The age-based variations also show that the older folks bear more Ewe names than the younger folks. Finally, the study shows that there is a discrepancy between the respondents' preference for their personal names and their attitudes towards the use of their Ewe names. These findings are of paramount importance to the current study because they helped to establish whether or not there have been transformations in the Tumbuka naming systems due to religious contact and in such instances, what implications the names may have on name bearers and the community at large. The current study further made an

enquiry into the strategies that Tumbuka people employ to mark cross gender distinctions of names.

In another study carried out in Ethiopia among the Omoro people, Tesfaya (2014) examined personal names using a morpho-semantic analysis in order to show the Oromo norms and values as expressed in their naming pattern. The purpose of the study was to determine the structure and meaning of Oromo personal names. Features of the Oromo Personal names as a subcategory of words were described, and morphological features, semantic interpretations and referential meaning of Oromo personal names analyzed. The findings indicated that Oromo personal names are derived from nouns, adjectives, pronouns and verbs. The combination of these different word categories during the formation of personal names sometimes not only reflects issues of social or/ and national importance but also generates gender-related personal names. It was also found that suffixes that are attached to the names are gender indicative marking morphemes. For instance, names which end with suffixes -a, -aa, -an, -uu, and -saa, refer to male and those which end with suffixes such as. -tii, duu, -ee, refer to females. Oromo personal names have meanings, which could be descriptive, associative and/ or referential. Tesfaye's research is quite extensive especially considering how he explored the aspects of structure and meaning of Oromo personal names.

#### **2.1.4 Conclusion**

From the literature that has been reviewed, it can be observed that names just like other lexical units can be studied by applying various levels of linguistic analysis. The literature has also revealed that for certain regions in Africa; Zambia inclusive, the study of names is seemingly a growing field of inquiry. This growth can partly be explained by the realisation that people are consumers of names, with a need and right to know about the social, psychological, magical, religious and ethnic aspects of names and the meanings that they carry since they are an integral aspect of a society's cultural heritage. This assertion can be backed up by studies which have acknowledged that naming is a universally enthralling subject and the cross-cultural deviations are only an indication that every culture has its unique aspects it wishes to communicate through meanings attached to the names bestowed on its people.

## **CHAPTER THREE: METHODOLOGY**

### **Overview**

The preceding chapter reviewed some studies on the study of names in general and those that are particularly related to the subject of personal names and are, in the context of this study relevant. This was intended to help understand the current study from the perspective of similar studies that have been carried out, exploring the subject of names. In this chapter, a detailed outline of the methodology employed for data collection and analysis has been presented. This includes such details as the research design; study area and sample size; methods and instruments used during data collection; procedures used during and the timeline for the data collection as well as details relating to the process of data analysis.

### **3.1 Methodological Approach**

The study was conducted using the qualitative approach. As defined by Kombo and Tromp (2006), qualitative research is a form of study that seeks to describe and analyse the culture and behaviour of humans and their groups from the point of view of those being studied. They further posit that in qualitative study, feelings and insights are considered important. Denzin and Lincoln (2000: 3) further indicate that “qualitative research involves an interpretive and naturalistic approach. This means that qualitative researchers study things in their natural settings, attempting to make sense of, or interpret phenomena in terms of the meanings people bring to them”. They further indicate that it involves interactive techniques such as observations, discussions and interviews. This is because qualitative research encompasses an investigation that seeks answers to research questions that systematically use a predefined set of procedures as outlined above, to answer the question and collect evidence and produces findings that can be extended beyond the immediate boundaries of the study. It also seeks to understand a given research problem or topic from the perspective of the local population involved. Qualitative research is especially effective in obtaining culturally specific information pertaining to the values, opinions, behaviours and social contexts of particular populations.

In addition, qualitative research further attempts to get a better understanding of what is being investigated through first-hand experience, truthful reporting and verbatim responses from

participants. It aims at understanding how the participants derive meaning from their surroundings, and how these meanings influence their behaviour (Nkwi, Nyamongo and Ryan 2001). Scholars like Mason (1996), view qualitative research as being concerned with how the world is interpreted, understood, experienced or produced. This entails understanding a people's mental categories, interpretations, perceptions, feelings and motives which is only achievable when one exploits the natural setting coupled by agile and social context sensitive strategies of collecting data such as interactive interviews, focus group discussions and questionnaires.

Most mindful qualitative research questions are “How” or “What” questions (e.g., “How did this happen?” “What is going on here?”) which are geared towards complex processes, exploration, and discovery. The analysis itself naturally becomes complex. Schram (2006:15) describes qualitative research as “contested work in progress” and the qualitative predisposition as “embracing complexity, uncovering and challenging taken-for-granted assumptions” and being “comfortable with uncertainty” (Ibid:6-7).

### **3.2 Research Design**

According to van Wyk (2012)'s *Research design and methods*, research design is the overall plan for connecting the conceptual research problems to the pertinent (and achievable) empirical research. It articulates what data is required, what methods are going to be used to collect and analyse this data, and how all of this is going to answer the research question. Both data and methods, and the way in which these will be configured in the research project, need to be the most effective in producing the answers to the research question (taking into account practical and other constraints of the study). Different design logics are used for different types of study. The research design also reflects the purpose of the inquiry. Borrowing from Akhtar (2016:68), “a research is valid when a conclusion is accurate and the research design is the conceptual blueprint within which research is conducted.”

Taking into account what has been discussed in the foregoing section, this study employed a descriptive research design, and the justification for the selection has been outlined below.

### 3.2.1 Descriptive Research Design

Khanzode (1995) cited in Akhtar (2016:75), says that descriptive research design “describes phenomena as they exist. It is used to identify and obtain information on characteristics of a particular issue like community, group or people.” In a way, we can say that this type of research describes social events, social structure and social situations. Here, the observer observes and describes what he found. Descriptive research attempts to provide answers to the what, who, where, how and when questions.

The main aim of descriptive research is to provide an accurate and valid representation of (encapsulate) the characteristics of a particular group or situation and/or variables that are relevant to the research question. The current study used a descriptive research design because it was aimed at providing detailed descriptions and explanations of the selected names, within the context of the study area. This is in line with what has been postulated by Kombo and Tromp (2006: 71) that “the major purpose of the descriptive research design is to describe the state of affairs as it exists and researcher reports findings”.

A descriptive study may also explore such things as the attitude or views that people have towards anything. This approach is inductive in nature due to its flexibility and sensitivity to the social context. It starts with specific observations and moves towards the development of a general pattern that emerges from the generated data. The researcher is not expected to impose much of the organising structure; neither does he or she make assumptions about the relationships among the data prior to the observation. As Yin (2011: 4) observes, “you just might want to study a real- world setting, discover how people cope with and thrive in that setting and capture the contextual richness of people’s everyday lives.” Aguma (1995: 73) also observes that, “qualitative research methods can give valuable insight into the local situation and people’s feelings and can help ascertain how local culture and beliefs affect human behavioural patterns.” Because a descriptive research design takes into account the value that context has in the social sciences, its pursuit is understanding the participants’ lived experiences of the phenomenon.

### **3.3 Study Area and Sample Size**

The study was conducted among the Tumbuka people in Lundazi District of Eastern province, Zambia. Lundazi District was purposefully picked because it is a Tumbuka-prone speech community, hence helped provide the required cultural context in which to carry out the investigation. Five villages namely; Kapinda, Mulopwe, Bila, Ngwata and Katoloma were selected for data collection purposes. A total number of 59 participants were selected by the researcher in the study area for purposes of this research.

A group of 45 participants were purposefully selected, with varying ages ranging from 25 to 80 from the study area to be key informants, and help with verification of data thus far gathered. Among them were the headmen from the villages selected and four men and women from their respective villages. This selection was based on the assumption that people within this age bracket had the required body of knowledge and could be relied on as vessels of the necessary cultural related issues. They understand and can articulate better most of the issues related to culture. In addition to these people were other 14 participants chosen from different villages through simple random sampling and snowballing. This helped with the speedy collection of data as well as to enabled people that had vast knowledge on the subject of names but were not from the older generation and/ or among those selected to also take part in the study.

### **3.4 Data Collection Instruments**

During the data collection process, the researcher used three main instruments to collect data. These were a digital audio recorder, diary and an interview guide. Using an interview guide, (see sample from the appendices section), the researcher carried out semi-structured interviews. Some of these interviews were recorded with full consent from respondents, using a recorder and/or mobile phone. In addition to recording interviews, the researcher was taking notes in a diary, especially for those interviews where the participants expressed discomfort in having their voices recorded. Finally, permission was sought for the researcher to collect secondary data on Tumbuka names from village and school registers from the relevant authorities respectively.

### **3.5 Data Collection Procedures and Timeline**

The data collection exercise was undertaken within a period of six weeks. The study used five main research techniques for data collection. These were: simple face to face interviews, focus

group discussions, interaction with the study population, introspection and document analysis. All the recordings which were made during the semi-structured interviews were noted down in a notebook for easy identification on the recorder and when transferred to a computer. Details such as name of the village, the date and time of the recording were noted down for easy identification. In certain instances, data was collected through focus group discussions, and these discussions helped the researcher establish the authenticity of the data thus far gathered, especially from the interviews conducted using simple random sampling of participants, a method that helped with the generation of data. They also helped with the interpretation of certain sections of data generated from secondary sources. The above procedures were supplemented by introspection, based on Tumbuka being the researcher's third language. In addition to this, the researcher also interacted with the study population, for instance when at the communal water bow holes.

### **3.6 Data Analysis**

Data analysis began as soon as the data collection process started taking shape. This was to avoid getting overwhelmed by analysing all the collected data at once. This is in line with Miles and Huberman (1994)'s proposition that qualitative data collection and analysis should proceed simultaneously. This is because ongoing findings affect what types of data are collected and how they are collected. Making note as the data collection and analysis proceed has been identified as one important data analysis strategy. The notes, or possibly sketches, trace the thinking of the researcher and help guide the final conceptualisation that answers research questions (or related ones) and offers a theory as an explanation for the answers. These notes support all activities of qualitative data analysis through data reduction (extracting the essence), data display (organising for meaning), and drawing conclusions or explaining the findings. Miles and Huberman (1994) have further noted that, fieldwork is so fascinating, and coding usually so energy absorbing, that you can get overwhelmed with the flood of particulars. This then makes it important to proceed with data analysis as soon as the data collection begins.

