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A linguistic analysis of Rukiga personal names

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The goal of the paper is to provide a linguistic description of the structure of personal names in a lesser studied Bantu language of Uganda, Rukiga (JE14). Data show that Rukiga personal names are presented as lexical entities but with underlying elaborate grammatical structures derived from the syntax, morphology, phonology and the lexicon of the language. Personal names in Rukiga form a special category of nouns derived from nouns, adjectives, verbs, phrases, clauses and full sentences. This study establishes that truncation, affixal derivation, lexicalization of phrases, clauses and sentences are employed in name-formation. The study further reveals that the socio-cultural context influences the semantics and structure of names in Rukiga. Data for this study were collected in Kabale district in western Uganda through interviewing older persons, reviewing baptism and marriage records and tax collection registers. The study mirrors personal names as a part of the grammar of Rukiga reflecting the general complex linguistic system of the language. Data from this study is envisaged to contribute to typological and theoretical analyses of personal names which have internal morphosyntactic properties.

Keywords: Rukiga, personal names, truncation, affixal derivation, compounding, proclitics, lexicalisation

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1.1 Introduction

Studies on naming in African societies reveal that personal names are not mere identificational labels, rather, they contain descriptive content presented in complex linguistic structures that reflect the linguistic and socio-cultural background of the people of a given society (Akinnaso 1980; Suzman 1994; De Klerk & Bosch 1996; Koopman 2002; Maduagwu 2010; Ngubane 2013, Abiodun 2015, among others). Among the Bakiga¹ of western Uganda, personal names are a great component of their socio-cultural lives. They communicate their values, customs, religious beliefs, generally their way of life. In other words, they are used as diaries to store and communicate their life stories.

Most available studies on personal names focus on the semantic-pragmatic and socio-linguistic interpretations (see among others Akinnaso 1980; Agyekum 2006; Abiodun 2015; Mensah 2015). As Van Langendock and Van de Velde (2016:17-18) note, studies on the linguistic structure of personal names are rarely sought after in linguistic descriptions. A few studies on the linguistic structure of names in the African context are available (such as, Maduagwu 2010; Van de Velde & Ambouroué 2011), and yet names form a part of the grammatical system of many African languages presenting linguistic features that are worth studying. For instance, according to Maduagwu (2010), names in Igbo (East-Kwa, Nigeria) are

¹ I use Bakiga to mean the people, Rukiga is the language and Kiga is the society.

derived through adjoining two or more words to derive a special class of compound nouns used as personal names, as in (1).²

- (1) Águ' + nwá → Agunwa 'strong child'
leopard 'child'

Maduagvu (2010:316)

In Zulu (Bantu S42, South Africa) personal names, certain affixes are associated with a given gender. Ngubane (2013:170) notes that the suffix *-ile* in Zulu is used to derive female names from male names. For example, the female name *Thembile* is derived from the male name Themba 'trust'. *Thulile* comes from Thula which means 'quiet' (see also Koopman 2002:279). In Chasu (Bantu G22, Tanzania), Sebonde (2020:18) observes that, the *na-* prefix marks female personal names (e.g., *Nankware* 'of quail') and *se-* male names (e.g., *Senkando* 'of wall').

Since every culture has its way of forming names (c.f., de Klerk & Bosch 1996:169), the goal of this paper is to give a linguistic analysis of the formation and structure of personal names among the Bakiga. The paper further seeks to establish whether the socio-cultural setting of the people influences the meaning and the structure of names in Rukiga. The paper is structured as follows: Section 1.2 poses the challenge of lack of appropriate theories to study personal names that have internal descriptive content. Section 1.3 describes briefly the methods that were used in data collection. In Section 2, I show how personal names in Rukiga are distinguished from common nouns. The analyses of word formation processes involved in the formation of personal names are presented in Section 3 (simple processes) and Section 4 (complex processes), while Section 5 is the conclusion.

1.2 No available appropriate theoretical approaches for the study of personal names with descriptive content

Although proper names are nouns (N), Schucker & Ackermann (2017:312) acknowledge that they have unique morphosyntactic properties. In section 2, I discuss the difference between personal names and common nouns in Rukiga demonstrating that personal names can be derived from any noun class, but they take a class 1 semantic agreement. Personal names as presented in this paper are derived from nouns, adjectives and verbs. Others are lexicalised forms of phrases or sentences. The nature of personal names with descriptive content poses a challenge for theoretical studies as questions are raised in regard to the kind of syntactic structure they form: NPs, VPs or CPs.

Since names have generally been assumed to have no internal structure, theories to study their internal structure are scarce especially from the context of African names. Another challenge is that cultures are peculiar in ways they form and interpret names. Therefore, an effective theory needs to put into consideration the peculiarities each culture presents. Moreover, personal names in one language may present a variety of forms. Thus, personal names derived from adjectives, nouns, verbs; and others that are in form of phrases and sentences, need their own theoretical approaches, and therefore, they should not be analysed

² Abbreviations used: APPL = applicative; ASP = aspect; ASSOC = associative marker; AUG = augment; CL=noun class; F = female; F.PST = far past; FV = final vowel; IPFV = imperfective (aspect); M=male; NEG = negative; N.FUT = near future tense; NMLZ = nominaliser; N.PST = near past tense; OM = object marker; PASS = passive; PFV = perfective; PL = plural; PRO = pronoun; RECP = reciprocal; REFL = reflexive; REL = relative; REL.PRO = relative pronoun; SBJV = subjunctive; SG = singular; SM = subject marker. Numbers refer to noun classes, unless they refer to 1st or 2nd or 3rd person.

the same way personal names in the Indo-European languages such as French, English and Germany are studied. This study contributes data that can be used in developing theories for the study of personal names that have a functional internal morphosyntax.

