

**A PRAGMATIC EXPLORATION OF NAMING PRACTICES IN SISWATI**

by

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submitted in accordance with the requirements for  
the degree of

**DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY IN LANGUAGES, LINGUISTICS AND LITERATURE**

in the subject

**AFRICAN LANGUAGES**

at the

**UNIVERSITY OF SOUTH AFRICA**

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**FEBRUARY 2022**

## **DECLARATION**

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### **A pragmatic exploration of naming practices in Siswati**

I declare that this thesis is my own work and that all the sources that I have used or quoted have been indicated and acknowledged by means of complete references.

I further declare that I submitted the thesis to originality checking software and that it falls within the accepted requirements for originality.

I further declare that I have not previously submitted this work, or part of it, for examination at Unisa for another qualification or at any other higher education institution.

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## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

I would like to express my sincere gratitude and appreciation to my promoter, Professor M.R. Masubelele, who provided guidance, advice and assistance on the subject matter of my thesis. I would also like to thank her for encouraging me not to give up on my studies.

I also thank my co-promoter, Dr. S.R. Mdluli, for assisting and providing insights on the Swazi culture that relate to naming.

I also wish to express my gratitude:

to the University of South Africa for awarding me with a bursary to pursue my studies;

to Professor I. Kosch for editing the thesis;

to my lovely wife who always believes in me and wishes that I become a better person in life as well as in academia;

to my children for understanding that I could not always be available when they needed me because of my research;

to everyone who contributed to the success of this research, especially informants who were interviewed and those who completed questionnaires so that I could obtain rich information about their personal names and trusted me with their information.

I dedicate this study to my parents who educated me so that I may have a bright future. I will always be indebted to them.

## SUMMARY

This study is a pragmatic exploration of naming practices in Siswati. It examined personal names bestowed on newborns and focused on how the emaSwati use names to convey messages to their interlocutors by using speech acts, which are categorised as commands, requests and interrogatives. It was established that name-givers include great grandparents, grandparents, parents, parents' friends, aunts, uncles and sometimes siblings. To be eligible for this task, these individuals must meet the felicity conditions concerning naming, they must have authority to bestow the names and have relations with the name-bearers. Name-givers who are not relatives are given consent by the child's kin to issue a name on their behalf. Data was gathered through interviews and questionnaires. Purposive sampling was used to select informants and obtain rich data on personal names. Names that are commands, requests and interrogatives were identified and the situations or contexts that informed the naming were also explored. The speech act theory and systemic functional linguistics were the theories that underpinned the study. Some personal names in Swazi culture are speech acts wherein name-givers communicate precise messages to specific interlocutors or hearers. The speech acts involved in naming are influenced by the way of life of emaSwati, their cultural traits, challenges, aspirations, emotions and frustrations as they interact with one another in encounters such as community struggles, failure to offer bride price, their religious beliefs, marriage problems, issues involving the paternity of a child and their desires about the roles their children should play when they have grown up. Hence, naming as a speech act is context-bound. The naming practices also revealed that naming is a functional process wherein language is used to carry actions such as making demands, requests and asking questions. On the part of the name-bearers, some are proud of their names because of the informative and authoritative messages they contain, while others dislike the meaning of their names especially when, for instance, the name exposes complex information such as denied paternity. However, they use their names as permanent identity markers which they were given at birth.

**Key terms:**

Naming; personal names; speech act theory; directives, commands, requests, interrogatives; name-giver; name-bearer; Siswati; emaSwati

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## CHAPTER 1

### INTRODUCTION

#### 1.1 Introduction and background

Naming is as old as the creation of humankind and people, including the emaSwati, have bestowed names on individuals at different stages of their lives, the naming of newborns being the most common practice. The emaSwati named their creator *Mlentengamunye* or *Mvelinchanti* long before the arrival of Europeans and foreign religions such as Christianity in areas occupied by emaSwati. Giving names in Siswati was and is still not limited to personal names but to all things that exist. Personal names are not mere labels or codes to differentiate one person from the other but have various meanings which express the socio-cultural and religious traits of emaSwati. Few scholars have written on Siswati personal names. These include Dlamini (2004) and Mazibuko (2015). The study of onomastics is still emerging in Siswati. There is still a need to explore naming practices in Siswati from different positions.

This study is a pragmatic exploration of naming practices in Siswati. The study will examine Siswati name giving practices from the point of view of speakers or name-givers and the utterances they make when they give their newborns names. Siswati is a language spoken predominantly in Eswatini and in the Mpumalanga province of South Africa. The study of naming practices is an interesting study in Siswati and African languages in general. Mbiti (1969:199) posits that a name and the name-bearer are inseparable. The name given to a person becomes his/her identity indefinitely. Hence, in Siswati there is a saying *libito lemuntfu liyakhuluma* ‘a person’s name speaks’. This saying shows that a person’s name is not just a label but has meaning and purpose that is directly linked to the name-bearer. The above Siswati expression also suggests that names given to individuals depend on the culture and context within which they are framed and used. In different African societies, a name provides a lot of information about the person who bears it, the language from which it is derived as well as the community

that gives it. Names can represent both phonological processes and grammatical forms of a language. They also reflect the status of the name-bearer in the community, societal histories as well as personal experiences of community members around the name-bearer (Mphande, 2006).

In Swazi societies, a person possesses many names but basically a person is given two names: *libito lasekhaya* ‘a name to be used at home’ and *libito lesikolwa* ‘a name to be used at school’. The name to be used at home is typically given immediately after the child is born and is commonly used as a first name when the newborn is welcomed into the entire family. This is the name by which he or she is to be known by all members of the family and the society at large. The *libito lesikolwa* is usually the second name that tends to be used mainly at school. EmaSwati began acquiring English names such as John, Christopher, Mary and Maria, when they met Europeans. The bestowal of these names might have been because missionaries who were the first teachers of emaSwati when education was introduced among the people, had difficulties in pronouncing Siswati names, hence they gave their learners English names for ease of communication. Some names are believed to have been given by the missionaries during baptism. However, there seems to be a shift in modern naming practices as evidenced by instances where a person who had both a Siswati and an English name, drops the English name for reasons that relate to African identity.

## **1.2 Statement of the problem**

People have been called by their personal names not only in Swazi society but in the world at large. These names have been taken for granted and used as mere tags to differentiate one person from the other. Siswati names are not just labels given to people for the sake of giving a name. When one looks at the many names given to emaSwati, they seem to have peculiar and interesting meanings. Siswati names have situational and context-bound meanings. Ainiala and Östman (2017:6) suggest that “on a social and sociolinguistic dimension, issues of participants’ implicit and explicit social and cultural identities are also negotiated in and with names”. These scholars further posit that proper

names should not be regarded as separate entities from other parts of the language. The naming practice in Siswati is therefore regarded as a feature of the language and culture which characterises not only emaSwati but the entire African race. Siswati names are messages with perlocution on the hearers they address. Thus, it is imperative to examine the speech acts involved in Siswati naming and to explore the illocutionary force of names on either name-bearers or those addressed.

The applicability of speech acts on naming had a bearing on this study. Austin (1975:5) used the term "speech act" to refer to what he called locutionary and illocutionary acts. The illocutionary act, described by Austin (1975:5) as "by saying something, we perform something," is of special significance here. Therefore, in this study, Siswati naming practices will be examined against the messages they convey to their interlocutors, and the functions they serve based on the systemic functional linguistics theory.

It is important to note that not much attention has been given to personal names in Siswati, therefore there is a need to explore the pragmatic relevance of the meanings of some Siswati personal names, as well as to establish the traits embedded in Siswati naming practices. Put differently, this study will explore the messages that are conveyed by emaSwati when giving names to their children.

### **1.3 Research aim**

This study aimed to investigate the pragmatic meaning that manifests in Siswati personal names and to establish the traits embedded in the Siswati naming practices.

### **1.4 Research objectives**

The following objectives will be realised by the study:

- to examine the messages emaSwati express through naming
- to identify types of names given by emaSwati to their newborn children

- to establish the people addressed and the contexts under which names are bestowed in Swazi culture
- to bring to light attitudes attached to some personal names in Swazi culture
- to investigate traits of the emaSwati embedded in naming practices.

### **1.5 Research questions**

The study sought to answer the following questions:

- What messages are expressed by emaSwati through naming?
- What types of personal names do emaSwati give to their newborn children?
- Under which contexts are personal names bestowed in Swazi culture?
- What attitudes are attached to some personal names in Swazi culture?
- What are the social, cultural, religious and political traits embedded in Siswati names?

### **1.6 Rationale**

This study will provide relevant information on the pragmatics of Siswati names and establish the different traits that are ingrained in name giving. The study will also sensitise emaSwati about the power commanded by the names they give to their newborn children, with a view that they appreciate the names as part of their existence and socio-cultural heritage. The study will add to the body of knowledge on naming practices in African languages in general and in Siswati in particular as this is one of the indigenous languages in the Southern African region which is still lagging behind in research on naming patterns and practices in contrast to other indigenous languages in the region.

### **1.7 Definition of terms**

**Culture** “refers to society and its way of life. It is defined as a set of values and beliefs, or a cluster of learned behaviours that we share with others in a particular society, giving us a sense of belongingness and identity” (Lee, 2006 in Lebrón, 2013:126). Culture may

be defined as unique practices and activities that are shared by a particular set of inhabitants in a certain area and are maintained over time. Language, music, dances, myths, folklore, medicines, attire, acceptable behaviours, and values are all examples of culture. It also encompasses the socioeconomic way of life that people in the community practise and experience.

**EmaSwati** refers to the Swazi Nguni tribe or group that speaks the Siswati language and shares a common culture.

**Name-giver** is a person who has the “responsibility of naming a child” (Mandende, 2009:39). In personal naming, the word name-giver refers to somebody who gives someone a name. Parents and family members are typically the main people who can name their children.

**Name-bearer** is a person who has been given a name and is identified by his/her name (Mandende, 2009:39). This means that a name-bearer is the owner of a personal name and that the name given to them becomes their identity.

**Personal names** “are signs that, when used vocally by humans, have very different characteristics than other linguistic elements, that necessarily precede the development of language, and that are intimately involved in the creation of circumstances contributing to that development” (Jenkins, 2013:4). Personal names are permanent identities bestowed on children at birth by name-givers in many cultures and they are modes of communication through which name-givers send messages to specific addressees. Siswati personal names include commands, requests, interrogatives, and statements. The meanings of these names reflect many facets of emaSwati's existence.

**Speech acts** refer to actions, which are “performed via utterances” (Yule, 1996:47). This implies that when individuals say particular words, they do actions like commands, requests, and questions.

**Locutionary acts** are what is said (Cutting, 2002:16). A locutionary act is the “basic act of utterance, or producing a meaningful linguistic expression” (Yule, 1996:48). Therefore, a locutionary act may be defined as the messages or meanings that the words spoken by a speaker express.

An **illocutionary act** is an intention and function of an utterance made by a speaker (Yule, 1996). The illocutionary act is “performed via the communicative force of an utterance” (Yule, 1996:48).

A **perlocutionary act** is “an action that is carried out by a speaker when making an utterance and the effect it has on the hearer” (Hurford and Heasley, 1983:250).

**Directives** “are speech acts that a speaker uses to get someone else to do something” (Levinson, 1983:240).

### **1.8 Delineation of the study**

This study has been systematically structured into five chapters.

Chapter 1 deals with the introduction and background, the problem statement, the aim, and the objectives of the study.

Chapter 2 discusses the literature review. Related works which deal with naming were consulted and interrogated to establish positions from which various scholars in different cultures have studied naming and to establish a gap that needs to be filled in relation to naming in Siswati.

Chapter 3 covers the research design, methodology and theoretical framework.

Chapter 4 discusses three main types of speech acts involved in Siswati personal naming, namely commands, requests and interrogatives. The messages issued as well as the

context under which they were issued, and the persons addressed by the names were established. The attitudes of the name-bearers concerning the names with which they have been bestowed were also revealed. Some Siswati personal names are speech acts which are performed in name giving.

Chapter 5 deals with findings of the study and the conclusion.

### **1.9 Conclusion**

This chapter has presented the introduction and background of the study. The problem statement that inspired the research on Siswati personal names was discussed. The aim of the research and its objectives were stated. The research questions that the study sought to address were provided, as well as the rationale for doing the study. Key terms were defined, and the structure of the study was outlined.

## **CHAPTER 2**

### **LITERATURE REVIEW**

#### **2.1 Introduction**

This chapter interrogates scholarly works globally as well as locally that examined naming to establish what has already been done with a view to establishing or filling the gap in the body of knowledge about naming. Thus, theses, books, journals and articles on naming were probed. Before investigating what the different scholars have looked into in their works in relation to naming, it is imperative that we first examine what a literature review is.

#### **2.2 Literature review**

A literature review is an organised procedure that involves reading, analysing, assessing, and summarising academic works on a certain topic or issue. The findings of a literature review could be included in a study or incorporated in a scientific research paper, project, and grant application (Fink, 2009). Bless and Higson-Smith (1995:22) contend that literature review is “obtained mainly by reading whatever has been published that appears relevant to the research topic”.

According to Parahoo (1997:82; 2006:121), literature refers “mostly to any published material”. The author considers textbooks, dissertations, journals, articles, newspapers, pamphlets, booklets and flyers as constituting literature. A literature review comprises a critical study of chosen publications to determine how they could be relevant in the current study (Parahoo, 2006:127). The importance of a literature review is that it demonstrates to a researcher, the gaps in knowledge that the intended research would need to fill and establish the body of knowledge that seeks to be advanced (Marshall and Rossman, 1995:28). Moreover, the literature review serves as a foundation for compiling scientific research results in each field into a coherent publication that offers a clear demonstration

of present success, limits and future research directions in a specific subject or discipline (Keary et al., 2012:239).

The following sections will interrogate research on naming done globally and locally.

### **2.2.1 Research on naming globally**

Heyman (2011) in a study of names in the United States noted that in the past, personal names were not used merely as personal identities or a method to find some elusive characteristics, but they had been a platform to communicate information to other people. Personal names have three functions namely, denotative, connotative and associative. A denotative use of a name allows a person to refer to a name-bearer by a specific name and that person is then known by that name. When names serve a connotative role, they express specific attributes concerning an individual, whether real or precative, whether overtly or covertly, while their associative role conveys relations between the owner of the name and other entities. He concluded that nowadays naming practices are diverse as they are derived from parental invention, cultural heritage, and prevalent culture as well as commercial products. In general, parents give names to their children because of their connotative meanings. These names often reflect the parent's wishes, strong desires and feeling about the birth of a baby.

Finch (2008), in an exploratory analysis of the significance of personal names in contemporary western societies in the United Kingdom, established that in Anglo-Saxon societies, by law a child should be given a personal name and be registered in the General Register Office within forty-two days of its birth. Personal names consist of forenames followed by a surname. The surname is regarded as the family name and children assume the names of their fathers. The father's name is passed on from one generation to the next through newborn babies. The transmission of the father's name to newborn babies denotes male generational continuousness. Thus, the naming process manifests the patriarchal dominance in society. Moreover, Finch ascertained that naming a child serves many functions. One of the functions performed by bestowing a name on an individual is

that a name personifies that individual by giving him/her unique identity which in turn distinguishes the name-bearer from others. Names also present social meanings within a specific community through the use of forenames and surnames.

Finch (2008:712) outlines the following power of names in Anglo-Saxon culture:

- Names have the power to embody social associations such as ethnic and religious identity. It is a common tendency that people who follow certain religions such as Christianity and Islam generally take either Christian names or Muslim names depending on the religion of their interest. They associate their names with their religion.
- Names may stereotype and inconvenience a person. People who have names regarded as 'Islamic' may be discriminated against as their names may be associated with extremist groups hence that person may be inconvenienced just for having such a name.
- Names could offer instruments for establishing and comprehending family relationships and their features. For instance, people often name children after themselves such as John Jr to illustrate family bonds and that child is always associated with his father.

Watzlawik et al. (2012) investigated if variations in the naming strategies used by families in various countries including South Korea, Brazil and Germany had an impact on how people associate with first names given to them and noted that there is a variation in naming practices across cultures. In contemporary Western societies such as Germany and Brazil, parents name children based on personal standards and characteristics such as education level and status. Meanwhile, in Asian societies, naming practices follow specific rules. The rules are influenced by specific facts and customs such as family totems and family trees, time and date of birth. The naming rules are also influenced by events surrounding the pregnancy, that is, what was happening during and after the pregnancy.

Watzlawik et al. (2012) further described how naming is done in Asian communities, for example, in South Korea, a child is named by parents before birth, as soon as the time, date, month and year of its birth are known. The parents usually name the child through consulting fortune tellers who assist them with the selection of the child's name. Some parents in South Korea follow different traditions in the naming process whereby a fortune teller will read facial features from the child and determine which name best suits it. However, some parents do not rely on any tradition when naming their child; they just choose a name appealing to them and assign it to their child. These personal names often express parents' wishes and expectations, and religious dispositions.

Eder (1975) studied names in the Philippines among the Batak people and observed that the Batak people have more than one personal name. No person is expected to have less than two names while others possess more than five names. The names may be classified into three main types, namely birth names, affinal names, and reciprocal names. Birth names known as *Ngara* are given at birth by either the father or mother of the child. These birth names are very meaningful as their origin relies mostly on some extraordinary circumstance of birth. Other birth names owe their origin to the remarkable physical appearance of the newborn child. Conversely, some Batak birth names have no meaning.

Affinal names called *Pandini* are names that are added to a person's birth name. The affinal name usually originates from some of the person's characteristics or distinctive life encounters. These names include baptismal and pet names in Batak.

The last type of names are reciprocal names (*Lalawan*). The reciprocal names act as a code or form of address used by individuals or peers through mutual consent. For example, the name 'friend' *abay* between males and *aybay* between females are considered reciprocal names in Batak.

Britto (1986) explored naming patterns for Tamils in India and reported that Tamils rely on Hindu scriptures and traditions for name selection and giving for their children. The

Hindu texts contain abundant rules that govern personal naming practices such as the time and manner of running a ceremony for name giving and stipulate appropriate types of names for each social group and gender. The author states that, culturally, Tamils give children names that are meaningful, and many personal names are associated with desired virtues such as prosperity, power, greatness, happiness, beauty, victory, piety, and so forth, which are particularly related to the gods of Tamil Hinduism. Thus, Tamil names originate from the characteristics of divine beings while others denote saints and mythical people. However, not all personal names of Tamils originate from Hindu traditions. Other names are from various cultures and religions. For example, Christian names in Tamil are derived from Judeo-Christianity while names of Tamil Muslims originate from Islam.

### **2.2.2 Research on naming in Africa**

In Africa, the following research was conducted on naming:

Mphande (2006) observed that personal names give information about momentary social matters and are useful in determining the current state of affairs at any particular period. Personal names reflect a relationship between a person and his or her social and physical surroundings. They are also pronouncements about the name-givers' religious views and their connection with the supernatural. As a result, personal names serve as a tool for assessing shifts in moral norms and attitudes of historic times.

Mbiti (1975) remarked that throughout Africa, there are numerous naming traditions regarding African names. Children are normally assigned one or more names, however, other names are typically acquired as time goes on. The most significant is the one a child receives at birth, termed a first name. In certain regions, a name is selected before a baby is born while in others it is given after the birth of the child. Among African communities, a name is understood to be an important aspect of a person's character. As a result, names are carefully thought out, selected assiduously, and considered seriously. People's names always have meanings, and their meanings deserve to be respected as

they may speak volumes about a person's life. The name selected expresses the parents' feelings and commemorates the event of the baby's birth.

Mbiti (1975) further explained that the name selected expresses the parents' feelings and commemorates the event of the baby's birth. Names are also associated with the child's time of birth, meteorological conditions such as the weather as well as the season of the year. Other names highlight the historic moment at which the child is born, prevailing events and activities within the family or nation, extraordinary occurrences, and the location where the baby is born. African names may also express religious beliefs of name-givers.

Finnegan (2012:455) explored the role played by African names in oral literature in Africa from various societies. She stated that a prominent interesting quality of names is how they are used to express specific information clearly and, in a few words, and the indirect way of associating with their name-bearer. For instance, nicknames in Thonga were given to Europeans to comment on their characters efficiently and calmly. Some names are generally used to articulate opinions, aspirations, and feelings such as grief, sorrow and other sentiments. This is the reason why sadness and consciousness of the ills of life are the themes often found in African names. However, names can also express joyful thoughts experienced by the parents because of the birth of a child.

Arega (2016) focused on determining the primary factors that led to the naming change in Wolaita of Ethiopia, as well as the effects of the present naming change on the Wolaita people's identities. The author first described the phenomenon of naming as connected with a person's language, culture and traditions. Names possess a deep understanding of social and cultural practices, valued traditions and customs, fundamental traits, and significant events in the Wolaita culture. Thus, naming represents a person's socio-cultural traits and is a cultural identity and heritage. In his findings, Arega (2016) observed that in previous times children were given names derived from the indigenous language and Wolaita culture. However, as years passed most people discontinued giving such names due to social and cultural changes that came to their societies. One prominent

cause for the shift in naming was the influence of the old colonial system in Ethiopia. Discrimination associated with indigenous names was widespread where people were discouraged and even insulted based on their indigenous names. Indigenous names affected the Wolaita people's economic life as those with indigenous names were disadvantaged in getting employment due to the stigma associated with their names. Religion was another factor that resulted in the naming shift as parents adopted religious ideologies and religious names from the Bible which they eventually gave to their children. Other factors such as globalisation and westernisation also promoted the naming shift. Parents thought that if they gave their children Western or Amharic names that would make their children to be seen as educated and civilised as these names were associated with modernisation and development while Wolaita names were perceived as barbaric and primitive. As a result, people felt that their Wolaita native names had less value compared to the Western and Amharic names.

Mutunda (2016) argued that in Luvale society, it is the primary responsibility of parents to bestow names on newborn babies. A first-born is commonly named by the father while a mother is given the privilege to name a second born child. Subsequent children may be named by grandparents and other family members. Mutunda also established that there is a distinction between naming in Western and African societies. Naming in Western societies is predominantly a system of reference while in African culture, naming is not merely an exercise of issuing name tags to newborns but a well thought out and carefully considered important practice which provides useful insights into the social and cultural traits of every society. It is through naming that patterns of social and cultural organisations are revealed. Through a name, a message is conveyed by the name-giver to society using the name-bearer.

In Luvale, names give insights and evidence about historical, religious, cultural and political events that have affected society. Personal names are bestowed on children based on various factors and conditions. Mutunda (2016:78) outlines the following factors and conditions regarding personal naming:

circumstances surrounding the birth of the child, social aspects of the family, hopes, traditional beliefs, and wishes for the child, or the expression of gratitude to a deity. The wishes, happiness and suffering endured by family are also considered when one bestows a personal name to a child.

Mutunda (2016) suggests that Luvale personal names may be classified according to the following categories:

- Names that are associated with the manner and position of birth that reveal the birth order in which the children were born.
- Names expressing gratitude that show gratitude to a supreme deity or ancestral spirit.
- Proverbial names that use innuendos to depict a circumstance that happens before, during, and after pregnancy or delivery. These names demonstrate the social relationship prevailing between the mother and her in-law.
- Time and place of birth names given to children to show the time and place of birth.
- Foreign names that show Western influence on African culture. They are usually regarded as Christian names as they are a result of the strong influence of Christianity on Luvale culture.

Orkaydo (2015) studied personal naming practices in Konso in Southwest Ethiopia in which he discovered that personal names can either be informal or formal. Informal names are given to children as soon as they are born. These names are usually given by a midwife with the help of the child's grandmother. Informal names include 'baby foods' and 'age-mates' names. These names are either dropped or returned once the child has acquired formal names. Age-mates names are acquired after the child has already been given a formal name. The age-mates names may have meanings that express personality and behaviour, body size and complexion of the child.

Formal names are assigned to a child after three months from birth. The name giving of a formal name is regarded as a ceremonial event. It calls for relatives and neighbours to partake in the naming ceremony. A consultation between the child's grandfather, midwives and a group of three young boys called "mud boys" takes place to choose a

suitable formal name for the child. Therefore, formal names reflect various aspects of life in Konso. The names may indicate events that happened simultaneously with the birth of the child. The events include mourning, hunting and wars. Some children are named after seasons or farming periods while others are named after names of months, days of the week and time divisions of the day. Moreover, some Konso personal names indicate the birth order of the child in the family while other names are taken from animal names and flora names (Orkaydo, 2015:143).

In West Africa, among the Ashanti people, children are named based on the names of the week on which they are born. People assume that the names given to the Ashanti children are associated with personalities and have strong effects on the behaviours of the children. A boy born on a Monday is assumed to be quiet and well behaved while boys born on a Wednesday are regarded as aggressive and short-tempered. Hence, children are believed to “live up to the expectations of their names” (Hargreaves et al., 1983:393).

Hailu (2017) examined personal names in Oromo culture and found that they are connected to cultural, social, religious, economic and psychological traits of the Oromo people. Names indicate historical facts and socio-cultural attributes. It is through naming practices that social, political, and cultural status quo of Oromo society are demonstrated. Names are considered to be very important as they may express joyful thoughts and personal aspirations of the name-giver to the name-bearer. Moreover, in Oromo, children are named based on birth occurrences, and social activities happening during the child’s birth. Other names are given based on a supreme deity or God.

Clasberry (2012) maintains that naming practices communicated histories behind the names in Nigeria-Ibibio and Africa, until the invasion of Christianity and colonisation. Colonisation and Christianity were the main factors that broke the relationship involving personal names and cultural identity. These two forces have continually played a role in the gradual loss of the African culture of naming. As a result of the influence imposed by

missionaries and British rule, many Nigerians in Africa gave up their names which reflected their culture and opted for foreign names.

Ogunwale (2012) explored Yoruba proverbial names and determined that proverbs in the Yoruba languages are employed as personal names. Semantically Yoruba proverbial names are classified into the following categories: ideational, testimonial, experiential/observatory, monumental and admonitory. Ideational Yoruba proverbial names express the Yoruba traditional perspectives on a broad variety of subject matters such as fate, kinship, the cosmos and the quality of life. Testimonial names attest to a person's prosperity, triumphs and accomplishments in his life. Experiential/observatory names reflect the name-giver's past experiences and that of the community based on the vicissitudes of life. Monumental names commend extraordinary accomplishments in economic activities, physical abilities, possessions, richness and social positions in the society. These names usually emphasise morality while admonitory names convey "the tokens of admonition to guide individuals and guard his/her contemporary behaviour and future undertakings" (Ogunwale, 2012:32).

Omoloso (2015) asserts that Yoruba names are deeply rooted in the cultural practices and beliefs of the people. They expose various meanings about social, historical, psychological, and cultural backgrounds of the Yoruba people. The indigenous names of the Yoruba people only make sense and meaning when related to the traditional and socio-cultural contexts of the people. When the names are used in context, they constitute diverse speech acts. Omoloso (2015:132) classifies Yoruba names in the following categories:

- royalty related indigenous names
- deity related names
- names that are based on the situations at the child's birth
- family's vocation/profession related names
- names based on infantile immortality
- names based on the importance of children to the family
- names based on natural circumstances and admonitions

Agyekum (2006) avers that in Akan culture people name in order to distinguish, to recognise and to have knowledge about things. They attach significance to their names and the naming process. Akan names reveal the culture of the people, their ideologies, religious beliefs and their general surroundings or settings. Their symbolic essence reflects the interaction between foreign cultures and the beliefs of the Akan people.