All the files that were recorded using the audio recorder and phone were transferred to a computer. Using Audio Notes 3D, a computer assisted application of qualitative data analysis software (CAQDAS) the researcher listened to the recorded files. This software is an important tool for transcription of audio files because of its enhanced features. These include voice

enhancement which can be done through noise removal and audio trimming that allows making text and or photo notes and comments that are synchronised to the audio with time stamps. In addition to this, the software can also remove various static ambient sounds and allow the listener to select the pace at which they would want to listen to the audio file. This made the analysis of data quite easy. During the process, all the names, their meanings and other important data related to the study were noted down with the help of Audio Notes 3D. A socio-semantic analysis of names that were selected for the study was then given in light of the theoretical framework, and names were grouped according to their themes. Thereafter, the information was summarised using a pie chart to help illustrate the percentage constituted by each category of names.

### **3.7 Conclusion**

Chapter three has discussed the procedures that were used during data collection and analysis for the present study and the basis on which they were selected. It has also highlighted how the selected descriptive research design coupled with the qualitative research approach helped provide detailed descriptions and explanations of the selected Tumbuka anthroponyms. From the methodology, the complexity of the nature and meaning of names cannot be overemphasised, and this is what led to the careful selection of the methodologies when dealing with the current study as has been outlined in this chapter.

## **CHAPTER FOUR**

### **PRESENTATION AND DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS**

#### **Overview**

This chapter presents the findings and discussions in relation to the Tumbuka naming system, meanings of Tumbuka names and the sociocultural implications that these names together with the naming strategies have. The data has been arranged according to the main and sub themes derived from research objectives and their corresponding questions. The presentation and discussion of findings also takes into account things such as the attitudes, views, suggestions and assumptions of the research participants. The chapter ends by offering conclusions based on the entire study and making recommendations for future research.

#### **4.1 Tumbuka Naming System**

According to Herbert (1995) as cited by Hang'ombe (2015:102) "there are social and cultural issues that should be addressed in any anthroponomastics study." These include such information as the one who names a child; when a child is named; how a name is selected and if there is any special ceremony to mark the naming event among other details. In light of the foregoing, a sample of an interview guide that assisted the researcher in extracting relevant data on the issues raised above in relation to naming among the Tumbuka people has been attached to the appendices section.

Findings showed that among the Tumbuka people, the first name is bestowed on a child after the detachment of its umbilical cord. After delivery, the mother to the newborn stays in seclusion as people wait for the new born child's umbilical cord to fall. During this period, there is a group of elderly women assigned to help the new mother with anything that she might need. However, it should be noted under certain circumstances, the naming of a child is delayed. For example, when there have been concurrent infant deaths or death in general of members of the family or community, it might be decided that members wait a little longer than the usual period within which a child should be named as a way of partly ascertaining the survival of the new born as well as ensuring that the bad luck emanating from the previous concurrent deaths in the family and/or community is completely ward off through special rituals.

Traditionally, the paternal grandfather and great grandfather to the new born child are the sole name-givers. This is because they are believed to have vast knowledge that would guide them into selecting a name that is suitable for the child. However, there are circumstances when the paternal uncles or father to the child or another paternal elderly relative to the father of the newborn may be requested to name a child. Examples of such circumstances include among others:

- a. When the rightful name givers are not alive to fulfill their naming duty.
- b. Or when they have not been around long enough to be aware of the main events that could help them with the selection of a name that would be a true reflection of the period when and circumstances under which the child to be named was born.
- c. Instances of concurrent infant deaths which are believed to be rooted in the choice of names. This happens when children being given a certain name are constantly dying. Traditionally, it is perceived as name rejection by the ancestors and members of the family and/or community involved may never be allowed to use such a name again in order to avoid further deaths. An extra step of stopping people that may have been in any way part of the naming process to be stopped from naming children in future.
- d. Instances of infant deaths which are supposedly influenced by the name giver. There are times when the family and community members realise that the same person has been naming all the children that have previously died. Under such circumstances, the person is stopped from naming anymore children because it is believed to be a sign from the ancestral spirits calling for the change in the name giver. People treat such situations with suspicion, assuming that the name giver could be involved in witchcraft or may have committed a crime that the ancestors have still not forgiven him for, therefore punishing him by killing all the children he is naming.

When asked why there are people traditionally assigned to name children, one of the respondents explained by stating that...

*“Mukazi wane pala waba na mwana, bokuteya dzina niba dada wane olo bagogo bane. Cifukwa ico bocitila ntene nicakuti mwana yura beneco nibakucanalume, bamusungenge mwana mpaka wakula.”*

This loosely translates to [when my wife gives birth, the one to name the child is my father or my grandfather. The reason they do this is because that child will be raised by the man's family until s/he is an adult]. As was discussed earlier in the background, the Tumbuka are a patrilineal tribe. That is, relatives are identified exclusively through male members from a founding male ancestor. Since name giving is of paramount importance, it leaves a specific group of people (male family members from the father's child in this context) to doing it. It should, however, be noted that it is not always the case that the name giver is physically present. Sometimes, he might be away at the time when the baby is born. When this is the case, he is required to inform elderly people from within the family what the baby's name would be.

Among the Tumbuka people, names are largely selected from an already existing vocabulary, with the common ones being from parts of speech such as nouns, adjectives and verbs. It should be noted that, although rare, there are still cases when coinage is possible especially when it comes to names that are derived from concepts that do not have equivalent words in Tumbuka language. For example, the names Eclipse and Eclipso for boys and girls respectively, as derived from the word eclipse.

#### **4.2.Semantics of Tumbuka Names**

This section presents meaning of Tumbuka anthroponyms as gathered during the data collection period. For each name considered in this study, the meaning has been presented and analysed at two levels, with the first level being at denotative meaning and the second at the level of connotation. The reason for this combination is to help decipher not only what the names mean literally, but what else could be implied or communicated by these names when looked at closely from the point of view of what they mean. The selection helps with decrypting information and/or messages that the name giver(s) wished to express. This selection has been guided by the different studies that have been reviewed in this paper and have proposed that in African contexts, names usually have a deeper meaning beyond what they might entail on the surface.

Based on the findings of this study, Tumbuka names have both denotative and connotative meanings. This in turn means that for one to fully comprehend and appreciate the information that is contained in meaning of these names, one has to take into consideration the meaning at both levels. It should however be noted that while denotative meanings are generally obvious, it

is not always the case with connotative meanings. This conclusion is consistent with works of Kimeyi (1989) and Hang'ombe (2015), who in their studies also observed that the meaning of a name is sometimes clear while at other times, it is not.

As has been established in the earlier chapters of the paper, Tumbuka Anthroponyms are an important part of Tumbuka cultural heritage and the two are so intertwined that for one to understand and appreciate their (i.e. Anthroponyms) full meaning, one needs to have a rich array of knowledge base of the Tumbuka culture and vocabulary. Borrowing from Koopman (1990:46), "the ability to read between lines is dependent on the cultural knowledge in which language is embedded, and which is not open to all." This cultural knowledge is cardinal because without it, one's ability to decrypt the cultural meaning of Tumbuka names for instance, which results from complex social negotiations that are learned and interpreted through socialisation would be blocked.

#### **4.2.1 Personal Names**

The bestowal of first names among the Tumbuka people is influenced by different factors. Among them are events or circumstances surrounding a child's birth such as: the order of birth; fertility; marital disputes; manner of birth; happiness; death; social caution; bad occurrences; religion and unity among other factors. In addition to the circumstances highlighted above, sometimes names are given to children in memory of events or dead siblings, parents, grandparents and other members of the family or community. The meanings of selected names were identified, analysed and categorised according to their themes.

##### **4.2.1.1. Order of Birth Names**

Names in this category are given in accordance with the order in which a child was born in relation to its siblings.

###### *1. Nkhombora*

The name means 'to take over from or to free someone.' Traditionally among the Tumbuka people, *Nkhombora* is the name given to the first-born girl child. It has connotations of liberating someone from a certain situation, especially one perceived in a negative way. For instance,

failure to have children is considered shameful among the Tumbuka people of Lundazi District in Zambia. This therefore necessitates the change in social status for a couple that has been blessed with a child or children. The name *Nkhombora* can then be extended to mean that the new born has liberated the parents from the bondage of childlessness.

## 2. *Tangu and Nyuma*

*Tangu* and *Nyuma* are feminine names given to twins to help show the sequence in which they were born. *Tangu* can loosely be understood to mean ‘front’ and *Nyuma* ‘behind.’ Respectively, these names are given to the girl twins on the basis of having been the first and second to be delivered.

Unlike those African communities that conduct special rituals to ward off the bad omen that the birth of twins allegedly signifies, Tumbuka traditional societies regard twins as a miraculous gift from the ancestors. The birth of twins is believed to be a sign that the ancestral spirits are happy with and proud of such parents’ parenting skills, therefore blessing them with more than one child at the same time. To mark such births, fixed names are given to the children. In addition, among the Tumbuka people, twins are believed to be delicate and therefore, one important lesson imposed upon the parents is to ensure that there is harmony and tranquility in the household, for it is believed that if the parents are not living peacefully in a home and/or community one of the twins or even both of them may die.

## 3. *Chifumu and Muleza*

Just like female twins, male twins also have fixed names. These are *Chifumu* and *Muleza* for the first and last to be delivered respectively. One observation that can be made is that the name *Chifumu* derived from *ufumu*, has connotations of ‘kingship or leadership in general’ is used for the male twin that is first to be delivered. Here, it is possible to conclude that the influence of patriarchy has slipped through the naming systems, as evident among the Tumbuka people of Lundazi District in Zambia. This is because despite there being special names for female twins, there are no connotations suggestive of leadership anywhere in the names because traditionally, a woman cannot be a ruler.

