

# The Social cultural Values and Changing Trend of the Hehe Personal Names

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## Abstract

Investigation on personal names appears to offer the most insightful view of the languages and cultural values of any community. This is because apart from acting as labels for distinguishing persons, the names given to children by parents largely reflect the cultural knowledge and circumstances of their community. This paper examines the social cultural values and changing trend of Hehe personal names by shading lights on their topology and cultural values. It is based on data collected through documentary review and focus group discussion in Ifwagi and Mtili villages in Iringa region, Tanzania. The analysis of the collected names show that the naming of persons in the Hehe community is currently guided by traditional system alongside non-traditional one. Normally, clan, appellative and first names are given to persons according to the traditional system. Names related to body parts, life and death, love and marriage, leadership and war affairs, and thanks-giving are connected to traditional norms. These names coexist with non-traditional personal names adopted from foreign religions (i.e. Christianity and Islam), Swahili language, and English language. The Christian and Islam personal names are meaningless inside the Hehe naming norms. The Swahili personal names depict circumstances surrounding the birth of the children and the nation's political atmosphere while the English names carry certain messages regarding the circumstances that took place when a person was born. This implies if researches on changes which occur in the languages due to coming into contacts with speakers of different languages do not involve cultural matters, the influence will be on preservation of speakers' knowledge related to mankind, ethnicity, history, and ecology embedded in languages. To enrich the existing literature, the study appeals for the further research on the influence of introduction of the non-traditional personal names on the age-based addressing terminologies in Hehe in order to enrich the existing literature.

**Keywords:** personal names, naming system, traditional norms, appellative names, nontraditional norms.

## 1. Introduction

Perhaps personal naming constitutes one of the oldest linguistic labels from which aspects of human life can be traced. [7] asserts that from the ancient times, people and their cultural lives were identified through personal names. As such, personal names are not mere labels for distinguishing persons; rather, they are entities that carry and preserve cultural meanings in the community. No one is without name, as [7] maintains that people know each other by names. Yet, it seems many of us pay attention to the circumstances that determine the way we have been named, but we do not ponder as to why names with certain meanings were given to us. [3] affirm that a person can die, but their names will continue to

exist. Thus, people recall the lost fellows through names and the circumstances enacted during their birth or life time lifetime. The circumstantial aspects such as identity, beliefs, ideology, environment, ambition, or politics of a certain people or community is entrenched from in its names. [13] endorses that there is quite a lot a set of people's meanings embedded in personal names. However, as communities are known for having unique values, customs, ideologies, and beliefs, their names and the norms underlying ruling out their naming systems appear to vary significantly from one community to community.

Certain factors seem to determine the naming of persons in communities. As [3, 14] point out, the philosophy, psychology, etymology, and historical background of a community as factors influencing the naming of persons and places. As such, naming appears to represent an exclusive topic in the current ethnolinguistics; hence, making it one of the aspects of interest in sociolinguistics studies in the contemporary decades. This study focuses on the topology and cultural values imbedded on Hehe's personal names.

Hehe is one of the more than 128 Ethnic Community Languages (ECLs) spoken in Tanzania. Its speakers reside mainly in Iringa which is located in the southern highlands. [8](Guthrie, 1967-71) places the Hehe language in the Zone G60 of the Bena-Kinga Bantu group. The Hehe are approximated<sup>1</sup> to be more than 1,425, 000; and speak their language along with Swahili and English. Thus, since Swahili and English are dominant in the country, Hehe like other ECLs including Hehe are reported to have been receiving linguistic influence from them (i.e. Swahili and English) due to borrowing [11]. At the same time, although there is a lack of research-based information, the Hehe naming system too appears to have been influenced by Swahili and English.

## 2. Literature Review

The way personal naming is practiced exhibit tremendous individuality from one culture to another. In the Balochi community for instance, parents uphold that a name given to a new baby should relate to the circumstances that surround the birth or the community [2]. A name of a Balochi person is therefore not arbitrary; certain connotations are conveyed to reflect the community's cultural values and traditions. As demonstrated in (a -i), these meanings are realized clearly in nine aspects.