Furthermore, Agyekum (2006:231) presents common types of names found in Akan communities namely “day (of the week) names, family names, circumstantial and manner of birth names, names associated with gods, weird names, insinuating and proverbial names, gang and nicknames, status, occupational, professional, religious, matrimonial, and western names”.

A further study of the Akan names reveals that a name of a person is of concern to society because some people anticipate that the words' intrinsic powers in the name would manifest in the name owner's life whether favourably or detrimentally. In Akan culture Agyekum (2006:209) confirms that a newborn named after a chief is supposed to be well-behaved. Children named after chiefs, grandparents and parents are well advised to behave in a good manner to keep their identities from being tarnished. The names are intended to mould the child's character, development and fraternisation. Moreover, names in Akan also express the qualities of the person who has been named. As a result, individuals would receive new names and titles depending on their specific accomplishments.

Mwangi (2015) studied Gikuyu personal names and found that they are primarily taken from verbs, noun phrases, adjectives as well as nouns. A small number of names were found to be a combination of nouns and verbs. Meanwhile, other names were recognised as 'nativised' foreign words that had been incorporated into the language through the process of assimilation. It was determined that no names were taken from adverbs. The author also found that Gikuyu personal names reflect the grammar of the language. As a result, aspects of language could be learned from personal names because they come from the various parts of speech in the language. The names are formed through

morphological processes such as reflexivisation, compounding, affixation as well as derivation.

According to Lisimba in Chishiba (2017:84) there are two main name categories among the Lamba people and all other Zambian tribes. These categories are “names that arise from the circumstances of birth and names that arise from socio-psychological environment”.

In Zambia in the Copperbelt province, naming of children among the Lamba people is the sole responsibility of selected family elders. Therefore, a baby is given a name just after birth once the baby’s navel is cut and its body has been washed. Newborn babies are usually bestowed with names derived from deceased relatives and the name given is known as a spirit name. Such names are given to imply that the deceased relative’s spirit is reincarnated. A child is allowed to change the ‘spirit’ name given at birth between the age of 10-12 years. The name bestowed at the birth of the child may be replaced with a totally new name which is often issued by elderly members of the family which may include a maternal uncle or a grandmother (Chishiba, 2017:84).

Pfukwa (2007) analysed war names used in the conflicts of Zimbabwe between 1966 and 1979 and their significance. There were various types for names that were established namely, Shona names, mixed names (Shona and English), names that reflect the influence of popular culture, ethnic slurs, names from Flora and Fauna, ‘names of women’, ‘martial names’, ‘ideological names’ and ‘names taken from other languages’ as well as ‘miscellaneous names’ that were used during the war. The study found that a majority of the fighters gave themselves names and their names were motivated by their linguistic, cultural, spiritual, or societal preferences. He concluded that the naming patterns and procedures of guerilla names were informed by the namers’ socio-cultural background.

Mashiri et al. (2013) examine names in Zimbabwe and observe that names are given to children as a consequence of cultural, political, religious and ideological conditions faced

by the Zimbabweans. Names generally expose the political and religious history of the country. Both Christian and African names are meaningful. They are associated with the name-giver's beliefs, personal experiences, and circumstances about the birth of the child. It is through naming that we grasp how people perceive life.

Mashiri et al. (2013:169) state that Christian names reflect the following traits:

- they celebrate God
- the name-giver's personal and religious experiences
- the name-giver's personal experiences with God
- facts about God's role in their lives that are philosophical
- brief stories concerning the birth of the newborn

Furthermore, post-independence Christian names in Zimbabwe can be categorised mainly into three types: names that celebrate Christian values, names expressing thankfulness to God, and names expressing religious convictions (Mashiri et al., 2013:170).

Mheta et al. (2017) on an analysis of Shona personal names explain that names perceived as Christian among the Shona are of spiritual significance. They hold family virtues and values, faiths, hopes, trepidation and ambitions. Through the names assigned to children, parents tell a lot of stories. The authors conclude that the so-called Christian names are not only always Christian but are names that allude to various Shona traditional spiritualities and beliefs. These names are given at birth and fall under the category of maternal home names. Therefore, the names given to Shona newborns are manifestations of Shona life, culture and religious beliefs.

Makondo (2013) investigated the most popular Shona female anthroponyms and their meaning. He found that the names "**Chipo** 'Gift', **Tendai** 'Be thankful', **Tsitsi** 'Mercy', **Chiedza** 'Light' and **Vimbai** 'Trust'" were extensively used in the Shona society. The name *Chipo* is a result of clipping the names "*Chipochangu* 'My gift', *Chipochedu* 'Our gift', *Chipochedenga* 'Heaven's gift', *ChipochaMwari* 'Gift from God', *Chipochatapihwa*

'The gift we have been given', *Chipondechedu* 'The gift is ours' and *Chipochake* 'His /her gift". Meanwhile, **Tendai** is a clipped word of names such as "TendaiMwari 'Be thankful to God', *Tendai-Musiki* 'Be thankful to the creator', *Tendaimupi* 'Be thankful to the giver', *Tendaizvose* 'Be thankful for everything', *TendaikunaShe* 'Be thankful to the Lord' and *Tendainhositawanda* 'Be thankful to the day we have increased". The third famous name **Tsitsi** is a clipped word of full names "TsitsidzaMwari 'God's mercy', *Tsitsidzedenga* 'Heaven's mercy', *Tsitsidzake* 'Mercy of God', *TsitsidzaShe* 'Mercy of the Lord', *TsitsidzeMusiki* 'Mercy of the creator', *Tsitsidzamuponesi* 'Mercy of the Saviour' as well as *TsitsidzaJesu* 'Mercy of Jesus". The name **Chiedza** is a short form of "Chiedzachedu 'Our light', *ChiedzachaShe* 'Light of the Lord', *Chiedzachangu* 'My light' and *Chiedzachemoyowangu* 'Light of my heart", while the name **Vimbai** is also a clipped word of "VimbainaShe 'Trust in the Lord', *VimbainaMwari* 'Trust in God', *VimbainaYe* 'Trust in Him', *VimbainaJesu* 'Trust in Jesus' and *VimbainaTenzi* 'Trust in the protector" (Makondo, 2013:115-117). Makondo ascertained that the common names of females had meanings and were manifestations of Shona culture and existing societal traits experienced by name-givers.

Ncube et al. (2013) semantically analysed Ndebele names that were bestowed on children in Zimbabwe between 1970 and 1982. They found that children born during the colonial time were given names that reflected the animosity and bad blood between the oppressed and their oppressors. The Ndebele people used their children's names to express their frustration and gripe about the oppression they experienced under colonialism. Therefore, most people's names born during this era reveal anger, hopelessness, and hatred directed at the oppressors and some optimism to gain liberation. The names served as records for the people to document their injustices and indignation as well as a reminder of all the experiences they encountered. Meanwhile, names bestowed on children after independence express emancipation and signify peace and harmony, freedom from civil unrest, and independence.

Latern et al. (2014) focus on personal names bestowed on children at the time of Zimbabwe's liberation war and after, as well as the incidence of natural disasters and

post-independence events. The authors found that during the war, Ndebele names revealed the feelings of the people about the colonial enemies. In post-independence, the names given to Ndebele children reveal the history loaded with challenges. The names unearth the difficult problems and great suffering the country together with its people experienced under colonialism. The names show the various contexts that people went through, some names mourn, probe and shame while others celebrate the achievements of gaining independence (Lantern et al., 2014:10).

Vilakazi (2002) investigated naming of Ndebele children in South Africa pre- and post-1994 in which she aimed to demonstrate how naming in Ndebele is determined and influenced by cultural and socio-political factors. She analysed naming in urban and rural areas. The study found the following types of names in urban areas: names related to emotions expressing joy, disappointment and friction, religious orientated names, family continuity names, names relating to the state of weather at birth, events at birth, name repertoire and politically inspired names. In rural areas the following kinds of names were established: names based on emotions that include names expressing joy, wishes/hopes/requests, names referring to social disharmony, names expressing relief, and reflecting disappointments, religious orientated names, family continuity and family situation, names referring to the state of weather at birth, names expressing historical/memorable events at birth, physical features, calendrical names (names taken from days of the week and months), nicknames, death related names and repertoire. The study found that it was the duty of paternal family members in both urban and rural areas to name children. Rural names showed general tendencies as people over the age of twenty to thirty had mainly traditional names with a few modern names. The author concluded that there is a shift nowadays which is influenced by social transformation especially in families that has resulted in children being given positive names. Names that are of English origin are now directly translated into African languages and given to children.

Mphela (2010) contends that naming among the Bapedi in the Moletjie region of Limpopo differs significantly from other cultural groups. The issue of gender is not considered much

in name giving nowadays. Both males and females may have similar names. For instance, the name *Tlou* ‘elephant’ could be bestowed on either a baby boy or girl. People are named after wild animals in Moletjie which is a common practice these days. The animal names assigned to children are more than just names denoting animals, they are important since they are related to various totems of diverse types of people. People named after wild animals carry their names with great pride and honour.

Chauke (2015) revealed that like many African tribes, the Vatsonga employ various practices of selecting a name for children. They often name their babies based on specific situations, such as the events surrounding the child's birth, social features of the household, desires and aspirations regarding the newborn, indigenous practices and beliefs as well as appreciation to a divine being. He further indicated that names tell us a lot about the history and cultural values of the Vatsonga. Among the Vatsonga, the naming exercise is of great importance because a “name-giver chooses a name that truly identifies the child as a person” (Chauke, 2015:303). People consider names as priceless and wonderful presents and someone who does not have a name is deemed an entity, not a human. Occasions and incidents that are commemorated are often enshrined in the personal names. As a result, names are selected because they have a positive impact on the personalities and lives of name-bearers.

Furthermore, children are named after their ancestors in the Xitsonga culture with the belief that the deceased would be around the newborn and safeguard it against any calamities. Traditional healers are first consulted before a child is named to determine the most appropriate name for the baby. Among the Vatsonga, when a child is given a name of a family ancestor, certain people believe that the newborn would be blessed, whereas others believe that the child would be superior to other children and become a prominent figure in the community (Chauke, 2015:304).

Mohome (1972) in a study on naming in Sesotho clarified that in Sotho culture, the Basotho ascribe great importance to the naming process and to the meaning of names. Names indicate the emotions, experiences and events of the people. It is believed that

certain names influence a name-bearer's character. When an individual is given a particular name, he/she is expected to behave in compliance with the name. This serves a predestination purpose as it determines the person's future character and often people live up to that expectation as they behave per the meaning of their name. Therefore, naming in Sotho is a cultural and linguistic practice (Mohome, 1972:172).

Mohome (1972:171) presents main techniques of bestowing Sesotho names:

- A child is named after his/her kinsmen, a grandparent, or senior relative.
- A child can be named following a famous figure, a neighbour, or, in the case of a female, a midwife.

Mohome (1972) also ascertains that the names given to Basotho serve more than one purpose. A name given to a person is not merely a person's identity, but it also serves a predestination purpose as the name determines the person's future character.

Guma (2001) examined Basotho personal names, tekonyms, and teknonymous names in Southern Africa and paid attention to the cultural meaning and their relations with historical events. Guma (2001) ascertains that the Basotho people believe that a person's personality may be influenced by their given name. The names given to Basotho reflect social and cultural attributes: historical events, individual experiences, attitudes, class relationships, authority, family, and clan relationships. Names that depict historical events were derived from regional, communal and international events for commemoration purposes, while some names were derived from outsiders who were not related to the child and bestowed on the newborn since there were names of prominent figures in society. These names could be used to estimate the date of birth of the child mainly by illiterate parents who possessed no birth records of their children. Subsequently, the name plays an important role as the name-bearer associates himself with part of the Basotho history. Hence it promotes a confident image to someone named after such a historical event (Guma, 2001:269).

Guma (2001) claims that naming a newborn after important events could play emotional and psychological roles in a family or community. This is witnessed when the birth of a

child concurs with some misfortune or tragedy that happens in a family such as an accident or death. For example, a boy child born at the same time of an accident would be named *Kotsi* ‘danger/accident’, or *Tsietsi* ‘accident’ and such naming practice serves as documentation of events in the family and society (Guma, 2001:269).

Guma (2001) also notes that a great number of Basotho names reveal their social and cultural experiences, such as in the case where several deaths might have occurred in the same family. In this case, a newborn could be given a name that is supposed to have an opposite intention from its literal interpretation. The name would be drawn from natural entities like animals. For example, from an animal name *Polomashwashe* ‘alligator’ a name-giver would derive a boy’s name *Polo*, while from *Ntja* ‘dog’ a name for a girl *Moselantja* ‘dog’s tail’ could be derived. Guma (2001:270) explains that

This expression of lived-in experience through nature is extended to names denoting an unusual birthplace; delayed birth; children born out of wedlock and those of uncertain paternity; denoting patience, endurance or perseverance; names referring to social disharmony such as in Lekgotla (court of law); problems or dissatisfaction with the bride-wealth or marriage; and those names which refer to personal qualities.

Guma (2001) also asserts that in the Sotho culture, the usage of teknonymous names is connected with the institution of marriage. They are used to identify and address someone by using their child’s name. This assists in prohibiting the use of precise names/words related to the personal name of the father-in-law as well as certain forms of forbidden behaviours. A married woman is also assigned a teknonymous name for the in-laws to address her by so that they avoid her maiden name. The husband must also call his wife by the given teknonymous name, particularly in the presence of any family member and in the public domain.

Possa-Mogoera (2020) examined Basotho names bestowed on illegitimate, rejected, abandoned and unwelcomed children who possess names that are bad. She discovered the names given and the meanings they express. The author claims that Basotho name-givers exercise their supremacy to mock, shame and express their displeasure by giving

people names. The study found that the names reveal various nuances. Some names indicate that the child was not well received, and the mother is interrogated. Some names ridicule the mother while others reflect that the child was neglected from birth. There are also names that reflect that the father denied paternity resulting in the child being rejected. Other names show uncertainty and surprise about the child, meanwhile there are those that only state the place where the newborn was conceived by the mother. Possa-Mogoera concluded that naming a child is misused by those with authority among the Basotho to ill-treat the child or the mother. Children are dragged into parents' affairs through naming which has negative effects on them.

Mandende (2009) in a study titled 'A study of Tshivenda personal names' investigated the morphological composition of personal names, their meanings, and the reasons why people select specific personal names for children. The author reports that many personal names in Tshivenda are unisex and they are given to individuals irrespective of gender or sexuality. This class of names is referred to as neutral such as *Mulalo* 'Peace', *Tshililo* 'Weeping or Lamentation' and *Lufuno* 'Love' (Mandende, 2009:156). Some names are gender specific. The female names begin with prefixes [Nya-] and [Nwa-] while other names denote the male gender and begin with prefixes [Ne-] and [Ra-]. The names are made up of various parts of speech in the language. They are mainly derived from verbs while some are taken from the qualitative, nouns, copulative, pronoun, interrogative phrase or compound negative construction. When these various word categories are employed to create personal names, they may reflect societal issues as well as give gender-related names.

Mandende (2009) also noted that Tshivenda naming practices were influenced by the Vhavenda's encounter with Europeans at the end of the 19th century. The Vhavenda met the Europeans in a variety of settings, such as places of worship, schools and workplaces. After independence in South Africa, Vhavenda like many Africans began to give their children African names. These names reflect political, economic, social and religious issues of the people who are involved in the naming process.

Neethling (2004) in a study titled 'Name choice among the Xhosa of South Africa' claims that first names in Xhosa have semantically clear meanings. The author presents the following most prevalent categories of motives for naming a child in the Xhosa culture:

**Expectations/Aspirations:** Names given out of this motive represent the name-givers' expectations or aspirations for the newborn. Names under this category are commonly those that express good human character, behaviour and attributes. Parents usually give their children pleasant names in the hope that they would honour the wish and demonstrate the desired characteristics or personality traits (Neethling, 2004:1).

**Gratitude to God/Ancestors:** Name-givers name their children when they want to thank God, either the Christian God, *uThixo* or *uQamata* for they feel indebted to Him as they believe that He has an impact on individuals in their everyday lives. Naming a child could also be intended to thank ancestors and to acknowledge them for being kind to the parents. A name can never thank both God and the ancestors at the same time (Neethling, 2004:1).

**Composition/Extension of the Family:** Name-givers may give children names that either express satisfaction or displeasure about the composition of the family pertaining to the number of children they have or their gender in the household. Normally, name-givers use names that overtly express the child's gender (Neethling, 2004:3).

**Circumstances around Birth:** Events or experiences around the birth of a child inspire creative and generally amusing names. The looks of the baby may inspire the creation of a name. However, it is the uncommon, remarkable, and unexpected circumstances that bring about intriguing names (Neethling, 2004:3).

**Death, Survival and Consolation:** Name-givers may be prompted to issue unpleasant names to children born after the death of another child. It is usually disappointment and hopelessness caused by the misfortunes of miscarriage and the death of a child that

compel parents to bestow on their children negative names that seem to be meaningless and disparaging (Neethling, 2004:4).

**Commemorative Names:** A name-giver can name a newborn to commemorate a deceased important family member, a prominent person or friend. In isiXhosa culture, people are given names that commemorate significant events and respected people. Some parents commemorate and honour their Christian religion by retrieving names from the Bible and giving them to their newborns (Neethling, 2004:5).

**Derogatory/Negative Names:** Some Xhosa names arise from bad experiences of the parents or the name-giver which result in children being named with negative names. The mishaps lead to derogative Xhosa names bestowed on newborns (Neethling, 2004:6).

De Klerk and Bosch (1996) surveyed naming practices in Xhosa, Afrikaans and English linguistic groups in the Eastern Cape province of South Africa. They determined that differences exist between these groups in the naming of newborn children. In Xhosa societies the parents or the grandmothers of the child are the main name-givers. They give meaningful names to their children. However, some name-givers merely choose a name for a child because they 'like it' or like how the name sounds, while others select names for commemorative purposes. The authors also discovered that, unlike in the past, it was now common for parents to deliberate about a suitable name to be given to their child long before the baby is born. Among Afrikaans speakers, it was ascertained that most name-givers follow a tradition whereby grandparents are honoured by bestowing their names on the children. Other name-givers choose names that are beautiful and which they like for their children while there are a few names that are derived from magazines and movies. Afrikaans speakers also name children after nonfamily members and nonrelatives. Among English speakers, some choose standard English names for the sake of liking them while others give names to commemorate something, especially to their first-born male child.

Koopman (2002) argues that the Euro-Western concept of a name is generally ‘a label’ or ‘a tag’ only to be employed to address/refer to a person. However, in African societies, there are several reasons for giving names. Koopman (2002:34) points out that “in Zulu societies the reason for name giving is directly linked to the underlying meaning of the name, and the name-bearer is well aware of the meaning of his/her name”.

Koopman (2002:34) distinguishes African personal names as follows:

- Names referring to the structure of the family, where we find reference to the sex of the child, the number and spacing of the children and twins
- Names referring to the perceived role of God in the birth
- Names referring to ‘state of mind’ of the parents, including feelings of love, pride and happiness, and injunctions of the child
- Names referring to the circumstances of the birth, including the birth itself, wider circumstances, and friction in the family.
- Names referring to the wider clan, including ancestral spirits, clan membership, and the custom of *ilobolo*.

Dickens (1985) examined Western influences on Zulu personal naming practices and found that the naming was affected by the arrival of White settlers in South Africa. Western ways of living and tendencies like religious practices such as baptism in which a black person acquired an English name was a factor, among others, that influenced Zulu people to adopt Western names. Schooling, education, employment, urbanisation and civilisation perpetuated Western influence on Zulu naming as black people assumed Western names.

Dickens (1985) also established that a Zulu person ordinarily had three names: a home name *igama lasekhaya*, a European/ baptismal/ school/ town name *igama lesilungu/ lombhabhatiso/ leskolo/ lasedolobheni* and a personal praise name *isithakazelo* in that order. However, people who adopted the Western naming, only had one type of name. The study ascertained that names of Zulu origin had a rich history as they portrayed the circumstances around the birth of the child as naming was informed by various factors. Some names were of religious nature, some derived from historical events that occurred locally or abroad, and others were taken from names of flowers and places. Some names came from Western moral values and judicial systems (a name like ‘Justice’ belongs to

this category), while there were names reflecting royalty such as places and stations. Interestingly, some of these names were bestowed on the black people by the Whites.

Furthermore, there were other names of Zulu origin that a person could acquire such as a personal praise name *izithopo* or a nickname *izidhlaliso*. These names reflected socialisation relations between the owner of the name and his/her peers in the community. The use of these names was exclusively between peers, whereas other people were supposed to use the home name. A person could also be given a *giya* name which was a name given to a warrior for showcasing his dancing skills (Dickens, 1985).

Suzman (1994) in her study of Zulu personal naming practices determined that in Zulu culture children are given names that indicate values and attributes contained in society. Giving of names to children was traditionally the responsibility of grandfathers and fathers. In the past, children were bestowed with two names; a first name called 'a home name' and an English name known as a 'school name'. The first names which were in Zulu indicated various social traits related to the child's birth circumstances. Today, Zulu children are still given two names with meanings and these names originate from the social framework of the name-givers.

Ngubane (2000) in his study of Zulu personal names aimed at analysing names to identify differences and similarities so that he could measure the shift away from traditional/common naming practices. Generally, names are given to children as soon as they are born or shortly afterwards in African communities. The newborn's father or mother usually bestows the name on the baby. The primary objective of naming is to prevent one individual from being mistaken for someone else and names are the primary means of identifying individuals. People are commonly named in their language for the purpose of easier communication and identification. Cultural and religious beliefs, and traditions of the name-giving community are practically linked to the names. It is also possible for parents to choose a name that is completely strange to their own culture because of a variety of life circumstances. A parent may choose a 'foreign name' out of personal preference or for political reasons (Ngubane, 2000:2).

Zulu children have historically been named primarily according to events that occurred during the maternity of the mother as well as communal events. Traditionally, the father would name his child seven days after delivery. In Zulu culture, naming ceremonies do not exist. The father can only consult additional family members in the home to help him decide on the name of the child (Ngubane, 2000:68).

Ngubane (2000) also discovered a transformation in the naming system among the Zulu people. The main cause of the shift in naming was cultural and language change. These changes emanate from European influence on the culture of the Zulu. The adoption of Christianity also brought changes in the naming system as converts adopted names which were associated with their religion as a symbol of new life. Another shift in the naming practices is the gender of name-givers. Customarily, name-givers in Zulu culture were males especially the father of the child. In today's societies there has been a shift, both the father and the mother can share the responsibility of naming a child. In some cases the mother is the only name-giver (Ngubane, 2000:147-148).

According to Ngubane and Thabethe (2013:2) naming in Zulu is understood as an important exercise of bestowing a symbol of identity on a child. Personal names provide identities that are both cultural and individualised. They preserve a personal heritage and identity, transferring them to generations. As a result, names tend to be an expansion of societal structure and social life of the people who use them. In Zulu culture, children were only given names that were in the isiZulu language. The names had recognised social and cultural meanings until the arrival of Christianity and colonialism which required of them to have at least one English name.

Research on naming in Siswati, especially on personal naming is still at its infant stage. Few scholars have investigated Siswati personal names. Two scholars were found to have embarked on studies of personal naming in Siswati: Dlamini (2004) and Mazibuko (2015). Other scholars focused on other types of naming and have been included in this literature to demonstrate the infancy stage of studies in naming practices in Siswati.

Dlamini (2004) noted that there are different reasons for giving people names. In most cases a name of an individual portrays the situation surrounding his/her birth. She highlights that only the elderly family members, usually the parents of the baby, are responsible for giving the child a name. The names given to children are used as identities in society from birth onwards.

Mazibuko (2015) focused only on names given by parents and conducted a morpho-semantic analysis of names. She discovers that most Siswati names originate from Zulu words, compound nouns, and Zulu phrases. Personal name giving in Siswati has changed over time and names of young ones differ from those of elders both morphologically and semantically.

Masuku (1999) examined reasons which make people name their taxis. She observes that some taxi owners give clan names to their taxis because they show gratitude to their ancestors for giving them the idea to establish their taxi business. Others use their personal names as names that associate them with the taxis they possess.

Dube (2008) analysed cattle names morphologically and observes that in Swaziland cows are given names by their owners and herdsmen. In most cases, cattle names are associated with the physical features of the cow such as skin colour, horn shape and its character.

Matfunjwa (2009) stated that names of grocery shops carry meanings which denote the name-giver's beliefs, hopes, fears and philosophy. The naming of grocery shops is important among the Swazi people. The name of a grocery shop is used for distinct identity which makes one grocery shop different from others. He further posits that names of grocery shops allude to the background of the business and the reasons for establishing the business. Hence, it is the responsibility of a shop owner to name his/her grocery shop.

Mngometulu (2015) observed that bus station names are coined by people living in the areas where the stations are found. The bus station names refer to the area and maintain mutual intelligibility between members of the society. Most bus station names are locatives and are formed based on historical occurrences, physical description and character of people living in the area.

In her research, Ncongwane (2015) collected and classified tree names. She establishes that a tree is named after the fruit it produces, from the use of the tree, according to its physical looks, on the basis of its characteristics and the shape it takes as it grows. She also outlines the geographical region in which the trees grow in Swaziland and their general use in society.

From the research done so far, no study has been devoted to the pragmatic analysis of Siswati naming practices. It is evident that this study is a valuable contribution to the study of naming practices in Swazi culture from a pragmatic perspective, that is, in showing how emaSwati use naming in conveying messages to their interlocutors.

### **2.3 Conclusion**

This chapter investigated research done on various aspects of naming patterns and practices in different societies globally and locally. Linguists have explored and analysed how personal names are bestowed and the factors that influence naming in their communities. It has emerged from the literature discussed in this chapter that research in Siswati naming practices is still in its infancy and a lot more still needs to be done. Although this study on the pragmatic analysis of naming in Siswati is only scratching the surface it will be filling a scholarly gap on Siswati naming practices.

## **CHAPTER 3**

### **RESEARCH DESIGN, METHODOLOGY AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK**

#### **3.1 Introduction**

This chapter focuses on the research design and methodology, and the theoretical framework applicable to this study. Research methods employed to collect and analyse data are overtly deliberated on and justification for employing such methods is explained. The theoretical model engaged to analyse the naming practices in Siswati is also discussed. The discussion first explores various types of research and the research design applied in the study. This is followed by research methodology, and the methods that were used in this study, including the research techniques for collecting and analysing data, and the theoretical framework underpinning the arguments. The chapter concludes with a review of reflexivity, reliability and validity of qualitative research, as well as how these conditions were accomplished in the current study.