It should be noted that if twins happen to be of different sexes, the names are chosen from the fixed options, and the order of their birth determines the names to be selected. For example, if the first to be delivered is a boy, then he will be named *Chifumu* and the girl will be *Nyuma*. But if the opposite happens, then the girl will be called *Tangu* and the boy *Muleza*.

Twins in Tumbuka are known as *mapasya* ‘gifts’. Further, the birth of twins in turn leads to their parents acquiring new forms of address. The mother becomes *anyina mapasya* ‘mother of gifts’, which means ‘mother to the twins’ and the father becomes *awisi mapasya* ‘father of gifts’ which means ‘father to the twins.’ If the couple happens to have another set of twins, they will maintain their previous by-names. As Thipa (1984:95) notes, “such names reflect both politeness and special 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.”

#### 4. *Phyera*

Just as there are special names for twins, there is also a name for a child born immediately after twins among the Tumbuka people. The name is *Phyera*, which literally translates to ‘[you] sweep’. This name carries a connotative function in relation to purging or cleansing. Therefore, it could indicate purification and restoration of the mother’s fertility in this context because of the supposed extraordinary delivery of twins which is achieved when *Phyera* is born.

#### 5. *Kwangu and Tamara*

The names mean that the bearer of the name is the last born in a family. *Kwangu* refers to ‘a thin crust (usually crispy) that forms at the base of a pot after cooking nshima.’ It can also be extended to mean the final remains of something. Among the Tumbuka people, the name is given to the last born child with the understanding that the child so named has put an end to a couple bearing more children.

*Tamara* on the other hand translates to ‘we have finished.’ This is taken as a proclamation by the parents to put child bearing to an end. Thus, in this case, *Tamara* becomes the last born child. A respondent explained these names as...

“*Ngati mwateya mwana aya mazina ndiye kuti kulije munyakeso kumbuyo kwaiyo*”

This can be translated as [when you name a child with either of these names it means there is or there will not be another sibling born after the named].

It should however be noted that the name Tamara can also be used to explain a family's lamentations for death clearing off the family members. Thus *tamara* 'we have finished.'

#### **4.2.1.2. Names Related to Fertility**

In this category, the names that have been discussed are those that are given to children to express a couple's struggle with childbirth. All examples of names below suggest that usually, women are the ones that are traditionally held responsible for a couple's childlessness in a home. It is no wonder all the measures taken are directed towards them. This is partly because of the pressure that women encounter amidst sentiments such as '*a woman's glory is crowned in childbirth.*' Therefore, there is emphasis on a woman seeking help from the elders of the family and/or community, traditional healers and the ancestors because childlessness in a home is only associated with barrenness of a woman.

##### *6. Kamunkhwala*

The name *Kamunkhwala* is derived from the noun *munkhwala*, which means 'medicine' or 'herbs' in the context of a traditional setting. This name is given to the first-born male child after the parents' long search for a child. This happens in instances where a woman experiences fertility-related challenges such as miscarriages or inability to conceive. Usually, traditional herbs are used to help her prevent future miscarriages or help conceive if she was not able to. Alternatively, she would be treated with rituals aimed at enhancing fertility. Once such a woman finally conceives and delivers a child, the name *Kamunkhwala* is bestowed on the new-born because it is assumed that the medicine finally worked. Here, the assumption is that it was solely because of the herbs and/or rituals that the couple was finally able to have a child. This name is thus meant to show how effective *munkhwala* is among the Tumbuka people of Lundazi District in Zambia in solving issues such as infertility among the local people. It can also be extended as a plea to people to continue preserving certain herbs, roots and practices because they are special.

## 7. *Chimika*

Just like Kamunkhwala, there is a name for the first-born female child born under similar circumstances. The name is *Chimika*, from *kumika*, which loosely translates to ‘mixing herbs.’ This was explained by a respondent who said that...

*“Ngati nimwana mwanakazi, nyengo zinyake nyumba ikasuzga, mpapo yasoba. Papita nyengo comene kuti muntu yura akhale na ntumbo. Basi bapita kumankhwala kuti uyu ankhaleko namwana mbwenu Chiuta wadangila ula muntu wakala namwana. Ula mwana bakuti ni Chimika, ngati nimwanakazi. Chimika cifukwa bacita mikisi”*

This can be translated as [When for a woman sometimes a home becomes difficult, motherhood is missing. Time passes without that person having a child. Then they resort to using traditional herbs then God answers and that person finally bears a child, that child is named *Chimika*, if it is a girl. Because they have mixed.] The whole process of using traditional herbs in order to help a woman conceive is known as called *kuchimika*. In this name, one thing that is apparent is that the Tumbuka people believe in both the use of herbs and in a supernatural being that intervenes in people’s affairs. That is, people can use herbs, but their effectiveness is dependent on some higher powers. From this, it can be inferred that names such as *Kamunkhwala* and *Chimika* are reminders to the people on the need to continue preserving certain herbs, and also encourage people to never lose hope so that even amidst childlessness they should keep believing in the power of the supernatural.

## 8. *Tiyezge*

The name literally means ‘let us try’. It is given to a child born under similar circumstances as *Kamunkhwala* and *Chimika*. *Tiyezge* is however given to the second born child born to a couple that used herbs to have its first child but could not have any more children after that. They then consider exploring the same option in order to have another child. If they finally conceive due to what is supposedly the influence of the herbs again, the child is named *Tiyegze*. This name describes a couple’s persistence and confidence in herbs when it comes to child bearing. The name might also serve to remind the couple, family members, friends and other members of the

community of the struggles that child bearing could come with and the importance of not giving up on family life.

#### 9. *Fumbani*

The literal meaning of the name *Fumbani* is ‘ask’. For the Tumbuka speaking people, there are names embedded in allusions of what happened to a woman before pregnancy. They may depict the bitterness (mostly bordered on the blame game) that characterised the relationship that existed between couples due to having remained childless for a long period of time in their marriage life. It could also be due to the mockery the new mother had received from the in-laws, relatives, neighbours, community members and/or co-wives (in case of a polygamous marriage) where each wife competes with the other(s) to have the most children because she wants to prove to the co-wives that she is their husband’s favourite wife. When such a woman finally gets to have a child, she will name the new born *Fumbani*. Although this name means ask, at a deeper level it acts as a message to her enemies. That is, all those who mocked her for having remained childless because her giving birth is a triumph and puts her considered enemies to shame since their expectations have not fallen through. The name is also meant to boast about her achievement. In this name is an element of sarcasm as the woman tells people to ask her about when she would conceive or finally give her husband a child.

#### 10. *Sekani*

This name literally means ‘laugh’. It is bestowed on a child born to a couple that has had challenges with child bearing but eventually manages to have a child. This name comes as a response to all those that could have mocked the couple for having remained childless. This again has elements of sarcasm, asking the supposed enemies to laugh at the woman or couple for being childless.

#### 11. *Chasoba*

The name *Chasoba* means ‘it is lost.’ Just like the other names in this category, *Chasoba* is bestowed on a child that is conceived after many years of a couple’s childlessness. It is meant to remind the parents of the long years when parenthood was lost. However, it could also be extended to talk about the barrenness that is no longer there, that is, it is lost.

### **4.2.1.3.Names Related to Marital Disputes**

In this category, there are three sub-categories of names related to marital disputes that have been presented. The first category discusses names that depict unpleasant circumstances that could have transpired between the husband and wife, usually being a form of reaction from either partner. The second is a group of names meant to encourage the couple to reconcile after unpleasant circumstances in their marriage, while the third category has names with connotations of a couple standing up for itself to fight the criticism from the family members and the community at large.

#### **4.2.1.3.1. Names Linked to Bad Occurrences in Marriage**

##### *12. Chabudikha*

In the literal sense, the name translates to ‘it has collapsed.’ It is given to a child born to a woman who at one point had offended the husband, who then decided that the only way of them reconciling is by getting intimate. However, the woman was not agreeable at the time because she was on her menses. Traditionally, during this period, a woman not allowed to get involved sexually as menstrual blood is considered unsacred. Therefore, if the husband forcefully decides to have it his way (i.e. marital rape) and the woman supposedly conceives from that encounter, the child is named *Chabudikha*. The name *Chabudikha* is given in order to show that the child was born under particular collapsed or hostile circumstances in a home. On a deeper level, the name acts as a woman’s indirect protest towards the husband’s aggressive behaviour and also to urge him to work on his conduct and how he generally treats his wife because this has led to his household receiving a child in one way the community considers unpleasant. This name is sometimes also given to children born to women that conceive from cases of sexual assault in general, even if the offender is not the partner.

##### *13. Chimbizgani*

The name is derived from the verb *kuchimbizga*, which means ‘to intimidate or threaten.’ It is given to a child born in family where a woman has been receiving threats of being divorced because the husband plans on taking another wife. Thus, a child born amidst this turmoil is named *Chimbizgani*. At first glance, the name is suggestive of the woman telling her husband to

chase her. This interpretation is true when it is understood to mean that the man is being dared to divorce his wife knowing that she just gave birth, a decision that society frowns upon. However, the name is culturally meant to plead with the man not to let go of his wife.

#### 14. *Wizilamo*

*Wizilamo* means ‘s/he has just come (unexpectedly without planning).’ This is a common name in polygamous marriages. It is given to a child born from the most recent wife. There are times when wives in a polygamous are not getting along especially if the new wife was taken on without the other wife’s/wives’ approval. If the wrangles continue and before they are resolved, the newly taken on wife conceives, the child is named *Wizilamo*. This name is an appeal to the co-wife or wives not to taunt the new born as s/he is innocent and has just come amidst the chaos without any intentions of escalating the situation. This name has elements of vulnerability, and can also be looked upon as a way of a mother trying to detach the newly born child from the differences that have been going on.