Aspect	Names
1. Days of the week	<i>Yakshambay</i> 'Monday', <i>Dushabe</i> 'Tuesday', <i>Seyshambey</i> 'Wednesday', <i>Charshabey</i> 'Thursday', <i>Pashshambey</i> 'Friday', <i>Juma</i> 'Saturday', and <i>Shanbey</i> 'Sunday'
2. <sup>2</sup> Months afar 'second month',	<i>Rajab</i> 'seventh month', <i>Shaban</i> 'eighth month', <i>Ramzan</i> 'ninth month'
3. Wind	<i>Abasham</i> 'rainy or cloudy', <i>Liwar</i> 'a hot summer', <i>Grand</i> 'thunder'
4. Colours	<i>Boro</i> 'brown', <i>Suhrag</i> 'red', <i>Qumber</i> 'black and white', <i>Zardi</i> 'yellow', <i>Sabzal</i> 'green'
5. Birds	<i>Gengul</i> 'sparrow', <i>Kalag</i> 'crow', <i>Shandol</i> 'dove',
6. Animals	<i>Marok</i> 'snake', <i>Pulang</i> 'leopard', <i>Mazar</i> 'tiger'
7. Flora and Fauna	<i>Shinzi</i> / <i>Shinzo</i> 'camel thorn', <i>Nazboo</i> 'sweet basil'
8. Flowers and smell	<i>Asumi</i> 'Jasmine', <i>Gulab</i> 'Rose', <i>Zabad</i> 'perfume'
9. Events and occasion	<i>Barath</i> 'born on the of barath', <i>Ahedok</i> / <i>Ahed</i> 'born of the day of Eid', <i>Ramzan</i> 'born on the day of Ramzan'

<sup>1</sup> <https://www.ethnolinguie.com>

<sup>2</sup> Each of these month-related names is based on the Islam calendar.

**Source:** Ali, Bakhsh, Ali, and Khan (2023)

In the examples above, the names *Yakshambay*, *Ramzan*, *Liwar*, nor *Zabad* correspond to the words 'Monday', 'ninth month', 'hot summer', and 'perfume' respectively. The community seem to bear the circumstances surrounding the entire community. In this case, whereas a personal name such as *Asumi* 'Jasmine' relates to happiness, beauty, or smell like those experienced by a family when a person is born, the name *Ramzan* is given to a baby to keep memory that his or her birth took place at a time when the community was celebrating *Ramzan* feast. [2] preserve that as the Balochi never name their persons aimless, the selection of personal names is based on social beliefs and cultural practices.

In the Tshevenḍa community too, persons are assigned names related to certain socio-cultural values. However, contrary to the Balochi, in this community, these cultural values are exhibited in six aspects namely death, social condition, illness and honouring, traditional leadership, beliefs, and thanksgiving. For instance, names such as *ilàwàù* 'kill (eat)', *Mufàndilàni* 'one who died on the way' and *Lufàndilàni* 'one who died on the way' are given to babies to show how death happened. Moreover, whereas names such as *Nḍemédzò* 'burden', *Azwihàngwisi* 'unforgettable', *Miphò* 'gift' reflect social conditions, illness and honouring is explained in names such as *Fúnzàni* 'teach', *Màsindì* 'neater', *Ràtshàlì* 'the tested'. The aspects related to traditional leadership are reflected in names such as *Mùtàngànyisi* 'one who unites the family', *Nthàḍùlèni* 'help me', and *A'thixédzwi* 'I cannot be misled'. Nevertheless, beliefs are depicted by names such as *A'pfèswàhò* 'one who (God) is listened to most' *Mùrèndèni* 'praise him (God)', *U'nàrinè* 'he (God) is with us' while names such as *Màshùḍù* 'blessings', *Ròtòndwà* 'we have been blessed', *Livhùwàni* 'be thanksgiving'. [14] maintain that Tshivèḍà are tied strongly to the spiritual world; hence, they send certain messages to their ancestors. The Hehe people appear to name their children based on certain cultural values, but evidence for this is scanty there is a lack research basis.