#### **3.2 Types of research**

Kothari (2004) and Creswell (2009) outline the following types of research: descriptive, analytical, applied, fundamental, quantitative, qualitative and mixed-method research. The following subsections will briefly provide information on these types of research.

##### **3.2.1 Descriptive and analytical research**

Descriptive research consists of fact-finding investigations of various types and surveys. The primary goal of descriptive research is to describe current conditions and circumstances. Because the researcher does not influence any factors, this research approach is primarily concerned with reporting what has occurred or is now occurring (Kothari, 2004:2). Descriptive research may also be described as an approach that is applied to effectively explain an established issue or phenomena. The basic purpose

of descriptive research is to analyse situations in a systematic way. Surveys, qualitative studies, content analysis and correlational studies are examples of descriptive research. (Atmowardoyo, 2018:198). On the other hand, analytical research entails examining scientific facts which are already available publicly in order to produce a rigorous analysis of such information (Kothari, 2004:2).

### **3.2.2 Applied and fundamental research**

Applied research refers to seeking solutions to a particular issue that a person, community, industry, or company is experiencing (Mishra and Alok, 2017:3). Therefore, the primary goal of applied research is to identify and find a solution to an urgent issue confronting a society, people, or an industrial/business enterprise (Kothari, 2004:3). Applied research is also carried out to address real-world issues, as opposed to research conducted to establish a theory or to broaden fundamental knowledge (<https://dictionary.apa.org/applied-research>), whereas fundamental research is primarily focused on explanations and theory formation (Kothari, 2004:3). This type is also called basic research or pure research in which research is carried out to gain a better insight into a phenomenon, test a theory, or advance knowledge (<https://dictionary.apa.org/basic-research>).

### **3.2.3 Conceptual and empirical research**

Conceptual research is mainly concerned with certain abstract concepts and theories. It is generally used by intellectuals and philosophers to generate original concepts or re-evaluate already established ideas. Meanwhile, empirical research is typically based only on experiences and observations, with little consideration for theories and concepts. It is a data-driven study that results in findings that can be validated by observations and experiments (Kothari, 2004:4).

### **3.2.4 Quantitative research**

Quantitative research is concerned with calculating the magnitude or degree of an entity or phenomenon. This research is concerned with describing quantifiable or calculable occurrences (Kothari, 2004:3). According to Goertzen (2017:12-13), quantitative research has the features as outlined below:

- It deals with numbers to assess information.
- Data can be measured and quantified.
- It aims to be objective.
- Findings can be evaluated using statistical analysis.
- It represents complex problems through variables.
- Results can be summarised, compared, or generalised.

Moreover, quantitative research is an approach for examining correlations between variables in order to test specific theories or hypotheses. As a result, the variables could be measured by utilising measurable techniques to assess numerical data (Creswell, 2009:4). Muijs (2004:3) emphasises that “quantitative research is based on numerical data analysed statistically.”

### **3.2.5 Qualitative research**

Yin (2011:7) presents five characteristics of qualitative research summarised below:

- Qualitative research provides an opportunity to investigate the essence of participants' way of life in a normal setting and under natural conditions. A researcher can study the uninterrupted people's existence where they live and can see behaviour patterns in the natural environment.
- Qualitative research varies from other research types due to its capacity to speak to the perspectives and points of view of the members in an examination. Catching their point of view might be a noteworthy reason for a qualitative investigation. In this way, the occasions and thoughts rising out of qualitative research can speak to the implications given to genuine occasions by the individuals who live them, the qualities, predispositions, or significance held by the investigators.

- Qualitative research is also able to cover background circumstances and surroundings including economic, social, cultural, political, and other natural conditions within which individuals' lives happen. These conditions tend to influence people's way of living which conversely other types of research struggle to capture.
- Qualitative research offers an accurate and deep understanding of either current or rising conceptions that could assist to elucidate people's social conduct. A researcher can have a social intuition of participants when carrying out a qualitative inquiry.
- Qualitative research attempts to gather, incorporate, and present information from an assortment of sources as a major aspect of the investigation. Conclusions of a study are founded after intensive use of data from multi-sources of corroboration. Therefore, various tools are used to collect data in qualitative research which enables the study to cover the complexities of settings and participants.

Qualitative research also includes viewpoint and attitude which are meant to understand how individuals behave and what people believe about a certain issue. Qualitative research is particularly essential in behavioral sciences, in which the goal would be to uncover those basic motivations of human action. Such a study examines many elements that push individuals to behave in a certain manner, causing them to enjoy or despise certain objects (Kothari, 2004:3).

Furthermore, qualitative research is used because it provides an opportunity to carry out in-depth studies about a wide range of topics and can be used where other research types can be constrained thus providing more room in selecting appropriate topics (Yin, 2011:6).

In qualitative research, an investigator can analyse and handle information while preserving the contextual information and intricacy of the data, which is a significant benefit. Qualitative research employs optimal procedures for probing issues when anticipatory data reduction would avert research findings. Additionally, qualitative

research facilitates the creation of innovative ways of looking at existing data in research (Atieno, 2009:14). In qualitative research, qualitative methods that are used in most cases are useful to achieve an understanding and interpretation of people's experiences as well as reasons why they undertake certain actions. It is through qualitative methods that a researcher acquires insights into the settings of existing problems thus creating hypotheses. The use of qualitative research methods normally yields detailed and rich results that provide concepts and ideas that enlighten the research (MacDonald and Headlam, 2008:33).

From the multiple definitions, one can describe 'qualitative research' as a scientific investigation of human essence and existence in their socio-cultural societies. This type of research stems from conducting a study in the human habitat to grasp how phenomena happen in a natural territory.

This study is a pragmatic exploration of naming practices in Siswati in which it investigated how personal names are bestowed on newborn children at birth within Swazi societies, that is, the natural setting of the participants under inquiry and sought to answer questions about the speech acts involved in the naming of emaSwati. It is against this backdrop that the study falls under qualitative research. Hancock et al. (2007:7) explain that the goal of qualitative research is to explain social phenomena. Its role is to enable us to understand our social environment as well as the reasons things are in their ordinary state. In addition, qualitative research is concerned with the social aspects of the globe and attempts to answer questions including why individuals conduct themselves in a certain manner, how beliefs and sentiments have been created, how humans are influenced by activities that happen in their environment, and why and how certain traditions and cultural practices are established and have evolved in a specific manner. Hence, this type of research is appropriate in investigating why and how the Siswati speaking community uses names to address their interlocutors as well as the circumstances that inform naming.

### **3.2.6 Mixed methods**

Mixed methods research is a strategy for an investigation that consolidates both qualitative and quantitative structures. Both methods are blended into a research study. Therefore, the utilisation of the two methodologies pair with the goal that the general quality of the examination is more noteworthy than any other type of research method (Creswell, 2009:4).

Mixed methods are to a certain extent a new methodology that uses the logical amalgamation of qualitative and quantitative information in a solitary inquiry or research. It is believed that incorporating the two methods enables holistic and synergistic exploitation of data as opposed to using one method (Wisdom and Creswell, 2013:1). Therefore, one would say that in mixed methods research, a researcher uses quantitative as well as qualitative tools to collect and analyse data with the aid of incorporating two methods.

## **3.3 Research design and methodology**

### **3.3.1 Research design**

Burns and Grove (2003:195) explain that the term ‘research design’ refers to a plan for carrying out a study that maintains efficiency and management of issues that might compromise the overall accuracy of research results. It enables an investigator to organise and carry out a study in a manner that the expected results are obtained, improving the possibilities of collecting information that is relevant to the real-world situation. To Yin (2011:75) research designs are rational plans. These plans include the connections between the research problem, the data to be gathered, and the procedures for data analysis whereby the study's results address the desired research problems. In research design, the rationale also contributes to the validity and accuracy of a study. Polit et al. (2001:167) also describe a research design as an investigator’s total strategy for addressing questions of a research as well as verifying a study hypothesis. Creswell

(2009:5) concurs that research design is a framework or concept for carrying out research that incorporates philosophy, particular methodology, and approaches of analysis. Parahoo (1997:142) on the other hand explains that a research design is “a plan that describes how, when and where data are to be collected and analysed”.

From the various definitions presented by scholars, a research design is viewed as a detailed intention or a map of the study that shows how a researcher embarks on carrying out and coordinating the scientific study by aiming to find specific solutions to the research problems.

This study explored naming practices in Siswati from a pragmatic approach. According to Kaburise (2004:18), a pragmatic analysis entails evaluating the purpose and meaning of an utterance within the context of a specific event. As a result, the study followed a qualitative research design.

Atieno (2009:14) outlines the following claims about qualitative designs:

- Qualitative researchers are concerned primarily with the process, rather than outcomes or products.
- Qualitative researchers are interested in meaning, how people make sense of their lives, experiences, and structures of the world.
- The qualitative researcher is the primary instrument for data collection and analysis. Data are mediated through this human instrument, questionnaires or machines.
- Qualitative research involves fieldwork. The researcher physically goes to the people, setting, site, or institution to observe or record behaviour in its natural setting.
- Qualitative research is descriptive in that the researcher is interested in the process, meaning, and understanding gained through words or pictures.
- The process of qualitative research is inductive in that the researcher builds abstractions, concepts, hypotheses, and theories from details.

### **3.3.2 Research methodology**

Scholars describe research methodology in various ways. Research methodology is a broader term used in research that describes the design, setting, sample, methodological limitation and procedures applied to collect and examine data in research (Burns and Grove, 2003:488). Polit and Hungler (2004:233) agree that research methodology entails numerous approaches and systems in which data is acquired, “organised, and analysed for research purposes”. Each methodology used is determined by the essence of the researched topic. Kothari (2004:8) supports that research methodology is a technique for solving a research issue in a systematic manner. It could be viewed as a means of examining how scientific research is conducted. In research methodology, researchers look at the many processes that a researcher engages in while examining a research issue, as well as the reasoning underpinning them.

A research methodology is a collection of clear and rational procedures suitable for complementing each other, reflecting research questions, and providing data and results that correspond to the researcher's objectives (Henning et al., 2004:36). Jackson et al. (2007:22) also concur that research methodology comprises of pinpointed reasons and substantiations for selecting precise methods of investigation to solve a research problem. Moreover, Jackson et al. (2007:23) maintain that methodologies offer various ways to investigate a problem, procedures to structure the problem, and how to design suitable data collection techniques and to establish systematic connections involving the research question, data collection, research analysis, findings and conclusions made.

One of the advantages of research methodology is the provision of tools to conduct research (Igwenagu, 2016:5). This means that in research methodology, the investigator embarks on finding tools that are suitable for collecting corpora to be used in the study and identifies tools for analysing the data. It is in the research methodology that a researcher will scrutinise and select relevant tools for collecting and analysing data that will best yield the desired results.

From the several definitions of research methodology given above, one deduces that research methodology involves planned scientific and plausible procedures that are employed in a study that help a researcher to achieve his/her research objectives and rationally solve the problems of the study.

Since this study is a pragmatic exploration of naming practices in Siswati, its research methodology was informed by the following research questions:

- What messages are expressed by emaSwati through naming?
- What types of personal names do emaSwati give to their newborn children?
- Under which contexts are personal names bestowed in Swazi culture?
- What attitudes are attached to some personal names in Swazi culture?
- What are the social, cultural, religious and political traits embedded in Siswati names?

Therefore, the research methodology is significant as it gives a structure of the overall study in terms of the tools used for collecting and analysing data, and how the investigation was carried out to provide us with valid results. In the following sections, qualitative research methods that were used in the study are discussed.

### **3.4 Research techniques**

Since this is a qualitative study, qualitative research techniques were used to collect data, analyse and find research outcomes. Research techniques refer to a set of tools that are employed in conducting scientific research. These are scientific and systematic tools that are employed by a researcher during research inquiry to obtain and analyse research information (Kothari, 2004:8). Research tools can also be described as means or instruments for gathering information (MacDonald and Headlam, 2008:3).

Walliman (2011:29) refers to research tools as “practical techniques used to carry out research”. These are the tools that make it possible to collect information and analyse it (Jackson et al., 2007:22). For his part, Crotty (1998:3) describes research tools as “the

techniques or procedures used to gather and analyse data related to some research questions or hypotheses”.

Research tools can therefore be described as instruments and apparatus that an investigator selects based on his research questions and objectives to utilise in collecting and examining data so that valid and reliable results and conclusions are achieved for the study. In the following subsections, instruments that were used to collect data are described in detail.

### **3.4.1 Data collecting tools, techniques or instruments**

Yin (2011:147) states that “collecting refers to the compiling or accumulating of objects, documents, artefacts and archival records related to your study topic”. Kothari (2004:96) presents numerous research tools of collecting primary data such as observation, interviews, thorough questionnaires, and schedules. The most prevalent tools for collecting data that are used in qualitative studies are observations, interviews, questionnaires, and desktop approaches.

#### **3.4.1.1 Purposive sampling**

To identify and select participants for the study, the researcher used a purposive sampling method. In purposive sampling, participants are chosen because they provide representations and manifestations of the subject of interest. The intention to use sampling is to gain knowledge concerning the phenomena being researched and to obtain rich information that is useful in answering the research questions of the study (Patton, 2002:40). Etikan et al. (2016:2-3) also explain that purposive sampling is the intentional picking of a respondent in research depending on the traits an individual has. Generally, the investigator determines what requires to be understood and then seeks out individuals that are keen to supply data concerning experiences and awareness they have on the research topic. Purposive sampling is intended to focus on individuals with certain attributes related to the research that would assist in solving the questions of the research.

In this study, informants from various rural and urban areas that had names that are directive speech acts namely commands, requests, and interrogatives, were identified and selected for data collection. Name-bearers who were over the age of 18 years were given either a questionnaire to answer or interviewed by the researcher. Interview questions were identical to the questions on the questionnaire so that the same information was obtained on naming. Interviews were conducted in instances where access to respondents was easy while questionnaires were used in circumstances where access to respondents posed a problem especially meeting them face to face. In some cases, name-givers of speech acts under investigation were interviewed on behalf of name-bearers especially in situations where the name-bearer was underage to conform with the ethics of this research. In other instances, the name-giver was asked to provide information because his/her child as the name-bearer did not know how his/her name came about. These participants were selected because their names were relevant to the research questions of the study and the researcher wanted to obtain rich information for analysis as far as naming is concerned.

By using the purposive sampling method, the researcher was able to collect personal names only given at birth which were directive speech acts. The purpose of collecting the corpora from sources was to obtain a general and unbiased representation of personal names in Siswati for analysis. Using the research tools namely questionnaires and interviews for collecting data also assisted the researcher to gather valuable information on Siswati names that are directive speech acts and finding clarity on why specific names were given.

Below is a discussion of the research tools used to collect data in this study and justifications for choosing them as well as how these tools helped in collecting rich and useful data for the study.

### **3.4.1.2 Questionnaire**

Pandey and Pandey (2015:58) describe a questionnaire as “a form prepared and distributed to secure responses to certain questions. It is a device for securing answers to questions by using a form that the respondent will fill himself”. A questionnaire is used to obtain data from broadly scattered sources hence it is regarded as a vital instrument for data collection. This instrument is usually utilised when it is impossible to personally meet all the people whom you desire to collect information from (Pandey and Pandey, 2015).

Pandey and Pandey (2015:58) outline the following advantages of the questionnaire:

- it is very economical
- it is not time-consuming
- it covers the research in wide areas
- it is very suitable for a special type of responses

Kothari (2004:100) states that “a questionnaire consists of a number of printed or typed questions in a definite order on a form or set of forms”. Once a questionnaire has been compiled, it is usually sent to respondents, who are asked to read, comprehend and write their responses on the form on their own.

According to Kothari (2004:101), the questionnaire has the following advantages:

- it is free from the bias of the interviewer; answers are in respondents' own words
- respondents have adequate time to give well thought out answers
- respondents, who are not easily approachable, can also be reached conveniently
- large samples can be made use of and thus results can be made more dependable and reliable.

In this study, a total of 150 questionnaires were personally issued to participants in some rural and urban areas. Eighty of the questionnaires were given to Siswati name-bearers over the age of 18 years while the other 70 were given to name-givers. Participants were asked to answer all questions willingly. The questions that were asked were both in Siswati and English as these are the official languages of Eswatini. A participant could

choose either the Siswati or the English questionnaire after having read and signed the consent form. However, some questionnaires were not completed fully by informants which rendered them unusable, and such information from those 'spoiled' questionnaires was not used for data analysis. As a result, the researcher ended up receiving less data than what was anticipated. The questions presented in appendix A and B were posed to participants.

However, a questionnaire can only be used to gather information from literate and cooperative respondents. Some respondents may not respond to all questions thus resulting in omission and incomplete data (Kothari, 2004:101). Some of these disadvantages associated with the use of questionnaires were complemented by the utilisation of interviews because when interviews were used, the educational levels or literacy of respondents did not matter as questions were asked in the respondents' mother tongue.

The use of questionnaires was crucial in the study because it enabled the researcher to verify the authenticity of Siswati names. He was able to identify the different types of speech acts of names given to emaSwati and establish reasons why children were given such names. The questions also helped in establishing the meanings of the names and the attitudes people attach to some of their names.

### **3.4.1.3 The interview**

Kothari (2004:97) states that an interview method "involves the presentation of oral-verbal stimuli and reply in terms of oral-verbal response". Pandey and Pandey (2015:59) explain that "an interview is a two-way method which permits an exchange of ideas and information". Therefore, in an interview, the researcher engages a respondent in the form of a dialogue in which questions are asked and the respondent answers.

The interview method is mainly utilised in qualitative research because of its merits over the other methods. Interviews are typically used to investigate participants' emotions,

feelings and experiences, and are suitable in research that deals with sensitive issues pertaining to human experiences (Gill et al., 2008:292). Therefore, using interviews in this study assisted the researcher to find out how name-bearers feel about their names and their emotions concerning those names they were given at birth.

On the use of the interview method, Kothari (2004) reaffirms that interviews are specifically appropriate for in-depth research. Thus, the pragmatic exploration of naming practices in Siswati is indeed an intensive investigation that calls for the utilisation of the interview method to explore naming practices.

Jackson et al. (2007:25) validate that “interviewing is a set of techniques for generating data from individuals and groups utilising structured, semi-structured, or unstructured questioning formats”. Structured interviews are orally administered questionnaires whereby orderly questions are asked by a researcher and the interviewee responds to those questions (Gill et al., 2008). Semi-structured interviews include a series of important questions that serve to outline the themes to be investigated in pursuing a concept or answer in greater depth while unstructured interviews do not adhere to several predefined questions or conventional methods of capturing data (Kothari, 2004:98).

In this study, the researcher used semi-structured interviews due to their flexibility and suitability in collecting valid research information. In most cases, semi-structured, open-ended, and informal interviews are chosen because they permit much flexibility and responsiveness to topics and issues for both interviewer and the interviewee when data is gathered (Jackson et al., 2007:25).

For interviewing purposes, 30 respondents took part in the collection of data. The interviews were conducted in both urban and rural areas so that crucial information from emaSwati speaking communities was collected. Respondents represented both name-givers and name-bearers. The interviews were conducted mainly in Siswati in order to accommodate both the literate and illiterate informants. Bhandarkar et al. (2009:203) posited that using interviews as a data collecting tool is beneficial since the language

used in an interview can be tailored to the interviewee's abilities or literacy. Thus, avoiding misunderstandings of questions by the participants and obtaining misleading answers is relatively easy. Firstly, permission to record the participant before conducting the semi-structured interview was sought from the participant. An audio recorder was employed to record the informant while conducting the interview. The interviewer initiated the conversation by asking questions and the informant responded. The researcher also took notes while the participant gave information. The recordings were then manually transcribed and data for analysis was availed.

The interview method has numerous advantages over other primary data collecting techniques which justifies why the researcher chose this method. When compared to other procedures, personal interviews provide more accurate information since the interviewer is there on the spot and can clarify obviously erroneous or irrelevant replies by clarifying the questions to the interviewee. If the informant gives false answers on purpose, the interviewer may verify them by rephrasing the questions. Moreover, the interviewer generally has some influence over who will answer the questions. As a result, he chooses his informants based on their traits and in accordance with the study topic. Additionally, an interview is a better method for eliciting information on complicated, emotionally charged topics or investigating the feelings behind a presented viewpoint (Bhandarkar et al., 2009:2003).

Kothari (2004:98) presents the following merits of using interviews to collect information:

- more information in greater depth can be obtained
- it can be made to yield an almost perfect sample of the general population
- personal information can be obtained easily
- samples can be controlled more effectively as there arises no difficulty of the missing returns; non-response generally remains very low
- the interviewer can usually control which person will answer the question
- the interviewer may catch the informant off-guard and thus may elicit the most spontaneous reactions than would not be the case if the mailed questionnaire were used
- the language of the interviewer can be adapted to the ability or educational level of the person interviewed and misinterpretations concerning questions can be avoided

- the interviewer can collect supplementary information about the respondent's personal characteristics and environment which is often of great value in interpreting results.

It was against the backdrop of the advantages described above that the research opted to use the interviews for collecting data. Interviews as a tool to collect data suited this study by allowing the researcher to get a deeper insight into the naming practices in Siswati. It also made it possible for emaSwati from diverse backgrounds who possess directive speech act names, to participate in the study as questions were asked in Siswati which facilitated the gathering of research data in a normal socio-cultural location of the participants.

However, there are disadvantages in using interviews since they require a lot of time and are tedious. Sometimes particular participants could be difficult to contact which can lead to the information to be gathered being insufficient (Kothari, 2004). Based on the above-mentioned limitations of the interview, the researcher used questionnaires to complement the interviews. The questionnaires were sent to respondents who could not be reached easily for a face-to-face interview.

### **3.4.2 Data analysis**

LeCompte and Schensul (1999:3) define analysis as:

the process a researcher uses to reduce data to a story and interpretation. Data analysis is the process of reducing large amounts of collected data to make sense of them. The analysis of data reduces them to a more manageable term that permits ethnographers to tell a story about the people or group that is the focus of their research.

Data in this study were analysed manually. The researcher was the main instrument for data analysis. Data collected from interviews was manually transcribed. A total of 120 names collected from emaSwati name-givers and name-bearers was analysed by the researcher. The researcher first created a database where all the information collected about a specific name was stored. Then these names were examined to find common

themes and patterns among all the names. Once the names had been carefully scrutinised, they were grouped according to their types and their pragmatic relevance in Swazi culture was established. Therefore, names that share the same theme and that address identical hearers were grouped under one type.

The second step was examining the information given by informants to establish the messages conveyed by a specific name, that is, who is being addressed by the utterance or name given to a newborn child, the attitudes expressed by name-bearers regarding their specific names and the socio-cultural traits embedded in a particular name. After that, the researcher interpreted the data to extract meaningful information that addresses the questions of the research. Then findings on naming were presented. From the findings, subsequent conclusions were drawn on the overall naming practices in Siswati.

### **3.5 Theoretical framework**

This section discusses the theories that underpin the study. A theory is system of interrelated ideas or concepts which organises and explains information about social phenomena. The theory offers concepts, fundamental hypotheses, guides investigators to key issues, as well as recommends methods for analysing and interpreting data. It influences the way we perceive and approach a subject or issue (Neuman, 1994:35, 52).

Parahoo (1997) suggests that a theory is a description of observed occurrences. He further indicates that theories could be dismissed or updated at any moment, hence they are not rigid. Distinct theories could be used to describe similar occurrences. To Kerlinger (1973) as cited by Mouton and Marais (1996:142), a theory is a collection of interconnected definitions, constructs, as well as strategies that give a clear picture of an occurrence through identifying relationships among factors to predict or give an explanation about a specific phenomenon.

Mouton and Marais (1996:142) also suggest theories are characterised by their goal of understanding and interpreting phenomena. Therefore, theories clearly make statements

that sum up and systematise information in a specific area, and are put through testing, restructuring and amendment (Sarantakos, 1997:10). Theories also provide a systemic interpretation for findings that pertain to a certain area of life. They use concepts to explain observations, wherein the ideas are abstract components that describe categories of phenomena with a specific area of study (Babbie, 2010:45).

After considering how scholars explain the term ‘theory’, one deduces that theory is basically a way of explaining ideas based on observation of occurrences and making generalisations about what has been witnessed. The two theories that inform the present study are described below, namely, the systemic functional linguistic theory and the speech act theory.

### **3.5.1 Systemic Functional Linguistics**

Since naming in Siswati is mainly influenced by situational and social contexts, Systemic Functional Linguistics is suited to underpin the arguments that are presented in this discussion. Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL henceforth) as a field of study was pioneered by MAK Halliday in the 1960s as demonstrated by Halliday (1978 and 1994) and Halliday and Matthiessen (2004) who focused on the functions of language analysing it on a functional approach other than structural. SFL considers every text or speech as serving a specific purpose or intention as opposed to making mere conversation. Eggins (2004:11) argues that SFL pursues a functional-semantic approach in examining a language, that is, how speakers or language users use text or speech to express various meanings in a particular context. In SFL, the selection of words by the language user and the function they serve is of major interest for analysis. Scholars in SFL explore the usage of the language and determine the intentions/actions it achieves in social situations/contexts by conveying several meanings.

Eggins (2004:3) summarises theoretical claims that are made by scholars in SFL concerning language:

- that language use is functional

- that its function is to make meanings
- that meanings are influenced by social and cultural contexts in which they are exchanged
- that the process of using a language is a *semiotic* process, a process of making meanings by choosing appropriate words for specific functions.

Gee and Handford (2012) assert that SFL acknowledges the significant impact that language has on human beings and views the formation of meaning as a systematic exercise that is influenced by the situations or settings where language is spoken.

Systemic Linguistics (SL) which is a variation term for SFL is intensely interested in the purpose of the usage of a language. It is mainly rooted in the practical approach to language. Those who use SL continuously probe questions such as what is a speaker attempting to do with the language, what are the words and phrases available to assist the speaker, and on what premise do speakers settle on their decisions? (Trask, 2007:293).

This SFL theory applies to the study because it allows the researcher to explore the naming practices in Siswati based on a functional approach and on the basis that naming is largely determined by sociocultural contexts in which it takes place. Adopting SFL theory for the study provides for an understanding of the social function of language with regard to naming and helps in explicating the social, political, religious and economic traits exposed by naming practices in Swazi culture.

### **3.5.2 Speech act theory**

In this study, the speech act theory is adopted as a theory to underpin the analysis of personal names as utterances in which name-givers perform specific actions. Yule (1996:47) explains that “speech acts are actions performed via utterances”. This explanation assumes that when a speaker makes a speech, he/she is actually doing actions through the spoken words. Fromkin et al. (2007:560) posit that “a speech act is the action or intent that a speaker accomplishes when using a language in context, the meaning of which is inferred by hearers”. McGregor (2009:142) defines speech acts as

“actions speakers perform in uttering sentences including promising, requesting, questioning, commanding, warning, preaching, congratulating, laying bets, swearing and exclaiming”. Thus, a speech act involves the functions which a speaker performs when making an utterance.

Searle (1969:16) explains that “to speak a language is to perform speech acts”, for example, issuing assertions, commanding, questioning, promising, and other acts like predicting and referring. The importance of studying speech acts is that linguistic communication basically entails the performance of some acts since communication happens in specific contexts and conditions. Hence, the minimal units that make up communications are indeed speech acts.