#### 15. *Bayenkhu/Tiyenkhu*

The literal meaning of the name *Bayenkhu* is ‘where will they go?’ The name is given to a child born to a woman that has suffered abuse in a marriage. One of the inferences that this name has is mockery. This is because the name giver is suggesting that the woman cannot go anywhere despite the ill treatment that she might be subjected to. One of the respondents added on that, *Bayenkhu* is slowly becoming a common name in polygamous marriages. It is bestowed on a child that is born to one of the co-wives to send an indirect message to the other wife or wives that even though she is their husband’s favourite, the others can continue forcing themselves into the marriage because they have nowhere to go. That is, they are desperate to be taken care of. *Tiyenkhu* on the other hand means ‘where shall we go?’ This name usually applies to the mother and child, lamenting about where they would go if the mother left her marital home. That is, we have suffered, but where shall we go.

#### 16. *Chananga*

The name loosely means ‘it has offended me.’ It is given to a child born to a woman who during pregnancy was caught by the husband committing adultery. The name is meant to communicate

the husband's displeasure over the occurrence as well as raising paternity doubts due to his wife's promiscuous behaviour.

#### *17. Jumbani*

The name is derived from the word *kujumba* which means to 'complicate or endanger.' This name is given to a baby born to a woman whose husband had a sexual relationship with another woman during the period his wife was pregnant. In Tumbuka tradition, this is believed to cause complications during delivery and can sometimes lead to the death of the woman and/or her unborn child. When there is strong suspicion of such, the husband is asked to confess and the couple is given herbs that are treated as spell breakers in order to allow the woman to have a safe delivery. The name is meant to talk about the difficult situation under which a child was born and speak against a man's infidelity in a home, especially at such a crucial point in a couple's marriage life.

#### **4.2.1.3.2. Names Related to Reconciling a Couple**

#### *18. Zikhani*

The name loosely translates to 'keep quiet or take it easy.' In marriage, there are moments when a man's promiscuous behavior begins affecting a couple's marriage life and the smooth running of affairs in a household. When this happens, a woman is traditionally supposed to confide in the husband's oldest surviving paternal aunt, who in turn informs the elderly men in the family. These men then summon the promiscuous husband and talk to him about how his conduct is shattering his home. However, if the behaviour persists, traditional counselors are requested to offer counselling to the man as last resort. If all these interventions fail, and in the process, his wife gives birth to a child, s/he is named *Zikhani*. This name is deliberately given to a child in order to ask a man 'to take it easy', that is to be cautious of his conduct. Connotatively, the name is an indirect way of condemning a man's promiscuous behaviour in a home and an urge for him to reconcile with his wife so that they could raise the child that has been born into their home in a harmonious environment.

### *19. Mangani*

The name *Mangani* literally means ‘build or tie.’ This name is given to a child born amidst a couple’s unresolved marital disputes. It serves as a reminder and request for the couple to settle their disputes and focus on building their home and family.

### *20. Chatonda*

‘It has failed’ is literal translation of the name *Chatonda*. When a couple is at the verge of divorcing, then amidst the crisis discovers that the woman is pregnant, the couple may decide not to proceed with divorce. Once the child is born, it is named *Chatonda*. This is meant to describe their failed divorce, which is believed to have been due to the strong conviction in working out their marriage and the desire to raise their little bundle of joy together.

### *21. Temwanani*

*Temwanani* literally means ‘love one another’. It is given to a child born under similar circumstances as *Mangani*. It is also aimed at encouraging a couple to reunite and love each other so that they could promote harmony in a home. Love is believed to conquer everything, thus, it is believed that if partners love each other there is nothing they cannot overcome in their marriage.

### *22. Gomezgani*

The name literally translates to ‘trust me’. This was explained by a respondent who said...

*“kwene nyengo zinyake pantengwa pangubako yayi chigomezgo, chitemwa cikaba cocepa. Basi bakhala na mwana bakuti uyu ni Gomezgani”*

[Sometimes in a home, there are times when there is no trust, love is not enough. When they have a child, they say this one is *Gomezgani*]. This name therefore acts as a plea to one partner so that s/he could show trust to the other. The child then acts as a symbol of the lost love and trust in a home.

#### **4.2.1.3.3. Names Related to a Couple Standing up for Itself**

##### *23. Tifwilepo*

The name is given to a child born at a time when a couple, or at least one of them, is rejected by the community they have settled in. For example, the man or the woman may be rejected by the partner's community, or a neutral community, but the couple is determined to stay on despite being unwelcome. In other contexts, it could be family members, friends and/or community members having apprehensions towards the partner a man or woman wishes to settle with. However, the two still go ahead and marry without worrying about anyone else's approval. This sometimes leads to the person that people had been against receive abuse, be it physical, emotional or verbal. Nevertheless, the victim would choose to endure the harsh treatment. When such a couple bears a child, it is named *Tifwilepo*, a name that loosely translates to 'we will die over it'. This name, at a reflective level has manifestations intended by the couple to make it clear to everyone that had been against their relationship that they will continue to be together even if it means fighting to death if they have to. It shows that the couple is willing to go to any length just to be together regardless of the external influence.

##### *24. Zondani*

*Zondani* is derived from the noun *zonda* which means hate. It is understood to mean 'keep hating'. This name is given to a child whose parents are ostracised by other people, usually without a good reason. It comes as a reaction to this resentment, telling people to keep hating until they get tired and eventually give up. It has connotations of people giving up the fight of convincing others to like and/or accept them.

#### **4.2.1.4. Manner of Birth Related Names**

Among the Tumbuka people of Lundazi District, Zambia are found names that are influenced by the way or manner in which a child was born or conceived. This includes factors such as the position in which a child was born and circumstances that led to its birth. These names, just like names in other categories discussed earlier have different connotations depending on the circumstances that led to the birth of a child.

### 25. *Chawezi and Nchawaka*

The two names loosely mean ‘something for free or a gift’. They are commonly given to children that are born under the following circumstances:

(a) when a man impregnates a woman but refuses to take responsibility for the pregnancy by claiming that he is not responsible. This name is normally given by members of the woman’s family since they are the ones that play an active role in raising the child.

(b) when a couple finally gets to have a child after a long time of a childless marriage (the child is considered a gift) to the family.

The two names above have connotations of something received not on merit but simply as an undeserved gift. When analysed from the sociocultural perspective, the names seem to have an emotional and psychological cushioning effect on the name bearer. Instead of one feeling like an outcast in the family and/or community especially when it is bestowed as discussed in context (a), one begins perceiving oneself as a gift and so does society. These names then seemingly carry so much positive meaning that they are now common names among the Tumbuka people.

### 26. *Masiye*

*Masiye* literally refers to ‘one that has been left alone or abandoned’. The name is commonly given to children whose parent(s) died during, at and/or shortly before or after birth. It should be mentioned that this name may sometimes be given to a child born when the father is absent from home to witness its birth, or to the remaining twin after one has passed away. Thus, it can be a name for a boy or a girl respectively. One thing that is clear in names such as *Masiye* is that death in the homeland may also affect naming. But death could also be extended to mean physical absence of a parent, especially the father in the life of a child.

### 27. *Mavunama*

The name is derived from the verb, *kuvunama* which literally means ‘to be upside down.’ It is a name specifically bestowed on breech babies (i.e. babies born legs or bottoms first). This name connotes the unusual manner in which the baby was born but still survived. On another level, the name could be understood to mean breaking away from the usual routines and exploring what

might be considered by the community as challenging or impossible and still thrive under those circumstances. Such names could be aimed at helping people look at a perspective that might be considered oblique and/or thought-provoking.

#### 28. *Vilaso*

Literally, the name *Vilaso* means ‘pneumonia’. It is a unisex name given to children whose births are believed to have been the cause of the pneumonia that their mother suffered shortly before giving birth. The name could also be extended to explain the extreme difficulties that a mother may have suffered during childbirth.

#### 29. *Dubani and Dubile*

*Dubani* is a name for boys and *Dubile* for girls. These names are given to children born to women whose husbands-to-be denied being responsible for the pregnancy. However, the two ended up getting married after a reconciliatory process.

#### 30. *Buchizga and Mabuchi*

Both names mean to be born unexpectedly, with *Buchizga* being a boys’ name while *Mabuchi* is for girls. This was explained by one of the respondents as,

“*Nyengo zinyake, kumankala kuti kuli kusaika koma wakala na ntumbo*”.

[sometimes there is something like during this period I cannot conceive but she gets pregnant]. Essentially, the child so named is as a result of a couple’s error in judgement in relation to when a woman is on her safe days. That is, the period of her menstrual cycle during which her fertility levels are low, thus making her chances of conceiving low. Nevertheless, if a woman conceives supposedly out of that miscalculated encounter, the child is either named *Buchizga* or *Mabuchi* if a boy or girl respectively. The two names discussed here can in a way be looked upon as reminders to the couple to be more cautious when it comes to issues of family planning.

#### 31. *Chizamusoka*

Taken literally, the name means ‘It has come with trouble/calamity’.

*“Nyengo zinyake, mwana uyu wabadwila mumasuzgo. Kwali nyina wakashwala chomene”*

[Sometimes this child is born amidst problems. Maybe the mother was very sick]. While it is not uncommon to find women that hardly experience any severe pregnancy symptoms, there are pregnancies where a woman for instance experiences morning sickness throughout her pregnancy. Hence, when the mother’s ill health is believed to have been caused by the pregnancy, the child can be named *Chizamusoka* to signify the pain or ill health that the child has brought upon the mother. However, it is not always that the child is the source of the misfortune, sometimes the child is just born amidst calamity, and s/he would be named *Chizamusoka* to mark that particular incident.

#### **4.2.1.5.Names Related to Happiness**

Like in most African societies, child-bearing is highly valued among the Tumbuka people. Thus, a woman who gives birth to a live child after an exceptionally difficult delivery or simply after a long period of childlessness or other challenges in her marriage life will show gratitude to God or the ancestral spirits for granting her a child.