1.3 Data collection methods

Data for this study were collected from the western region of Uganda in Kabale district in the sub-counties of Kyanamira, Kaharo, and Kabale Municipality. The three sub-counties were purposively selected. Names were recorded from Kyanamira sub-county headquarters from baptism and marriage records and tax collection registers. These are the only documents accessible at the sub-county that contained the kind of information that I wanted. The study targeted those names which were commonly used before the coming of modern religions, which I refer to as traditional names. Kyanamira was selected because it is the oldest sub-county in the greater Kabale district. A large collection of old records is therefore kept at the sub-county headquarters. In the Municipality is where three scholars on the culture of the Bakiga, whom I interviewed lived. To these three, I added seven other native speakers who were familiar with the naming culture of the Bakiga. I selected ten more consultants from Kaharo subcounty. Kaharo was added because I needed to get views from other native speakers outside of the municipality, who were also assumed to be knowledgeable in cultural issues of the Bakiga. In total, I interviewed 20 consultants from the three sub-counties. The consultants who were scholars in cultural studies of the Bakiga were purposively selected while the rest of the consultants were selected using the snowballing sampling technique. The consultants were aged between 65 and 95. Older persons were selected on the assumption that they were familiar with the naming culture. Interviews were conducted after the recording of names from Kyanamira subcounty headquarters. The purpose of conducting interviews was to find out the meanings of certain linguistic elements that featured prominently in the collected names but also to record more names from the consultants, and also to find out cultural meanings of selected names.

2. Distinguishing personal names from common nouns in Rukiga

Rukiga is a Bantu language (JE14), spoken natively by about 2.3 million (UBOS 2016). Like most Bantu languages, Rukiga is highly agglutinative exhibiting affixes attached to the verb stem, and may result in sentences that are in form of words, as in (2).³

- (2) (elicited data)
 n-ka-bi-ba-twar-ir-á=mu
 1SG.SM-F.PST-8OM-2OM-take-APPL-FV=18LOC
 ‘I took them for them in there.’

Another prominent feature of the Bantu languages is the noun class system (Maho 1999). Nouns in Bantu languages are assigned to different classes based on their semantics. Each class is assigned a number and numbers reconstructed from the proto Bantu go up to 23 (Maho 1999:51). Most of the classes occur in pairs. Generally, the odd numbers are assigned to singular noun classes and even numbers are assigned to plural forms (c.f. e.g., Van de Velde 2013; 2019). Languages differ according to the total number of noun classes they possess. For example, while Kiswahili has 15 (Ashton 1947), Luganda has 21 (Ashton et al. 1954:23), and Rukiga has 20 noun classes (CL) (Asiimwe 2014:424). In Rukiga, class 1 (singular) and class

³ Unless otherwise indicated, all data come from the field work that was conducted in Kabale in 2020.

2 (plural) are reserved for humans. *Mu-* is the class 1 agreement prefix and *ba-* is the class 2 agreement prefix. Furthermore, as part of their morphology, nouns in Rukiga (and other nominal elements such as adjectives, relative clauses and infinitive verbs) generally bear an augment (preprefix or initial vowel) which is used to perform a range of semantic-pragmatic functions such as specificity, particularisation, and also brings about a contrastive restrictive reading (see Morris & Kirwan 1972; Taylor 1972; Asimwe 2014; Asimwe, Kouneli & van der Wal to appear).

Rukiga (JE14) personal names are distinguished from common nouns by having no augment as also observed by Van de Velde (2010) for names in Kirundi (JD62). Class 1 is thus subcategorized to create a subclass of nouns which inherently do not have an overt class marker and an augment. These are kinship terms and personified animals (Maho 1999:51). Also, personal names are placed under the same subcategory (compare (3a-c) with (3d). Thus, kinship terms and personal names belong to class 1b⁴).

(3)	(elicited data)		
a.	tatéto (paternal aunt)	kinship	CL1b
b.	Warujojo (personified)	Mr. Elephant	CL1b
c.	Mutúngi	personal name	CL1b
d.	o-mu-túngi AUG-1-farmer/wealthy_person	‘farmer/wealthy person	CL1

In any given syntactic structure, a common noun triggers concord on linguistic elements it is in relation with, be it within the noun phrase (4a-b) or in a clause (4c).

(4)	(elicited data)		
a.	akanyonyí karungi a-ka-nyonyí ka-rungi AUG-12-bird 12-beautiful ‘a beautiful (small) bird’		
b.	enyereré ze e-nyereré z-e AUG-10.ornament 10-her ‘her ornament’		
c.	Abatúngi bágyenda. a-ba-tungi ba-gyend-a AUG-2-wealth 2PL.SM-go-FV ‘(The) wealthy people have gone.’		

Generally, personal names are not expected to reflect the class 1 concord, although coincidentally some names take *mu-*, that is, those that are derived from class 1 common nouns, as shown in (5). In (5b) the proper name Mutungi is derived from the noun *omutungi* (5a). Both the common noun (*omutungi*) and the proper name (Mutungi) take noun class 1 prefix.

⁴ According to Katushemererwe (2010:51), class 1 is for common nouns in singular form while class 1a is reserved for the deity e.g. *Omuhangí* ‘Creator.’

However, personal names derived from other noun classes other than class 1 and 2, and those that originate from word categories other than nouns do not show CL1 nominal agreement. As Van de Velde (2010) observes for the Bantu language Kirundi, the agreement concord shows that they are personal names. More discussion regarding this name-formation process is given in Section 3.1.

- (5) (elicited data)
- a. Teer-er-a ó-mu-túngi. (CL 1)
 2SG.SM.call-APPL-FV AUG-1-farmer/wealthy person
 ‘Call a/the wealthy person.’
- b. Teer-er-á Mutúngi. (CL1a)
 2SG.SM.call-APPL-FV 1b.Mutungu
 ‘Call Mutungi.’

In (6a), the personal name Kanyonyi triggers the noun class 1 concord. This is justified by the fact that personal names trigger semantic agreement as opposed to common nouns (as in 6b) which trigger formal agreement (Van de Velde 2010).

- (6) (elicited data)
- a. Kanyonyi noomumánya? (CL1)
 Kanyonyi ni-o-mu-many-a
 1b⁵.Kanyonyi IPFV-2SG.SUBJ-1OM-know-FV
 ‘Do you know (the person called) Kanyonyi?’
- b. Akanyonyi nookamánya? (CL12)
 a-ka-nyonyi ni-o-ka-many-a
 AUG-12-bird IPFV-2SG.SUBJ-12-know-FV
 ‘Do you know a (certain) small bird?’