The investigation on utterances commonly known as speech acts was initiated by JL Austin in a compilation of his lectures in 1955 which was later published as a book titled *How to do things with words* in 1962. This initiative was later developed by John Searle. Austin (1962:5-6) categorised utterances into two types namely “constatives and performatives”. Constatives are statements which can be regarded as either factual or untrue, while performatives are utterances that indicate an action in which a speaker does a certain action other than merely saying something. In performatives, the person making an utterance has a particular intention.

According to Austin (1962:14-15), there are certain conditions commonly called felicitous conditions which performative speech acts need to meet for them to be ‘smooth/happy’, that is, to be accepted:

- There must exist an accepted conventional procedure having a certain conventional effect, that procedure to include the uttering of certain words by certain persons in certain circumstances, and further, the particular persons and circumstances in a given case must be appropriate for the invocation of the particular procedure invoked.
- The procedure must be executed by all participants both correctly and completely.
- Where, as often, the procedure is designed for use by persons having certain thoughts or feelings, or for the inauguration of certain consequential conduct on the part of any participant, then a person participating in and so

invoking the procedure must in fact have those thoughts or feelings, and the participants must intend so to conduct themselves, and further must actually so conduct themselves subsequently.

Generally, three things can be performed through speech which can be classified as “locutionary acts, illocutionary acts, and perlocutionary acts” (Austin, 1962:108-109). A locutionary act is essentially like articulating a statement or utterance with a specific meaning and reference. Illocutionary acts are utterances that a speaker makes which have definite force such as warning, informing, ordering, and so on. Meanwhile, perlocutionary acts entail the results of performing an utterance or the achievement one gets after saying a particular utterance such as persuading, determining and convincing. These types of actions a speaker performs through speech are deliberate as he/she attempts to have the desired action (Austin, 1962:108-109).

According to Austin (1962:150-152) speech acts make use of performative verbs and they can be classified based on “their illocutionary force: verdictives, exercitives, commissives, behabitives, and expositives”, which are discussed below.

Verdictives are characterised by making a judgement or verdict, by a judge making an adjudication. They could be reckoning, appraisement or estimation. Verdictives in general give outcomes about an entity (Austin, 1962:150).

Exercitives are executions of authority, influence, right and power. Electing, warning, promoting, appointing, commanding, directing, ordering, and persuading, voting, encouraging and counselling are some examples of exercitives (Austin, 1962).

Commissives are characterised by promises and commitments in which a speaker is obliged to perform something. They even contain assertions and announcements of intent that are typically not promises such as taking one's side (Austin, 1962:150-151).

Behabitives are associated with sentiments, emotions, and social behaviour of individuals. Swearing, cursing, congratulating, asking for forgiveness, consoling, complimenting, and opposing are some examples of behabitives (Austin, 1962:151).

Expositives are typically expository as they explain or describe how speakers use words and how utterances suit in a conversation. Illustrations of expositives are ‘I argue’, ‘I concede’, ‘I illustrate’, ‘I assume’, ‘I postulate’ (Austin, 1962:152).

Searle (1976) cited by Levinson (1983:240) explains five typical actions a speaker can perform when making an utterance namely:

- representatives, which commit the speaker to the truth of the expressed proposition (paradigm cases: asserting, concluding, etc.)
- directives, which are attempts by the speaker to get the addressee to do something (paradigm cases: requesting, questioning)
- commissives, which commit the speaker to some future course of action (paradigm cases: promising, threatening, offering)
- expressives, which express a psychological state (paradigm cases: thanking, apologising, welcoming, congratulating)
- declarations, which effect immediate changes in the institutional state of affairs and which tend to rely on elaborate extra-linguistic institutions (paradigm cases: excommunicating, declaring war, christening, firing from employment)

For any type of speech act or illocutionary act/force to be accepted which is referred to as being felicitous in pragmatic circles, there are certain rules or conditions which an utterance should abide by. Searle (1969:66-67) described rules for these types of “illocutionary acts: request, assert, state (that), affirm”, order and command, “question, thank, advise, warn, greet, and congratulate”, which he presented in the following manner in Figure 1:

### Types of illocutionary act

		<i>Request</i>	<i>Assert, state (that), affirm</i>	<i>Question<sup>1</sup></i>
Types of rule	Propositional content	Future act <i>A</i> of <i>H</i> .	Any proposition <i>p</i> .	
	Preparatory	1. <i>H</i> is able to do <i>A</i> . <i>S</i> believes <i>H</i> is able to do <i>A</i> . 2. It is not obvious to both <i>S</i> and <i>H</i> that <i>H</i> will do <i>A</i> in the normal course of events of his own accord.	1. <i>S</i> has evidence (reasons, etc.) for the truth of <i>p</i> . 2. It is not obvious to both <i>S</i> and <i>H</i> that <i>H</i> knows (does not need to be reminded of, etc.) <i>p</i> .	1. <i>S</i> does not know ‘the answer’, i.e., does not know if the proposition is true, or, in the case of the propositional function, does not know the information needed to complete the proposition truly (but see comment below). 2. It is not obvious to both <i>S</i> and <i>H</i> that <i>H</i> will provide the information at that time without being asked.
	Sincerity	<i>S</i> wants <i>H</i> to do <i>A</i> .	<i>S</i> believes <i>p</i> .	<i>S</i> wants this information.
	Essential	Counts as an attempt to get <i>H</i> to do <i>A</i> .	Counts as an undertaking to the effect that <i>p</i> represents an actual state of affairs.	Counts as an attempt to elicit this information from <i>H</i> .
	Comment:	<i>Order</i> and <i>command</i> have the additional preparatory rule that <i>S</i> must be in a position of authority over <i>H</i> . <i>Command</i> probably does not have the ‘pragmatic’ condition requiring non-obviousness. Furthermore in both, the authority relationship infects the essential condition because the utterance counts as an attempt to get <i>H</i> to do <i>A</i> in virtue of the authority of <i>S</i> over <i>H</i> .	Unlike <i>argue</i> these do not seem to be essentially tied to attempting to convince. Thus “I am simply stating that <i>p</i> and not attempting to convince you” is acceptable, but “I am arguing that <i>p</i> and not attempting to convince you” sounds inconsistent.	There are two kinds of questions, (a) real questions, (b) exam questions. In real questions <i>S</i> wants to know (find out) the answer; in exam questions, <i>S</i> wants to know if <i>H</i> knows.
Types of rule	Propositional content	<i>Thank (for)</i>	<i>Advise</i>	<i>Warn</i>
	Preparatory	Past act <i>A</i> done by <i>H</i> . <i>A</i> benefits <i>S</i> and <i>S</i> believes <i>A</i> benefits <i>S</i> .	Future act <i>A</i> of <i>H</i> .	Future event or state, etc., <i>E</i> .
	Sincerity	<i>S</i> feels grateful or appreciative for <i>A</i> .	<i>S</i> believes <i>A</i> will benefit <i>H</i> .	<i>S</i> believes <i>E</i> is not in <i>H</i> 's best interest.
	Essential	Counts as an expression of gratitude or appreciation.	Counts as an undertaking to the effect that <i>A</i> is in <i>H</i> 's best interest.	Counts as an undertaking to the effect that <i>E</i> is not in <i>H</i> 's best interest.
	Comment:	Sincerity and essential rules overlap. Thanking is just expressing gratitude in a way that, e.g., promising is not just expressing an intention.	Contrary to what one might suppose advice is not a species of requesting. It is interesting to compare “advise” with “urge”, “advocate” and “recommend”. Advising you is not trying to get you to do something in the sense that requesting is. Advising is more like telling you what is best for you.	Warning is like advising, rather than requesting. It is not, I think, necessarily an attempt to get you to take evasive action. Notice that the above account is of categorical not hypothetical warnings. Most warnings are probably hypothetical: “If you do not do <i>X</i> then <i>Y</i> will occur.”
Types of rule	Propositional content	<i>Greet</i>	<i>Congratulate</i>	
	Preparatory	None.	Some event, act, etc., <i>E</i> related to <i>H</i> .	
	Sincerity	<i>S</i> has just encountered (or been introduced to, etc.) <i>H</i> .	<i>E</i> is in <i>H</i> 's interest and <i>S</i> believes <i>E</i> is in <i>H</i> 's interest.	
	Essential	None.	<i>S</i> is pleased at <i>E</i> .	
	Comment:	Counts as courteous recognition of <i>H</i> by <i>S</i> .	Counts as an expression of pleasure at <i>E</i> .	“Congratulate” is similar to “thank” in that it is an expression of its sincerity condition.

<sup>1</sup> In the sense of “ask a question” not in the sense of “doubt”.

**Figure 1: Types of illocutionary act (Adopted from Searle, 1969:67)**

Motsh (1980:155) noted that Searle's and Austin's theories are based on the assumptions that every utterance, statement, or sentence that is spoken in a specific situation is regarded as an action and these utterances must be examined to find the kind of actions known as speech acts and how the actions are expressed through the use of language. Therefore, in examining the types of speech acts, real contexts, or actual situations in which the actions are performed are important for understanding the functionality of utterances.

Yule (1996:53-54) also categorised five functionalities that are performed by speech acts namely "declarations", "representatives", "expressives", "directives" and "commissives":

- Declarations are those kinds of speech acts that change the world via their utterance. Representatives are those kinds of speech acts that state what the speaker believes to be the case or not.
- Expressives are those kinds of speech acts that state what the speaker feels. They express psychological states and can be statements of pleasure, pain, likes, dislikes, joy, or sorrow.
- Directives are those kinds of speech acts that speakers use to get someone else to do something. They express what the speaker wants. They are commands, orders, requests, suggestions.
- Commissives are those kinds of speech acts that speakers use to commit themselves to some future action. They express what the speaker intends. They are promises, threats, refusals, pledges, and, they can be performed by the speaker alone, or by the speaker as a member of a group.

Taking Yule's classification on the functions of speech acts, the study examined directive speech acts namely, commands, requests and questions. Since speech acts involve analysing linguistic communication (Searle, 1969), the researcher hypothesises that naming is a form of communication and name-givers perform some actions when issuing personal names. The names are utterances of certain messages and intentions by a speaker or a name-giver which are directed to a specific hearer. The name-bearer then attaches attitudes to these utterances in the form of names. Therefore, the speech act approach assists in exploring the illocutionary force of the name-givers, that is, their intention in giving a certain name to children and the perlocution, which is the effect of the actual words uttered, in this case, it is the name given to the child. The speech act theory

also aids the researcher to find out the contexts that influence naming and how such situations have an impact on a name given to a newborn child. Mey (2001:94) emphasises that it is imperative to consider the actual circumstance or situation in which a speech act is made since speech acts are completely reliant upon an overall context in which they are performed.

As a result, the speech act theory was adopted as the theory that underpins arguments made in the study concerning the naming patterns because it furnishes a platform to understand that names are acts and intentions that name-givers try to convey to hearers in the form of messages, either to the name-bearer or to someone else in a precise context. Through the speech act theory, the investigator attempted to understand that naming is performing an action, therefore, he investigated the messages that name-givers try to convey using the Siswati language in the context of Swazi culture.

### **3.6 Reflexivity in qualitative research**

In this qualitative study, the researcher was an important instrument for data collecting and interpretation. In successfully conducting the research, the investigator was not biased and did not influence the collection of data, analysis, and results of the study. He was aware that he had to be neutral in the collection of data, analysis, and presentation of the findings so that a true reflection of the naming patterns amongst emaSwati could be discovered. The procedure followed by the researcher in this study is what Symon and Cassel (2012:72) refer to as reflexivity which is “an awareness of the researcher role in the practice of research and the way this is influenced by the object of the research, enabling the researcher to acknowledge how he or she affects both the research process and outcomes”.

In this study, the researcher discloses that he is a Swazi national who is familiar with Swazi culture and lives in the area some respondents reside in. As a native speaker and a parent who has previously engaged in the naming process by bestowing names on his children, he has experienced how some naming happens among some family members.

When conducting the interviews, the investigator was able to establish rapport with the informants and question them while being objective. This helped the researcher to represent a true reflection of the data obtained through interviews and questionnaires.

### **3.7 Trustworthiness and authenticity**

Credibility: to ensure trustworthiness, the researcher chose suitable data collection methods, namely semi-structured interviews and questionnaires which would result in providing specific answers to the research questions on naming practices.

Dependability: the researcher used specific principles and criteria to select participants. Siswati name-givers who have given their children Siswati names were used in this research from urban and rural areas. Siswati name-bearers that are above 18 years old were interviewed to collect data concerning naming in Swazi culture.

Conformability: the researcher ensured that information in this study reflects the views of participants by relying strictly on the original sources of data provided by them. He avoided personal interest and bias, and judgmental influence on the research was minimised so that the study would be as objective as possible.

Transferability: the researcher ensured that theories adopted were relevant for this study and applicable to research problems to ensure trustworthiness.

Authenticity: the researcher provided all views presented such as differences, similarities, conflicts, social values, and beliefs in naming as portrayed by the participants. No one-sided arguments were made by the researcher.

### **3.8 Ethical considerations**

In this study, an ethical clearance certificate was issued by the University of South Africa to conduct the research and collect data. Information on the naming practices in Siswati

was obtained from participants above the age of 18 years. Informed consent was sought from participants, and they participated voluntarily. The study carefully maintained the research participants' privacy and anonymity, seeing that only information that pertains to the names given to name-bearers or to names that name-givers bestowed on their children was required for analysis. The research did not entail any foreseen physical discomfort or inconvenience to respondents. Participants had the option to stop participation in the research at any time. Benefits of the study to the society and the procedures of the research were explained to all participants before it was conducted.

### **3.9 Conclusion**

In this chapter, the research design, methodology, and theoretical framework were discussed. The common research approaches namely descriptive, analytical, applied, fundamental, quantitative, qualitative and mixed-methods research were described. The qualitative approach was adopted because of the nature of this study. Interviews and questionnaires are the tools that were used to collect data. The interviews gave the researcher a platform to collect data from participants in their socio-cultural environment which revealed the socio-cultural background that influences the naming practices. The interviews also allowed the researcher to reach illiterate emaSwati to partake in the study as they would not have been able to complete the questionnaire. The questionnaires enabled participants who were not available for interviews to provide essential information on naming. The use of questionnaires also enabled the researcher to verify the authenticity of Siswati names.

The data analysing technique in this study was discussed. The data collected were analysed manually by the researcher. Names were grouped according to their types and their pragmatic relevance in Swazi culture was established. Information given by informants was examined to unravel the messages conveyed by a specific name, the attitudes expressed by name-bearers regarding their specific names, and the socio-cultural traits embedded in a particular name.

The theories, systematic functional linguistic approach, and speech act theory that underpin and support the discussion on the pragmatics of Siswati naming were discussed. The SFL allowed the researcher to explore the naming practices in Siswati based on a functional approach and on the basis that naming is largely determined by sociocultural contexts in which it takes place. Adopting SFL theory for the study enabled the researcher to understand the social function of language with regard to naming and helped in explicating the social, political, religious and economic traits exposed by naming practices in Swazi culture. The speech act theory furnished a platform to understand that names are acts and intentions that name-givers try to convey to hearers, either to the name-bearer or to someone else in a specific context. It is based on the speech act theory that we understand that naming is performing an action, therefore, we investigated the messages that name-givers convey using the Siswati language in the context of Swazi culture.

## CHAPTER 4

### A PRAGMATIC ANALYSIS OF SISWATI PERSONAL NAMES

#### **4.1 Introduction**

In this chapter, Siswati personal names are analysed in terms of their pragmatic functions, which refer to their ability to be used for a variety of purposes. The background situation and context that inform the giving of Siswati names will be discussed. The attitudes of name-bearers towards their given names will also be explored. It is worth noting that the ways in which names are given vary from one family to the next. Each name has its distinct history and meaning. Only the situation and context of names that pertain to name-givers and name-bearers interviewed will shape the discussions in this chapter. The names that will make up the discussion corpus will be categorised according to their thematic importance.

#### **4.2 A pragmatic approach to Siswati naming**

Personal names in African culture are not just labels used to distinguish one person from another; they are culturally significant utterances that serve to communicate what the name-giver is thinking. Thus, personal names are utterances or messages used by name-givers, who may be considered speakers in this discussion, to express their thoughts, wishes, beliefs, and dreams to the individuals they are addressing. Therefore, they are aspects of pragmatics, based on Yule's (1996:1) assertion that "pragmatics is concerned with the study of meaning as communicated by a speaker and interpreted by a listener [an addressee]". To Stalker (1989:184), pragmatics constitutes "a system of rules which defines the relationship of meaning to the contexts in which it occurs, that is, it matches functions with particular language choices in particular contexts".

Thomas (1995:1-2) asserts that in the 1980s "the most common definitions of pragmatics were: meaning in use or meaning in context". Nowadays, linguists understand the term 'pragmatics' as equivalent to "speaker meaning" or "utterance interpretation". Ariffin

(2004:14) suggests that “making meaning involves the negotiation of meaning between speaker and hearer, the context of utterance (physical, social and linguistic) and the meaning potential of an utterance”. Mey (2001:6) advocates that “pragmatics studies the use of language in human communication as determined by the conditions of society”.

In his definition, Crystal (1985:240) underscores the major role played by a speaker and states that “pragmatics is the study of language from the point of view of users, especially of the choices they make, the constraints they encounter in using language in social interaction and the effects their use of language has on other participants in the act of communication”. To Thomas (1995:22) pragmatics is “the study of meaning in interaction”. Thomas (1995:22) further explains that in pragmatics “making meaning is a dynamic process, involving the negotiation of meaning between speaker and hearer, the context of utterance (physical, social and linguistic) and the meaning potential of an utterance”. Kaburise (2004:17) clarifies that “a pragmatic investigation is a combination of a syntactic/semantic examination and the study of meaning in relation to speech situations”. In other words, a pragmatic study deals with utterance meaning in relation to speech.

The definitions of pragmatics which have been given above will justify why the speech acts in Siswati personal names need to be discussed in this study. This will reveal communicative roles and the messages sent by name-givers, who are considered speakers in pragmatics, to the addressees or interlocutors.

Communicative or pragmatic competence is a crucial component in expressing and interpreting utterances, and it will therefore be important to briefly highlight the efficacy of this concept in the study of Siswati personal names. The term 'communicative competence' was created by Hymes (1967) to describe the capabilities of participants in a conversation to express and understand messages as well as their ability to socially construct sense/meaning in a particular situation. Mart (2018:163) professes that “communicative competence is a term which alludes to tacit knowledge of language and the ability to understand and use the language effectively for communication purposes.

Simply put, it refers to the ability of forming correct utterances and using them appropriately."

Bachman (1990:90) explains that "the notion of pragmatic competence includes illocutionary competence or the knowledge of the pragmatic conventions for performing acceptable language functions, and sociolinguistic competence or knowledge of the sociolinguistic conventions for performing language functions appropriately in a given context".

The competency to recognise the aptness of an utterance within a given situation and select one feasible form over others is considered one of the most essential abilities connected with pragmatic competence (Kasper and Rose, 2002).

Therefore, to communicate effectively in a language, a speaker must comprehend its linguistic, sociolinguistic, as well as socio-cultural fundamental aspects. Such knowledge enables the language user to utilise the appropriate language in the appropriate circumstance for the proper cause, allowing him to be called "communicatively competent" (Saleh, 2013:102).

According to Stalker (1989:182)

communicative competence is that part of our language knowledge which enables us to choose the communicative system we wish to use, and, when that selected system is language, to connect the goals and contexts of the situation with the structures which we have available in our linguistic repertoire through functional choices at the pragmatic level. In making these selections, language users accommodate linguistic features both consciously and unconsciously in order to adjust the social distance between the producer and the receiver.

Canale (1988:90) posits that pragmatic competence entails "illocutionary competence, or the knowledge of the pragmatic conventions for performing acceptable language functions, and sociolinguistic competence, or knowledge of the sociolinguistic conventions for performing language functions appropriately in a given context".

The discussion of personal names in this chapter will consequently be in line with the abovementioned scholars' thoughts that there should be appropriateness whenever utterances are carried out. The issue of appropriateness always touches on the felicity conditions of an utterance. The term 'felicity conditions' refers to circumstances and requirements that should be fulfilled for a speech act to achieve its desired objective. Therefore, it will also be determined in the study whether the bestowal of names does meet the proposed conditions. This implies that, for names to be acceptable in Swazi culture, they must be bestowed by a rightful person, someone who has authority to assign a name to a newborn child or has been given permission to do that.

#### **4.3 Personal names as speech acts**

Speech acts are an aspect of language that cannot be overlooked in any discussion that involves pragmatic competence, speakers, addressees, utterances, and the speech context. In this regard, in the following section of our discussion, we will look at naming as speech acts. As pointed out in Chapter 3, Austin (1962), defined speech acts as the utterances of speakers which express meanings and result in addressees performing certain actions. In other words, in his examination of speech acts, Austin (1962) was intrigued by the way words appeared to do more than just to convey knowledge and factual information, he wanted to know how they could also be used to do tasks.

Speech acts are described as actions that are performed through utterances (Yule, 1996:47). When a name is bestowed on a newborn baby, words uttered are referred to as locutionary acts in pragmatics, and these are defined as the "literal meanings of the utterances that we use" (Taghizadeh, 2017:81). The intentions of the speakers or name-givers or the impact that the utterances have on the addressees are called illocutionary acts (Taghizadeh, 2017). Cruse (2011:365) asserts that "illocutionary acts are acts which are internal to the locutionary act, in the sense that, if the contextual conditions are appropriate, once the locutionary act has been performed, so has the illocutionary act". The perlocutionary acts are the outcomes of the illocutionary act. The focus of this

discussion will be on the illocutionary acts of personal names since it will be the intentions of the name-givers that will be affirmed as well as the effect they will have on the addressees.

When a name-giver assigns a name to a newborn child, a message is addressed to a specific addressee. The message contained in the name is intentional and has implications for the addressee. Personal names that will be addressed in this chapter will be those that involve the speech act dimensions of commands, requests and interrogatives. These speech acts are classified under a broad category called directives (Searle, 1969). Cruse (2011:369) maintains that Searle's classification of speech acts "is not a perfect taxonomy, as it is in many cases possible to place verbs under more than one heading, that is, the categories are not mutually exclusive. But it enables us to take a synoptic view".

As mentioned above, this discussion will focus only on directives, under the subcategories of commands, requests and interrogatives. It will look at Siswati personal names as speech acts. The personal names in this study have been classified into three broad categories namely, commands, requests and interrogatives.

#### **4.4 The pragmatic analysis of personal names in Siswati**

This analysis will focus on Siswati personal names that have been generated around commands and requests which have been classified by Searle (1969) as directives and interrogatives commonly known as questions because these speech acts are performed with the aim to elicit a response from the addressee. It will be realised that with interrogatives which usually demand a response from the person addressed, no response is expected. Therefore, these utterances become rhetorical questions.

The analysis will be done in the following order: personal names in the form of commands will be presented first. These will be discussed and analysed within the confines of pragmatics, followed by those that are in the form of requests and the last will be those

that fall under interrogatives. In each analysis, the name of the name-bearer will be provided, followed by his or her gender, the person who has assigned the name, that is, the name-giver will then be stated. The discussion and analysis of the personal name will then follow. Lastly, the attitudes of the name-bearers towards the names bestowed on them will also be explored.

It will be observed that identical personal names were assigned by different name-givers to different newborns. Since the circumstances under which the names were bestowed are different, these names will be discussed as separate entities and be differentiated by superscript numbering.

It needs to be noted that because of the historical relationship between isiZulu and Siswati, some personal names are originally isiZulu names. In the late 1960s, Siswati was predominantly spoken within Swaziland [Eswatini] and in some parts of Natal and Transvaal. However, there were no Siswati written texts before that era for educational and religious purposes in the country. In schools, Siswati was used as a language for instruction in cases where English was not used. Meanwhile written and supporting learning materials such as indigenous grammar and literature books were in isiZulu (Woodson, 1991:381). This close relationship between the two languages and their mutual intelligibility led to some emaSwati bestowing personal names that are of Zulu origin on their children and relatives.

#### **4.4.1 Siswati personal names in the form of commands**

According to Dewi et al. (2020:3), a directive speech act is intended to compel an addressee to carry out something or execute what is implied by the speaker. Commands are grouped under directives. Commands are speech acts in which an addressee is ordered by a speaker to do a specific task. Although the function of commands is the same as in ordinary speech situations, in naming, the issuing of commands does not solicit any response from the addressee. The morphological analysis of some names that are commands should not come as a surprise. The analysis demonstrates how complex

the verbal construction of the command is. Most commonly, the morphology of commands in Siswati does not include any morphemes before the verb stem. However, we do find instances of the use of /**Ma-**/ which is the polite form of the verb in the subjunctive mood and where there is an object concord for specificity. The name-giver's communicative intention in making an expression hinges on the message sent. What is of significance here is that the name-giver is certain that his or her communicative intention which is issued as a personal name in the form of a command will be recognised by the addressee.

Personal names are disposed as messages to a medley of people by the name-giver. Using a command as a personal name bestowed on a newborn child, the name-giver in a way seeks to cause the addressee to do something about the content of the message embedded in the personal name. The addressees of the messages transmitted by the name-giver range from the newborn child, one or both parents, the family, the extended family, the neighbours, the community to the Supreme Being as well as the ancestors.

Personal names ordinarily appear as single words, however, these single units are representations of phrases and to a large extent, sentences that contain full meanings. The naming process in Swazi societies is informed by distinct circumstances, thus no identical names originate from the same situation. Each name has its unique background and addresses an individual in a specific manner. Thus, personal names are specific utterances made by speakers, who in this study are referred to as name-givers, that speak to hearers with a view to conveying specific communicative intentions.

#### **4.4.1.1 Personal names in the form of commands addressed to the newborn child**

Names carry a great deal of significance in African societies because a person's identity and character are always determined by the name given to him or her. Asante and Mazama (2009:339) assert that "naming a child is taken seriously because it is believed that a name can make or mar a person. Thus, names are chosen for their special meaning, power and source". This view on naming is supported by McAndrew (2021:1) who states that a name given to a child by a parent is extremely important as it connects

the owner to his destiny in mystical ways. It is against this backdrop that people who assign personal names to a newborn child must meet cultural conditions. These people may include grandparents, parents, relatives, or someone associated with the name-bearer in some way. However, there are circumstances in which personal names are bestowed by non-relatives and persons who have no kinship with the name-bearer.