#### *32. Sekelele*

The literal meaning of the name Sekelele is ‘rejoice.’ This name is given to a child to show a family’s euphoria over what could have transpired in their lives. It could be that a couple had remained childless for a long period of time, but finally managed to have a child or other especially bad events that a couple could have endured. Once such a couple receives a baby, it is named Sekelele to show that a family is happy to welcome that child because it is the silver lining of the dark cloud that had befallen the family. The child becomes symbolic of the happiness that is deemed therapeutic.

#### *33. Kondwani*

Means ‘be happy.’ The name is meant to urge the parents to the new born to embrace their child as children are a blessing and a source of happiness.

#### **4.2.1.6.Names Related to Death**

Death is another factor that influences the choice of personal names among the Tumbuka people. In this category, four sub-categories of names have been devised based on the general themes behind names with overtones of death. The first sub-category presents names with connotations of hopelessness after a couple has experienced concurrent deaths of their children. The second encompasses names with connotations of suspicious deaths, while the final sub-category has names depicting victory over death. The fourth sub-category consists of names that are aimed at mocking or daring death.

##### **4.2.1.6.1. Names with Connotations of Hopelessness and Lamentation**

###### *34. Chakumanda*

The literal meaning of the name is ‘of the grave’. That is, s/he belongs to the grave. One of the participants described this name as *kumala kwa banja* [finishing of a family]. The name is given to a child born after so many simultaneous deaths of its siblings in a family. It could also be given to a child born amidst concurrent deaths of younger generations to show the desperateness of the family due to losing so many (young) lives. Looked at from the sociocultural perspective, this name has elements of hopelessness because the name giver assumes that the child born after concurrent deaths has negligible chances of surviving because just like the others gone before its birth, it too belongs to the grave.

###### *35. Malalo*

The name means ‘graveyard.’ This is a name given to a child that is the first to survive after concurrent deaths of older siblings. The name is symbolic of the resting place for the siblings gone before the named child because the family fears that they might lose even this one to death. This name, just like *Chakumanda* has connotations of drabness.

###### *36. Tamara*

The name translates to ‘we have finished.’ It is bestowed on a child born amidst so many deaths in a family. With this name, it does not have to be strictly siblings dying, it can be members from both the older and younger generations. The name is meant to express a family’s lamentations

over how death taking away members to the extent of finishing them. This name has connotations of fear and hopelessness since members of the family alive feel that death will finish them off.

#### 37. *Zabene*

*Zabene* literally translates to ‘s/he is not ours’. If a family has been losing members to death, sometimes members begin thinking that their relatives can only be with them for a short period of time, hence making them believe that the people that they are losing belong elsewhere. This is especially true for parents that have lost several children due to death. In the long run, they stop believing in having children. Hence, a child born to such a couple is named *Zabene*, to mean that even this child is not theirs. S/he belongs to the grave.

#### 38. *Kanyifwa*

The name *Kanyifwa* means ‘small or little death.’ It is derived from the root -nyifw- which means death and has been used with the prefix ka- which is used to form diminutive forms. The name is given to a child born after concurrent deaths of the siblings born before it. The bestowal of this name implies that just like other children have died, the child so named will also die at a young age. This makes the child a representation of death because the likelihood of surviving is negligible. And because such a child is a representation of the death that has taken away the siblings, s/he becomes death itself, that is *Kanyifwa*.

#### 39. *Chayambaso and Chantindika*

*Chayambaso* literally means ‘it has started again’ while *Chantindika* means ‘it has surprised me.’ Both names are given to children born during a period when there has been a sudden death of a family member or close relation after a long period of time. It is a lamentation over the return of death in the family. Apart from death, the name could also be extended to other sudden tragic occurrences like illnesses that the family had not encountered in a long time.

### 4.2.1.6.2. Names with Connotations of Suspicious Death

#### 40. *Lyaniso*

The name *Lyaniso* means ‘eat again’. This name is given to a child if in the family, there have been concurrent suspicious deaths of children. The Tumbuka people are quite a superstitious group and sometimes death is believed to be caused by the witches. Therefore, when a child is born under these circumstances, it is named *Lyaniso*, with the view that the death of the children that a family has lost due to death is not as a result of genuine causes; there is foul play suspected. That is, they are being eaten by the witches and/or wizards. Subsequently, the name is meant to dare the suspected witches to eat [i.e. kill] even the named child like they have done with the rest. This name has overtones of suspicious death.

#### *41. Nyifwayao*

This name literally translates to ‘it is their death. The name shows that people are not happy with the manner in which they are losing members of the family, especially children. It is meant to put the blame on the suspected killer(s) as well as send an indirect warning to the suspect(s) that the family knows the one(s) behind their children’s death. This name, just like *Lyaniso*, carries associations of suspicious death.

#### *42. Nyamazawo*

At the first level, *Nyamazao* is understood to mean ‘their meat’. The name is given to a child under the same circumstances as *Lyaniso* and *Nyifwayao*. However, a family might use this name to lament over the way in which their children are dying, that is, like meat which is meant for consumption. The name is meant to send a message to the person or people believed to be killing children to eat even the child so named since all the other children were given birth to only to be eaten. This name has both underlying elements of daring the witches and also expressing hopelessness by referring to the children as just meat that is meant to be eaten (i.e. killed).

#### *43. Tifwengechi*

This name translates to ‘why/how are we dying?’ It is given to a child born following miscarriages, concurrent deaths of siblings or other family members. It depicts death occurrences, and has connotations of desperation and fear of losing other surviving members. Hence, people ask, are we going to keep dying, what crime have we committed to attract

concurrent deaths in the family? A family can opt to naming a child that is born under the circumstances discussed above *Tifwengechi* in order to express their distress.

#### 4.2.1.6.3. Names Depicting Victory over Death

##### 44. *Machilu*

The name *Machilu* loosely translates to manner of jumping (especially if there is a barrier). The name is given to a child born to the mother that has experienced concurrent miscarriages, still births or children that do not live long enough to grow. Once such a woman finally manages to give birth to a live child or a child that has seemingly outlived the other children, s/he is named *Machilu*. One of the respondents explained this as,

*“Machilu ing’anamula kuti mwanakazi akhala nantumbo yataika, wababa mwana wafwa, bana bakungo mwalila. Basi bakhala namwana wacita monga akulilako. Sono balala ati huh imwe..., niba Machilu aba. Tikamanyanga kuti aba nabo bangalelako mwana wakhala?”*

This can be translated as [*Machilu* means that when a woman becomes pregnant, she miscarries, bears a child, it dies. Children keep dying. Then she gives birth to a child that seemingly grows. Then elderly say, ah this child is *Machilu*. Did we ever know that this person could have a child and it survives?]. This name has both connotations of showing surprise at how a child born amidst such terrible things as death could make it as well as showing triumph over death.

##### 45. *Chidongo*

The name *Chidongo* is derived from the noun *dongo* which means ‘soil.’ When used with the prefix *chi-*, it translates *Chidongo* to ‘big soil’. This name is bestowed on a child born to parents that have had to deal with concurrent deaths of their infants. When a child born under such circumstances seemingly outlives the siblings gone before him/her, s/he is named *Chidongo*. A respondent described this name as suggestive of “*kudikha panyifwa*” which means [to cover death]. This name connotatively, could mean that the child has covered the death trap. That is, has triumphed over death by putting an end to the death of children in a family. The child becomes the living dead after outliving its siblings.

#### 4.2.1.6.4. Death Daring Names

##### 46. *Yizenge*

The name means ‘let it come.’ It is given to a child born in a family that has suffered frequent deaths of children. Perhaps as many as five consecutive deaths. The name *Yizenge* is therefore given to a child born under such circumstances as a way of indirectly challenging death by daring the supposed killers to kill again. This is an indirect way of sending a message that the family is not afraid of experiencing the death of a child, thus it could come.

##### 47. *Chifwenge*

This name means ‘let it die.’ It should however be noted that the name does not imply that the family wishes for the child to die. On the contrary, they are shaming death for having failed to take the child so named. The pain of losing a child or any close relation could sometimes affect people’s perception of life.

##### 48. *Chakufwa*

The name translates to ‘it is [already] dead.’ It is given to a child that is born to parents that have experienced concurrent deaths of their children. After having a child that has supposedly outlived the dead siblings, a child is named *Chakufwa* as a way of mocking death that the named child should not end up any different. That is, should die just like the rest.

##### 49. *Yafika*

The name *Yafika* literally means ‘it has come,’ with the pronoun *it* referring to death in this context. After losing many children to death, the one that supposedly outlives the rest would be named *Yafika*, a name that is meant to symbolically announce the arrival of death. That is to say, what they have received is death and not a child, just like the past experiences. This name is meant to directly mock death for letting the child slip away.

##### 50. *Chapasi*

The name means ‘belongs to the soil/earth.’ Amidst the hopelessness that comes with losing children, people may decide to name their new born child *Chapasi*, as a way of daring death to

kill even the new born since the family has become accustomed to burying its young ones [since they all belong to the soil].

#### *51. Chikomeni*

‘Kill it’ is the literal translation of the name *Chikomeni*. This name is usually given to children born to a couple that believes that there had been foul play involved in the way that they had been losing children. Subsequently, they would name the child that has seemingly outlived its older siblings *Chikomeni* to dare the suspected killers of the other children to kill even the child so named. This too, just like the other names in this sub-category, is meant to taunt death for having failed to have its way with the child so named.

#### *52. Chiponde*

The name means ‘funeral.’ It is given to a child born to a woman whose husband had died while she was pregnant and the husband’s brother or any other appointed relative married her through *chokolo*, a bride inheritance custom among the Tumbuka people. The name is also given to a child born amidst many deaths in the family or village at large. Instead of rejoicing for receiving a child, the family becomes grief-stricken due to fear of the possibility of losing another member. Hence, they resort to daring death to take away the child, who has then become synonymous to a funeral.

#### **4.2.1.7.Names Related to Social Caution**

In this category, the names that have been discussed are meant to remind people of the importance of being courteous when relating with others regardless of their background or physical appearance. Due to the fact that the future is full of uncertainties and no one knows who might help them in challenging times, the names in this category serve as forms of advice to members of a family and/or community against allowing any form of differences between or among them cause friction in their midst. Thus, the names are aimed at urging people to treat one another with kindness and be in good terms with everyone around them without segregating.