In the Swahili community, a name given to a person relates to the day or a time of birth, supernatural power, place and manner of birth, relationship of parents or society, and parents' expectations from their newborn. [6] informs that the day- based personal names are associated with three days *Alhamisi* 'Thursday', *Jumanne* 'Tuesday', and *Jumapili* 'Sunday'. This shows that the person given any of these three names was born on the day which the word refers to. According to him, names such as *Chausiku* and *Asubuhi* are female names given to a baby that was born at night or in the morning. In the Balochi community, each of the seven days of the week has a counterpart personal name. Besides, in Swahili, names that relate to supernatural power and place names are plenty. For instance, while names such as *Shukuru* 'thanks', *Huruma* 'Sympathy' and *Baraka* 'blessing' are related to supernatural power, names such as *Msafiri*, 'traveller', *Salama* 'safe' and *Shida* relate to the place and manner of a child birth. Moreover, Flora and Fauna are exhibited in only two names namely *Maua* 'flower' and *Simba* 'lion'. In the Tshevenḍa, supernatural power is reflected in names that convey peoples' beliefs to gods such as *A'pfèswàhò* 'one who (God) is listened to most' *Mùrèndèni* 'praise him (God)', *U'nàrinè* 'he (God) is with us' and names that convey thanks, such as *Màshùḍù* 'blessings', *Ròtòndwà* 'we have been blessed', and *Livhùwàni* 'be thanksgiving' [14]. As Hehe people are also connected to various traditional beliefs and faiths, their names appear to reflect various aspects including their relationship with God.

In Tanzanian, the aspects of ECL including personal naming are less researched because the socio-political setting of the country has been ruling out them from being used in formal contexts. [16]state that researching on an ECL, making a translation of its texts, or documenting it was indirectly prohibited. As this took place for a relatively long period; that is, more than three decades from the

1960s to 1990s when the cultural policy that allowed linguistic tolerance was inaugurated, both the formal and informal communication have been dominated by the major languages i.e. Swahili and English; hence, leaving the use of the community languages confined at home domain. The fear that they will lead the nation into tribalism and hardship in unifying its people is reported to account for the prohibition [5]. Therefore, aspects of the community languages including Hehe appear to be less researched. This study looks at the topology and the cultural values embed in Hehe personal names.

### 3. Material and Methods

The study was conducted in two villages of Mufindi District namely Ifwagi and Mtili located in Iringa region in the southern highlands of Tanzania during our fieldwork between July and September 2024. The rationale behind the selection of these villages is that its inhabitants are speakers of the variety whose lexicon constitute the largest part of Hehe. This is based on [14] statement that, in Iringa, the varieties of Hehe spoken in villages located in the southern around the rift valley and central area constitute pure Hehe. To accomplish the study, primary and secondary were collected.

We collected secondary data by doing a documentary review and focus group discussion. Triangulation was opted to ensure verification of the collected data. Gathering data about the same aspect using more than one method ensures that the weaknesses of one method are compensated by another method [4]. As such we visited Ifwagi Hospital and reviewed the hospital attendance book to collect data. The hospital attendance books list the names of the patients (including names of expectant mothers, names of their babies born and their fathers) who were visiting it to get treatment; and find up to 100 personal names. Then, we visited Mtili primary school and reviewed the school attendance register books to accomplish data collection; thus, emerging with 200 personal names. Then, the aim was to supplement and crosscheck the information collected from documents, we conducted a focus group discussion with eight informants who were selected purposively. The selection was based on their resourcefulness to provide relevant information for the study. Besides, to rule out any influence which might occur due to gender, age, occupation, and level of education differences, data were collected from informants of diverse demographic and socio-economic characteristics. Having some knowledge of the Hehe language also enabled us to use our intuition to collect some of the data. Ultimately, 284 personal names were qualified to be true Hehe personal names. These personal names were then analysed qualitatively before presenting the results descriptively. Correspondingly, [9] state that making an in-depth descriptive analysis of information that was gathered in the field through more than one method is achieved when the investigation is presented descriptively