On the socio-cultural scene, Mutungi⁶ (5b) as a personal name means that the name-bearer is projected to become a wealthy person in his adulthood while *omutungu* is any wealthy person. Similarly, Kanyonyi in (6a) means that the name-bearer was small in size at birth while *akanyonyi* refers to a bird that is small in size. Thus, naming among the Bakiga is a linguistic act that portrays the physical appearance of the child at birth (e.g., Kanyonyi) or desired social status (e.g., Mutungi). Other factors that determine the choice of a name include social relationships, value in God or deities, time or period of birth, political situation, among others. The scope of the current study does not allow a detailed discussion of these factors. However, when it is particularly pertinent, I will point to the socio-cultural basis for the interpretation of some names.

The next two sections (Section 3 and 4) discuss the formation as well as the linguistic structure of Rukiga names. Rukiga personal names appear in simple and complex forms. The two word-formation processes responsible for the simple forms are truncation and derivation, discussed in Section 3. Personal names with a complex underlying linguistic structure are a

⁵ After this, I will not continue to put the class number (1b) on the personal names in the glosses.

⁶ A person with such a name may not necessarily be rich in adulthood. The name has an overt meaning but the meaning may become detached from the person (cf. Kripke 1980). The meaning at present may not matter although the name givers are cautious of names with negative meanings, since it is still believed culturally that: *Eiziina ribi rijumisa nyinaryo* ‘a bad name brings a curse to the bearer.’

result of attaching a proclitic to lexical nominals or by conjoining two or more words to form phrases or sentences, and these processes are discussed in Section 4. I will begin with discussing the simple forms in Section 3 and then turn to the complex forms in Section 4.

3. Formation of Rukiga personal names by simple word-formation processes

There are two word-formation processes, namely truncation and affixal derivation that are responsible for the simple forms of names in Rukiga. These two processes do not lead to a change of word class. I discuss and illustrate these two processes in turn.

3.1 Truncation

Truncation, also known as clipping in some literature (c.f. Booij 2007:21) is a word formation process that involves the dropping of one or more syllables from a word. The process does not involve addition or change of any affix. In the case of the formation of personal names in Rukiga by truncation, the augment is dropped from the lexemes that exhibit nominal properties viz. nouns, adjectives and infinitive verbs. Examples of names depicting truncation of common nouns are given in (7a-b), from an adjective (7c) and an infinitive verb (7d). The truncation strategy extends to adjectives and verbs as well since, structurally, adjectives and infinitive verbs are similar to nouns in two respects: (i) they take an augment just like the noun, and (ii) they partake in the noun class morphology.

- | | | | | | |
|-----|----|---------------------------------|---------------|-------|-------------|
| (7) | a. | a-ma-guru
AUG-6-leg | ‘legs’ | ————→ | Maguru |
| | b. | o-bu-saasi
AUG-14-sorrow | ‘pain/sorrow’ | ————→ | Busaasi |
| | c. | (a)-ba-kye
AUG-2-small | ‘small’ | ————→ | Bákye |
| | d. | o-kw-éhangaana
AUG-15-endure | ‘to endure’ | ————→ | Kwéhangaana |

In the examples given in (7), there is no difference in structure between the source word and the personal name that is formed, apart from the dropping of the augment. Taking the name Maguru for example, it is derived from a class 6 noun and it is comprised of the plural class prefix *ma-* and the root *-guru* ‘leg’. The augment *a-* is dropped and there is no other procedure required to form this name. Personal nouns can originate from any noun class. Examples (7a) and (7b) show source nouns belonging to class 6 and 14 respectively.

3.2 Affixal derivation

The second process involved in the formation of Rukiga personal names is derivation by affixation. Affixation is generally one way through which languages form new lexemes (e.g., Katamba 1993; Booij 2007). Personal names in Rukiga are derived from different word categories. The examples in (8) are personal names derived from common nouns where, an appropriate nominal class affix is attached to a nominal stem. The derived personal name is assigned a different noun class from the original noun class prefix, which means that the morphology of the derived personal name differs from the form of the original common noun.

Taking the example in (8a), the nominal root is *-shaija* which typically takes a noun class 1 prefix but it is assigned a noun class 6 by prefixing *ma-* to form a personal name, Mashaija.

- (8)
- | | | | | | | |
|----|-----------------|--------|-------------|---|----------|--------|
| a. | o-mu-sháíja | (CL1) | ‘man’ | → | Mashaija | (CL6) |
| | AUG-1-man | | | | | |
| b. | e-bi-gambo | (CL8) | ‘words’ | → | Magambo | (CL6) |
| | AUG-8-word | | | | | |
| c. | e-i-rémbo | (CL3) | ‘threshold’ | → | Birémbo | (CL8) |
| | AUG-5-threshold | | | | | |
| d. | e-m-pazi | (CL10) | ‘red ants’ | → | Buhazi | (CL14) |
| | AUG-10-red_ants | | | | | |

In (8), we notice that the process of deriving a personal name does not involve a change of word category, but the prefixation of an appropriate noun class marker to the nominal stem, a noun class marker that is different from the prefix the noun would normally take. Thus, the nouns are moved out of their original classes and receive new semantics. While Mashaija, Magambo (class 6 nouns), and Birembo (class 8) are augmentative, Buhazi is diminutive. Therefore, the derived nouns used as personal names bear extra-pragmatic nuances.

In the next set of data (9), personal names are derived from the infinitive verb forms. As mentioned earlier, infinitive verb forms have nominal properties that is, they take an augment and a noun class prefix *ku-* (class 15). To derive personal names from infinitive verb forms, the first step involves the nominalisation process that is, deriving a common noun from an infinitive verb by attaching a noun forming suffix which is *-i* (e.g., *-ombek-* + *i* = *-ombeki* in (9a)). After that, the resultant noun is assigned to a desired noun class. In (9), the suffix *-i* specifies that the derived nouns are typically human-denoting, and therefore belong to noun class 1/2. The step that follows is to convert a common noun into a personal name by dropping the augment.