#### *53. Sokalikwenda*

The name is derived from the noun *soka* or plural *masoka* which means ‘calamity or calamities’ respectively. It reflects unfortunate circumstances or events that surrounded the baby, its parents or family before, during or even at its birth. This name suggests that a form of calamity took place before, during or even after the birth of the child. *Sokalikwenda*, which means ‘trouble/calamity walks’ is intended to caution the family and community members that misfortunes can befall anyone and therefore acts as an appeal to people not to mock others because of the circumstances under which they were born. This name can also be given to a child born with physical deformities. When this is the case, the name is intended to caution members that anyone can be met by unfortunate circumstances, thus, it would be erroneous to treat a person based on his deformity.

#### 54. *Fumbanani*

‘Ask among yourselves’ is the meaning of the name *Fumbanani*. This name is given to a child born to a couple or into a family that has been having disputes. Here, people take advantage of the birth of the newborn child to ask the people at loggerheads to resolve their conflicts. This is because disputes in a homestead and the general lack of peace in a home or family can lead to disintegration and in turn affect the upbringing of a child. *Fumbanani*, in this context then becomes a mediating name and in most cases proves effective. This could partly be attributed to the fact that the name brings to light to the community what might have been going among members of the family under consideration. Hence, people would strive to work towards mending the broken

#### 55. *Mangani*

The name is derived from the verb *manga* which means ‘build’. This name is given to a child born amidst misunderstanding either between a couple or among other members of the family. It is a request to the parties involved to reconcile and rebuild their once broken relationship.

### **4.2.1.8. Names Influenced by Religion**

Religion is another factor that has an influence on the selection of personal names. Of the two sub-categories, one depicts names with a sense of gratitude to the ancestors or the Supreme Being while the other comprises names that are translations of characters in the Bible.

#### 4.2.1.8.1. Names Attributed to Ancestors and the Supreme Being

##### 56. *Walusungu*

Regardless of the gender, the name *Walusungu* “the merciful one” or simply *Lusungu* to mean ‘mercy’ is given to a child born to a woman or couple that has had various bad encounters prior to having a baby. These can range from marital disputes to having difficulties during delivery. The name entails that it is the mercy of the ancestors and/or the Supernatural Being that the couple was finally able to have a child. Here, religion is at play as can be seen in the acknowledgement of the interference of supernatural powers.

##### 57. *Vitumbiko*

This name means ‘blessings.’ It is given to a child specially when a family wants to thank God for the good things that He has done for them. They take all the good events that could have happened to the family into perspective and resolve that they should show gratitude to God for allowing all such good things to have happened. This name has positive inferences, as the name is a reminder of only good things. The name giver deliberately decides to overlook any bad events because from the point of view of religion, God only allows good things to happen to people and all the bad events are associated with the devil.

##### 58. *Wongani*

The name literally means ‘thank or show gratitude’. It is a name given to children as a way of urging parents to thank the Supreme Being and/or ancestors for giving them a child.

##### 59. *Taonga*

Taonga is another name used to show gratitude. It means ‘we thank you.’ This name is given to a child in order to thank ancestors or the Supreme Being for giving them that child. It is a common name for girls that were born through forced labour, caesarian birth or other complications during birth.

##### 60. *Lombani*

‘Ask’ is the literal meaning of the name *Lombani*. It is a name given to a child that is born after a couple’s struggle with childlessness. It is meant to encourage the couple to try having more children by requesting to God and the ancestors. That is, if they asked and it was granted, why not ask again. This name therefore becomes appropriate for such a purpose.

#### 61. *Tapiwa*

‘We have been given’ is the literal translation of the name *Tapiwa*. The name is usually given to children that are born with deformities. This is to urge people to look at such children as gifts from God instead of discriminating them like in the olden days when children born with deformities were treated as bad omen and there were taboos associated with such births. This name therefore has connotations of acceptance of the newborn regardless the deformity.

#### 4.2.1.8.2. Names Adapted from Characters in the Bible

#### 62. *Mariya*

This is the name Mary, in English. It is adopted from the Bible. Mary, as a character in the religious circles is believed to be the mother of Jesus Christ. The name is believed to have connotations of meekness, generosity, sacredness, decency and forgiveness among other good attributes. It is a feminine name which people bestow on their children, with hope that they grow up with some of these attributes.

#### 63. *Estele*

*Estele* is derived from name Esther, which means star and happiness. The story of Esther as a character in the Bible involves a young woman from the humblest of origins, a Jewish exile, who rose to become a Queen of Persia. More importantly, in her royal position, she was able to save her people from a genocide designed by a scheming court figure. As depicted in the Bible, Esther was a pious woman who demonstrated great faith, resolve, mercy and courage ([www.encyclopaedia.com](http://www.encyclopaedia.com)). Just like *Mariya*, *Estele* is a feminine name, and Christian parents would give it to their girl children, hoping that the children grow up leading virtuous lives like Esther, as depicted in the Bible.

#### 64. *Yohani*

The name is translated as John, in English. Like other names in this category, it is also taken from the Bible. Based on the characters as found in the Bible, this name is perceived to have connotations of faultlessness and having a close relationship with God. It is given to children because of the belief that the named can end up with the expected behaviour in relation to the characters in the Bible.

#### *65. Peturo*

Just like other names that have been discussed in this category, *Peturo* is derived from a Bible character known as Peter, in English. Looking at Peter's transformation from a fisherman to Jesus Christ's disciple. Peter was initially self-assertive, inconsistent and impulsive but transformed into a charismatic, enthusiastic and visionary leader. Aspirations for parents that bestow the name *Peturo* on their boy children is to see their sons rise with exceptionally good leadership qualities at different levels.

#### **4.2.1.9.Names Related to Bad Occurrences**

Names in this category are related to hardship or unfortunate events befalling a couple or family. They indicate that some form of calamity might have occurred before, during, or shortly after the bearer was born.

#### *66. Misozi*

The name means 'tears.' Among the Tumbuka people in the research area, one of the many things that can bring about tears is death. This name is usually given to a person born at the time of a bereavement; a time when a family member or close relation died. The name culturally means that the bearer was born prior to, during or shortly after a bereavement in the family. Even though it is possible for people to shed tears amidst joyous moments, the name can only be understood as having connotations of a solemn mood. This therefore makes the name *Misozi* suggestive of an individual born at a time when the family was going through a difficult time. It may not always be a funeral but a situation where someone is dealing with other strong emotions of pain. A respondent added on that sometimes instead of the name *Misozi*, a child born under the circumstances discussed above can be named after the person that died, in the case where a funeral is the influencing factor.

#### 67. *Suzgo/Masuzgo*

The name *Suzgo* means ‘trouble’, and *Masuzgo* is its plural form. It is a name given to children born at a time when a family and/ or individual members are dealing with or have in the past, prior to the birth of the child, had to deal with different challenging circumstances. It is mainly meant to talk about various hardships encountered. These could be related to bereavement in the family, abuse in a home, socio-economic challenges or unreceptive treatment from members of the family and/or community. Taking into account these contexts, the name could be understood to be reminder of those difficult times or a voice against the angst caused on the family or individual members. It can also be looked upon as a lamentation for receiving a child during critical times.

#### 68. *Tinkho*

The literal meaning of the name *Tinkho*, is ‘hatred.’ The name is given to a child born to a couple that believes that one of the them is hated by the partner’s family, based on the treatment that one receives. This is especially in instances where the couple has settled in the same area as their in-laws because it is easy to detect behaviour that is suggestive of hatred based on the treatment that one is receiving. This leads to naming a child born under the circumstances discussed as *Tinkho*. This is meant to explain to other people what has been happening to the couple and also to indirectly speak out against the unjust treatment of one partner.

#### 4.2.1.10. Names Meant to Promote Unity

Amidst adversity and/or discord, receiving a baby in the family can be a source of strength. One way of helping to deal with such situations is by giving to the new-born child a name that carries therapeutic connotations that help members of a family or community still remain united by not allowing discordance or adversary cause disunity between them. Examples of such names have been discussed in this category.

#### 69. *Tikhore*

The name *Tikhore* means ‘let us hold.’ It is derived from *kukhora*, which means ‘to hold.’ After experiencing hardships as a household, parents can name a child *Tikhore* as a way of helping to

strengthen themselves. The named child then becomes a uniting factor of that family because away from the hardships, they have something to bring them together, and stay strong for one another even amidst tension. It can imply a family staying strong for or holding on to one another, which implies staying united.

#### *70. Tinozge*

*Tinozge* means ‘let us do good.’ The name is given to a child born into a family where members attempt doing good things for other people, but are always seemingly ungrateful. And because they feel that their efforts go unnoticed, they can name a child *Tinozge*, to imply that no matter how much of the good deeds they engage in, people are never appreciative. This name is meant to encourage the couple or members of the family to keep doing good regardless the response they receive from people. That is, them extending a good or kind gesture should not be dependent on how people perceive it. This helps deal with any ill feelings and frustrations that might spring from making efforts that go unnoticed, which in turn helps to avoid friction

#### *71. Bafiske and Fiskani*

The name *Bafiske* means ‘let them do as they wish or please.’ This is a girls’ name, and its equivalent for boys is *Fiskani* ‘do as you wish.’ These names are given to children born to parents that have been in conflict with other members of the family or community. Usually, this is because they are always speaking out whenever they feel that they are not receiving appropriate treatment from the people that surround them. Hence, after having a child, it is named *Bafiske* or *Fiskani* if a girl or boy respectively to tell the people that they have been in conflict with that they have given up the fight, hence can go ahead and treat them as they deem appropriate. Another way of looking at the name is that it acts as a message from the victims of conflict to the people they have been at odds with that they will eventually have their real intentions exposed. Hence, do not interrupt, let them speak freely instead of fighting back.

#### **4.2.1.11. Names Related to Physical Appearance**

The three names discussed in this category are based on the physical appearance of children at or shortly after birth.