### 4. Results and Discussion

The analysis of the collected data indicates that first names can preserve certain cultural circumstances experienced by a bear during the birth of a baby. These messages involve those related to how pregnancy and those related to how a baby was delivered and perceived by its parents, family members, a clan, or community. However, currently, it is possible to find a person whose name has meaning outside the Hehe traditions or carries any messages. As such, we can consider Hehe as a community that practices two types of naming; traditional naming and non-traditional naming.

#### 4.1 Traditional Personal Names

Among the Hehe community, a person gets a tradition name soon after birth. A single person can be addressed in three names namely clan, appellative and first. Once, a persons is born, it is named in a clan

name; and this comes from a male parent. The community bear a similar clan name to both a female and male child. As such, persons are distinguished through gender prefixes *mwa-* and *se-* that are attached at the initial of surnames. The prefix *mwa-* is for addressing males while the prefix *se-* addresses females. The community therefore knows that a person who is named *Mwamwilafi* should be male and *Semwilafi* be female.

The second name given to a person is an appellative name. Along with clan names, Hehe language address its people using appellative names. Even though each Hehe knows its appellative, this is often used to address aged women. The aged women are respected by the entire community. It considers that since such women have expertise in the values of the community, are helpful to expectant mothers and are often consulted, they should not be addressed by a first name like girls. So, they address those women using appellative names. There are several appellative names in the community. However, a single appellative name can be shared by different clans. People who share an appellative name are believed to belong to the same clan and origin; hence, they are brothers and sisters. Common appellative names include *Mugaanga*, *Muganga*, *Muhiigo*, *Muhafiwa*, *Muyinguu*, *Mwolooka*, *Mahuvi*, and *Lukuungu*. The appellative name *Munganga* is shared among the clans of *Mseya* and *Mkonda*. The appellative *Mupanga* is shared by the clan of *Mutung'e*, *Kavenuke* and *Ngoti* clan. Besides, the clan of *Mpiluka*, *Mahimbi* and *Kalinga* share use the appellative *Muhigo*. Besides, persons who share an appellative name are forbidden to marry. The reason is that they have similar origins and might share blood too. So, they cannot marry each other for it is taboo. Traditionally, it is forbidden to marry a person with whom you share an appellative name; and persons who ignore this norm or do it accidentally are punished by the traditional gods. Therefore, personal and appellative names are very important for they help to preserve the values, beliefs and norms of the entire community. In the Hehe community, a first name is given to a baby based on the circumstances during the birth. This makes a name meaningful and deliberately conveys certain cultural aspects. There are several aspects in each of the personal names, but the most common are five; body parts, death, hard work, leadership and war, and marriage, and thanksgiving.

The Hehe appear to perceive a person who has a physical abnormality inversely. This perception makes them to find a name that matches the persons' boy abnormality; thus, naming him or her by using a word of such abnormality. This tendency makes a personal name act like a label too. Names that reflect this aspect are plenty and can include names such as *Lugongo* 'back', *Kidungu* 'umbilical cord', *Miho* 'eyes' and *Magulu* 'legs'. The name *Lugongo* is given to a person whose back has a certain abnormality; *Kidungu* is for a person whose umbilical cord is too big or problematic; but the name *Miho* is given to a person whose eye or eyes are too small, big, or red. In other communities, aspects related to the body parts determine a kind of personal name too. This is evidenced in the community of the Tshevenḁa people where a person's name relates to his or her ill-health and death such as *Funning* 'teach', *Màsindī* 'neater' and *Ràtshàlī* 'the tested', *Mũfàṇḁlànī* 'one who died on the way', *ilàwàù* 'kill (eat) your child', *Lũfàṇḁlànī* 'one who died on the way'. [14] affirm that since the Tshivèḁa people are tied strongly to the spiritual world, they feel that their names should be composed of words that praise their gods. Hehe appears to praise gods differently using words that describe how one is created.