- (9)
- | | | | | | |
|----|--------------|---|---------------|---|----------|
| a. | o-kw-ómbeka | → | o-mw-ómbeki | → | Mwómbeki |
| | AUG-15-build | | AUG-1-builder | | |
| b. | o-ku-rwana | → | o-mu-rwani | → | Murwani |
| | AUG-15-fight | | AUG-1-fighter | | |
| c. | o-ku-híiga | → | a-ba-híigi | → | Bahíigi |
| | AUG-15-hunt | | AUG-2-hunter | | |
| d. | o-kw-ánga | → | a-ba-ngi | → | Báangi |
| | AUG-15-hate | | AUG-2-hater | | |

The data above show that personal names derived from nouns (as in 8) and infinitive verbs (as exemplified in 9) are typically male names. They generally show attributes that society expected to see in the male gender apart from the name Buhazi which relates to the (small) size of the child at birth. Next, I will consider two nominal prefixes that were found to be commonly used in the formation of personal names. These are *ru-* a class 11 prefix and *ka-* for class 12.

3.2.1 The prefix *ru-*

Ru- is a class 11 prefix whose members are long and undulative objects (Creider 1975:129; Maho 1999:51), but names of languages are also found in this class (Byamugisha, Keet & DeRenzi 2018:2635). The class 11 *ru-* prefix is exclusively associated with the male gender which portrays them as strong, fierce, superior, and powerful. It could also mean that men are generally expected to be tall like some objects in class 11 which are straight and long/tall (such as *orutindo* ‘bridge’ *orushozi* ‘mountain’, *oruhaburizo* ‘billhook’. Personal names with the formative *ru-* abound. Although *ru-* is originally not an augmentative noun class prefix in Rukiga, it is used augmentatively to derive male names. The names formed by the prefix *ru-* are derived from nouns and adjectives (10), and verbs (11).

- (10) a. e-m-bogo (N) ‘buffalo’ → Rubogo
AUG-9-buffalo
- b. e-i-shóki (N) ‘hair’ → Rushóki
AUG-3-hair
- c. o-mu-zigu (N) ‘enemy’ → Ruzigu
AUG-1-enemy
- d. e-manzi (A) ‘brave one’ → Rumánzi
AUG-9.brave_one

The examples of personal names in (11) are derived from verbs. The name Ruhondeeza, for example, is derived from the verb *okuhondeeza* ‘to oversleep/sleep longer’. The name-bearer might have shown signs that he sleeps for longer hours. Hence, the meaning of Ruhondeeza is ‘one who oversleeps’. The names might contain a negative marker to mean ‘one who does not...’ e.g., *Rutairuka* ‘one who does not run away.’

- (11) a. o-ku-hondeeza ‘oversleep’ → Ruhondéeza
AUG-15-oversleep
- b. o-kw-íruka ‘to run’ → Rutáiruka
AUG-15-run
- c. o-ku-hakana ‘to argue’ → Ruhakána
AUG-15-argue
- d. o-ku-hemurana ‘to embarrass’ → Ruhemúrana
AUG-15-embarrass

3.2.2 The prefix *ka-*

Ka- is a class 12 prefix which contains mostly diminutives. The personal names are formed by prefixing a class 12 *ka-* prefix to a nominal stem. The *ka-* used to derive female names is a mark of endearment and affection towards girls, and for male names, it shows that at birth the child was small in size, or a certain part of his body was smaller than normal. These are illustrated in (12).

- (12) a. e-ki-rungi ‘something good/beautiful’ → Karúngi (F)
 AUG-7-good
- b. o-mu-himákazi ‘a female Muhima’ → Kahimákazi (F)
 AUG-1-hima_woman
- c. e-ki-húngu ‘butterfly’ → Kahúngu (M)
 AUG-7-butterfly
- d. o-mú-twe ‘head’ → Kátwe (M)
 AUG-3-head

In this section, I have demonstrated how truncation and affixal derivation as simple word-formation processes lead to the formation of personal names in Rukiga. Of the major word categories, only nouns, adjectives, and verbs are transformed into personal names. We have noted that nouns are required to drop the augment to form personal names. We further note that the noun class system plays a significant role in the formation of these names. An appropriate noun class is prefixed to a given nominal stem to form a name. Hence, some nouns will retain their original noun classes while some will be moved to other noun classes and assume new pragmatic interpretation before they can be used as personal names. Next is a discussion on complex forms of personal names.

4. Complex personal name forms

In this section, I present complex personal names that are formed as a result of a combination of two or more constituents subcategorized into (i) names that result from adding a proclitic to a full word; (ii) those that are due to compounding and (iii) names that are formed by conjoining words into phrases and clauses and (iv) names that result from lexicalized sentences. A subsection is devoted to each of these processes. I will begin by presenting personal names that result from attaching a proclitic element to content words.

4.1 Proclitics

A clitic is a phonologically bound morpheme that attaches to a host. It is neither a full word nor an affix (Spencer & Luís 2012). A clitic that attaches at the beginning of its domain host is a proclitic and the one that comes at the end of its host is an enclitic⁷. For the current study, I am only focusing on proclitics which attach on nouns and verbs to form personal names. I treat the associative particle *-a* (Section 4.1.1) as a proclitic (see also Hyman & Katamba 2001 & Van de Velde 2013 for the same treatment of the particle *-a*). At first sight, one may take the joining of the associative and a nominal as a case of compounding however, without considering other criteria such as those suggested in Lieber (2011), in the process of compounding, typically, the second nominal must lose the augment. In the process of forming words where the associative is involved, the second constituent does not lose its augment compare (13a-b and 13c-d). Moreover, the hyphen is also not used.

⁷ Literature on proclitics in Bantu languages is scanty. Spencer and Luís (2012) remark that generally, there is more literature available on enclitics than proclitics.