The following are examples of personal names that use commands and are addressed to a newborn child:

1) Name: **Busa** ‘Reign’

Gender: Male

Name-giver: Father

The name **Busa** means to reign. This name was issued by the father to his new baby boy. The speaker (father) addressed the message to his son because the child was the first boy in a monogamous family. As a firstborn male, the newborn would hold a significant status in the family setup and he would assume the role of *inkhosana* ‘an heir’. Customarily, the first male child in a family is considered an heir, and only males are eligible to occupy such positions. According to Rubin (1965), an heir is ordinarily the eldest son in a monogamous marriage or the eldest son from each household in a polygamous family. Mbatha (2002:261) supports this argument that “the heir is the person who steps into the shoes of the deceased head of the family as the administrator of family property”. In Swazi culture, an heir is entrusted with major family responsibilities such as providing for and protecting the entire family. Rubin (1965:97) notes that an heir plays a crucial role in the inheritance of the estate of a deceased because in Swazi customary law, the inheritance is patrilineal. Only the adult male can inherit property from his father because of the seniority accorded to him. He is entrusted with the right to take over his father’s property such as livestock, weapons and land rights. These rights are accompanied by responsibilities of guardianship over the young dependants of the deceased as well as the widows. On the issue of inheritance, the female children of the deceased man receive no share of the estate, and widows are usually not allowed to

inherit property. However, they have the right to use the land and livestock left by their late husband (Rubin, 1965:92).

Therefore, in the name **Busa**, the speaker commands the newborn to rule over the family and imbues him with the spirit of supremacy. The father wants the child to grow up knowing the position he has assumed and the responsibilities that go with it. Therefore, the speaker sends a message that affirms the child as the rightful successor and the command is a declaration to every member of the family of the child's position.

On the issue of the attitude of the name-bearer, when conducting the interview, the name-bearer was still too young to voice his attitudes concerning the name bestowed on him. His father as an informant, on the other hand, claimed that the child responds positively to the name, although unaware of the task at hand.

2) Name: **Vus'umutiwendvodza**<sup>1</sup> 'Establish a man's homestead'

Gender: Male

Name-giver: Paternal grandfather

The utterance **Vus'umutiwendvodza** meaning 'establish a man's homestead' is addressed to the male child. This speech act is a command because the verb *vusa* which means 'establish' has been used by the speaker (paternal grandfather) in the construction of the phrasal name (*vusa* 'raise' + *umuti* 'homestead' + *wendvodza* 'of a man'). The name instructs the male child to establish his father's homestead. The assigning of this name was informed by the situation that the child was born after the burial of his father, thus the name-giver, that is, the grandfather of the newborn, was deeply upset by the death of his son. Through this name, the speaker was addressing the addressee to set up his father's homestead on a long-term basis because the head of the family whose responsibility was to manage the home had passed on. A man in Swazi culture is the head of the family and a breadwinner, thus his presence is prominent in the family. It is his responsibility to look after the wellbeing of every member of his family. The World Trade Press (2010:9) reports that "the homestead is headed by the father, whose authority is respected and obeyed.

Society regards him as the breadwinner and does not formally recognise women's contributions to the family economy."

Therefore, the demise of the father meant that there was no one to take over as head of the family. The birth of the male child lifted the grandfather's spirit such that he bestowed on the boy the name **Vus'umutiwendvodza** to show that his son's lineage would be reinstated, and the cultural traits of Swazi patriarchy would be retained. In Swazi culture, the family lineage is preserved and continued through the male. IRIN (2009) affirms that there is gender preference among emaSwati which usually demands that a wife must give birth to a male child because customarily the progeny of a family rests with the male. Even if a woman may have girls, the birth of a boy child amongst them would fulfil the expectations of the family. Therefore, the message in the name is communicated to the child to grow up and take the responsibilities which were left by his father. The name **Vus'umutiwendvodza** reveals that the name-giver assumes that the person addressed will execute the massive responsibility placed before him.

When the name-bearer was asked how he felt about the name that was given to him at birth and after the death of his father, he said that he was very proud of his name. He liked the name because of the huge responsibility that is demanded by it. He thinks that he is working hard to complete the task he was ordered to perform from birth.

3) Name: **Vus'umutiwendvodza**<sup>2</sup> 'Raise a man's homestead'

Gender: Male

Name-giver: Paternal great grandfather

The name **Vus'umutiwendvodza** in this case means to 'raise a man's homestead'. The command is addressing the newborn. The name was given to the child by his great grandfather because he was the only boy among his great grandchildren. He believed that through the birth of the boy child, the families would multiply as it was anticipated that he would have many children once he reached adulthood. Such obligation is basically assigned to a male child who is supposed to accomplish the given task in the future. This is done in a Swazi traditional setting in which the eldest son is not expected to move out

of his father's homestead and establish his own, but is rather expected to build his home within the compound after having married his first wife. His father usually builds the first hut for him in which he lives as a bachelor until he marries (Vilakati and Msibi, 2006:189). The eldest son should be prepared to take over the responsibility to preserve and procreate the family. On the importance of the responsibilities of a boy child, Hughes (1972:89) affirms that a male child, often the eldest in his father's household, assumes the position of a general heir (*indlalifa*). The heir then inherits cattle and other valuable properties as well as land rights once his father has died. This status is accompanied by the responsibilities of looking after the descendants of his deceased father and assuring that their needs are taken care of. Therefore, the name **Vus'umutiwendvodza** 'raise a man's homestead' is a direct message to the boy to be the pillar of the family as the only male great grandchild. He was given the obligation at birth to look after the family and the entire household. The name-giver chose to address the child using the name because names are permanent possessions in Swazi culture which one carries now and in the hereafter. If the message is contained in the name, the name-bearer will never forget it.

**Vus'umutiwendvodza** treasures his name because he is the only child to be named by the great grandfather in the family. He thinks that his late great grandfather was optimistic by entrusting him with such a great responsibility.

4) Name: **Vus'isizwe** 'Uplift the nation'

Gender: Male

Name-giver: Father

The name-giver assigned the name to the newborn child because he hoped that the child would be of help in future to the family and the whole community as **Vus'isizwe** is a fifth born and the only male in the family. When he was born, the father was happy as he had been longing to have a son that would contribute to the procreation and the existence of his clan's name. The name-giver did not only want the child to perpetuate his lineage, but he wished that the child would be a medical doctor in the future so that he would treat people from his community as well as his family members. This was one of the noble jobs which the father desired for his son. Dlamini (2016:4) notes that there is gender

preference in children born among Swazi families. She contends that such preference is a result of dissocial inequality in Eswatini, in which boys are given special preferences while female children are treated as worthless. Parents assume that females will leave their paternal homes once they marry while boys will grow into men and be of help to them by providing for the family. Thus, it is in line with such thoughts that the father bestowed the name **Vus'isizwe** on his child. When such instruction is given at a tender age, it is believed that the one addressed, will live up to those expectations and implement the task given to him by the parent. However, the motivation for bestowing the name by the name-giver is not convincing as not all children live up to the expectations of their parents.

**Vus'isizwe** likes the meaning and intention of the name. However, to some extent, the name-bearer believes that he has fulfilled the obligation and expectation of helping people even though he is not a medical doctor. He opted to be a teacher and he helps learners in his community to achieve their dreams.

5) Name: **Zenzele** 'Do it yourself'

Gender: Male

Name-giver: Father

The command **Zenzele** is addressing the boy child. The addressee in this utterance is ordered to be self-reliant. The name-bearer was given such a name after his father was denied a share in an estate left by his biological father. He was told by the elders of his family that he was born out of wedlock and could therefore not be eligible for a share in the estate. According to the family elders, only children born in marriage were considered eligible to share the estate of the deceased. Marwick (1940:47) found that in Swaziland [Eswatini] inheritance of property of a deceased father was male controlled and dominated, and as such only the eldest son of each married woman to the husband became an heir and could inherit part of his late father's property. Meanwhile, Kuper (1963:27) notes that in the case of a polygamous marriage, it was the firstborn son of the deceased who was considered as a main heir that received a big share of the estate while each eldest son from individual wives could get the cattle from the bride wealth of their

biological sisters. Kuper (1963) points out the existence of discrimination on the distribution of the properties of the dead father among his sons. The author states that middle sons could not inherit anything from their father's estate.

The Swazi customary law of inheritance considers only sons of the deceased husband who are born in marriage from all the households of each wife in which the eldest son amongst them receives a large portion of his father's inheritance (Hughes, 1972:90). Surprisingly, the author does not include male children born out of marriage who are known as illegitimate children in the inheritance of property. However, the Constitution of the Kingdom of Swaziland (2005:26), chapter 3, section 31 authorises all children born outside of marriage to have a share from their late parents' estates. As a result, it is currently unconstitutional to exclude or deprive any child that is born out of wedlock from benefitting from his/her late parents' properties.

In the context of this name, the exclusion from his father's estate disappointed the name-giver to such an extent that he decided to disown the family and establish his own homestead. When his wife gave birth to a boy child, he felt that it was necessary to give the newborn a mandate to always work hard for himself in life, build his own wealth and be independent. The name-giver gave his child this instruction because he didn't want him to depend on any person's wealth lest he be disappointed by the conditions that accompany such wealth.

**Zenzele** likes the name since he says that it encourages him to be an independent hard worker. He vows to adhere to the directive in order to avoid what befell his father. This sentiment shared by the name-giver illustrates how the name-bearer relates to the message of the name.

6) Name: **Cebisa** [*ngemnotfo*] ‘Enrich us with [wealth]’

Gender: Male

Name-giver: Mother

The child was given the name **Cebisa** which means to enrich us because his mother only had girls before she got married to her current husband. When she gave birth to the first boy child in her new marriage, she expected that the boy would enrich her in future by taking care of her because all the girls she had would eventually marry and leave her vulnerable. According to Grosz-Ngaté et al. (2014:59), children are important in marriage as they usually provide economic and social security to their parents in the future, particularly during old age. Therefore, the name was a directive that the mother issued to the newborn. She communicated the message through the name so that the name-bearer would never forget the task assigned to him. As a result, the son is regarded as future economic security.

**Cebisa** adores his name since it was conferred on him. He regards the duty of bringing riches to a family, a unique authority among all existing authorities in the world. This obligation demonstrates that the name-bearer is admired in the family.

7) Name: **Philasande** ‘Live so that we multiply’

Gender: Male

Name-giver: Paternal grandfather

The name commands that the child must live so that when he reaches adulthood, he would have children that in turn will increase the number of members of the clan. The name was given to the newborn child because his grandfather had prayed when the mother was pregnant that she would have no complications during labour. Through the name, the grandfather wanted his son to have many boys as he felt that the clan was not increasing as well as he had hoped. He wanted the mother to bear a baby boy who would be an heir and help in increasing the clan. EmaSwati like other Africans do not want to die without an heir and having a son is very important in order for the family inheritance to be preserved (Mbiti, 1975:109). Therefore, the name affirms the wishes of the child’s grandfather and gives a mandate to the name-bearer which he must achieve once he is

old. Regrettably, the child's grandfather died before the child was born, whereupon the parents decided to name the child **Philasande** 'Live so that we increase' in an attempt to pass the message of the late grandfather on to the newborn.

**Philasande** likes his name. He believes that this is a simple name which entails a strong message. He hopes that one day his late grandfather's wish will be accomplished.

8) Name: **Tselifa** 'Bring in wealth'

Gender: Female

Name-giver: Elder aunt

With the name, the elder aunt is addressing the baby girl. The verb *tsela* 'bear fruit' is usually used in association with a tree. The same verb is also used to command someone to bring in something. In this context, the speaker orders the female child to pour out wealth which will be in the form of cows to be paid as *lobolo* 'bride wealth/bride price' when she gets married. Cattle are regarded as a source of wealth among the emaSwati because of their economic, social and religious importance. Economically, cattle are used for milk, meat and cultivation purposes while socially they are a bride price and used in other traditional ceremonies. Cattle are also slaughtered for ritual purposes (Herbert, 1990:456). Some families still insist on the use of cattle as bride wealth while others opt for money. Posel and Rudwick (2014:52) describe bride wealth as a custom that is widely practised in southern Africa, and it involves the transfer of marriage gifts in the form of money or cows that are offered by the husband's family to his wife's parents. In Swazi culture this custom is used to legitimise marriage. Ferraro (1983:4) asserts that "traditional Swazi marriages are legitimised only after the payment of bride wealth (*lobolo*), a form of compensation to the bride's kin for the loss of the woman and her procreative capacities". To Heeren et al. (2011:73) the significance of bride wealth is that "it demonstrates that the man getting married is capable of taking care of a family and also serves as a token of gratitude to the bride's family for raising a wonderful woman". Contrary to what is mentioned by Heeren et al. (2011), Dlamini (2008:73-74) argues that bride wealth "is a specific fixed number of cattle or amount of money determined by the status of the woman in her family as well as her clan's status among the Swazi people".

Kuper (1963:22) states that in *lobolo*:

the woman is not regarded as a commodity by the people involved, she is a valued member of the community, and her past status and future security are symbolised in the transaction. By giving *lobolo*, her children are made legitimate and become entitled to the benefits of the father's lineage; by accepting *lobolo*, her people are compensated for the loss of her services.

To Kuper (1963:23), in Swazi culture, when a man pays bride wealth, he finds a life partner and a mother for his children; he is obligated with his family to take care of and protect the woman.

The name under discussion was given by the child's elder aunt because after one month of the child's birth, her biological mother dumped the baby at her big sister's home and married another man she fell in love with during the time when she was pregnant. Then the child's aunt said that she will raise the child as her own and gave her the name **Tselifa** 'bring in wealth'. She expected that by raising the abandoned girl, she would get the cattle to be paid as *lobolo* 'bride price' when the girl gets married in future. The child would bring wealth to her as the rightful person who should benefit after raising her sister's child alone. However, for a child like this who has been born out of marriage and has not been 'acknowledged' by her father through the paying of damages *inhlawulo*, it is usually her uncles who receive her bride price. The message was directed to the girl child so that she would know what was expected from her in return for being cared for from birth until adulthood. The name-giver was also telling her sister that a major share of the bride price had to be given to her as a token of appreciation.

**Tselifa** loves her name as it shows that her aunt had faith in her and recognised her as a valuable person who in future can enrich her through *lobolo*, unlike her biological mother who chose to be married to a man rather than raise her child. She also likes the name because she lived up to it by behaving well until she got married and indeed her aunt got the bride price as per the order, she made some twenty-five years before. Other people say that her name is lovely and unique, they usually ask for its meaning.

9) Name: **Lethumcebo** ‘Bring riches/wealth’

Gender: Female

Name-giver: Father

The name **Lethumcebo** is a command that is addressed to a girl child. In this speech act, the speaker gives a peremptory order to his daughter. The child discussed here is a sixth born and the only female among her siblings. Before the birth of **Lethumcebo**, the name-giver was worried that most of his cattle would be used in supporting his male children in the payment of the bride wealth *lobolo* for their wives. He wished that if he could have a daughter, some of the cattle used in his sons' *lobolo* contributions would be recovered. After childbirth, the father was happy to realise that having a girl meant that he was in a good position to be wealthy if his child marries. The perception that girls are a source of income and future wealth for some fathers in patriarchal societies is common among traditional emaSwati. Some fathers use bride wealth to enrich themselves and as a way to eradicating poverty by demanding many cattle as bride wealth for their daughters (Posel and Rudwick, 2014:55). The commercialisation of the custom of dowry has led to the abuse of this tradition because parents now use it for their own economic gains and to make wealth (Parker, 2015:1780). Therefore, the command is assigned to the young girl to grow up knowing that she must behave well so that her father could receive the full *lobolo* that will enrich him.

**Lethumcebo** likes her name because she understands how her father likes money and properties. She is happy that indeed she fulfilled her father's command as she is now married, and her bride wealth was paid in full.

10) Name: **Bhek'ikhaya** ‘Look after the homestead’

Gender: Male

Name-giver: Mother

The name **Bhek'ikhaya** which means ‘look after the homestead’ was issued by his mother. The name instructs the boy child to look after the homestead when he is a grown person. It expresses the mother's desires and aspirations which she feels she could not accomplish because of being a woman with a child out of wedlock. The mother says that

she was elated when giving birth to a son because she could then exercise the rights which were not endowed to females according to Swazi customs (common law). Now that she had given birth to a boy child, the mother felt eligible to acquire land through the *kukhonta* system. This is a system of acquiring Swazi Nation Land (SNL) that is under the control of chiefs but owned by the king in the best interests of the nation, by paying a cow to a chief. The SNL is used for building homes and establishing fields for agriculture (Simelane, 2014:87). The homestead which the name-giver built after acquiring the land was named after the son's surname. Therefore, the home by extension belongs to her son, hence the mother decided to command her son to look after it.

In Swazi culture, an unmarried woman was only allowed to acquire land through *kukhonta* if she had a son. The International Women's Human Rights Clinic (2009:293) reports that "under Swazi law and custom, a chief allocates communal land [Swazi Nation Land] to a woman only through her husband, male relatives or male children. Because land rights vest in males and women are considered inferior, a woman has no security on communal land..." Simelane (2014:87) also notes that "women need a male proxy to access land through SNL system". However, this bias treatment on the acquisition of SNL experienced by women is against the Constitution of the Kingdom of Swaziland (2005:18), chapter III, section 19(2) which states that "a person shall not be compulsorily deprived of property or any interest in or right over property...". Section 28(1) of the Constitution (2005:25) of the same chapter states that "women have the right to equal treatment with men and that right shall include equal opportunities in political, economic and social activities". Contrary to what the Constitution stipulates, women who have no husbands still rely on their male children to gain access to land. As a result of such a predicament, the name-giver was happy to have a son and the command ***Bhek'ikhaya*** 'Look after the homestead' was bestowed to address the imbalances that prevailed.

The name-bearer feels that his mother loves him so much by giving him the responsibility to look after the homestead. He holds that his birth was treasured and appreciated by his mother. This name is perceived to be a positive identity by the name-bearer because it shows that his mother strongly believed that he could carry out the task given to him.

11) Name: **Gcinumuzi** ‘Keep the homestead’

Gender: Male

Name-giver: Father

The father ordered his child to keep his homestead as the first boy child who is regarded as an heir in a Swazi traditional setting. This mandate is usually assigned to an older boy child in Swazi culture as he is required to look after the household once his parents can no longer look after themselves or when they have died. Mbiti (1975:109) affirms that “when the parents become old and weak it is the duty of the children, especially the heirs or sons, to look after the parents and the affairs of the family”. Mbiti (1975) further explains that upon death, the children are required to properly bury their parents, commemorate them and take care of their graves, give them food and wine where appropriate. They also need to maintain good relations with their deceased parents because they are now the family ancestors.

The name-bearer was given this name because his mother had given birth to four girls before his birth. When the boy was born as a fifth child, the father was so relieved and glad that at last, an heir had arrived. He felt the need to pass the message to the new baby boy precisely at birth because he anticipated that all the girls he had, would get married and leave his homestead with nobody to look after it. Therefore, as the boy child grows up, he is required to accomplish the assignment given to him by his father as culture dictates. This view is also supported by Mbatha (2002:261) who states that the major duty of the heir is to oversee his parent’s home and look after all the dependants of the deceased parent.

The name-bearer likes the name and is proud that his father entrusted him with such responsibility which he must execute throughout his entire life.

12) Name: ***Thembel'enkhosini*** 'Trust in the Lord'

Gender: Female

Name-giver: Father

The utterance is directed to the baby girl. The situation that resulted in the newborn being given the name ***Thembel'enkhosini*** is that the father as a name-giver grew up in a family set-up where his family members did not believe in Christianity and its teachings. Contrarily, they believed in Swazi traditional religion which venerates ancestors as intercessors to *Mvelinchanti* (God the creator). They strongly believed in the veneration of ancestors and the consultation of diviners when faced with life's difficulties. This makes Swazi religion and culture closely related in such a way that it is not easy to clearly distinguish between the two (Kasanene, 1993:24). Before the arrival of missionaries in Eswatini [Swaziland], emaSwati highly esteemed their traditional religion. However, due to the spread of the Christian religion which influenced the father to be converted to it, he believed that God was the one who gave him a wife and a better life. He felt that trusting in God was rewarding. With the name he gave to his baby child, he proclaimed his belief to everyone because of what he had seen God doing for him and his family. He had a strong conviction that if his newborn child trusted in the Lord, she was also going to be successful in life. He wanted the name-bearer to believe in God and never follow other beliefs. The father might have been forced by prevailing circumstances such as the clash in beliefs between him and the family to bestow such a name on the child. He knew that no one had the right to change the child's name once bestowed by him as the biological father. This name informed the child about the religious system she should follow from a tender age before she could be polluted by the religions of other people.

***Thembel'enkhosini*** loves her name. She believes that it conveys a powerful message especially now when one must find an anchor to hold onto in life. She says that some young people have approached her and indicated a desire to use her name on their children when they are adults and have children. This shows that her name has positively influenced many people.

13) Name: **Phila**<sup>1</sup> ‘Be healthy’

Gender: Female

Name-giver: Paternal grandfather

The name **Phila** is a command given to the newborn girl to be healthy. The paternal grandfather commanded the baby to be well after her mother was critically ill during her pregnancy. Prior to **Phila**’s birth, her mother had a miscarriage. Astonishingly, she subsequently gave birth to a premature baby. The premature birth worried some family members, and they feared that the child might be ill, with disabilities or she might also die. It was believed that if a name such as **Phila** is given to her, she would live up to it and be a healthy child according to her name. The name was to encourage the child in knowing that members of the family, especially her grandfather were cheering her on to live a bright, productive, and worthwhile life with the knowledge that she had the support of the entire family.

**Phila** likes her name as she believes that there are few girls with such a name. The name is regarded as masculine because it is commonly encountered among boys in Swazi communities. The name-bearer also believes that her name is attached to some personality traits because when someone has a cheerful personality, we say *Uyaphila* ‘He/she has good character’ in Siswati hence she regards herself as having good moral qualities.

14) Name: **Phila**<sup>2</sup> ‘Be alive’

Gender: Male

Name-giver: Father

The name **Phila** which literally means ‘be alive’ is a directive to the newborn and it expresses the desire of the name-giver. When the baby was born, his mother died within a few hours after giving birth. His father was heartbroken after the demise of his wife. His greatest wish was for the boy not to die but to live because he could not bear the pain of losing both his wife and a child at the same time. Therefore, the name **Phila** was a command for the boy to survive and stay healthy.

**Phila** dislikes the name because he feels it is a constant reminder that he survived while his mother died. He feels that if he had an opportunity, he would change it so that he would forget the pain of being raised by a stepmother. If he thinks about his mother's painful death, he feels that it would maybe have been better if he had died with her.

15) Name: **Phila**<sup>3</sup> 'Be alive'

Gender: Female

Name-giver: Mother's friend who has a similar name

The name is a command that is directed to the girl child. This kind of speech act instructs her to be alive and healthy. The name was bestowed on the baby by the mother's friend, who wished that the child would grow well and be well behaved so that she could take care of her mother who was a single parent. The mother's friend was also named **Phila**. The mother did not have any other children, therefore her friend was sceptical that she would have any further children for she was already forty-three years of age when she gave birth for the first time to **Phila**. The name-giver presumed that the mother was approaching menopause and therefore chances of having a child were very minimal and being pregnant after forty years has its risks for both mother and child. Bachechi (2016) believes that the risk of genetic abnormalities increases with maternal age; the DNA in the eggs can degrade over time. She further explains that "biological" age doesn't necessarily correspond to one's actual age and most women have healthy pregnancies regardless.

The risks that go along with pregnancy after forty years, might have been a cause for concern for the mother's friend who consequently bestowed the name **Phila** on the newborn. The motivation that the name was bestowed on the child because of the mother's age during pregnancy was not strong enough to convince the researcher because there have been women who have given birth to normal and healthy children when they were way over forty-five years of age. It is only a person with the relevant medical expertise such as a gynaecologist who could duly diagnose a person and assess if the pregnancy is presenting any risks to the mother and/or the newborn.

The owner of the name said she does not like her name because she does not understand why she was named by her mother's friend, and she says that sharing the same name with her is weird. One must note that it is not common practice in Swazi culture for someone to give a name to a friend's child. There are exceptional circumstances where a friend of a parent can ask for names which she/he could pick from for a child but not to give the child their own name.

16) Name: **Phila**<sup>4</sup> 'Live'

Gender: Female

Name-giver: Paternal grandfather

The girl was named **Phila** after both the mother and the baby became critically ill at childbirth. The baby's grandfather would often visit the mother in hospital and say, 'Be well my granddaughter and daughter'. With this statement, he was declaring life over both his daughter-in-law and the newborn. The grandfather took the responsibility to visit his son's wife because the baby's father was studying abroad. The fact that the father was not around could have prompted the grandfather to be the pillar of support to the daughter-in-law to encourage and strengthen her to discard any negative feelings. The father-in-law was very concerned about the health of both the daughter-in-law and the infant, as seen by his frequent hospital visits and well wishes. He wanted to demonstrate his support and, in the absence of his son, show his daughter-in-law that the family stood by her and wished her well. Hence, the name **Phila** was conferred on the child to direct her to get well.

The name-bearer likes the name as she believes life and health were declared over her at birth. It motivates and gives her hope when she is not feeling well, knowing that she will eventually recover as her name commands.

17) Name: **Lulama** ‘Get well’

Gender: Male

Name-giver: Mother

The name **Lulama** means ‘get well/recover from illnesses. This name is a command issued by the newborn's mother. The meaning of the basic verb *lulama* expresses the notion of getting up from a recumbent position. The child was given this name after he was born with meningitis. The mother might have known about how fatal meningitis is, this could have been the reason why she pleaded with her child to recover. Stach and Ramachandran (2022:98) explain that “meningitis is a bacterial or viral inflammation of the membranes covering the brain and spinal cord that can cause significant hearing loss”. Chàvez-Beuno and McCracken (2005) allege that the illness can affect anyone including newborns within the first month of their life and if left untreated newborns die from the infection. Therefore, through praying and pleading, the child would respond positively to the treatment offered in hospital and get well. The name-giver believed in the power of supplication and prayer. She was unwavering that great things happen when people pray in earnest. As per the mother's wish, the newborn responded well to the medication that was given to him for the condition and was discharged from hospital after getting better.

**Lulama** says that he has neither negative nor positive feelings about his name. He just accepts it as a personal name which was given to him. He perceives it as a tag that distinguishes him from other people.

18) Name: **Cedusizi**<sup>1</sup> ‘End the sorrow’

Gender: Male

Name-giver: Mother

**Cedusizi** means to ‘end sorrow’ and is a message which was addressed to a boy child. The child was ordered to end the sorrow which his mother had endured and bring her joy. The name-giver wished for her son to mature and be well behaved. As a single parent raising a boy, it was going to comfort her if the name-bearer lived according to her instruction. Traditionally, it was the father's responsibility to teach his son about

upbringing, appropriate social behaviour, and masculine responsibilities (Vilakati and Msibi, 2006:190). However, due to the prevalence of single parents, women are forced to raise children on their own and instil good behaviour in boys, which is not a duty traditionally assigned to them. So, the motivation for bestowing the name *Cedusizi* is that the mother had been devastated during her pregnancy after the father denied paternity of the child.