#### 72. *Towera*

This name is derived from the word *kutowa*, which means ‘to shine.’ It has connotations of beauty, attractiveness and faultlessness. It is given to a physically beautiful female child. The name might be an indirect way of parents boasting to members of the community over having received such a beautiful girl. The name has positive connotations on the life of the bearer as it instills confidence in them.

#### 73. *Towani*

The name means ‘[you] shine.’ It is an address to someone, asking them to shine. This name carries the same connotations as *Towera*, but is given to a physically handsome baby boy. It is meant to show how proud a family is to have received such a handsome child.

#### 74. *Chiheni*

*Chiheni* means ‘bad [thing].’ Unlike *Towera* and *Towani*, *Chiheni* is given to a child that is supposedly born looking ugly. The name has negative connotations on both the bearer and the name giver because it undermines the value of meanings that personal names should culturally convey. However, perceived differently, the name may not always refer to an ugly looking child. It might be extended to mean that a child was born at a time when something bad occurred, and they decided to keep that bad event in a name since names are oral records.

#### 75. *Chibinke*

### **4.3.Surnames and Clan Names**

#### **Overview**

Unlike first names that are generated based on various factors as has been outlined in the thematic strands discussed in the foregoing section, most of the Tumbuka surnames first started as ordinary names and/ or nicknames. Later, such names became permanent surnames or clan names. They were given for specific reasons or as a result of specific events that took place at some point in the family or clan history. These names could have also meant specific things or were given in memory of specific items of importance in the area, family or something that their parents did in society. (Chondoka and Bota, 2015)

The Tumbuka people maintain their family names (at all times). This is so because it is the surnames that are used to identify people's locality in the kingdom or the village where they come from. For example, a Nyirenda, wherever s/he may be residing today, is by origin from north-western Malawi, in Mowa's chiefdom. Such related information is true for almost all Tumbuka surnames (ibid.). It is also worth noting that, among the Tumbuka people, there is a prefix *nya-* or its honourific *anya-* which translates to 'daughter of' that is attached before surnames when addressing female members. Culturally, this is used in order to denote female gender when it comes to surnames. This means that, *anyaMtonga* for example, is a woman and *Mtonga* is a man within the same family. This practice of attaching gender markers when using surnames can be looked upon as chauvinist because it belittles women to only being daughters while allowing sons to feel the ownership of the name.

#### **4.3.1. Semantics of Surnames and Clan Names**

The meanings of selected names were identified and analysed at the levels of denotation and connotation as was done with first names.

##### *76. Dokowe*

The name originally came from the *Nyirongo* clan. The narrative is that Nyirongo was a polygamist, but with his first wife he only had one child, a son. When he grew up, he named himself Dokowe, after a bird. Among the Tumbuka people, there is a bird locally known as *dokowe*, which only hatches one egg each breeding season, hence only has one baby bird at a time. Because he was the only child like that of the *dokowe* bird, he named himself after the bird to express his fears for lack of continuity of the family. Eventually, this nickname spread with time and assumed the place of a surname. It is up to this day and age a common surname among the Tumbuka people.

##### *77. Mwandila*

According to oral traditions, this name was initially given to a person because he was too shy to eat *sima* (i.e. nshima) left overnight (i.e. *chimbala*) in the presence of people. It is alleged that the name bearer kept his left over nshima in his fibre bag (known as *nkwizu* or *nyanda* in Tumbuka) because of his shyness. Hence, people would teasingly refer to him as:

*“mwandila mukwenda chimbala cili muthumba”*

which loosely translate to ‘a person that walks with leftover nshima in his pocket,’ therefore becoming withered while the leftover food is in the pocket. The member of the clan was getting thin due to self-starvation, yet he had food. At one level, this name has connotations of condemning pretense and also elements of shyness. But also, can be looked at as a way to encourage people not to hide their inadequacies or challenges that they might be experiencing for fear of being mocked.

*78. Luhanga*

The *Luhanga* clan is also known as the *Mutimbula* clan because the people of the clan liked to make the river or stream water dirty by throwing soil and other muddy materials in the water and stirring it, especially at the source of the river, hence making the water down the river dirty. The people used to say *Matimbula* ‘the one who stirs water [makes it dirty]’. Water is very important in every community, but if the people from its source can make it unsafe for use, it is a way of denying other members usage which can in turn lead to frictions. This can further be extended to mean that when people are in an advantageous position, they may desire to do things that might destroy other people’s lives or yield so much discomfort just to prove that they have an upper hand in the matter.

*79. Chitambo*

The name *Chitambo* translates to ‘a big river’. Just like many African indigenous societies, the Tumbuka people associate water with cleansing and life. A big river however, would also suggest that it cannot be crossed quite easily from the shore over to the other side without needing help or support. Therefore, the meaning of the name *Chitambo* can be protracted to symbolize a humble life because nature is beyond man’s control and no one knows for sure when s/he might need help or who would be willing to render assistance.

*80. Mtambo*

*Mtambo* refer to ‘rain clouds.’ Like most African communities, the traditional Tumbuka society depends on agriculture for its livelihood, and it is easy to imagine how receiving adequate rain is one of the most pleasant events. For this reason, some Tumbuka names are associated with someone who brings hope in times when people are desperate and need a sign of assurance that

their situation will get better. Hence, just like the rain clouds are a promise of rainfall for people to carry out their agricultural activities, *Mtambo* as a name is aimed at helping to instill hope when times are trying.

#### 81. *Ngwazi*

Refers to one who always wins, hence renders competition redundant. *Ngwazi* and other related names extol remarkable personal achievements in physical skills, material wealth, social status and economic endeavours. The socio-semantics of this category of names is that the name shares the assertion that a life that leaves indelible footprints on the sand of time is the one that is desirable. Its implication on the truth-value, therefore, is that ambition is a great catalyst to success in life. By accepting to be called and addressed by this name, one is motivated to work very hard in order to succeed.

#### 82. *Nyirenda*

The *Nyirenda* clan was named based on how their population was increasing uncontrollably. They were so many that people used to comment that they were as many as the legs of the millipedes. In the olden days, having many children was an achievement because it earned people so much respect. It was a way of proving just how fertile a couple was. Thus, all the people that were related to the *Nyirenda* clan were highly respected.

#### 83. *Zimba*

The *Zimba* clan was also known as *Magaba* ‘the divider of things [especially land]’ because they helped people share or divide land equally and made strong visible boundaries to avoid future boundary disputes. They commonly praised themselves in Tumbuka saying

*“ise ba Zimba magaba chalo nga nchabanyawo, mulya nkhone zibisi, Kambulunje wa mu Muchenje. Kayuni ka pa makama kambula kayola bana kayowa, vimayi vyapafunga, chalo mbantu ku khwengwenela chalo. Nkhulozga makuni vyakulya nthakuvindila lusala mwati muvindilenku lusala lukulu waka, Mazimba kupa.”*

Translated as [we of the Zimba clan, the dividers of (or those who apportion) land, as it is for others, the eaters of raw snails, no hope in a cactus tree. The bird in the coconut tree does not gather the young ones, knife of common land is people rubbing their buttocks on the ground (or land). The one who cuts trees anyhow, it is food, you can stop diarrhoea, you think you can stop

a heavy diarrhoea of the *Zimba* clan anyhow.]’ Land is important in any community, and the *Zimba* clan through self-praise has shown how powerful people can become if they have the authority to demarcate land. The name could connote a kind of leadership style in which the rulers hold themselves in high esteem.

#### 84. *Chirwa*

The name means ‘island.’ It is believed that the first group of the *Chirwa*’s to have settled in Lundazi District had originally come from Malawi, where they lived on an island. Even after they had left Malawi, people still referred to them as the *Chirwa*’s. Eventually, younger generations slowly began using this name as their surname. An island is symbolic of isolation, and *Chirwa* might in certain contexts be extended to refer to people that have settled in an area that is far apart from the majority population, and could be representative of the minority group.

#### 85. *Kumwenda*

The Kumwenda clan was known as Daile, ‘the one who dwells in the thicket.’ Members of the clan praised themselves by saying,

*“kumwenda Daile, musopa kunguyi akenda kenda, zuba linganjila ukamuwezga ni usiku akawela bantu bakajuma bakati Yebo musopa Daile.”*

Translated as ‘*Kumwenda*, the one who dwells in the thicket, the worshipper of a hiding place, he wandered all over until the sun set and darkness forced him to come back home. On arrival, people approved and said, thank you the thicket worshipper.’ The name was initially meant to refer to people that wished to keep to themselves during difficult times and were embraced by community members whenever they returned to seek comfort. It carries positive connotations and helped people not to feel uncomfortable seeking help from members of the community when the need arose. Eventually, this name developed into both a clan name and surname.

#### 86. *Mtonga*

*Mtonga* is a name that is associated with leadership, i.e. *Mudangilili*. Leadership is very cardinal in society. Otherwise it would be difficult to maintain peace and order since there would be no one with the authority to regulate the behaviour. *Mtonga* was originally a royal name. It is historically associated with a chief in now Boyole village, Chief Magodi’s area in the early 19<sup>th</sup>

century who was a polygamist. He had twelve wives, who each had at least nine children. He was able to fend for his family and still managed to help people in the community. Admired and held in high regard, he was eventually made chief and named *Mtonga*. After his death, the younger generations took up *Mtonga* as the family name.

#### **4.4 Sociocultural Implications of Tumbuka Personal Names and Naming Strategies**

For the Tumbuka people, the selection and finally, the bestowal of personal names as has been discussed earlier in the paper is an important process. This is because people believe that the choice of names can influence the life of the name bearer, through the treatment they receive from other members of the family and community purely based on their name. This usually emanates from the influence of the divergent views that people have about different names.

For the Tumbuka people, culturally, names are not just tags that are out there in the community to help distinguish one person from another. They are fundamental clues to help people look into issues pertaining to where they are coming from, dig into their history and acknowledge the fact that they are coming from some place characterised by certain realities that influenced the choice of the name they ended up with and help to (re)define who they are as a people. Because these names are given and used in a social setting where people are aware of their meanings, it in turn leads to people developing certain attitudes towards names, especially based on the meanings and other associative meanings they carry.