The message associated with life and death is sent through Hehe persons. As would be the case of any human community, parents are happy to see that their children survive and contribute to continuity. This makes them name its persons in the names that express encouragement and grief to its people when they lose their loved ones. As such, they use words such as *Mukimbile* 'one who is left alone'; *Semukiva* 'one whose relative (s) was passed away'; *Mukwamile* 'one whose was taken care the by people who are not



his parents'; *Yamile* 'preserve or do not kill him or her'; and *Sibangumuhavi* 'he who is never scared of the witch' to say something to God and entire the community on how they perceive life and death. The community believe that death can happen because of God's will and witchcraft. So, it has been usual to find them praising God whenever they are rescued from disasters; and mourn whenever one member dies to express their grief. This manifested in different names. For instance, a person named *Mukimbile* is understood as one whose baby, or close member of the family such as a mother or father has passed away. Similarly, the name *Sibangumuhavi* is given to a person to remind the community not worrying about witchcrafts. Among the Swahili, death is reflected in personal names that sympathize. This is based on [6] observation that personal names such *Huruma* 'sympathy', *Shida* 'suffering', *Msafiri* 'traveller', and *Baraka* 'blessing' emphasize trust in God to withstand the hardship experienced in the community due to suffering and deaths. Therefore, although the context of naming varies, these communities use the personal names to communicate messages in their lives.

Moreover, in Hehe, there are personal names whose meanings relate to hard work. Parents bear them to children so that the nice message put in such names could be shifted to such children as they grow up. This aspect can be observed in several names including names such as *Magimilo* 'hoe', *Sindamumale* 'he or she that spends time to find wealth', and *Mwakavindi* 'one who possesses productive land'. In Balochi and Swahili communities, no personal name is related to hard work; rather their names are related to flora and fauna. For instance, whereas the Balochi names such as *Shinzi* or *Shinzo* 'camel thorn' and *Nazboo* 'sweet basil' reflect fauna; the Swahili personal names such as *Maua* 'flowers' and *Simba* 'lion' are consecutively associated with flora and fauna [2].

Similarly, the Hehe names convey love and marriage. There are several names where bearers send messages that convey love affection or marriage satisfaction experienced in their lives. These include names such as *Mbegeleyungi* 'bring me another' which metaphorically signifies a query made by a man to marry another woman'; *Mali kuvahindi* 'loved by a white man' which metaphorically signifies the expression of pride of being cared for by different men. Nevertheless, a person name such as *Fwalavahanu* 'one who is reliable to many wives signifies a man with extreme sexual power while as name like *Muvipile* 'one who is hate' appears to signify complaints due to odium. The *Mulimilavangi* 'one who works for others' is given to a person who is polygamous. The Hehe are usually polygamists. So, they feel that this should be encouraged indirectly through personal names. While naming of persons based on love and marriage occurs dominantly in Hehe, in other communities, this is done differently using names that express love to children. This is clearly shown when the Balochi parents name their baby *Asumi* 'Jasmine', *Gulab* 'Rose', or *Zabad* 'perfume' to relate them with love and nice smell paid to these flowers [2]. Therefore, while in Hehe love is manifested in the names given to adult persons, the Balochi people express it using names given to babies.