In a study conducted by the Centre for Social Development in Africa, University of Johannesburg, and Sonke Gender Justice (Eddy et al., 2013:3), it was argued that “although a father’s physical presence alone is not necessarily a positive outcome in itself, widespread father absence has detrimental consequences for families and for society as a whole”. The findings of the study indicated that the prevalent absence of fathers in South African families is closely linked to socio-economic, socio-cultural, and historical factors. The absence is also stimulated by ideological perceptions like material possessions which are perceived views of fatherhood and are associated with masculinity. Socio-cultural practices such as the payment of bride wealth and ‘damages’ as well as family matters also contribute to the problem. Moreover, poverty and lack of jobs play a role in the unavailability of fathers for their children.

Therefore, the mother thought that by giving birth to a boy child, her sufferings were going to come to an end as the boy could take care of her in future. She felt that she had found comfort or consolation in a time of great distress or sadness in having a boy that was going to be her emotional and economic pillar in future. In such a naming process, the command issued shows the name-giver’s sentiments about the child.

**Cedusizi** likes his name as he regards it as special, expressing his mother's feelings about him. He hopes to live up to his mother's expectations and be a source of joy to her.

19) Name: **Cedusizi<sup>2</sup>** ‘End the sorrow’

Gender: Male

Name-giver: Paternal grandmother

In the command the boy child is addressed. The infant is required to grow up and contribute to the family's reproduction by having many offspring, thereby putting a stop to his grandmother's grief. The motivation for issuing such a name is that the grandmother of the name-giver had a miscarriage when she was pregnant with her second child. She underwent surgery that didn't go as planned and was informed by physicians that she would never be able to conceive again following the procedure. Because she only had one surviving child, the news shocked the entire family. Then her 16 year old son impregnated a girl in the village which disappointed some family members who felt that he was not yet prepared to have a child. However, his mother rejoiced when she learned that the girl was pregnant with a baby boy, thinking that the baby would end her suffering and misery. Ending the sorrow meant that the boy would contribute to the procreation of the family. The boy was regarded as a compensation by the name-giver for the child she had previously lost.

When he was younger, the name-bearer despised the name since he never understood the full meaning and significance of the name, to the point that he used his second name, Xolani, which means ‘forgive’ to avoid his first name. When he was older his grandmother explained to him what it meant and why he was given such a name, and it was only then that he came to appreciate and understand it.

20) Name: **Yenzokuhle** ‘Do good’

Gender: Male

Name-giver: Grandmother's friend

The name means ‘do good’. The name was bestowed by the child's grandmother's friend after she asked for a suitable name for the grandson. The grandmother's friend passed a message to the name-bearer which she wanted to see being carried out. The motivation to bestow such a name arose from the name-giver's own miserable life in which her children neglected her in the rural areas and lived in towns with their spouses. This was

a painful experience as she had raised them without anybody's assistance after her husband went missing. The transition which families in Africa have been going through such as family structure and composition, closeness between members, dominance and decision making, and social roles had affected the wellbeing and support for elderly people (Chigali et al., 2002). Tati (2009) in Lombard and Kruger (2009:125) observes that "...eroded family life and lack of support from the extended family have rendered elderly-headed households vulnerable, putting them at greater risk of social and economic deprivation".

Under these circumstances the grandmother's friend saw a chance to name the boy **Yenzokuhle** 'Do good'. She used the opportunity to assign him this name in a way to inculcate the spirit of doing good in the boy, especially towards his parents and grandparents. She wanted the name-bearer to be a caring person especially to family members, a trait which her own children failed to demonstrate. Therefore, the name-giver had good intentions for the newborn and believed that doing good in life is gratifying and rewarding.

**Yenzokuhle** appreciates and understands his name. He believes that the name has a strong message which he tries to follow daily. He says that people consider him as a kind person which perhaps is due to the influence the name has on his behaviour.

21) Name: **Vulindlela** 'Make a way'

Gender: Male

Name-giver: Father

**Vulindlela** means to 'make a way' for someone. This was a message issued by the father to his son. The boy child was born when his father was preparing for a journey from Eswatini [Swaziland] to South Africa to minister the gospel of Christ. Prior to the boy's birth, the father had prayed for a safe delivery of the baby and good health for both the child and his spouse. The child was born just a month before the father departed to the current Limpopo province where he was going to hold sermons. He was only going to leave on condition that both his child and wife were in good health. As a pastor, the father

regarded the birth of the child as a sign that God had approved his planned journey. It was for this reason that he assigned the name **Vulindlela** as directive to the Supreme Being to spiritually pave a way for him as he was embarking on a divine mission. He presumed that the birth of the boy child was the beginning of a safe journey for him to the foreign land and that God would be with him all the way. Christians have faith that everything happens because of God's will, according to The Holy Bible in Proverbs (3:5-6) which says, "Trust in the Lord with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding; in all your ways submit to him, and he will make your paths straight". Therefore, the father was informed by his belief that through the words we speak, we create what we want in this world. He believed that issuing the command would lead to a safe journey.

**Vulindlela** believes that the name follows him because he is a leader and a problem solver. When people seek solutions at work or home, they usually ask him. Therefore, he opens different ways by solving people's problems and he strongly believes in the meaning of his name. Thus, he likes his name.

22) Name: **Zam'okuhle** 'Attempt to do good things'

Gender: Male

Name-giver: Father

The name implies that a person should attempt to do good. The name was given by the child's father because he strongly thought that a true man is one who strives for greater success in life. The name was chosen to encourage the infant to have positive life goals and accomplish them in order to live peacefully. The father was inspired to give his son this name since he had witnessed how youngsters in his neighbourhood had been victims of moral decay which engulfed most communities. He therefore wanted his son to be different. Tinyani (2018:1) maintains that "moral degeneration is a worldwide problem in modern society and is characterised by growing anti-social behaviour and a decline in the quality of life". He further alludes to the fact that youth today are at the crossroads in terms of morals, values and norms which were held sacred in African communities.

Therefore, to salvage that which is remaining of the morals, norms and values of traditional societies, the father bestowed the name **Zam'okuhle** so that his son would grow up being a noteworthy person who would set a trend for other youngsters. This would make the son a role model and make his father proud. This was a message from the name-giver, who reflected on the olden times when he was growing up and wished to guide his son through the solid notions which had made them men of substance. The father thought that this undertaking would also shape his son's self-image and personality.

**Zam'okuhle** does not like his name, he hates the notion of trying, which is embedded in the message of the name, he feels that the name suggests that he must always go through several attempts before accomplishing something, an act which portrays him as a failure. He thinks that one chance to achieve something is good enough for him. He prefers his second name which is **Sabelo** (allotment) which he was given by his mother. He thinks the name given by his mother shows appreciation of having a son and his birth was viewed as a gift from God by the mother.

23) Name: **Awandze** [*umndeni*] 'Let the family multiply'

Gender: Male

Name-giver: Father

The name **Awandze** is a command. It has been formed by prefixing the hortative formative [**a-**] to the verb radical [-**andz-**] followed by the subjunctive mood suffix [-**e**]. It should be noted that since vowels are never juxtaposed in Siswati, to separate the vowel of the hortative formative from the first vowel of the verb root, the semi-vowel /-w-/ is inserted, e.g. [**a-**] + [-**w-**] + [-**andz-**] + [-**e**] > **awandze**. The subjunctive mood is often used to express wishes and polite commands. When the name **Awandze** [*umndeni*] was given to the boy, the name-giver was asking the child to enlarge his family. The speaker felt compelled to deliver such an order to his baby because he was the first male child in his family of four. The other three offsprings being girls could not be tasked with increasing the physical size of their father's clan name. When they get married their responsibilities would be towards the families they would be married into.

The name-giver anticipated that by having a male child, his family name would extend when his son grew up, got married, and fathered several children, especially boy children. This is motivated by the fact that in patriarchal Swazi society, lineage is passed down through men. Through the patriarchal system, every Swazi born child assumes his/her father's surname at birth even when the mother is not married, and the child is raised by her family. Under no circumstances would a woman pass her surname on to her children. Therefore, every man must pass on his surname to his children, and males have an obligation to continue the patrilineage and contribute to the growth of their clan's name (Kuper, 1963:16). Van Schalkwyk (2006) claims that the major reason, couples marry in Swazi culture is to have children and expand the man's ancestry through the male gender. Given the expansion of the family, Grosz-Ngaté et al. (2014:59) contend that "marriage in many societies is the primary means for expanding kinship relations and reproducing descent groups..." As a result, the name-giver was instructing the name-bearer to enlarge the family. This was a message that gave the child a mandate to accomplish.

**Awandze** likes his name and is proud of it. He tells people that when he grows up, he wants to have at least five children, mostly boys so that his father's instruction to increase the family would be realised.

24) Name: **Bonga** [*njalo*] 'Always give thanks'

Gender: Female

Name-giver: Father

The name **Bonga** [*njalo*] which means 'always give thanks' was bestowed mainly because of its uniqueness. The name-giver decided to instruct his child to always give thanks to the Lord because he was grateful that he has many children compared to his father who had one child. Some men take pride in having many children in marriage. Kasanene (1993:76) claims that "in Swazi society every adult person is expected to marry and to get children. The more a man has many children, the big is his labour force [sic]. He extends his labour force in the community and ensures immortality through his children". To Baloyi (2009:4) the importance of procreation in marriage is that of "inheritance and the survival of the lineage". This is the main reason why the birth of a

son is valued more than that of a daughter. Being thankful is an attitude of gratitude. Thus, the father instructed the child to always thank God for every good thing that would happen in her life. This was a way to instil morals in the child and initiate her to Christian values.

To Emmons and McCullough (2004:6)

the roots of gratitude can be seen in many of the world's religious traditions. Thus, interest in personal manifestations of religion and spirituality may transport the scientist into the realm of gratitude. In the great monotheistic religions of the world, the concept of gratitude permeates texts, prayers, and teachings. The traditional doctrine of God portrays God as the ultimate giver. Upon recognition of God's outpourings of favor, humans respond appropriately with grateful affect, and gratitude is one of the most common emotions that Judaism, Christianity, and Islam seek to evoke and sustain in believers. The Hebrew Bible is replete with the motif that man owes God gratitude for life, health, and sustenance. There are numerous thanksgiving psalms and other prayers in which the person or the community that is praying pours forth expressions of gratitude.

It is therefore against such principles that the name-giver considered it befitting to bestow the name **Bonga** [*njalo*] on his child, as a remembrance that human beings always have to show gratitude to the one who has shown them unmerited favour.

**Bonga** likes her name as she upholds that it is unique with a Christian message. She feels that her father's belief in Christianity is embedded in her name.

25) Name: **Lethukuthula**<sup>1</sup> 'Bring peace'

Gender: Male

Name-giver: Mother

When the child's mother fell pregnant, her boyfriend had several girlfriends, and she was not loved by her sister-in-law. The sister-in-law didn't approve of their relationship and was furious when she heard that she was carrying her brother's child. However, the other girlfriends had no children, so when she told her boyfriend about the pregnancy, he announced to his family members that he was going to marry her. When the woman delivered a boy child, she felt that the infant would bring her inner peace as well as peacefully unite the family. Concerning conflict, Ghebretekle and Rammala (2018:326)

advocate that, “no society is immune from conflict due to differences in interests, goals, values and aims among people. Conflicts occur within families, clans, villages or other small units. Most African communities have their own traditional conflict resolution processes that enable them to prevent, manage and resolve conflict”.

Therefore, the name-giver who might have been influenced by traditional ways of conflict resolution, resolved to bestow the name **Lethukuthula** ‘Bring peace’ on her newborn child. She was using the name as a binding mechanism between herself and her sister-in-law. She hoped that there would be peace and that her in-laws would finally accept their relationship after she had given the family a male child. She was eventually accepted by her in-laws, and she lived peacefully with them.

**Lethukuthula** likes the name since it contains a strong message. It is a peace binding name, and it moulds his character as he is perceived as a peaceful person.

26) Name: **[Phuma] uZakhele** ‘Get out and build your own homestead’

Gender: Male

Name-giver: Paternal grandmother

The name was given by the paternal grandmother of the newborn. She was addressing her son, who is the father of the child to get out and build his own homestead. His mother thought that it was the appropriate time for her son, who now had a child of his own, to move out and establish his own homestead before problems arose. The grandmother was expressing what she knew from experience by observing occurrences of conflict in her extended family. Problems were bound to arise. Marta and Alfieri (2014:2164) refer to problems that arise in family settings as family conflict and that this is

active opposition between family members. Because of the nature of family relationships, it can take a wide variety of forms, including verbal, physical, sexual, financial, or psychological. Conflicts may involve different combinations of family members: it can be conflict within the couple or between parents and children or, again, between siblings.

With experience which has taught the paternal grandmother of **Zakhele** that family conflicts are a phenomenon that is unavoidable, she thought it wise to provide a convenient channel that would subtly address the issue at hand without direct confrontation. This was an order which the addressee had to act on without questioning the speaker.

**Zakhele** likes his name because it encourages him never to rely on anyone, and everything he now has in life came through his own hard labour.

#### **4.4.1.2 Personal names in the form of commands that are addressed to the parents**

In the previous section we looked at personal names that are issued to address the newborn, and the things that pertain to him or her. In this part of our discussion, we will look at personal names that are issued to address the parent or parents of the child.

The following are examples of personal names that are commands and are addressed to the mother or the father of the newborn:

27) Name: **Tsembayena** ‘Trust Him’

Gender: Female

Name-giver: Maternal grandmother

The command **Tsembayena** means ‘trust Him [God]’ and it was addressed to the mother of the newborn child by the maternal grandmother of the child. The situation that informed the naming of the child is that the mother had previously lost a boy child at the age of two years due to illness. She was sorrowful and devastated because of losing the child. However, the name-giver encouraged her to continue to have faith in God that in due course He would bless her with another child. She firmly had the belief that God is kind and compassionate toward humanity. During times of danger, pain, difficulty, disease and sorrow, God's kindness or mercy has been revealed to His people. Since people ascribe their protection to Him, He is frequently called upon to assist in dire circumstances to save those who are afflicted (Mbiti, 1969:46-47). It is against this religious backdrop that the

grieving mother was motivated to look to God for help. When the mother eventually became pregnant, she was advised to keep putting all her trust in God and believe that the Lord would keep the child alive. The grandmother didn't want the mother to have any doubts about the Almighty's abilities. After giving birth to a healthy baby, the name-giver gave the child the name **Tsembayena** 'Trust Him', which was a command directed to the mother.

The name-bearer loves her name. When she is distraught, she says that she usually writes her name in full and reads it several times. She perceives this action as being therapeutic and a source of intrinsic inspiration, no matter what circumstances confront her in life. Therefore, the name reminds her that God is superior to any problem, it revives and strengthens her.

28) Name: **Bongisia** 'Give thanks exceedingly'

Gender: Male

Name-giver: Paternal grandmother

The name **Bongisia** means 'give thanks exceedingly'. The child's father is addressed in this name. With the command, the name-giver, that is, the paternal grandmother of the newborn baby was instructing the baby's father to express deep appreciation and gratitude to the ancestors for enabling his wife to have a son as his firstborn. The motivation that informed the bestowing of such a name was that the father had expressed his desire to the name-giver to have a male child. Consequently, his desire was granted, and that led to the name-giver ordering him to give thanks exceedingly. The name-giver believed that it was because of the intervention of ancestors that the father had a boy child.

On the importance of ancestors in every Swazi's life, Kuper (1963:60) establishes that "each family propitiates its own ancestors at the specific domestic events of birth, marriage, death and the building and moving of huts". Moreover, Kuper (1980:188) emphasises that ancestors have capabilities to "help or hinder, give or withhold health, happiness, and prosperity". He further explains that for this reason ancestors must always

be remembered and honoured at the beginning of every significant event for them to contribute actively and willingly to the welfare of their progeny. Therefore, to have a firstborn male child, the name-giver believes that this was a sign that the family ancestors were still with them and provided for their needs. It was for this reason that the ancestors were appreciated and exceedingly thanked through the traditional ceremony of *kuphahla*, that is, a ritual in which traditional beer is prepared and a goat or cow is slaughtered as a sacrifice to appease the ancestors (Kasanene, 1993). This ritual is performed as a ceremony to express gratitude to the ancestors for protecting and taking care of the family. In Swazi traditional religion, ancestors play a major role in the welfare of family members, they have supernatural power to bless when they are happy. In return the members of the family should show gratitude by offering sacrifices to them. The ancestors can also curse a person when they are displeased with specific things happening in a family. To appease them, the family will have to make a sacrifice or some offerings (Kasanene, 1993:20).

In the absence of the grandfather, the grandmother, as someone responsible for consulting with the ancestors on behalf of members of the family, recognised that the birth of a bouncing boy signified that the ancestors were delighted and deserved to be honoured. Therefore, the message in the name gives an order to the baby's father to prepare a sacrifice with a view to earnestly thanking the ancestors. The naming points to the cultural beliefs of emaSwati and the way in which they perceive the influence of ancestors in their life.

**Bongiswa** likes the meaning of the name but does not believe that his birth was a result of the ancestors being happy. He thinks that the gratitude should be given to God and not to ancestors because he subscribes to Christian values as opposed to Swazi traditional religion.

29) Name: **Batjele**<sup>1</sup> ‘Tell them’

Gender: Male

Name-giver: Father

The child was given the name **Batjele** ‘tell them’, by his father after the mother informed him that she was pregnant when he was about to leave the country to study in England. Senior members of the family noticed after six months that she was pregnant, yet her husband was away. They started to accuse her of promiscuity. The wife had to call her husband who was still abroad and complained that she was being insulted by the family as they suspected that the unborn child was a result of adultery. Then the father instructed his pregnant wife to request a formal meeting with the family members to convey to them that he was fully aware of the pregnancy, and acknowledged the paternity of the child, and would also talk to them upon his return from England. He also said that if they did not believe her, she also had to tell them to wait for the baby to be born for he knew that his physical features would show them if indeed it was his child. Hence the name **Batjele** was aptly assigned to the child as a message addressed to the mother who was supposed to inform her in-laws about the birth of the newborn.

The name-bearer approves of his name as he thinks that it is unique and believes that he is the only **Batjele** in the area. He can also relate to his name as he knows the story behind it.

30) Name: **Gcinangaye** ‘Let him be the last’

Gender: Male

Name-giver: Father

**Gcinangaye** is a seventh child in the family. When his mother gave birth, her partner instructed her to cease giving birth. He wanted the baby boy to be his last born because he felt that they had enough children as a family. Therefore, the husband conveyed an order that was directed to his wife to stop bearing children. The child’s father felt that should they have more than seven children, it was going to be difficult for him to feed and take care of them sufficiently. Therefore, such a name is usually bestowed on the last born in the family. However, **Gcinangaye** was not the last born since the mother gave

birth to another child two years later which was a violation of the command given her. According to the IRIN report of 2009, in Swaziland [Eswatini], culture has made decision making on major family issues the sole responsibility of men. Even when it comes to decisions of family planning, it is the man (husband) who decides on the number of children he wants. Women are often forced to continue bearing children by their spouses and their in-laws. However, in this scenario the child's mother did not follow the instruction as she gave birth to an additional child which was against the order given to her. It is common that male partners often think that it is the sole responsibility of the female spouse to use contraceptives for birth control. When a woman falls pregnant, the blame is usually put on her for failing to take precautions in order to prevent conception, yet both partners are responsible for the pregnancy.

**Gcinangaye** likes his name. When he analyses the events that informed his conception, he believes the name was appropriately given. However, he claims that others do not comprehend it since they frequently believe that he was born last, even though he was not. They are misled by the fact that such a name is typically given to children born last in Swazi families.

32) Name: **Visisa** 'Listen/understand well'

Gender: Female

Name-giver: Father

The message was spoken directly to the mother's child. The mother had fallen in love with a married man who already had children who were grown up and working. After she became pregnant, the child's father vowed to marry her as his second wife. The lady decided to inform her biological mother and other family members about the affair, and they all disapproved of it. They were perplexed as to why a young woman would marry someone who had a wife and was about the same age as her father. Her boyfriend (the married man), on the other hand, urged the woman to listen attentively to him and believe that the promises he made to her were sincere and bound to be fulfilled, that is, if she chose to be his wife a new home would be built in which she and the child would reside. Subsequently, the baby was given the name **Visisa** 'Listen attentively/understand well' at

childbirth which was a reminder to the mother to pay attention solely to her husband and ignore anybody who tried to interfere in their relationship.

The name-bearer likes her name because it conveys a message that encourages people to listen carefully and comprehend before making a decision. She is also pleased that the promises made when she was given the name were ultimately fulfilled. The bearer of the name even chooses to use just this name and despises her second name.

33) Name: **Bhekayena** 'Take care of him'

Gender: Male

Name-giver: Father

The utterance made through the name **Bhekayena** 'Take care of him' is addressed to the baby's mother. The child was assigned the name because he was born following the death of a sibling who lost her life immediately after birth. The mother was depressed after the demise of her first child. When she conceived the second baby, her husband told her not to be overexcited but to patiently observe how things unfold as far as the baby's health was concerned. The message contained in the name was directed to the mother to focus her attention on the health of the newborn. He was of the belief that they had to look well after the child to avoid what occurred previously. Therefore, the father bestowed the name **Bhekayena** 'Take care of him' because he wanted the baby to be healthy. It was a message which called on the mother to be calm, to forget about the dead child and to only focus on the newborn to avoid disappointments.

**Bhekayena** approves of the name as it compels his mother to always look well after him. He feels loved as his parents are concerned about his welfare all the time.

34) Name: **Themb'umenzi** 'Trust the creator'

Gender: Male

Name-giver: Father

The name **Themb'umenzi** is a command that is addressed to the mother of the child by her husband. The name was given to the newborn baby boy after a clash between the

mother of the child and members of her marital family. In her marital family, the elders believed in traditional religion, and they wanted the mother to drink traditional medicine when she was pregnant so that the baby might be protected from evil spirits and grow well. However, the mother with her husband were Christians and did not believe in what was said by the elders. After the mother had deliberated on the issue with her spouse, they agreed that she would not take the traditional medicine meant to protect the child. Hence, her spouse told the marital family that the pregnant woman would not do what they wanted. The child's grandfather was so angry that he accused his son of being bewitched and controlled by his wife. The grandfather then made threats to the pregnant wife, saying that should the baby be born ill or with any disabilities, he would chase her away from his home for defying orders from the elders of the family. All family members were waiting for the birth of the child eager to see what would happen. The baby's father told his wife that she was to trust the creator for he would protect her and the baby. When a bouncing baby boy was born, the elders of the family were surprised and disappointed, but the baby's parents praised God for they only believed in Him for protection. Therefore, the message in the name was addressing the mother to trust only God the creator who would safeguard her and the baby. This command given to the mother was in defiance of what the elders of the family wanted her to do.

***Themb'umenzi*** loves his name because he believes that it brought a complete change to how the family perceived Christians. After the safe birth, the elders stopped forcing the parents to follow their traditional religion. The name-bearer thinks that his birth demonstrates the power of God, and many of his family members are now following the Christian religion as a result of this.

35) Name: **Gcina** 'Stop'

Gender: Male

Name-giver: Father

The name commands the mother to stop bearing children. This name was given because the woman had six children, all females. The father predicted that the baby his spouse was pregnant with was a male child. He ordered that if indeed the wife bore a male child,

she had to stop having more children and the boy had to be their last child. In Swazi patriarchal communities, men as heads of families are never satisfied with the number of children they have if a boy has not been born yet. They take pride in having both sexes, as girls will enrich them through *lobolo* (bride price). Booth (1983:8) explains that "Swazi men count their wealth in their women, children and their cattle". According to Dlamini (2008:71), parents of every lady who decides to marry demand that the groom must pay bride price regardless of whether she marries through Civil Rite or Customary Law since every father sees his daughters as a means of expanding his herd of cattle. Meanwhile boys play a major role in maintaining the status quo of the family and the entire society. Therefore, the name-giver addressed the woman to stop having children after discovering that his wish to have a boy had been realised.

**Gcina** feels obliged to accept the name as it was given to him by his father. The name-bearer's attitude towards his name shows the authority a father has over his children. It is regarded as being disrespectful to disapprove of something said by an elderly person hence the name-bearer feels compelled to accept the name.

36) Name: **Batsetselele** 'Forgive them'

Gender: Female

Name-giver: Father

The name means to forgive someone unconditionally. This is a name that was given by the father of the newborn in which he was addressing his spouse. The message was a directive in which the wife was told to forgive her in-laws and especially her mother-in-law. The command came because the woman was never accepted by members of her marital family. They accused her of spending her husband's money recklessly. The accusations were due to the fact that the woman came from a poor family. The husband's family regarded her unsuitable to marry into a rich family. They said that her intention to marry the man was not driven by love but only by financial gain as she was married in community of property. The woman was dejected and told her spouse that she was returning to her parental home because she could no longer tolerate the insults and the

maltreatment she received. However, she discovered that she was already pregnant and that changed the entire situation. Her partner pleaded with her not to leave.

The father called a meeting with his family where he spoke on behalf of his spouse. He explained to them that his partner had complained several times about the harsh treatment she was subjected to in the family. He demanded that all his family members apologise to the wife, failing which he was prepared to desert them and take his wife to a new place. After the family members had apologised, the man instructed his spouse to forgive them for the sake of peace and the coming baby. The father wanted the baby to arrive in a healthy, peaceful home in which the newborn was not going to be affected by the affairs of the family. Therefore, the message was emphasised in the name of the newborn so that it would be a constant reminder to the mother of the instruction she received from her spouse. The name provided a channel by means of which the speaker could convey his message permanently. As long as the child lived, the message would still be communicated to the mother.

**Batsetsele** likes and accepts her name. She says that the name reminds her of the power of forgiveness as expressed in the Holy Bible. She relates it to Matthew (6:14-15) which says that “For if you forgive other people when they sin against you, your heavenly Father will also forgive you. But if you do not forgive others their sins, your father will not forgive your sins.” Thus, she thinks that she lives up to her name as she is a forgiving person.

37) Name: **Phumlani**<sup>1</sup> ‘Rest’

Gender: Male

Name-giver: Paternal grandmother

The name instructs both parents of the name-bearer to rest and stop procreating. The grandmother relayed the message to her daughter-in-law and her husband as she felt that the couple already had enough children. The message came after the mother had given birth to a ninth child. The grandmother had realised that the parents were struggling to provide for the needs of their many children. As a way to avoid direct confrontation with

her daughter-in-law and son, the name-giver opted to use the name assigned to the baby to send her message to them. This scenario under discussion illustrates how the name-giver uses naming as a conflict management strategy. Therefore, the name ***Phumlani*** ‘rest’ will always remind the interlocutors that they need do nothing now about the issue of bearing children. The name-giver would have succeeded in using the name to convey her command if her message is embraced, however it has to be remembered that speech is sometimes flouted.

***Phumlani*** likes his name as both parents obeyed the order that was given by the grandmother through the name. As a result, the name-bearer is the lastborn, and that affirms that the message was well received by the addressees after the mother had asked for the meaning from the name-giver and acted as required.

