

Onomastics: A Brief Study of Kurya Dog Names of Tanzania

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Abstract: *This paper dwells Onomastics investigation of Kurya dog names and the factors for their nature and nurture. The paper argues that names are not just for identification but are things. The previous literatures on domesticated animals especially in Tanzania talks on goats and cows, dogs have not been considered, thus it is the current study which fulfills descriptive gaps under the casual theory of proper names. The study used qualitative approach under a case study design whereby ten Kurya informants were selected snobbally. The reason for their selection was due to that they are Kurya native speakers and the possess dogs at their homes. Observation and unstructured interviews were the instruments of data collection. The former was done for observing dogs' behavior and appearances and the latter was organized special for unstructured interview with the Kurya natives of Tanzania. The study revealed eight Kurya dog names namely: Mokera, Mesanga, Nyabhutwi, Mrito, Msungu, Mang'iti, Nyamanya and Kyeng'e. Three reasons justified the nature and nurture of these names as in appearance (color, structure, size, hair, and shape), origin and behavior. It was conclude that dog names are things in African context because they echo socio-cultural milieu for strong sanctuary and attendant purposes.*

Keywords: Kurya Dog Names, Onomastics, Socio-Cultural Linguists, Tanzania

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Introduction

The discussion on the topics of dog names has attracted no interest to socio-cultural linguists in the 21st century. This made few studies be done on dog names in African socio-cultural practices despite the fact that dogs are very important animals at homes. Mhute (2016) investigated on Shona dog names paying attention from districts in Masvingo province such as Zaka, Masvingo and Ndanga. The author found that though in certain situations names are just tags meant to enhance identification of certain dogs just like the Biblical names that were given to most African children following the coming of the former white masters; almost every Shona dog name has a story behind it. The study of Mhute did not touch on the factors triggered dog names assigners in naming system in which the current study desires to investigate from the Kurya speech community of Tanzania.

Babane and Chauke (2017) conducted an investigation in unraveling the truth behind the naming of dogs and its significance using Vatsonga as a case study. Their main aim of this paper is to explore and describe the naming of dogs among Vatsonga. They revealed that some of the names given to dogs are identical to those of human beings. Dog names are generally given to draw attention to or to address certain problems in the family or community at large. It was concluded that there is a need to continue maintaining our dog-naming culture because the meanings help to reprimand and rebuke bad behaviour among family and community members. The current investigation uses different African cultural group called Kurya speech community to see how names are things of truth value pertinent to dog names.

Makondo (2014) investigated on *dog* Names in the Shona speech community. The author reports that dogs' names among the Shona people are assigned from witchcraft, death and animals. The study further finds that sometimes dog names are coined to be rhetorical to the hearers. Bamana (2014) conducted investigation on dogs and Herders in the rural Mongolia. The author revealed that the role of dogs and their naming in rural Mongolia has a strong relationship between dogs and human beings because, since the origin of humankind, dogs have been there and their names are used to communicate something both to the name-giver and other people. Therefore, this attracts more investigation if and only if dogs are

among human domesticated animals and they have socio-cultural association with human activities including security.

Koopman (1992) wrote among the Zulu people in South Africa and show how domestic animals such as dogs and oxen are named. He reported there are loaded meanings behind the naming patterns of these two domestic animals in isiZulu. This brings motivation under the level of discussion the way loaned senses are integrated like how human personal names are loaned, thus the current study uses Kurya speech community to see how reality dog names are in our construal cognition.

Underpinning Theory

The paper used known as Casual theory of proper names. The theory was proposed by Saul Kripke (1980). The theory is of the lining that the names are directly correlated with their nominatum and proper names are rigid designators ensuring the same individual in every possible world. Kripke extends this idea to natural types of things: human, dog, gold, water, which would not be descriptive, but directly denotative (Kripke 1980). The reason for Kripke arguing for designator is due to the fact that since the 1960s, Kripke has been a central figure in several fields related to mathematical logic, language philosophy, mathematical philosophy, metaphysics, epistemology and set theory. With his good theory, the current work modifies the term ‘rigid designator’ to flexible designator because names are not like mathematics. However, in *Naming and Necessity*, Kripke proposed a causal theory of reference, according to which a name refers to an object by virtue of a causal connection with the object, mediated by the communities of speakers. He also states that the proper names, unlike most descriptions, are rigid designations (the proper name refers to the object named in any possible world in which the object exists).