- (13) (elicited data)
- N+N compounds
- a. ka-téer-a + (*o)-ru-me Katéera-rume ‘go-between’
 12-beat-FV AUG-11-dew
- b. e-n-gyenda + (*e)ki-ro engyenda-kíro ‘one who moves at night’
 AUG-10-go-FV AUG-7-night
- Associative + N
- c. e-ky-a + *(e)-n-yanja ekyényanja ‘fish’
 AUG-7-ASSOC AUG-9-lake
 ‘something of lake’
- d. e-ky-a + *(o)-mu-gisha Kyómugisha ‘something of luck’
 AUG-7-ASSOC AUG-3-luck
 ‘something of luck’

4.1.1 The associative proclitic *-a*

Data show that there are many personal names in Rukiga that result from adjoining a relational morpheme *-a* called the associative marker to nominals. In the literature on Bantu languages, the morpheme is also known as the connective, genitive linker, or connexive (c.f. Van de Velde 2013; see also Hyman & Katamba 2001). Two nominal elements are brought together in a dependency relation by this particle; the nominal constituent on the left as the head and the dependent constituent on the right (Van de Velde 2013). The particle is usually rendered as ‘of’ but it is used with a range of meanings of relation going beyond possession (Van de Velde 2013) as shown in examples in (14).

- (14) (elicited data)
- a. egaari y’ómwîka
 e-gaari y-a o-mw-ika
 AUG-9.bicycle 9-ASSOC AUG-3-air
 ‘bicycle of air’ (train)’
- b. ebitongore bya gávumênti
 e-bi-tongore by-a gavumenti
 AUG-8-department 8-ASSOC 9.government
 ‘government departments’
- c. oruhu rw’éntaama
 o-ru-hu rw-a e-n-taama
 AUG-11-skin 11-ASSOC AUG-9-sheep
 ‘a sheep’s skin’

The associative particle takes an agreeing prefix of the head nominal constituent but it holds a strong link with the dependent constituent. I will adopt the term ‘associative proclitic’ which appears to suit best in the current analysis of names because the morpheme attaches on the dependent constituent to form names by associating the name-bearer with the semantics of the

dependent constituent as in (15).⁸

- (15) a. K-á + e-mi-gisha → Kémigisha
 12-ASSOC AUG-3-luck
 ‘child of luck’
- b. K-á + ebirunga → Kébirunga
 12-ASSOC AUG-8-crown
 ‘child of crowns’
- c. K-á + e-n-yonyoozi → Kényonyózi
 12-ASSOC AUG-10-star
 ‘born of the stars (born at night when stars were shining brightly or born with beautiful eyes)’
- d. K-á + e-n-tookye → Kéntookye
 12-ASSOC AUG-10-banana_plantation
 ‘associated with (born in) a banana plantation’

The associative proclitic attaches to the dependent constituent, and it is closely related with it, while the head is phonologically unmarked although the proclitic takes its agreement morphology. Data presented in (15) show that the associative proclitic takes a class 12 prefix for diminutives. From the examples above, the head noun is likely to be *akaana* (a-ka-ana → aug-12-child), whereby the class 12 prefix is used to encode affection or endearment — for instance *akaana k'emigisha* ‘a little child born lucky’. The names given in (16) take the class 11 agreement prefix.

- (16) a. Rw-a é-n-ruuru → Rwéndúuru
 11-ASSOC AUG-9-scream
 ‘cried a lot at birth/early days of birth’
- b. Rw-a é-bi-shúgi → Rwébishúgi
 11-ASSOC AUG-8-bush
 ‘born in the bush’
- c. Rw-a é-n-gyezi → Rwangyezi
 11-ASSOC AUG-9-lake
 ‘born near a lake’
- d. Rw-a á-ma-fa → Rwámafa
 11-ASSOC AUG-6-hunger
 ‘born during a severe famine’

While the examples in (15) are female names, those presented in (16) are all male names. As already indicated in Section 3.2, the prefix *ka* used in the formation of female names is to show endearment or affection to the girls. The *ru-* prefix is exclusively used to form male names which depicts them as strong, powerful and superior. It can therefore be suggested that the class

⁸Coalescence of the associative particle and the augment of the dependent noun takes place such that only one vowel is written as can be seen in the internal structure of the names in (15-17).

12 agreement marker *ka* is (majorly) a feminine marker while the class 11 agreement prefix is exclusively a masculine marker in the formation of personal names.

Note that the names given in (15) and (16) assume a different morphological structure from those discussed in section 3.2. In section 3.2 above, the morpheme (*ru* or *ka*) is prefixed directly to the nominal stem. In (15) and (16), the noun retains its class agreement prefix (and the augment) and the particle is procliticised to its left. In both instances, the particle cannot be a prefix because a single nominal cannot have two agreement prefixes.

More examples of names that show the use of the associative proclitic are given in (17) and (18). The examples in (17) are all male names and those in (18) are female names. In the formation of these names, the associative proclitic element occurs with a noun class 8 prefix (for male names) and the class 7 prefix (for female names). The difference in gender marking is indicated in the translations for ‘things’ (M) against ‘something’ (F).

(Masculine)

- (17) a. e-by-a ó-mu-gisha → Byamugisha
 AUG-8-ASSOC AUG-3-luck
 ‘things of luck’
- b. e-by-a á-ba-sháija → Byábasháija
 AUG-8-ASSOC AUG-2-man
 ‘things of men’
- c. e-by-a é-náama → Byénáama
 AUG-8-ASSOC AUG-secret
 ‘things of secrets’

(Feminine)

- (18) a. e-ky-a ó-mu-gisha → Kyómugisha
 AUG-7-ASSOC AUG-3-luck
 ‘something that brings luck/that is lucky’
- b. e-ky-a ó-bu-túngi → Kyóbutúngi
 AUG-7-ASSOC AUG-14-wealth
 ‘something that brings wealth’
- c. e-ky-a ó-mu-hendo → Kyómuhéndo
 AUG-7-ASSOC AUG-3-value
 ‘something precious’

The plural form (as in 17) is used in the formation of some masculine names because culturally, men were regarded as owners of all the wealth in a home. The plural marker according to some of the consultants also denotes that boys were more valued than girls. Another cultural justification for the choice of the plural marker for boys’ names could be that males represent the whole family and clan (see also Ngubane (2013:166) for the same justification for the Zulu names). Feminine names as given in (18) took the singular form as an indicator that culturally, girls and women did not own anything in a home. Moreover, women were regarded as a part of the men’s property. Such names are a clear signal that the cultural meaning of a name

contributed to its structure.⁹

To conclude this section, the process of procliticisation involving the associative phrase presents the following structure N-a-N where, *a-* stands for the associative -a. This strategy is prevalent in the formation of common nouns as well as personal names in Rukiga. The head which is either the singular ‘something’ or plural ‘things’ is omitted, as shown in the examples above (15-16). In the formation of nouns from connective phrases, phonological rules of vowel harmony and deletion apply as we have seen in (15-16).