Leadership and war affairs is reflected in Hehe names as well. The community use these names to express messages that reflect the historical circumstances of the community. Correspondingly, Both [15] and [10] report that the Hehe has been involved in numerous conflicts and wars with neighbouring communities such as Bena, Sangu, Ngoni, etc., before fighting against the colonial invaders to protect and expand the empire. They believe that their dignity should be cherished. Therefore, they inevitably name its persons in the words that raise spirits of leadership, patriotism, and readiness to fight for dignity. This is manifested in several personal names including names such as *Mugohamwende* 'love for the spear' *Mwagilisasi* 'kill by bullet', *Pangamasasi* 'arrange bullets', and *Mgombitanana* 'kill all around the plateau'. Leadership and war affairs are manifested in personal names of the Kurdish community

too such as *Rabar*, *Leshaav*, and *Karajat*. [1] state that personal names are never meaningless in the Kurdish community. It is maintained that *Rabar* is given to a person for the memory when the community was involved in political and social changes in 1992 and *Leshaav* is given to remind the community about the mass killing of people. It is worth noting that in the Hehe community, the leadership and war personal names are given to raise the spirits of fighting to enrich and protect the territory while among the Kurdish they are just meant to remind the community about political and social changes that took place in the past by unifying its people. In the Tshevenḍa, parents bear names such as A'thixèdzwi 'I cannot be misled', *Mùtàngànyisi* 'one who invites the family', *Nthàḍùlèni* 'help me' to new born babies so that they remind the entire community about the importance of good leadership [14].

Apart from leadership and war affairs, Hehe expresses thanks to God using personal names. People attach themselves to a belief in God. This makes the community believe that spirits are the source and controllers of each good circumstance in life. As a result, its people conduct several rituals to praise and seek assistance whenever they go through miserable experience. They bear names to appreciate gods for the achievements made and their commitment to serve them because of their belief that a better life can come out when they adhere to the will of God. Additionally, they name persons using words that remind them of the circumstances of their lives. These aspects can be exhibited in names such as *Mulumbe* 'thank God', *Yamile* 'preserve', *Mukwamile* 'he or she who is taken care by God', and *Twiviche* 'God's gift'. In the *Asu* community, names other than those observed in Hehe express thanks. [12] lists names such as *Togolani* 'keep praising the God', *Ariran* 'trust' and *Nakaza* 'I've praised' as related to thanks giving. There is a belief among the communities (i.e. Hehe and Akan) that persons should be named words that glorify, praise, or cheer God because he is the source of success, survival and life. Hence, understanding, the personal names in communities that praise God is imperative. This is based on the fact that love, grace and blessing can be attained in life.

#### 4.2 Non - Traditional Personal Names

In the past, non-traditional personal names were not used in the Hehe community. They seem to have been introduced when the community began to come into contact with Asians (mainly Arabs) and Europeans. [17] argue that Hehe had contacts with people from the Far East and the West (i.e. Europeans) triggered by trade, the campaign to spread Islamic culture, missionary activities, and colonial relationships between the 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> centuries. However, this shows that as the contacts intensified, communities enriched each other by sharing cultural matters including naming of its people. Currently, in Hehe, there are many names that are based on Christianity, Islam, Swahili language, and English language something which suggests that they might have been adopted during the contact. Besides, [15] affirms that the contacts between Tanganyika communities (hereafter Tanzania) and the European nations were for exploration, trade, missionary and colonial relationships. Therefore, the non-traditional personal names relate to foreign religions (i.e. Christianity and Islamic culture); and the impact of the Western education (i.e. Swahili and English names) on Hehe. In the following sections, we present these names as per these sources and analysis of the collected data.

##### a) Religious-related Hehe Person Names

In Hehe, most religious personal names are Christian names. This is attributed to the dominance of Christianity in the community. Some of them were converted into Christians and others were baptized to become Christians directly. The persons who were converted to Christian feel that their traditional names should be changed to align with the new faith; hence, they are renamed. Similarly, the baptized persons feel that their children should be assigned Christian names. So, this ultimately makes most

Hehe be accorded Christian names. The Christian teachers and leaders appear to influence people to name their new babies in the Christian names too. Most of these names do not reflect traditional values and sound foreign because they are just picked from the Christian calendars of saints to name persons. This is done in the view that a person who is given a name that is picked from the calendar could be assisted spiritually by the saint to whom he or she is named after.