Material and Methods

Approach and design: Research design refers to the structure of research which is used to hold all the elements in a research project together (Kombo and Tromp, 2006). It is also a blueprint for conducting a research (Fouche and de Vos, 1998). Therefore, this study applied a case study design in which Kurya dogs was the case study. According to Punch (2005) almost anything can serve as a case. Punch illustrates that typical cases include individuals, a role or occupation, organization, a policy, a community, or even a country. Therefore, from this account the researcher used Kurya dog names as ‘a case’ study which is strongly associated with qualitative research (Gray, 2014). Research approach is divided into three types namely: quantitative, qualitative and mixed approach (Bryman, 2008). The nature of the study made use of qualitative approach in which no statistical information were used rather than descriptions on the dog names and the associated reasons behind their names. Qualitative research design claims to describe life-worlds from the ‘insight out’ point of view of the people who participate in the action (Flick, Kardof & Steine, 2004).

Population and sample size: The people, items, word categories, animals or things that a researcher has in mind from whom he or she can obtain information are called *population*’ (Enon (1998). The target population is, therefore, part of the case from which ‘accessible sample’ is drawn. Thus, the study used Kurya population for drawing attention on the animals they keep being them dogs. Sample size is nothing but the number of participants in a study (Larson-Hall 2010). Considering the nature and the research design together with the instruments of data collection of the current investigation, only 10 Kurya informants were selected snobally to take part in the research. Their selection was made following the fact that they are having dogs in their households which act as soldiers, they live in rural areas and that they value dogs in their life. Therefore the 10 informants had these features of which they happened to fit into the study.

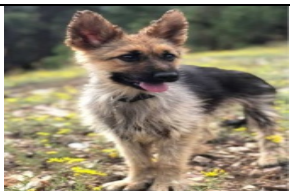



Instruments: Data collection methods refer to ‘techniques and procedures used in the process data gathering’. In this study, two instruments were used for data collections namely: observation and





unstructured interview techniques. These were used to collect all information pertaining to dog names in Kurya speech community of Tanzania. It is argued that a combination of different methods provide cross-data validity checks and therefore reduces errors that can be experienced when one particular method is used (Patton (1990). The choice of these techniques was preferred because the participants were believed to hold first-hand information on dogs and their associated naming practices as well as the meanings behind their names.

Ethical consideration: Research ethics is the science of morality, meaning that conducting research is beyond merely adopting methodologies but doing research is pertinent to moral implication in the given environment (Gray, 2014). However, for confidentiality maintenance of the findings, the participants were assured that all information would be treated with the utmost confidentiality, and would be used for research purposes only. The researcher gave all 10 participants the opportunity to withdraw from the study if they so desired. They were informed that the purpose of the study is to document dog names for keeping memory to upcoming generations to the extent that young generation should not be affected by global world for forgetting traditional practices of their parents.

Data presentation: This section presents data which were collected from the field on the Kurya dog names pertinent to realities of these names. Consider the following table whereby names and their descriptions have been presented.

Table 1: Kurya Dog Names

S.No.	Dog-Names	Description	Picture
1	NYAMANYA	The Kurya lexeme "Nyamanya" in the English language means "Hairy". However, the dogs of these kinds are named <i>Nyamanya</i> because of their long and abundant fur that covers their whole body.	
2	KYENG'E	The word "Kyeng'e" in the English language means "short" or "something short". However, this dog was named Kyeng'e because of its very short body shape compared to other dogs. Thus, it is from the base of physical appearance that triggers dog name assigners for naming.	
3	MANG'ITI	The word "Mang'iti" in the English language means "hyena", which is a wild animal. Hyenas have a spotted coat pattern similar to a leopard's, and this dog was afraid of other dogs because of being like hyenas. This means that other animals afraid it because of its characteristics of being hush in nature.	
4	MUSUNGU	The word "Musungu" in the English language means "white person" or "European" person whose color is white. These dogs were named <i>Musungu</i> because were brought by European person from Europe and had a completely white color without any spots. The people of Rung'abure Village compared its white fur to that of a person from Europe.	

5	MRITO	Mrito is a village located in the Rung'abure ward, known for its desert-like conditions. This dog was named Mrito because its body type lacked fur, and some parts of its body were only covered in skin, which looked different from other parts. It had very little fur, and the skin was visible, so it was called "jungle" that doesn't have enough grass and trees.	
6	NYABHUTWI	The word "Nyabhutwi" in the English language means "small ears". This dog was named <i>Nyabhutwi</i> because it possesses very short ears compared to other dogs. However, these dogs have the characteristics of being very fearful, even when they encounter other dogs.	
7	MESANGA	In the English language, " <i>Mesanga</i> " means "beads". These dogs are named <i>Mesanga</i> because of the bead-like patterns they have on their body, such as on their necks, which could be different from their overall body color, either on the neck, legs, or anywhere else	
8	MOKERA	The word " <i>Mokera</i> " in the English language means "tail". These dogs are being named <i>Mokera</i> because their tails colors are whites. This means that the dog could have a black or red body color but have a white tail. Therefore, in the Kikurya language, this type of dog is called Mokera by Kurya native speakers.	