4.1.2 The element *nya-*

Nya- is another element used to derive personal names in Rukiga. It is the short form of *nyina* which means ‘mother of’ (c.f., Cisternino 1977:473; Shadeberg & Bostoen 2019:195).^{10,11} In (19) below, the full form of the name Nyakwezi, for example, would be Nyinakwezi, which literary means ‘mother of the moon’. It appears that *nyina* grammaticalized into the short form *nya-* which is prevalently used with nouns to designate relationship e.g., *omunya* *buzáare* ‘relative’ (see also Kimenyi 1989)¹². The formation of the names by the proclitic *nya-* is as follows:

- | | | | | | | | |
|------|----|------------|---|-----------------|----------|---|----------|
| (19) | a. | <i>nya</i> | + | <i>o-kw-êzi</i> | ‘moon’ | → | Nyakwêzi |
| | | | | AUG-15-moon | | | |
| | b. | <i>nya</i> | + | <i>e-n-jara</i> | ‘famine’ | → | Nyanjara |
| | | | | AUG-9-hunger | | | |
| | c. | <i>nya</i> | + | <i>e-n-júra</i> | ‘rain’ | → | Nyanjúra |
| | | | | AUG-9-rain | | | |
| | d. | <i>nya</i> | + | <i>e-mí-twe</i> | ‘heads’ | → | Nyamítwe |
| | | | | AUG-4-head | | | |

Rukiga personal names that appear with the element *nya-* are typically female names. A male name corresponding to Nyamihanda ‘mother of paths’ would be Kamuhanda or simply Mihanda. However, male names with the proclitic *nya-* are also found in the dataset but they are very few. For example, Nyamitwe. The pragmatics encoded in this name is that the physical head of the boy who bears the name Nyamitwe is the ‘mother of all heads’ which means that the child was born with a big physical head. However, it is important to also note that the *nya-* element in masculine names, as in Nyamitwe, is augmentative, much as on the surface the meaning of ‘mother’ is discernible. Since the main lexical element which is on the right drops the augment when *nya-* is attached is an instantiation of compounding.

Some names presented with the full form *nyina* as in (20) were also recorded but these are not many. This manifestation seems to indicate that the grammaticalized process of the lexeme *nyina* is not yet complete. These names portray a linguistic act of compounding where

⁹ Neutral traditional names are also found in the corpus although not many. Neutral names are more prevalent in the contemporary names. Gender nowadays does not matter since names are greatly influenced by religion.

¹⁰ This *nya* is different from the functional proclitic *nya-* which is used as a tracking device for a discourse familiar referent, in examples such as *nyamuraingwa* ‘the tall one’ or *nyamushaija* ‘the said man’. These are discussed at length in Asiimwe (2014).

¹¹ I have come across only one name with an equivalent proclitic for the male names that is, *Ishebairu* (*ishebairu*) ‘father of Bairu’

¹² Therefore, *nya-* does not always translate into ‘mother of’ (Shadeberg & Bostoen 2019:195)

two full words are joined together to derive a single lexeme, which is a personal name.¹³

- (20) a. nyina + a-ma-fa → Nyinámafa
AUG-6-famine
- b. nyina + e-síísiri → Nyinésíísiri
AUG-10.small_insect
- c. nyina + by-ôna → Nyinabyôna
8-all
- d. nyina + o-bú-ro → Nyinóbúro
AUG-14-millet

4.1.3 A combination of *ka* and *nya*

In the data given in (22), personal names are derived by combining the associative proclitic taking the class 12 agreement (*ka*) and the proclitic *nya*. It is not unusual in Rukiga to find two or more (pro)clitics with one host. For example, in (21), two enclitics attach on same verb, one marking aspect (*ga*) and another one location (*ho*) (see also Hyman & Katamba (2001) for the occurrence of multiple clitics in Luganda (JE15)).

- (21) Tí-tu-ka-múshang-a=hó=ga
NEG-1PL.SM-never-1om-find-FV=16LOC=ASP
'We have never found him/her there.'

- (22) a. ka + nya + e-mi-híngo → Kanyamihíngo
AUG-4-barricade 'born within a fence'
- b. ka + nya + e-i-hamba → Kanyaihamba
AUG-5-forest 'born in a forest'
- c. ka + nya + o-ru-tookye → Kanyarutookye
AUG-11-banana_plantation 'born in a banana plantation'

The combination of proclitics *ka* and *nya* needs further investigation because both clitics appear to contribute the same meaning namely, locating the place of birth. The double proclitics perhaps give more emphasis to the place of birth. One might then argue that *nya* in the examples in (22) has a locative meaning, and *ka* is the associative proclitic discussed in Section 4.1.1. It is therefore not immediately clear what the status of each of these elements is as regards the formation of these names.