The paper set out to look at the sociocultural implications of some Tumbuka personal names based on the assertion that our identity is partly shaped by the way we are treated by the people around us, and that they (i.e. our names) have the potential to affect our interactions with society. In line with this, some respondents shared with the researcher opinions that they hold towards certain names.

Among examples of names that a majority of respondents had reservations over because they carry bad connotations included Kamunkhwala, Chimika, Chabudika, Jumbani, Chiheni, Lyaniso, Chakumanda, Masuzgo and Gomezgani. It was argued that such names should not be given to children because they do not carry a good message. That is, everyone that is familiar with the Tumbuka culture would know what possibly occurred for a child to end up with such a name. This knowledge usually tends to affect the treatment that name bearers receive even at a

tender age. And because people have in the long run developed these attitudes towards certain names, it now becomes dependent on the name bearer to devise a way of surviving in a community where they are not looked upon highly.

On the other hand, participants also shared how easy it is to relate in an encouraging manner with someone that bears a name with positive connotations. Examples of names that were cited include, Vitumbiko, Taonga, Walusungu and Wongani. Others were names as taken from characters in the Bible. When looked at closely, these names are linked to religious influence. In this era when monotheistic religions are fast growing, people tend to hold Christian names in high esteem.

However, other respondents argued that mostly, it is the people with names that are deemed to have bad names by society that in most cases excel because they strive towards fighting the stereotypes that surround the negative messages that their names might bear. However, this still stance remains highly debatable.

The findings of this study are in line with works such as those carried out by scholars such as Zawawi (1998), quoted by Kabaso (2016:154), who have contended that “personal names provide an important component of African cultural identities” and that “besides having psychological roles in establishing a person’s identity, names convey, to those who know their origin and meaning, the social and cultural experiences of the people who have created them....” This then makes names meaningful conveyers of information about the name giver, the named and society that has created the names under consideration.

## **4.5. Conclusions and Recommendations**

### **4.5.1. Conclusions**

From what has been presented in the paper, it can be construed that naming among the Tumbuka people of Lundazi District, Zambia is an important aspect of life, and therefore, cannot be compared to nonsense theorists’ perception of names as just identification tools that do not bear any significant meaning. In addition, personal names among the Tumbuka people have both straightforward and concealed meanings. These concealed meanings can only be deciphered by people that have sufficient knowledge of the Tumbuka language and culture.

It is important to note that Tumbuka names and the naming system as have been presented and discussed in this study have social implications on the name bearer and the community at large. Names that carry positive messages have positive implications while those that carry negative connotations in turn have negative implications for the name bearer, name users as well as the name givers. In the wake of religion, people are more comfortable with giving religious names to their children because they are believed to have a positive impact on the name bearer and are held in high esteem. Also, through the sentiments that people hold over some of the names, it was clear to the researcher that personal names indeed have sociocultural effects on the name bearer which manifest in the form of attitudes that people have towards certain names due to the meanings they carry.

While first names are bestowed in memory of the dead and according to circumstances surrounding a child's birth and a myriad of other social and psychological dynamics, most surnames considered in the study began as nicknames. However, both categories of names have denotative meanings from which extended messages could be derived. The two levels of meaning are closely linked as the literal meaning helps with the comprehension the social contexts in which the selection of names is done. This therefore entails that understanding the extended meanings that names have is conditional, with being well-versed in Tumbuka culture being that condition. This is because the extended or associative meanings are highly symbolic and their value can easily be recognised through individualisation and localisation of the name bearer by associating him or her with a particular incident, temperament, a point in time or a certain social and psychological background.

Further, of all the categories of names presented, names that are related to death were ranked the highest. People generally showed preference for and reservations towards certain Tumbuka names, and this partly accounts for why some people may opt to change their names later in life, giving rise to names of the umbilical cord. On a large scale, participants showed preference for names that have positive messages, and showed reservations towards those names that bear negative connotations.

#### **4.5.2. Recommendations for further research**

Based on the findings and conclusions of the study, the following recommendations were made.

- a. It would be important to explore other components of Tumbuka personal names from branches of linguistics other than Sociolinguistics and Semantics.
- b. Besides Tumbuka given names and surnames, other types of names such as nicknames and place names could also be explored.

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## APPENDICES

### Appendix A: Participant Information Sheet



HSSREC FORM 1a

#### THE UNIVERSITY OF ZAMBIA

#### DIRECTORATE OF RESEARCH AND GRADUATE STUDIES

#### HUMANITIES AND SOCIAL SCIENCES RESEARCH ETHICS COMMITTEE

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#### HUMANITIES AND SOCIAL SCIENCES RESEARCH ETHICS COMMITTEE

### PARTICIPANT INFORMATION SHEET

#### **TITLE OF RESEARCH:**

A Socio-Semantic Analysis of Selected Tumbuka Anthroponyms

#### **PURPOSE OF THE STUDY:**

The aim of this study is to establish the meanings (both denotative and connotative) and sociolinguistic functions of selected Tumbuka personal names among the Tumbuka people of Lundazi District, Zambia.

### **DESCRIPTION OF THE STUDY AND YOUR INVOLVEMENT:**

The study is an investigation into Tumbuka personal names. It explores the socio-semantic contents and sociolinguistic implications of both given and surnames. This is with the view that in most African societies, naming of a child is not a trivial matter, and is not done haphazardly. It instead calls for deep reflection of events surrounding a child's birth as names are not bestowed on aesthetic grounds like in most western societies. African cultures have various ways of naming children, but predominantly, many have shown preference for cultural-bound "meaningful" personal names that act as badges of basic group identity that produce a web of signification. With this motivation, the researcher wishes to explore these themes among the Tumbuka people of Lundazi District, Zambia.

You have been chosen to participate in this study because of your perceived knowledge on Tumbuka names and/ or the Tumbuka naming system and culture. I also want you to know that your participation in this study is strictly voluntary. Therefore, you are at liberty not to answer any questions you may not be comfortable with. Even if you choose to participate, you are free to end the interview or discussion at any point you wish to do so.

### **CONFIDENTIALITY:**

All issues pertaining to your participation in this study will be kept confidential. If you allow, I would like to record the interview. This will help me later as I try to remember certain details from the discussion. When compiling a report on this study, I may use some of the sentences you said, and when this is the case, it may appear with a brief description of you (for instance, one of the respondents from Kapinda village). However, I will not use any information that could identify you.

### **VOLUNTARY PARTICIPATION AND WITHDRAWAL:**

Please remember that your participation in this study is purely on voluntary basis. If at any point you do not wish to answer any of the questions, feel free to say so and the discussion will move to the next item. You can also decide to leave or withdraw from the study altogether at any time without consequences or having access to any of the services in the community compromised.

### **RISKS AND BENEFITS:**

I do not envision any physical harm happening to you as a result of participating. However, you may experience some stress and fatigue arising from the discussion or because the discussion may take longer than the initially agreed time.

This study is purely academic, hence apart from knowledge, awareness and understanding of the linguistic and the sociocultural aspects of Tumbuka names and naming system, there will be no direct or immediate material or financial benefit to you as a research participant. Participating in this study will allow gathering information relevant to the compilation of Tumbuka person names which is an integral part of Tumbuka heritage. The findings of the study might be used to stimulate further investigation of Zambian personal names in general and may further be useful to any audience that may take interest in knowing something about the Tumbuka culture, as the naming systems of most African societies are closely linked to a people's culture.

CONTACTS FOR QUESTIONS (Names, addresses and phone numbers of the following):

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## Appendix B: Consent Form



UNZAREC FORM 1b

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**HUMANITIES AND SOCIAL SCIENCES RESEARCH ETHICS COMMITTEE**

### CONSENT FORM

**TITLE OF RESEARCH:** A Socio-Semantic Analysis of Selected Tumbuka Anthroponyms

**REFERENCE TO PARTICIPANT INFORMATION SHEET:**

1. Make sure that you read the Information Sheet carefully, or that it has been explained to you to your satisfaction.
2. Your permission is required if tape or audio recording is being used.
3. Your participation in this research is entirely voluntary, i.e. you do not have to participate if you do not wish to.
4. Refusal to take part will involve no penalty or loss of services to which you are otherwise entitled.
5. If you decide to take part, you are still free to withdraw at any time without penalty or loss of services and without giving a reason for your withdrawal.
6. You may choose not to answer particular questions that are asked in the study. If there is anything that you would prefer not to discuss, please feel free to say so.
7. The information collected in this interview will be kept strictly confidential.
8. If you choose to participate in this research study, your signed consent is required below before I proceed with the interview with you.

---

**VOLUNTARY CONSENT**

I have read (or have had explained to me) the information about this research as contained in the Participant Information Sheet. I have had the opportunity to ask questions about it and any questions I have asked have been answered to my satisfaction.

I now consent voluntarily to be a participant in this project and understand that I have the right to end the interview at any time, and to choose not to answer particular questions that are asked in the study.

My signature below says that I am willing to participate in this research:

Participant's name (Printed): .....

Participant's signature: ..... Consent Date: .....

Researcher Conducting Informed Consent (Printed) .....

Signature of Researcher: ..... Date: .....

Signature of parent/guardian: ..... Date: .....

### **Appendix C: Interview guide**

1. What is your name and age?
2. What is your occupation and/or position in this community if any?
3. Among the Tumbuka speaking people:
  - a) Who names children? Is there any reason for this?
  - b) When are these given names bestowed on children?
  - c) Is the bestowal of names done publicly or in private?
4. Would you share with me some of the Tumbuka first names and surnames that you know together with their meanings?
5. Do you know of any circumstances that influence the bestowal of these names?
6. Do you have preference for any Tumbuka given names? Why?
7. Are you able to share with me examples of Tumbuka given names that you have reservations with, and why that is so?

**Appendix D: Pie Chart**