The presented dog names and their figurative representation are from Kurya speech community of Tanzania. The most important function of dog names is a communication tool in a socio-cultural binding in the Kurya community.

Discussion of the Findings

This subsection discusses the findings on the factors of dog names are things. The data from unstructured interview with 6 Kurya informants substantiate that names are things as they reflect socio-cultural connection within the community they are domesticated. In other words, dog names can be real in speech but not in writing, this follows the fact that dogs sometimes respond on their names they are called by structure, colors, etymology, action to name a few. Let us start with structural names as things:

Names are things by structure: Dog names like other animal names do not come out by chance. The physical appearance or/and morphology of these dogs trigger name assigners in socio-cultural naming systems. "Nyamana" for "Hairy", "Mrito", for dissert like form, "Nyamatwi" for "small ears" as well as "Kyeng'e" for "shortness" were the Kurya dog names and the things for their names. In other words dogs are some of the domestic animals which share a common environment with human beings and play a role in the lives of many people (Babane & Chauke, 2017). That is to say there exists a mutual benefit between dogs and human beings. The paper agrees descriptively with Chauke (2005:57)'s beliefs who was of the view that among African cultures, name-giving reflects the socio-cultural circumstances of that group.

Names are things by colors: Color of animals especially dogs in Kurya speech community have factored dog names assigners in naming system in this area. With reference to the dog name *Mang'iti*, it has been evidenced that this dog is similar with Hyena's spotted coat pattern similar to a leopard. From this base *Mang'iti* name came out. The same phenomenon is observed in the name "*Mokera*" whose English language gloss is "tail". *Mokera*'s tails color is different from the rest of their bodies. This means its body could have a black or red body color but have a white tail. "*Mesanga*" meaning beads in English is the Kurya name being assigned due to its color of bead-like patterns it has on its either necks or legs different from the rest of its body. This shows that names do not come by chance, it is the contextual things or objectives or behavior that make such assignment. Thus, names are things because conceptualization starts from people's mind in which names are processed before coming out in practice. These lines with Casual Theory (Cf. Kripke, 1980) which argues that there are some cases where descriptions actually determine in fact a reference. That is to say the referent of the names is usually determined by a series of causal links between the people who used the name, and when the referent of a name is determined by a property attributed to that called thing, the connection is contingent, rather than necessary or essential.

Names are things by origin: Sometimes originality of things, objects and the others become the bases for naming systems not only animals but also human being. This can be evidenced from the dog named *Musungu* which means "white person". The dogs are assigned this name because of their owner whose origin is from Europe and that he is white person. From the similar idea Kripke (1980) used to argue that names are directly denotative or rigid designator, but under the level of critical analysis, names are descriptive because they philosophically refer to the concept of possible worlds, with the real world as one of many possible worlds (Putnam 1973)

Things by actions: sometimes the action and behavior of other animals trigger their names. This has been evidenced by the dog known as *Mang'iti*. *Mang'iti* is one among the dogs in Kurya speech community whose name is influenced by its action or behavior of being harsh compared to other dogs. Its harshness is assimilated with "hyena". In other words breed names of this nature are classified under behavior contain elements describing the dog's speed or agility; the dog's manner of hunting, guarding, fighting, barking, or showing obedience (See Shipley 1984). This observation differs with that of Makondo (204) who reported that dogs' names among the Shona speech community are derived from witchcraft, death, animals and sometimes are coined to be rhetorical to the hearers. For the Kurya dog names, the color, structure or behavior attracts naming systems.

Conclusion

This paper has demonstrated that dog names are things with reference from the Kurya speech community of Tanzania. Dogs live with human being that is why they are being called all the time. Thus traditionally, 8 Kurya dog names were identified namely: *Mokera*, *Mesanga*, *Nyabhutwi*, *Mrito*, *Msungu*, *Mang'iti*, *Nyamanya* and *Kyeng'e*. With this regard, their color, structure, size, hair, shape, origin, behavior, skin or resemblance to another animal species influence dog name assigners in naming system among the Kurya speech community of Tanzania. This reflects the socio-cultural environments where people live together with these animals they keep for strong security, comforter and companion or attendant purposes. Thus, it is the mythology that have grown up around the Kurya speech community which claim that dog names are things under pragmatic emit.

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