38) Name: ***Zamani***<sup>1</sup> ‘Keep trying’

Gender: Male

Name-giver: Maternal grandmother

The name was given by the grandmother after Zamani’s mother had had difficulty in conceiving and bearing children. Some family members began to suspect that she was barren. This resulted in desperation to have a baby and the couple started to lose hope. The mother of the female spouse called and encouraged the couple to keep trying. She advised them to never lose hope but only to believe that at the right time, God would reward them with a baby. After many years of marriage, the woman eventually conceived, and the baby’s grandmother named him ***Zamani*** ‘keep trying’ because she felt that this message motivated the couple to not lose hope. The name was a message which the grandmother used to reassure the couple that all would be well if they only believed. The name ***Zamani*** commands that they must never lose hope in life, they need to attempt numerous times until something is achieved. The name shows the power of carefully chosen words to convey a message of encouragement and counselling. It propelled the parents not to give up.

**Zamani** feels very happy about his name as he says that it shows the power of faith in not giving up. He says that the name is an encouragement to him never to give up in life nor lose hope no matter what the circumstance. It teaches him to confront every difficult situation with confidence to overcome.

39) Name: **Zamani<sup>2</sup>** 'Keep trying'

Gender: Female

Name-giver: Paternal grandmother

The name means to keep trying and never give up. The utterance was directed to both parents of the newborn child. The situation that informed the assigning of this name was that the mother had lost her first child at birth. Then she tried with her partner for several years to have another baby, but she could not conceive. Her mother-in-law, that is **Zamani's** grandmother, used to encourage the couple never to lose hope but to keep on attempting to have a child. This was motivated by the fact that children are essential in African marriages, and they complete a marriage. Children also contribute a great deal to a family social structure as girls and boys have specific social duties towards their parents (Mbiti, 1975:108). The infertility between the couple in question lasted for eight years. It was in the ninth year, that the woman fell pregnant and gave birth to a baby girl. The grandmother was very happy for them and said that the couple must never give up in life no matter how many times they fail. The message in the name was directed to both parents because the name-giver saw that persistence is rewarding. Hence, the name **Zamani** was assigned to the baby as a constant reminder to the parents that perseverance is the mother of success.

The name-bearer likes her name especially because of the meaning it expresses. She thinks that she was given a very positive name that fosters confidence and teaches her to be optimistic in life even if she fails for the first time.

40) Name: **Zamani**<sup>3</sup> [*kulungisa tinkinga*] ‘Try to resolve your problems’

Gender: Male

Name-giver: Maternal grandmother

The name **Zamani** was a directive from the baby’s grandmother that was directed to both the father and mother of the child. The baby was born when the couple had marital problems and were on the verge of separation. The grandmother was concerned about the welfare of the baby and did not want to see her grandson being raised by a single parent. She was disturbed by the toxic relationship of the couple and wanted them to restore the relationship for the sake of the newborn. The naming process afforded the name-giver an opportunity to intervene in the couple’s affairs and address them so that they could act on the message and bury all differences so that the child would be born into a peaceful environment. The name depicts the role a grandmother is supposed to play, which is to protect her grandson and look after his welfare and be the mediator between the warring parties.

**Zamani** appreciates the name as it carries an important message which helped his parents to save their marriage. He believes that it was because of the message they heard from his grandmother that the parents reconciled and now live in harmony.

41) Name: **Pholani** ‘Be healed’

Gender: Female

Name-giver: Paternal grandmother

The name-bearer was born after her parents had experienced a tragedy two years prior to the childbirth. A house burnt down in which their firstborn child died due to smoke inhalation. The parents were very devastated about losing their beloved nine year old son. They almost gave up having children due to the emotional effects of the tragic experience. Not only did this sad occurrence affect the parents, it had a negative emotional bearing on all close family members as well. Elders had to play the role of counsellors to young ones because in the past, professional counsellors did not exist in the rural areas and such a role was executed by elderly persons in families and in the community. When the woman conceived and gave birth to a second child, the paternal

grandmother hoped that through the birth of this child, the parents would be healed. The message was addressing both parents to be emotionally healed and focus on the newborn that was alive. This name was a command and advice that were meant to comfort the affected parents. The name afforded the grandmother a mode of expression in which she could pass her advice without anyone asking questions. Therefore, names are used to advise the one addressed on specific issues and to console those who are suffering.

**Pholani** likes the name and believes that her birth helped her parents to deal with the healing process successfully. She also supports the message that was passed on through her name and thinks that the message was one that gave the parents the strength to effectively look after her.

#### **4.4.1.3 Personal names in the form of commands addressed to the siblings of the newborn**

In this section, we will look at names that address siblings of the newborn. The following are examples of personal names that use commands to address siblings of the newborn:

42) Name: **Busani** ‘Live comfortably’

Gender: Male

Name-giver: Mother

The name means to live comfortably. It was bestowed on the name-bearer after the mother had given birth to boys prior to this pregnancy. As a result of having boys only, there was a demand from family members for her to bear girls. When she became pregnant, it was discovered that she was carrying twins, a boy, and a girl. This was great news to the family members, and they were so happy that they would finally have a baby girl. These twins were born safely, and the father decided to name the male child **Busani** ‘live comfortably’. The name was a message directed to all the boys in the family to live contentedly because they now had a sister that would help them with some of the household chores which are mainly regarded as duties for girls. Dlamini (2008:61)

ascertains that in Swazi families, all domestic chores, including cooking and cleaning are performed by women and girls. In rural areas they collect firewood, fetch water, weed and harvest the fields while boys mainly look after cattle. This description of the chores for girls and boys shows that the latter lived relatively comfortable lives as they did not have many chores in the home. The motivation for assigning such a name to the boy child is however not convincing when one considers how serious the matter of naming is considered among emaSwati. Such a name could be bestowed perhaps for other reasons that would indicate how and why the siblings would have to live comfortably. The name highlights how males are cherished in Swazi homesteads. It somehow shows the cultural nuances as portrayed by roles of each family member.

**Busani** loves the name because his siblings do many things for him as the lastborn. He feels that he indeed lives comfortably as the name suggests. Other people ask him about the meaning of the name as this is an uncommon name in the community where he resides.

#### **4.4.1.4 Personal names in the form of commands addressed to the grandparents**

Personal names in the form of commands can be issued to newborns to address their grandparents. The following are examples of personal names that use commands to address grandparents of newborns:

43) Name: **Lethukuthula**<sup>2</sup> ‘Bring peace’

Gender: Male

Name-giver: Both parents

The command **Lethukuthula** ‘Bring peace’ is addressed to the newborn’s grandmother. The name-bearer was bestowed the name because his parents wanted to convey a message to the grandmother. The parents had a child while they were still students at university. When the mother came to report the pregnancy to the baby’s family, the grandmother was very irritated and disappointed because the father was still an undergraduate and unemployed. She said that the father should contemplate establishing

his own home as he had demonstrated that he was now an adult by impregnating someone's daughter. She even stated that the mother and the baby were not welcome in her homestead. Therefore, the command issued was directed to the paternal grandmother of the baby to find it in her heart to forgive them for what they did so that there would be peace among them. They were requesting her to pardon them because what had occurred was a mistake that lovers are bound to commit. They believed that the act of forgiveness would bring peace, particularly because they had no place to stay other than the paternal home, which would negatively affect the baby. The name was the only viable platform to speak to her after she stated that she did not want to see them in her home.

**Lethukuthula** likes his name as he believes that the message was clearly conveyed and well accepted by his grandmother. He feels that his grandmother loves him and treats him kindly as the only grandchild in the family. Whenever his grandmother buys nice food, she always shares it with him.

44) Name: **Batjele**<sup>2</sup> 'Tell them'

Gender: Male

Name-giver: Father

The command **Batjele** is directed to the grandfather of the child. The name came about because the woman who eventually became a mother could not bear a child for a long period ever since she married her spouse. Her husband had to consult traditional healers to diagnose the cause of the problem. It was established that the family ancestors were not happy that their son had married the woman through civil marriage instead of a traditional wedding. According to Kuper (1963:60) when ancestors disapprove of some family events, they can be difficult to deal with. They might express their rage by depriving a family member of prosperity, health and pleasure. In this case, in showing their anger, the ancestors decided to punish the husband by making his spouse not to conceive. They needed him to formally introduce the woman to them, at a ceremony that would be for the ancestors. When performing this ceremony, a cow had to be slaughtered so that they could bless them with a child.

After the husband had consulted the ancestors, a cow was slaughtered and a plea for forgiveness was made to them during the ceremony. The woman eventually fell pregnant, and the father named him **Batjele** which means tell them. With this message embedded in the name, the father commanded the child's grandfather to tell the ancestors that they have done a good job by forgiving him and providing the family with a firstborn baby boy. The instruction was to tell the ancestors that the family are truly grateful for the gift they have awarded to them. Although instructions generally proceed from a senior member of the family to a junior member, the directive in this example had to be given by a son to his father to command him as the suitable person to speak to the ancestors regarding their circumstance. This is because only the head of the family, either the grandfather or the grandmother, or the father in the absence of the two persons must communicate with the ancestors as if they were living, making requests, thanking, or rebuking them (Kuper, 1963:60).

**Batjele** likes his name because he knows the story behind it. He dislikes being called by his second name and even told his parents that he accepts only the name **Batjele** as his personal name. Surprisingly, some people usually develop an interest in the name whenever they hear it for the first time because this is an exceptional name among emaSwati.

#### **4.4.1.5 Personal names in the form of commands addressed to the immediate family**

Family members, being part of a unique social structure, also play a role in matters that pertain to anyone in the group because of their blood or marriage relations. Immediate family members can also be tasked with the bestowal of personal names to newborns.

45) Name: ***Mbukeni*** ‘Behold a boy child has been born’

Gender: Male

Name-giver: Paternal grandmother

The boy child ***Mbukeni*** was born after his mother could not conceive for seven years in marriage and family members started talking about the situation. Ordinarily, it is expected that all married women bear children for a family. If such is not seen after several years of marriage, some family members will start speaking ill of the woman. Other family members will persuade her husband to marry another wife because the existing one is considered barren. However, the grandmother calmed the family members and pleaded for patience as she hoped that the woman would eventually have children. One must note that it is a unique case for a mother-in-law to be calm about her daughter-in-law being barren because the main reason for marriage is to bear children (Mbiti, 1975:108). Infertility on the part of the woman is never accepted in African societies especially if dowry has been offered. According to Baloyi (2009:3-4), the bride wealth secures that children would be produced from the wife, and if she does not succeed, her parents would be compelled to return the cows to their in-laws. Kuper (1963:22) explains that if the family of the bride is not able to return the cattle, it is required that they provide their son-in-law with another woman to be a co-wife and bear children on behalf of their barren daughter. In such a circumstance, there is no additional bride price to be paid for the second woman.

After seven years of barrenness, the woman finally conceived. The grandmother was so excited because her dream had finally been fulfilled. After the birth of the boy child, the grandmother bestowed the name ***Mbukeni*** on the newborn which means ‘behold she has given birth to a boy child’. This was an order which directed all family members to admit that they were wrong to conclude that the woman was barren. Therefore, the name is addressing all the family members to look at the woman and appreciate her. The name-giver chose to address the family through the name to avoid speaking individually to each member but to use an inclusive way which addresses everyone concerned.

The owner of the name feels that the name is appropriate for him. He feels strongly attached to his mother because his birth somehow saved his mother from the scorn and disparaging remarks by family members.

46) Name: ***Mthandeni***<sup>1</sup> ‘Love him’

Gender: Male

Name-giver: Mother

The name is a command that was issued to the child’s family. It instructs family members to love the infant. The name was given because the mother as an unmarried woman fell in love with a married man and became pregnant. The maternal grandmother of the child was very angry because she thought that this was going to cause feuds between the families involved as they were staying in proximity in the community. She perceived this as a direct provocation to the married woman and said that the pregnancy will cause trouble. She was worried that the newborn might not be well received by the stepmother and this would affect the child’s upbringing. After the birth of the child, the mother named the newborn ***Mthandeni*** which means ‘love him’. This was a directive sent to the child’s stepmother and the child’s paternal family to love and accept the baby regardless of the fact that he was given birth to by the husband’s girlfriend. The name-giver wanted the people to love her son unconditionally. She might have been prompted to address them using the name because she could not physically tell them bluntly. She was afraid of her boyfriend’s wife and decided on using the name as an apt way to politely communicate the message to the intended addressees.

***Mthandeni*** likes and accepts his name. However, his stepmother hates it to such an extent that she suggested that it be changed because of the message it contains. This shows that the addressee clearly received the message conveyed by the name. Other people have shown some resentment to the name. They think that the name forces them to love the name-bearer regardless of how they feel about him.

47) Name: ***Lindani***<sup>1</sup> ‘Wait’

Gender: Male

Name-giver: Father

The name ***Lindani*** means that the family members must wait and see if the child will live, no one must rush to celebrate the birth of the baby boy. This was a directive that was addressed to the family members. The name was given because the newborn was born after another child had died at birth. The death of the firstborn child hurt the father so much that he had to seek professional counselling. Death is always accompanied by pain. This pain sometimes becomes so severe that people have to receive psychological help. The father knew that for everything to proceed normally in their lives they had to push the incident of the passing on of their child to the back of their minds. The death of a child is one of the most severe, shattering and overwhelmingly painful events to most parents. Therefore, the name-giver did not want the family to be carried away but to be cautious so that they would avoid being disappointed should this baby also die. This message was verbally said and expressed in the name. To use the name to express the message was done to emphasise the instruction in case someone missed it. The naming was a way of mitigating the effects of the first birth and repressing the thoughts of the family concerning that.

Surprisingly, the name-bearer has no special sentiments about the name. To him, this is just a basic name which people use to recognise him. This perhaps suggests that ***Lindani*** does not fully approve of the name for some reasons which he prefers not to confide to the public.

48) Name: ***Lindani***<sup>2</sup> ‘Wait’

Gender: Male

Name-giver: Mother

The name means that the family must wait for the day on which the baby will be born. This name was assigned to the newborn because the birth had been delayed for two weeks from the date that was given by a doctor as a birth date. The whole family was apprehensive and worried when the predicted birth date passed and were concerned

about the wellbeing of the unborn baby. However, the mother told them to relax and wait patiently for the right day because she could feel the baby kicking which meant that he was still alive. She said that the baby would decide when he was ready to come out, so everybody was just to hold on and keep their peace. When the mother eventually gave birth to a healthy boy, everyone was happy as his arrival was eagerly awaited. Hence the name was then bestowed on the newborn.

**Lindani** likes the name because it advocates for patience in life and teaches him that everything happens at an appropriate time. It instils the morals of patience and acceptance of every outcome.

49) Name: **Mbhekeni** ‘Look at him’

Gender: Male

Name-giver: Paternal grandmother

The grandmother was instructing the family to look at the newborn and carefully examine him because he did not look like any other member of the family. The baby did not display any physical features of the father or mother. Both parents were dark in complexion whereas the child was light with curly hair. The contrast was alarming as all other children in the entire family were dark. This caused the grandmother to question the paternity of the newborn. So, the name-giver was directing elders of the family to look at the baby as she said that there has never been a ‘white’ person in the family. The command to look at the child was intended to establish his paternity. One must note that traditionally, paternity was not determined through medical examination, but it was established by manually comparing the physical features of the baby with those of the alleged father and family members. After carefully examining the child, the family concluded that this was an adulterine child.

The child hates this name as it is a constant reminder that he is a product of adultery. He rarely uses it and opts to use his English second name. He feels that the grandmother had no right to assign a stigmatising name to him despite the prevailing circumstances around his birth.

50) Name: ***Jabulani*** 'Be joyous'

Gender: Male

Name-giver: Father

The name commands the family members to rejoice because a boy has been born into the family. The father wanted the family to rejoice because the birth of a male child means the continuity of the family clan name. This emphasises the notion that in Swazi culture the birth of a male child is highly esteemed because the clan names will never cease to exist. This will reinforce the patriarchal domination in Swazi culture. A male heir is highly desired to ensure continuity of the family name, he will be of value to the family when he has grown up and dispel the fear that his surname would dwindle and no longer exist when abandoned to the female gender. It was for these reasons that the father of the newborn chose to bestow the name ***Jabulani*** on his child. The birth of a boy child brought the family a sense of happiness.

***Jabulani*** likes his name because he realises that his birth was celebrated by his father as well as the entire family. His coming was well received.

51) Name: ***Khawulani*** 'Stop'

Gender: Male

Name-giver: Father

With the name given to the baby, the father was addressing his elderly family members to stop demanding that his wife bear many children. He decided that three children were enough to him and his wife. The father ordered the elders to stop the demands because he knew that having many children meant added responsibilities on him as the breadwinner. It was going to be difficult to raise more children. The name-giver was well educated and knew the significance of having a manageable family, so he wanted to have a few so that he would be able to provide for them with the best education. However, the extended family members wanted his wife to have more children as per the norm in many traditional households. In most traditional Swazi homesteads, elders have a say in the personal affairs of married couples and dictate how they expect a wife to behave. To verbally reprimand older people in a family not to interfere in your love affairs is not only

regarded as being rude, but also as being disrespectful in traditional settings. They usually think that your female partner has power over you. Therefore, conveying a message to the elders using the child's name is a polite way of telling them precisely what bothers you, for they will enquire about the meaning of the name given to the newborn and find out that indeed you are communicating with them.

The name-bearer likes the name as he used it as a first name at school. He believes that it is important to resolve family issues in an amicable way but that it sometimes compromises the self-image of an innocent person, as in his case.

52) Name: **Dumisani** 'Praise'

Gender: Male

Name-giver: Father

The father gave the name **Dumisani** to his newborn child because he was grateful to have a firstborn male child. In many Swazi families the father as the head of the family rejoices when a boy child is born first in his household. He acquires the feeling of the qualities or physical features that are expected in a man. Through the name assigned to the child, the father was demanding that the immediate family must praise and thank God for bringing forth an heir into the family on his wife's first delivery. As a family that professed Christianity, the name was also bestowed in order to thank God who made it possible for his wife to be fertile. Culturally, it is often assumed that women must bear children as it is their mandatory duty in marriage. Hence, by assigning such a name, the name-giver felt that it was by God's grace only that this was possible and solicited the support of the family in praising Him.

**Dumisani** appreciates his name since he believes his birth provided delight to the family because he is a valued heir.

53) Name: **Bongani** ‘Give thanks’

Gender: Male

Name-giver: Mother

The name compels family members to thank God for an uncomplicated and safe delivery of the baby by the mother. The assigning of this name emanates from the situation where the baby was delivered at home, unlike most babies who are born in hospitals. The father, who was unemployed, could not afford to pay for transport and hospital bills which would have been incurred if the delivery had happened in the hospital. After giving birth without any complications, the mother told her marital family including her husband to earnestly thank God who protected her and the baby during delivery which also took place without the assistance of a midwife or a physician. Therefore, the message in the name was directed to all the people who were present when the mother gave birth at home to express gratitude to God.

**Bongani** likes his name as it tells of his mother’s belief in God for protection and sustenance. However, some people don’t understand why he was bestowed the name as they do not know the circumstances that motivated the bestowal of the name.

54) Name: **Mtsembeni**<sup>1</sup> [*lomfana*] ‘Trust [the boy]’

Gender: Male

Name-giver: Paternal grandmother

The name came about because the paternal grandmother had a dream that a boy would be born by one of the wives in the family and he would be the only child from his mother. She foresaw that there would be difficult times when the entire family would go through problems and be confronted by the death of many family members. She was advised in the dream not to despair, but to trust that the child to be born would be the pillar of the family, he would bring unity and they would triumph over the problems as a family. Two years later, a grandfather died. Then a senior wife who had no child for seven years in marriage conceived and gave birth to a boy child. The grandmother confirmed that this was the child she was told about in the dream and gave him the name **Mtsembeni** ‘trust

him'. This name was a command to all members of the family to trust and take care of this boy, for he was the one who would look after them and rebuild her homestead.

**Mtsembeni** loves his name since it affirms that his grandmother's dream was indeed true as he is the only child from his mother side. He perceives his name as unique and with a strong message as he is the only one who possesses the name in the entire community and perhaps with a different meaning from other people with the same name.

55) Name: **Mtsembeni**<sup>2</sup> 'Trust Him [God]'

Gender: Male

Name-giver: Paternal grandfather

The name-giver assigned the name because the mother of the newborn died after giving birth and left the baby motherless. This message was directed to every family member including the father to devotedly trust in God and have faith that He would comfort them in their grief. The name-giver wanted the family to be optimistic about the future of the newborn by giving all their trust to the Almighty who would provide, protect, and sustain the newborn and also give them the wisdom to raise the baby. This was a message which was needed at that time when everyone was shocked by the tragic death of the mother and wondered what would happen to the newborn child. Therefore, the message compelled everybody to trust in the Supreme Being as the family desperately needed a source of strength and comfort.

**Mtsembeni** loves his name because he thinks that it is inspirational. He subscribes to the message of the name and believes that it has been through God's grace that he grew up without the care of a biological mother.

56) Name: ***Mbuyiseni*** ‘Bring her back’

Gender: Male

Name-giver: Maternal grandfather

The baby was born in his maternal grandfather’s home after his mother had run away from her marital home due to physical and emotional abuse she suffered from her husband during the early stages of pregnancy. The U.S. Department of State (2011:21) in the report of the year 2010 established that in Swaziland, domestic violence towards women, specifically the beating of wives, was prevalent and usually resulted in the loss of life. Even though it is unlawful, police failed to curb the crime. Both traditional and the Roman Dutch law systems afford women the right to lay charges against their abusive husbands that assault them. This usually happens in cases when extended families have failed to stop the domestic violence.

It was because of domestic violence that the maternal grandfather of the baby was furious when his daughter (the baby’s mother) explained the reasons for her to leave the marriage. Her father said that he would wait until the baby was born and then send a delegation to the paternal father-in-law and demand that he formally bring back his daughter because the man that his daughter was married to had shown that he cannot live peacefully with her. He also complained that his daughter was ill-treated but not even one cow had been offered as *lobolo* bride price, hence he regarded the marriage as not yet lawful and one that could easily be annulled. To Horn and Janse van Rensburg (2002:127), failure to deliver *lobolo* in marriage might lead to the marriage being annulled and without the payment of the *lobolo* that marriage is incomplete.

When the baby was born, the name ***Mbuyiseni*** ‘bring her back’ was bestowed on the newborn. This was a message sent to the in-law’s family demanding that they return the married woman (the baby’s mother) to her parental home because they were abusive and had failed to treat her well as a valuable wife. Both families met to discuss the issue involving the two couples and an agreement was reached to annul the marriage.

However, Ezer et al. (2007:894) note that divorce under customary marriage can only be allowed on two grounds: desertion and adultery. Basing divorce only on these two factors has placed many women under constant domestic violence from their male partners and leaving them with no place of safety. Moreover, Ezer et al. (2007:895) propose six conditions under which divorce should be allowed in Swaziland [Eswatini] for both Customary and Civil rites marriages namely, “irreconcilable differences between the spouses or irretrievable breakdown of marriage, incurable insanity or continued unconsciousness, abuse of spouse or children, unbearable living conditions, adultery and polygamy”. These suggested conditions seem to be a solution to protect women’s dignity and integrity regardless of the marriage they are married into.

The situation that informed the giving of the name depicts that abuse between lovers is never tolerated in Swazi culture, the bride and the groom’s father have full responsibility to ensure that the married woman’s wellness is looked after in the marital family. A married woman has the right to seek refuge from her husband’s biological father when ill-treated by her husband. Therefore, the message is a strong order that rebukes the male partner for abusing a woman and endangering the unborn child. It calls for drastic actions to be taken to protect the child’s mother.

The name-bearer does not like his name as he sees himself as a product of abuse and not love. But he appreciates the fact that he was raised with love by his maternal family. Hence, he dislikes that name and considers it as a bad reminder of the abuse they went through with his mother.

57) Name: ***Mthembeni*** ‘Trust Him [God]’

Gender: Female

Name-giver: Paternal grandfather

The child was born by a mother who was diagnosed with a Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV) but was in denial. There was a period when she was admitted to hospital for some time and had high blood pressure. Her condition was worsened by the fact that she could not accept that she was indeed HIV positive. When the grandmother of the baby to

be born heard the sad news, she was affected so badly that she had a heart failure. Her husband, that is, the baby's grandfather gave the family hope and told them to absolutely trust that God would protect both the child and mother. The grandfather had faith that the child would be healthy. When the child was born, she tested HIV negative and the mother eventually survived the ordeal as she was on antiretroviral drugs, hence the name **Mthembeni** 'Trust Him' was given to her.

**Mthembeni** likes the name because it shows the grace of God through her life because her mother did not take any drugs to protect her from being infected with the virus.

58) Name: **Sibongiseni**<sup>1</sup> 'Rejoice with us'

Gender: Male

Name-giver: Both parents

The name **Sibongiseni** has been formed from the verb *bonga* 'thank' by prefixing the subject concord for first person plural [*si-*] to the verb radical [-**bong**-], adding the causative verbal extension morpheme [-*is-*], then attaching the subjunctive mood terminative vowel [-*e*] plus the plural marker suffix [-*ni*], which resulted in *si+bong+is+e+ni* > **sibongiseni**. The name was given after the parents had discussed possible names and finally decided on this name. The name was chosen among others because the baby was a firstborn. The parents were happy to begin with a male child and they wanted everyone in the family to thank God with them. In many Swazi families, members share all kinds of emotions, from grief and sorrow of losing a loved one to celebrating events such as *lobolo*, marriages, and childbirths. The name assigned to the newborn child is an invitation to everybody at home to partake in celebrating the arrival of a new member of the family. The parents wanted the whole family to rejoice in the safe birth of a boy child by holding a celebration party wherein a goat would be slaughtered, and everyone could eat to their hearts' content. Waruta and Kinoti (2000:36) affirm that in most patriarchal African families it is not merely the birth of the child that is appreciated but the gender is very significant. Hence, the birth of a male child is more appreciated and valued. This view is also supported by Baloyi and Manala (2019:361) according to whom "the male child will not only continue with the family name but will ensure the

subsistence of his family through his labour". Therefore, a name communicates the value attached to a firstborn male child in Swazi culture. Zandamela and Tofa (2009:25-26) posit that the delivery of a male child by the mother in Swazi families is welcomed with exhilaration unlike that of females. Male children are held in high esteem because Swazi people value the continuation of the family lineage; Swazi children retain the surname of their fathers. Furthermore, boys are placed in a higher rank than their mothers. The family raises them since infancy to be dominant by allowing them to participate in making family decisions in partnership with senior male family members while women are excluded.

**Sibongiseni** loves his name because of its uniqueness, and because both parents agreed to it. This shows that his birth and name giving was a carefully planned event in which both parents were happily involved.