Naming persons based on Christian faith appears to rise because a large number of people convert to Christianity; even persons who were renamed too, name their children in Christian names; making others, especially the youth lack the knowledge regarding traditional names. Christian names are currently plenty; and include those which point back to notable historical values, faith and circumstances of the Church and famous religious saints. These include names such as *Ibulahimu* (i.e. Abraham, the father faith), *Mosesi* (i.e. Moses the leader of Jews who lead the nation in Egypt), *Yoseph* (i.e. Joseph the husband of Mary mother of the son of God), *Mikaeli* (i.e. Michael, the archangel), and *Malia* (mother of Jesus) and many more. Other personal names include names of famous prophets and contemporary saints such as *Yuda* 'Jude', *Bakita* 'Bakitha', *Maluko* 'Mark', *Timoti* 'Timoth', *Magidalena* 'Magdalene', *Telesia* 'Therese', etc. Some names relate to Christian holidays and festivals, such as *Noheli* (male) and *Noela* (female), the origin being Noel, *Dominikusi* (male) and *Dominika* from the 'Dominica'; *Kilisityani* (male) and *Kilisitina* (female) from the word 'Christ'; and *Kelemensi* (male) and *Kilemendina* (female) from the name 'Clement'.

In the Hehe community, personal names that were adopted from Islam are also many. Both the persons who were converted into Islam and those who have not been attached to Islam name their children in Islamic culture names. The most common Islamic names include *Atibu*, *Abudala*, *Hasani* and *Abibu* for males *Halima*, *Idaya*, *Sada*, and *Asa* for females. These names do not reflect Islam nor Hehe traditional values, history, or life circumstances. The converted Muslims parents appear to feel that their children should be given names which were given to them once they became Muslims. Also, they are parents who are interested in the way such names rhyme; hence, contributing to making the community ignore naming its person according to traditional norms in favour of the religion (i.e. Christianity and Islamic culture) naming norms.

#### **b) Swahili and English-related Hehe Person Names**

Moreover, names adopted from the Swahili or English are dominantly. The community use convey information about the circumstances which took place when the children were born such as those hardships that faced the parents, a member of a family, or an entire community. The fact that most Hehe are conversant with Swahili and English languages makes them inevitably feel that their new babies should be named using Swahili or English words that convey certain messages about the circumstances they come across. As such, each of the Swahili or English personal names has a meaning that is related to joy, grief, tolerance, and encouragement.

The Swahili names that were given to persons include *Furaha* 'happiness', *Chuki* 'hatred', *Vumilia* 'endure' and *Tukae* 'let's stay'; thus sending messages that relate to joy, grief, endurance, and tolerance. Besides, other names are used to express reminiscences and circumstances that took place when a child was born. These include names such as *Mapinduzi* 'revolution', *Elimu* 'education', *Azimio*<sup>3</sup> 'declaration', *Mageuzi* 'reform', and *Juhudi* 'effort'. So, whereas a name such as '*Azimio*' points out back to the years of 1960's when the Arusha declaration was inaugurated, *Mageuzi* points back to the

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<sup>3</sup> This is one of the famous events in Tanzania that involved inauguration of the policy of self-reliance in Arusha region; the aim being to bring awareness and mobilize the citizen on the use own resource in its efforts to build the newly born nation.



1990's when the multiparty democracy was reestablished in the country. Moreover, the words '*Elimu*' and *Madaraka* are used to address persons in remembrance of the year 1970s when the nation's policy on education for all and decentralization policy was established. So, as different policies were launched soon after the country got its independence in 1961 to mobilize its people to join efforts to build and fasten development, Hehe began to name its people using such words and slogans; hence, making them blooming.