4.1.4 The verbal element *ka-*

In Rukiga there is a category of names that are formed through adjoining a verbal element *ka-* to main verbs expressed in the subjunctive mood. The particle *ka-* is the short form of the modal *reka* 'let'. It is rarely used in its full form, pointing to the possibility that the particle is in its

¹³ In the process of compounding, the final vowel of the first word *nyina* or the augment of the second word which is a noun is elided following the rules of vowel harmony e.g., *Nyina + emisiri = Nyinemisiri*).

advanced stages of grammaticalization¹⁴, being grammaticalized from the verb (*oku*)*reka* ‘to let’. When the particle is adjoined on the main verb to form personal names, it induces mockery (e.g., Kabareebe) or sarcasm (e.g., Kabanukye) or delusional feelings (e.g., Kabasheke). All the names presenting this structure in the data are male names. Such names were commonly given to children by their fathers to express their negative feelings towards certain members of the community. It included members who were the ungrateful, the callous, the envious, the schadenfreude, etc. Mothers also expressed their concern towards members of the family where they were married through the names they gave their children, such as those who mocked them for failure to conceive or to produce boys, etc. Generally, the message would be passed through a name to avoid direct confrontations. Therefore, naming acted as the safest means to pass on certain information that would be hard to communicate directly. The examples (23) indicate the use of the verbal proclitic *ka* to form names.

- (23) a. Reká ba-nanúky-e —————► Kábanukye
 let 3PL.SM-be_happy-SBJV
 ‘Let them be happy.’
- b. Reká ba-reeb-e —————► Kábareebe
 let 3PL.SM-see-SBJV
 ‘Let them see.’
- c. Reká ba-gamb-e —————► Kábagámbe
 let 3PL.SM-talk-SBJV
 ‘Let them talk.’

4.2 Clausal forms

Personal names in form of dependent clauses are also registered. Examples given here are those in form of relative clauses and conditional clauses. Both the subject and object relative clauses are found. Data indicate that the names in form of relative clauses mostly take the noun class 7 prefix as the head (class for singular inanimate), referring to the name-bearer as though he or she is inanimate as shown in (24a-b). For example, Kyohairwe means ‘something that you are given’. The example in (24a) takes the form of an object relative clause while (24b) is a subject relative clause. The difference between the two forms of relative clauses lies in the fact that object relative clauses are marked with an independent demonstrative-like phonological word (e.g., *eki*) while in subject relative clauses, the relative clause marker is a part of the structure of the relativised verb (see Asiimwe 2019:139-145). However, both the object and the subject relative markers carry an optional augment which can be seen in the source form but dropped when forming the names.

- (24) a. e-ki ó-ha-ir-w-e —————► Kyóheirwe
 AUG-7.REL.PRO 2SG.SM-give-APPL-PASS-SBJV
 ‘something that you are given’
- b. e-ky-áng-ir-w-e —————► Kyángirwe
 AUG-7.REL.SM-hate-APPL-PASS-PFV
 ‘something that is hated’

¹⁴ I am grateful to Deo Kawalya for pointing out this to me.

The examples given in (25a-b) show that personal names can be derived from conditional clauses. These are dependent clauses presenting hypothetical statements suggestive of consequences.

- (25) a. kuri n-tá-ij-a —————> Kurintáija
 if 1SM-NEG-come-FV
 ‘if I had not come’
- b. kuri ba-kanya-a —————> Kuribakanya
 if 3PL.SM-multiply-FV
 ‘if only they can multiply’

4.3 Sentential forms

Personal names in form of sentences are aided by agglutination, that is, two or more pronominal affixes are attached on a verb stem to form a single lexeme that is used as a personal name. The affixes that attach on the verb stem include both the inflectional such as the subject prefix, the object prefix, tense and aspect markers and derivational affixes including one or more verbal extensions, for example, the applicative, passive, and reciprocal. A pronominal form of an adjunct, such as those that encode location, may also be attached. The name, Angabiirwe ‘he/she was given to me’ (26), for example has a subject prefix, an object prefix, an applicative and a passive affix. For the current discussion, I will discuss these data categories into sentence forms namely, declarative (4.3.1), subjunctive (4.3.2), and interrogative (4.3.3). To these, I will add a case of verbs with prepositional complements in Section 4.3.4.

- (26) A-n-gab-íir-w-e
 3SG.SM-1OM-give-APPL-PASS-FV
 ‘He/she was given to me.’

4.3.1 Declarative sentence forms

There are personal names in form of statements taking pronominal elements and other inflectional affixes plus derivational morphemes. Examples are given in (27a-b) for affirmative and (27c-d) for negative forms. In the name Rukanyangira, for example, the subject prefix *ru-* stands for *oruzaaro* ‘offspring’. In terms of the cultural interpretations of the name, it was given by the mother of a child who had to wait for a long time to have a child. The mother was mocked for being barren; she was tired of waiting and she had become pessimistic (see a related name in (27c)). In (27b), the child was born after many discourages or stillbirths. The message in this name (Rukamunuga) was intended to protect the child from death. The name suggests that death loathes the child and therefore he will survive. In the same vein, the name in (27d) implies that the parent of the child is uncertain whether the child will survive following the previous child deaths. Thus, the names in (27b,d) are death prevention names. To prevent death - *rufu*, it had to be mentioned through the pronominal element *ru*.

- (27) a. Rukanyángira —————> Rukanyángira
 ru-ka-ny-ang-ir-a
 11SM-F.PST-1OM-refuse-APPL-FV
 ‘I was not able to bear children’

- b. Ru-ka-mu-núg-a —————> Rukamunúnga
11SM-F.PST-1OM-loathe-FV
'It (death) loathed him'
- c. Tí-n-zaar-a —————> Tínzaara
NEG-1SG.SM-give.birth-FV
'I do not bear children.'
- d. Tí wa-ngye —————> Tíwangye
NEG 1-mine
'He is not mine.'

4.3.2 Subjunctive form

Some personal names occur in the subjunctive mood. In the subjunctive mood, the final vowel is realized as *-e* (as in 4.1.4). The names presented in the subjunctive mood for the second (grammatical) person in (28) express a wish, a request or a suggestion, and these are all male names.

- (28) a. Mu-gum-e —————> Mugume
2SG.SM-be_strong-SBJV
'(You) be strong'
- b. Ki-gamb-e —————> Kigambe
7OM-say-SBJV
'(You) say it.'
- c. Ny-ang-w-e —————> Nyangwe
1SG.SM-hate-PASS-SBJV
'I should be hated.'
- d. Ny-e-hámy-e —————> Nyehámye
1SG.SM-REFL-be_strong-SBJV
'I should make myself strong.'