The Hehe name their children using English words too. The meanings of these names relate to circumstances that happened when the named persons were born. As a result, even though the orthography and the phonological systems are Hehe, these names are composed using English words to carry desirable meanings. Currently, these names are many in Hehe. However, the common names such as *Hepi*, *Comfoti*, *Lavu*, *Giladi*, *Godi*, *Blesi*, and *Guudi* as adapted from English words are 'happy', 'comfort', 'love', glad, 'God's love', blessing, and Good love or God luck consecutively. As exhibited from the meanings of each of these words, parents bear them to reproduce circumstances that took place when a child was born. For instance, a person who is born when a family experiences success can be named *Hepi*, *Lavu*, *Komfoti*, or *Giladi* for words *happy*, *love*, *comfort*, *glad*; and person who is born when a family experiences harmonious life is named *Gudi*, *Godi* or *Blesi* for words *Good luck*, *God love*, or *blessings*. Thus, such names though are just words used to send a certain message to the community regarding circumstance that took place when a named so person was born. However, it should be born in the mind that naming persons using English words contributes to changes in the naming system because while persons were known through a clan, an appellative and first names since the past, currently they can be named in only single non-traditional name pair involving a Christian name plus a clan name, an Islam name plus a clan name, or a Swahili, or English word plus a clan name. Meanings are rarely embedded in these names and nontraditional messages can be conveyed. Besides, appellative names are no longer used and hardly known.

The introduction of foreign religious (Islam and Christianity), western education, and multicultural integration appear to account for the change in the naming system of the community. As a community comes into contact with a multicultural community, diligence in naming its persons based on traditional norms will not be practically inevitable. Christianity appears to account most for the change in naming persons in Hehe. Christian leaders are shown to have been persuading persons who want to convert to Christian or baptize their children to change names. They tell them each baptized person should have a name that relates to the Christian faith. They emphasize that a Christian person should not be named by traditional names such as *Muhavi Yawoonike* 'a witch is the one who is confirmed', *Muhufu* 'one who is extremely unattractive', *Lududi* 'limp', *Mvipile* 'one who is hate', or *Yesikumlava Imbwa* 'one whom the dogs watch'. The major reason for prohibiting these names is that their meanings do not reflect Christian values. Therefore, unless the meaning of a traditional name relates to the Christian faith and values is never accepted; hence, making Christian personal names occur dominantly in the community. It is, therefore, inopportune to find that only a few traditional names, especially those whose meanings are neutral exist along with the Christian, Islamic, Swahili names, or English personal names in Hehe.

## 5. Conclusion

The analysis of the data made in this study has offered ample evidence of the topology of social cultural and values of personal names in the Hehe community. Specifically, it has been shown that persons are named based on the traditional system and the non-traditional one. Based on the traditional norms, a

name reflects five cultural aspects including body parts, life and death, love and marriage, leadership and war affairs, and thanksgiving. The names which are given to persons based on the non-traditional norms were adapted from the foreign religions (Christianity and Islam), Swahili words, and English words. The Christian based personal names are picked by the parents from the Christian calendar. They are given to children under the influence of leaders to relate to those of the saints. The Islamic personal names are just picked out by parents to name children, especially those when rhyme nicely. The Swahili and English personal names bear different implications. The Swahili personal names reflect circumstances surrounding regarding the birth of the children and the nation's political events while the English names though are just words send certain messages to the community regarding circumstances that took place when a named person was born; hence, aligning with [13] statement that names do not tell only the identity, but also the major characteristics or ideology of people who bear the name. The study is therefore evident that if the system of naming persons according to non-traditional persists, the traditional names and knowledge related to Hehe's mankind, ethnicity, history, and ecology will no longer prevail in the near future. The study appeals for the further research on the influence of introduction of non-traditional personal names on the age-based addressing terminologies in Hehe in order to enrich the existing literature.

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