4.3.3 Interrogative sentences

Some names in Rukiga are in question form. Data show that the interrogative marker (en)ki¹⁵ 'what' is commonly used in the formation of personal names. Names in question form are used when the name-giver wants to question the status quo or the behaviour of a certain member(s) of the community (as in 29). According to the data, question forms are mainly used in male names. Recall that generally a message intended for a member in the community was passed through male's name. The cultural justification for this is that when a girl comes of age, she leaves and gets married into another family or community. But the boy will remain in the community, and thus the impact of the message is felt long enough. The name-giver questions the behaviour of a member of the community towards him or on behalf of another member. Since members of the community always avoided direct attacks, names were a convenient messenger.

¹⁵ There are no rules for the realization of *enki* or *ki*. It depends on one's choice.

- (29) a. Ba-kór-e=ho enki —————> Bakórehwênki
 3PL.SM-do-SBJV=PART what
 ‘What can they do about it?’
- b. Ny-ebir-w-e ki —————> Nyebirwéki
 1SG.SM-forget-PASS-FV what
 What have I forgotten/What don’t I know?
- c. M-ba-hung-ír-e he —————> Mbahungírehe
 1SG.SM-2OM-escape-APPL-SBJV where
 ‘Where can I run to to escape from them?’
- d. Ny-end-w-a ó-ha —————> Nyendwóha
 1SG.SM-like-PASS-FV 1-who
 ‘Who likes me? (Nobody likes me)’

4.3.4 A verb with a prepositional complement

The following names are formed by conjoining a subject pronominal verb with a prepositional complement which is headed by the preposition *na* ‘with’. The example in (30a) presents a pronominal subject with a full prepositional noun phrase. In (30b-c), the preposition proclitises on the possessive pronoun. The message passed in the forms of names in (30a-c) is meant for members of the society who are false friends, traitors, backstabbers, perfidious etc.

- (30) a. N-rya na á-bá-ang-i —————> Ndyanábangi
 1SG.SM-eat with AUG-2-hate-NMLZ
 ‘I eat with haters.’
- b. N-tuur-a ná=bo —————> Ntuuranábo
 1SG.SM-live-fv with=3pl.them
 ‘I live with them.’
- c. N-shek-a na=bo —————> Nshekanábo
 1SG.SM-laugh-FV with=3PL.them
 ‘I laugh with them.’

To conclude this section, following Van Langendock (2007), names acquire new semantic and pragmatic nuances before they can be used as personal names. Phrases, clauses and full sentences are picked from the grammar of Rukiga, and reduced to single lexemes before they can be used as personal names. The process involves contraction where two or more words in a sentence or phrase are joined together to form a name. Affixes are weaved together following the grammatical rules of the language showing an interaction between morphology and syntax. Taiwo (2014) assumes that lexicalisation of a sentence is a process that involves compounding at the sentential level. In Rukiga, contraction of words in a phrase or a sentence does not seem to yield compounding as a word-formation process because compounding typically takes place at the lexical level.

We note that a large number of names in the phrasal or sentential form take certain morphological affixes that are not arbitrarily picked. For example, instead of making a direct address to the specifically intended receiver with a second person pronoun or the singular third person pronoun, the name-giver chooses the neutral third person plural pronoun *ba-*. This is

intentional, and the name-giver wants to avoid being confrontational. This move was aimed at preventing conflicts and keeping peace and harmony in the society.

In addition, since names communicate life experiences, we find varying tenses and aspects being used. The perfective and remote past tense are indicative of the past experiences while the habitual aspect suggests that the miseries, hardships, the insults etc. are not yet over. Data have shown that most traditional names depicted negative feelings harbored by the name-givers (cf. Muranga 1990), portraying the (perceived) evil world the people lived in.

The current study could not exhaust all the linguistic forms of personal names in Rukiga due to space limitations. However, a picture of how names in Rukiga are formed and their internal structures has been painted. I have only picked those names that appear more prevalent in the data. Future research could go beyond the current discussions and consider other forms such as the use of the cleft sentences, copula sentences, etc. There are also some names in the data that are borrowed from Kinyarwanda (e.g., Wihangane) and Luganda (e.g., Mabiriizi), which are structurally different from names in Rukiga, that can be examined.

5. Conclusion

The aim of this paper was to show that names in Rukiga are not mere identification tags; they have meaning influenced by the socio-cultural background of the people. Although the study does not explicitly examine the semantic-pragmatic interpretations of the names, I have shown that the meanings are derived from the socio-cultural context, which influences the linguistic forms. The name-giver chooses a linguistic form that will appropriately communicate the intended message. We observed, for instance, that certain prefixes are used for a specific gender. This especially demonstrates how grammar communicates gendered meanings, a phenomenon that appears to contribute to the formation of gender identities among the Bakiga. Thus, the choice of the structure of the name is not arbitrary; for any given name, the form is determined by the intended meaning. Names in Rukiga conform to the phonological, morphological and syntactic rules of the language, which implies that naming is a linguistic act that communicates the beliefs, values, feelings, hopes, fears, and generally the life experiences of the Bakiga.

The data examined in this paper are indicative of the fact that, personal names in Rukiga have a place in the grammar of the language as has been observed in many other African cultures. From the data presented above, some of these names are derived by simple derivational processes while other names are formed by complex linguistic strategies including names which are formed by lexicalisation of clausal or sentential forms. Most African languages are generally under researched. As onomastic studies are increasingly getting attention, there is need to consider data from the less studied languages to inform typological comparisons, and for theoretical formulations. Most onomastic theories are based on personal names in the European context, which are claimed to have no descriptive content, and thus they lack a functional internal morphosyntactic structure. Most studies focus on their referent status (e.g., Van Langendonck 2007; Schucker & Ackermann 2017). Rukiga and many other African languages have lexicalized personal names which possess an internal morphosyntactic structure. Therefore, insights can be drawn from this study to motivate further studies into the examination of the internal structure of names and the understanding of how their interpretations influence their structures.

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