59) Name: **Sibongiseni**<sup>2</sup> 'Rejoice with us'

Gender: Male

Name-giver: Father

The name-bearer was assigned the name **Sibongiseni** at birth after his father wished to have a boy as his first child, but his wife gave birth to a girl. He was disappointed to start a family with a girl child which led him to name her **Simphiwe** 'We have been given her' which meant that they had to accept the female child as a gift even though that was not what they had hoped for. According to Kimathi (1994:12) a marriage that produces only female children in African societies is despised. This shows that even if a wife has children, there is no satisfaction unless she gives birth to a boy child. In this case, after three years his spouse conceived and gave birth to a bouncing baby boy. A celebration for the arrival of the boy whom he regarded as an heir was held and he requested all his family members and those from the partner's side to join them in rejoicing and thanking God and the ancestors for fulfilling his wish. The father was so happy that he bought a car for his wife to celebrate the fact that she had eventually given him all he wanted as a husband. The name was an invitation to every relative to partake in the thanksgiving. From the situation that informed the naming by the father, one notes the gender of the

child which he desired. It is also important to point out that it is rare for fathers in Swazi communities to celebrate the birth of children by performing ceremonies where people are invited to a feast. Usually, rituals are only performed for the newborn in which *tinyamatane*, that is, a mixture of specific animal fur, feathers of specific birds, barks and leaves from certain trees are set alight so that the baby and the mother would inhale the smoke. This ritual is done to protect the baby against all kinds of communicable diseases and witchcraft (Kasanene, 1993:55). Therefore, the name given and the celebration that accompanied the birth show how much importance this boy child was accorded in the family by the father unlike the birth of the female first child which never received attention.

The name-bearer appreciates and holds his name in high regard. He feels that the name makes it clear how his father feels about him.

60) Name: ***Mbongiseni***<sup>1</sup> 'Assist her in giving thanks'

Gender: Male

Name-giver: Father

The name ***Mbongiseni*** is formed from the verb stem [-**bonga**] 'thank' by prefixing the object concord of class 1 nouns [-**m-**] to the verb radical [-**bong-**] and adding the causative verbal extension morpheme [-**is-**], the subjunctive mood terminative vowel [-**e**] plus the plural marker [-**ni**] which resulted in ***m+bong+is+e+ni > mbongiseni***. The plural marker [-**ni**] indicates that more than one person is addressed here, to be precise every family member of the newborn. The name dictates that everyone in the family must join the mother in thanking God, the Almighty. The name was assigned to the baby after the mother once had an unsuccessful pregnancy due to miscarriage. The mother and her spouse were so disappointed after that bad experience. The father as an informant in this study said that he did not lose hope as he believed that God would give them another child at the right time. When the female partner got pregnant after the first miscarriage, the father was optimistic that the baby would live by God's grace. Indeed, the mother successfully carried the baby until birth. The birth of a healthy boy was well received by his father, and he requested everybody to support his wife in praising and thanking God the creator for protecting his son since the time of his conception until birth.

**Mbongiseni** likes the name as he feels that his parents were looking forward to his birth and were ready to receive him. He says that the name is also a good reminder to him that he must be thankful to God who gives and protects life.

61) Name: **Mbongiseni**<sup>2</sup> ‘Assist her to thank the [ancestors]’

Gender: Male

Name-giver: Father

The command **Mbongiseni** is addressed to the immediate family of the newborn. The situation that informed the bestowal of the name was that the baby was born at midnight while the father was not at home. When he came back after one o'clock in the morning, he received the news that his wife had given birth to a boy. He told his parents that he would celebrate after seeing the child as it was still dark. In the morning he was so excited when he realised that the baby boy looked like him. He wanted his family members to assist the mother in paying gratitude to the ancestors, whom he felt were responsible for the birth of their son. Ancestors play a significant role in the religious life of emaSwati especially during tough times when people turn to them for assistance and advice. Through the ancestors, the people can seek *Mvelinchanti* ‘God’. They appease the ancestors by giving sacrifice and offerings, in return, the latter would show happiness by granting the people what they have asked for (Kasanene, 1993:20). Thus, believers in traditional religion are of the conviction that blessing, good things, luck, misfortune, and curses are all from their ancestors who intercede for them to *Mvelinchanti*. Hence, the name assigned was a desire that the family members join in celebrating the baby's birth and thanking the ancestors.

The name-bearer says that he likes the name. He began to understand its meaning in adulthood and appreciated that his birth was well received by his father who demanded that every family member thank the ancestors for giving him a son.

62) Name: ***Phumlani***<sup>2</sup> ‘Rest’

Gender: Male

Name-giver: Mother

The message in the name means rest. This was a message that was directed by the mother to the elders of the family. The name-giver ordered the elders to rest and stop demanding that she bear children. She insisted that they should be content as the male child they wanted has finally come. Prior to her marriage, some family members from her partner’s side objected to their relationship as the woman had two children from a previous relationship while her boyfriend had none. As a result, the extended family’s older relatives and aunts expressed disapproval that her boyfriend should marry someone who already had children while there were so many single women in the neighbourhood without any children. However, the man ignored them and married her. The action of the man relates to the Siswati proverb that says *Umjingi udliwa yinhlitiyo* which literally means the heart chooses its own. Figuratively, the proverb implies that an individual cannot be compelled to do something he/she does not want to do (Kamera, 2001:218). However, life was not easy for the wife after the marriage as some members of the family told her openly that it was high time for her to have children because their brother also wanted to be a biological father. They complained that it was not fair for her spouse to raise children whom he was a stepfather to. She then got pregnant. After giving birth, the mother got an appropriate opportunity, through the naming of her baby, to address all those who had been demanding that she bear a child for her husband. The situation that informed the naming depicts the extent of the problems some women face in marital homesteads. Culturally, a married woman must respect all members of the family and cannot have verbal altercations with adult members of the family as this is regarded as rude and disrespectful. Therefore, the naming provides a medium of communication for the voiceless to relay their message to those people whom they cannot confront.

***Phumlani*** likes his name as he knows the message and how it came about. He feels that his birth set his mother free from all the abuses she received because of not having children with the man she had married.

63) Name: **Ayibongwe** ‘Let the Lord be thanked’

Gender: Male

Name-giver: Mother

The name **Ayibongwe** ‘Let the Lord be thanked’ is derived from a verb in the subjunctive mood. It has been constructed from the verb stem [-**bonga**] ‘give thanks’ by prefixing the hortative formative [a-] and the subject concord of class 9 nouns [-i-] to the verb radical [-**bong-**], followed by the passive verbal extension [-w-] and finally the subjunctive mood terminative vowel [-e]. It should be noted that since vowels are never juxtaposed in Siswati, to separate the vowel of the hortative formative and that of the subject concord, the semi-vowel [-y-] was inserted, thus [a-] + [-y-] + [-i-] + [-**bong-**] + [-w-] + [-e] > **ayibongwe**. In using this construction, the name-giver was politely imploring every family member to thank the Lord. The mother bestowed this name on her son because she was being grateful to God for providing her with a healthy son after she had been struggling to bear male children. She had been praying for a male child, and when her prayers were answered, she was indebted to the Almighty for rewarding her with a baby boy. Therefore, she was politely beseeching every family member to partake in expressing appreciation and gratitude to God for blessing her with a son which the family was desperate for after giving birth to girls only. The message in the name is a manifestation of the religious conviction of the mother who regards children as gifts from the Supreme Being.

**Ayibongwe** likes his name because he feels that it is a good reminder that he must always thank God for the good works He does for him.

64) Name: **Thulani** ‘Be quiet’

Gender: Male

Name-giver: Mother

The name **Thulani** means ‘be quiet’, and it was bestowed by the mother on the child. She commanded members of her marital family to be quiet and stop blaming her for only giving birth to male children. This is contrary to what the International Women’s Human Rights Clinic (2009:194) reports namely that under Swazi Law and Custom boys are preferred to girls and a woman can be evicted from her marital home for bearing female children

only. In this case, the mother already had five boys when ***Thulani*** was born. Some people among the family members including the mother-in-law were complaining that she was giving birth to boys only. They openly asked when she would bear girls as they were needed so that the father could benefit when they get married. Posel and Rudwick (2014:55) observed that some parents are abusing the custom of *lobolo* as they use it as a means of enriching themselves. The criticism concerning the children she bore annoyed the mother to such an extent that she got infuriated and needed a way to voice her frustration. After giving birth to a baby boy for the sixth time, she resolved that it was the right time to address those that had been annoying her, by bestowing the name ***Thulani*** ‘Be quiet’ on her newborn. The message in the name was a command that was issued to all the family members who were criticising her for giving birth to boys only, that they should shut up and accept all the male children which she had given birth to because she has now ceased producing children.

The attitude of the name-bearer is interesting in this case as he loves his name. He holds that the name has a clear message to those who mocked and blamed his mother for having only boys.

65) Name: ***Mvumeni*** ‘Accept him’

Gender: Male

Name-giver: Paternal grandfather

The name-giver is the paternal grandfather of the newborn. He bestowed on the child the name ***Mvumeni*** which means accept him [the child]. The name was communicated to the father of the baby and every person in his family to accept the child as biologically belonging to him. After the birth of the child, his mother brought him to her partner’s family so that they may see him as per the custom that is followed after *kubika sisu* ‘reporting of pregnancy’, that an unmarried woman must adhere to after delivering a baby. The custom known as *kubika sisu* ‘reporting the pregnancy’ is carried out by the pregnant lady’s female relatives, usually her senior aunt, who accompanies her to her boyfriend’s family to inform them about the pregnancy. They often arrive early in the morning wearing *ematjalo* ‘wool blankets’ over their shoulders. This signifies that they are coming to report

a pregnancy. The boyfriend's family would then gather the 'visitors' into a hut where the aunt of the pregnant women would explain the details of their visit. They would then be asked about the person responsible for the pregnancy. After the mention of the name, the boyfriend would then be summoned to the hut and asked if he knew the pregnant woman. From his response they would establish if he had fathered the child. If he says that she knows everything, the family will ask the pregnant woman to bring the child to them after delivery which means the pregnancy has been accepted by the family. Contrarily, if the man says that he is not sure of the pregnancy, then the family would usually say that *Sesiyyobona ngemntfwana* meaning that only physical features of the baby would determine if he or she belongs to the alleged father. Usually, the family does not vehemently deny the pregnancy before the baby is born.

However, in this case, when the people who were present *endlunkhulu* 'in the grandmother's hut' looked at the baby, a few weeks after birth, they found that the baby did not have physical features that resembled those of the father. One major difference was that the baby was light in complexion while the father was dark. Some people in the family questioned the paternity of the child based on the physical features. The paternal grandfather of the baby, as a senior member of the family who has absolute authority, intervened, and commanded everyone to receive the child and accept that indeed he was his biological grandson. He gave clarity that the baby had features resembling those of his maternal grandfather who was someone he knew very well since childhood. Therefore, the name ***Mvumeni*** 'Accept him' was bestowed on the child by the paternal grandfather. The name gives a strong directive to all addressees to acknowledge the newborn.

***Mvumeni*** does not like his name because he feels that his father was forced to accept him as a child. He still has a question about what would have happened had his grandfather not intervened when his paternity was questioned by people he regards as his family.

66) Name: **Bongisisani** ‘Give thanks exceedingly’

Gender: Female

Name-giver: Mother

The command **Bongisisani** is addressed to both the father and his immediate family members. The name-bearer was bestowed the name because her mother had given birth for the eighth time. The mother was instructing her husband and family to be grateful and thank her immensely since she had produced many children for them. The name-giver was announcing to her husband and in-laws that she had successfully executed her role as a wife whose bride price was fully paid. The newborn’s mother wanted her marital family to thank her for having given birth to many children in the family. She demanded that she be appreciated by her marital family as the name expressed. This might have been informed by the fact that women are often not appreciated in their marital homesteads for bearing children while they are easily blamed and insulted if they are unable to give birth. The ability of a woman to produce babies for a family is taken for granted by some families and treated as a duty which every married woman must perform especially if *lobolo* has been paid for her. She is never thanked for successfully contributing to the procreation of the family. According to Mbiti (1975:105) to African people, the ultimate goal of marriage is giving birth to children. As a result, unless one or more children are born, a marriage is not complete. It is a tragic occurrence when a couple fails to produce children. Therefore, the name-giver wanted the family to show gratitude because she would no longer bear children for them.

**Bongisisani** likes the name as she perceives it to be unique and unisex. She believes that it also teaches her family members to show gratitude whenever someone has done something good and not wait until someone demands to be appreciated like her mother.

67) Name: **Mayibongwe**<sup>1</sup> [inkhosí] ‘Let God be praised’

Gender: Male

Name-giver: Mother

The name **Mayibongwe** ‘Let God be praised’ is derived from a verb in the subjunctive mood. It has been formed from the verb stem [-**bonga**] ‘thank’ by prefixing the hortative

formative [**ma-**] and the subject concord of class 9 nouns [-**i**-] to the verb radical [-**bong-**], followed by the passive verbal extension [-**w-**] and finally the subjunctive mood terminative vowel [-**e**]. Since vowels are never juxtaposed in Siswati, to separate the vowel of the hortative formative and that of the subject concord, the semi-vowel [-**y**-] was inserted, thus [**ma-**] + [-**y**-] + [-**i**-] + [-**bong-**] + [-**w-**] + [-**e**] > **mayibongwe**.

The name being in the subjunctive mood makes it to be a polite command. The newborn's immediate members of the family are addressed by the name. The name-giver assigned the name **Mayibongwe** meaning 'let God be praised' because she was grateful to the Almighty for allowing her and her spouse to have a baby boy after they had been struggling to get one. The message entailed in the name is directed to everyone in the family who knew their plight that they must rejoice with them and give thanks to God. This name came about because of the jubilation of the parents when they found out that their firstborn was a boy. The mother attributed her ability to bear the baby boy to God hence she wanted to exalt Him. Such a name speaks of the religious nuances of the name-giver concerned.

The name-bearer does not really like the name. He thinks that it is long, and he had a problem in writing it when he began schooling and other learners made fun of him. This led to him to grow up disliking the name.

68) Name: **Mayibongwe**<sup>2</sup> [*inkhosı*] 'Let God be praised'

Gender: Male

Name-giver: Mother

The name in full means 'let God be praised'. The mother decided on giving this name to her second boy. She had long hoped for a second boy as she already had three daughters and a boy which made her to ask God to give her a second boy child. She used to pray daily for another boy. At the birth of the child, the mother was so relieved and glad when she realised that indeed what she had prayed for had been granted. The first words she said when the nurse showed her the baby were 'let God be praised' for granting her the desire of her heart and for answering her prayers. The message in the name is to mandate

members of her marital family to jointly honour God who made her dream come true. This name also reveals the religious traits of the name-giver.

**Mayibongwe** likes his name because he got it after God had answered his mother's prayer. He believes that it shows the power of God as manifested through his birth.

#### **4.4.1.6 Personal names in the form of commands addressed to the in-laws**

In-laws also play a part in the affairs of the people with whom they have marriage ties. In Swazi culture, the father of a man married to a woman has a direct influence over his son and his household. He and his wife have the power to bestow personal names on their son's children. On the other hand, the parents of a woman also have power to name a daughter's children when she is not married.

The following are examples of personal names that are commands addressed to the in-laws of the newborn's parents:

69) Name: ***Khumbulani*** 'Remember'

Gender: Male

Name-giver: Maternal grandfather

The plural marker [-*ni*] in the name indicates that not one individual is addressed but several people are spoken to. The name is a command that reminds the in-laws of the mother to remember the promise that the alleged father made before the birth of the child. The alleged father did not openly accept the paternity of the child when the pregnancy was reported to his parents. He made a promise that a position regarding the pregnancy would be taken once the child was born. He was going to accept full responsibility after seeing the newborn child and having determined whether there were features that resembled him. After the child was born, the maternal grandfather used the name as a medium to convey a message to the alleged father of the child to remember and fulfil the promise he made. He wanted the family to accept paternity so that the father could take care of the baby and pay a fine for impregnating the woman without marrying her. The

entire family is addressed instead of only the alleged individual because fines are paid by the father for the wrongdoing of his son who had impregnated the woman. Hence, all the family members are addressed. Culturally, a man is not allowed to impregnate a woman unless that woman is his wife. If that happens, the man is supposed to offer cattle to his girlfriend's father. Van Schalkwyk (2006:38) affirms that "if a man cohabits with an unmarried woman and impregnates her, her parents are entitled to claim damages from him. Five beasts are paid by the boy's parents to the girl's parents". Van Schalkwyk (2006) describes one of the cattle as *umdzalaso*, which is slaughtered on the premises of the pregnant girl. Such an act is done as a ritual to cast out bad omens which could spread to the other females and cause them to become pregnant prior to marriage. The sole purpose of offering damages is that once the girl has a child, her father will receive less bride wealth. Therefore, the name instructs the alleged father together with his family to remember their promise and act.

The owner of the name considers his name as a general tag that distinguishes him from other people. The message portrayed through his name is neither bad nor good, therefore, he sees nothing wrong with his name.

70) Name: ***Mthandeni***<sup>2</sup> 'Love him'

Gender: Male

Name-giver: Father

The name was given by the baby's father after ***Mthandeni*** was born while his mother was still at high school. The father of the newborn requested his in-laws from his partner's home to love and take care of his son. He admitted that he was wrong by impregnating his partner while both were still attending school. He understood that his girlfriend's family hated him for what he did. He decided to send a message to his girlfriend's family through the name assigned to the child. In the message he pleaded that the newborn should not suffer for his sin as the father, but that his in-laws should love the child as their grandson regardless of the circumstance that led to his birth. This was the only way the father could communicate his request after he had infuriated his partner's family by impregnating their daughter at an early age. Giving a child such a name shows that the name-giver was

anticipating that the child might not be well received in the family, thus a request for acceptance was required.

**Mthandeni** likes his name as he believes that it has a bearing on his life. He has experienced that in most places that he has visited, people tend to love him as expressed by his name.

71) Name: **Velani** [*nemali yelobolo*] 'Appear with the bride price'

Gender: Male

Name-giver: Maternal grandmother

The name was assigned to the newborn by his grandmother. She was very sick when the baby was born and wanted to see her daughter's bride price paid before she dies. The mother of the newborn had been married for six years and had four children. However, no *lobolo* 'bride price' was paid to her family. The grandmother was sending a strong message with the command **Velani** [*nemali yelobolo*] 'appear with the bride price' in which the son-in-law and his parents were addressed. Culturally, a mother has no right to directly demand the bride price for her daughter from the groom's family. It is her husband who has the authority to assign a delegation who will visit the groom's family and demand the bride price. Therefore, the grandmother opted for sending the message to the groom and his family through the name. She had no avenue of expressing her feelings about the situation at hand and this became an apt medium of communication to address the in-laws of her daughter on behalf of the husband who had failed to execute his responsibility.

**Velani** does not like the name as it expresses that he was born by a father who was regarded as a failure by his maternal grandmother. He thinks that the name-giver could have assigned him a different name but feels obliged to use it as all his documents are in the name.

72) Name: ***Buyisani*** [*imali yelobolo*] ‘bring the [bride price]’

Gender: Male

Name-giver: Maternal grandmother

The name ***Buyisani*** [*imali yelobolo*] means ‘bring the bride price’. It is a name that is an adjuration in which the name-giver orders the father of the newborn child to pay bride price. The maternal grandmother was angry that her husband had been requesting the baby’s father several times to offer bride wealth, but no arrangements to that effect were made. The failure to accede to the demands made, is a violation of Swazi culture and custom which stipulate that a man must offer a bride price to his wife’s family after marriage. Failure to settle the *lobolo* means forfeiting rights over your children such as owning your daughter’s *lobolo* in the future (Russell, 1993:50-51). Parker (2015:175) argues that “the transfer of cattle from the relatives of the bridegroom to those of the bride serves to legitimize the marriage”. This means that if the husband fails to offer the bride price, the marriage is said to be incomplete and still awaits the blessings of the bride’s family. Dlamini (2008:73) also confirms that every parent demands that *lobolo* be paid for his/her daughter. A married man has no choice but is obligated to pay regardless of the type of marriage he is married under. Therefore, the wife’s family has a right to demand bride price for their married daughter.

The above arguments about bride price show that the name-giver was justified to use the command ***Buyisani*** which she bestowed on her grandchild as demand for the bride price. The naming presented the grandmother with a mode of expressing her frustration and disappointment because the baby’s father had failed to offer the bride price which was long overdue. Hence, the name ***Buyisani*** was assigned as a message directed to the baby’s father and his parents.

The name-giver likes the name as it is the only Siswati name he has, and he knows its meaning. He prefers a name that has meaning unlike his English name John which he was given by a nun at Sunday school.

73) Name: **Sivumele** ‘Allow us’

Gender: Female

Name-giver: Father

The command **Sivumele** is directed to the father-in-law of the name-giver. The name was given because the father who is Swazi had impregnated a Ndebele woman. The father wanted the child to assume his surname as per the norm among emaSwati. However, his girlfriend’s family objected because he had not offered *lobolo* for her nor given them cattle as damages to claim paternity for the child. In Swazi culture, a child assumes the surname of the father whether the mother has been married or not (Van Schalkwyk, 2006:38). However, among the Ndebele of South Africa, a child does not assume his/her father’s surname if the parents are not married, or when damages have not been offered as a fine to the woman’s family for impregnating their daughter whilst not married to her.

According to the South African Birth and Death Registration Act 51 (1992), a child born from unmarried parents commonly known as an illegitimate child, shall assume the mother’s surname. These differences between the laws of South Africa and Swaziland as well as cultural differences led to the disagreements between the father and the mother’s families on which surname the child should assume.

So, the name-giver was addressing his girlfriend’s father to allow the child to assume his father’s clan name/surname which was a violation of the Ndebele culture. He promised that he would marry his girlfriend at a later stage. After the birth of the child, the two families met, and it was agreed that the man would offer five cattle if he wanted his child to assume his family name.

**Sivumele** regards her name as unique and likes it. She claims that since her childhood she has never heard of someone who shares the same name.

#### **4.4.1.7 Personal names in the form of commands addressed to ancestors**

An ancestor is someone who lived and died a long time ago, and that person belonged to a particular clan/family. However, not everyone who died qualifies to be an ancestor. A person who was morally corrupt in life and departed tragically or possessed some dreadful ailments and disorders such as madness is ineligible to be an ancestor (Pobee, 1976:7-8). Ancestors are only those people who existed in the human world and are now in the world of spirits after having died. To be an ancestor in African religion, a person must have lived a commendable life, had offspring, honoured older people, and expressed commitment to ancestors while he/she was still alive (Asante and Mazama, 2009:45). The belief in ancestors among emaSwati has been observed by many scholars (Kasanene, 1993; Ndlovu, 1993; Dlamini, 2008). Traditional Swazi religion is based on the concept that ancestors or deceased relatives influence the lives of all living people in a family (Ndlovu, 1993:51). Ancestors are consulted in various situations by elders of a family in Swazi traditional homesteads and they play an important role in the life of the living. Each family has its ancestors that guide and protect every member of the household. Asante and Mazama (2009:47) describe the role of ancestors as follows:

ancestors serve the living as the living beings serve them. Ancestors assist the living in court cases, in marriage, in mediations between family members, and in health situations; in return, the living offer ceremonies to feed the ancestors. Libations are usually offered through drink or food because the ancestors are believed to continue to live as they did when they were on the earth. Thus, even in their spiritual state, they need to have sustenance.

Nyawo (2004:52) supports the idea that ancestors play a significant role in the lives of the living in Swazi families. She argues that ancestors are "...emissaries of God and intermediaries between God and man and were assigned to manage the daily affairs of their living relatives, hence the need for the latter to stay in contact with them in order to know their desires and wills...". Certainly, ancestors have a major influence on the day-to-day affairs of family members.

EmaSwati use personal names to address ancestors. They communicate their messages through the names assigned to their children at birth. These utterances (names) may either be commands or requests. The following are examples of personal names that are commands addressed to the ancestors of a newborn:

74) Name: ***Phendulani*** 'Answer'

Gender: Female

Name-giver: Father

The command ***Phendulani*** is directed to the ancestors of the child's father. The name was given to the baby girl because the parents had two girls in a row. Before the mother fell pregnant and prior to the birth of ***Phendulani***, the grandfather as the elder of the family had consulted the ancestors on behalf of the parents and offered some sacrifice in which he requested them to bless the family with a baby boy. However, the parents, especially the father, were disappointed when a second baby girl was born whereas they had asked for a boy child. They had a belief that they were given children by the family ancestors. Due to this belief, by giving the newborn the name ***Phendulani*** 'Answer', the father was expecting that the ancestors would bless him the next time with the son he had asked for as he was content with the female children he already had with his wife. Therefore, the father wanted the ancestors to bless them with a male child as they already had girls. Pobee (1976:8) asserts that even though ancestors are no longer alive, they are viewed to be actively engaged with issues of the living. As a result, they are frequently implored for blessings such as health and better life, productivity and childbirth, rain, and overall family prosperity. Pobee's (1976) understanding of ancestors shows that the demand made by the father is not something strange. Hence the father expected only a favourable answer from the ancestors. The order presented to the ancestors to award the parents with a boy child strongly points to gender preferences in Swazi families. In this family, the parents wanted their offspring to be mixed. The naming also shows that emaSwati do not only address ancestors through rituals called *kuphahla* in which they put forward requests, appease and appreciate them, but they also use naming as another vehicle to speak to the ancestors and voice any discontentment in their life affairs.

**Phendulani** approves of the name because she has no other name to use. She was never given a second name. She is also fond of it because it is unisex and in Swazi societies you do come across other **Phendulani's** who are males. When written, people cannot easily tell the gender until they personally see the name-bearer and that amuses her.

75) Name: ***Khethani*** 'Choose'

Gender: Female

Name-giver: Maternal grandmother

The utterance issued in the name ***Khethani*** is directed to the ancestors. The name was given to the baby because she was born at a time when mothers usually delivered their babies at home because the hospital was very remote. When it was time for the baby to be born, the mother went through a difficult labour, as the head of the baby was already visible, but the body was stuck. A pick-up van was organised to take the woman to hospital but when it was waiting for her to be taken in, the grandmother requested to perform a ritual and pleaded with the ancestors before they could leave. She implored the ancestors, to keep alive the mother or the baby. She pleaded that they should help and at least rescue one of them. It is said that after the grandmother had completed performing the ritual, she returned to her sacred hut and found that the baby had been delivered. Hence, she assigned the newborn the name ***Khethani***. In this scenario, the ancestors were made to choose between the mother's life and that of the child by the name-giver. However, ancestors being benevolent guardians of the family (Mekoa, 2019) were unbiased in this incident as they rescued both. Kuper (1963:60) agrees that "ancestors have greater wisdom, foresight and power than the rest of mankind". This means that ancestors have authority to intervene in situations where living people fail. This is one of the reasons why they are consulted in almost all circumstances. Triebel (2002:189) also holds that "only the ancestors can guarantee that life will continue, that the stream of life will not be interrupted". Therefore, the naming here alludes to Swazi cultural beliefs and the role *emadloti* (ancestors) play in the affairs of the people. The situation leading to the birth of the child determined the naming process, as well as the name that the baby was ultimately given.

***Khethani*** likes the name so much because it is unique; if somebody calls it, she responds promptly as she knows that she is the only person being addressed. She feels that the name is appropriate when one takes into consideration the situation surrounding her birth.

76) Name: ***Mphephiseni*** ‘Save him’

Gender: Male

Name-giver: Paternal grandmother

The name was given because the newborn was sick at birth. The baby had severe jaundice which meant that the mother could not be discharged from the health centre due to the illness of the child. The child's grandmother was dejected when she heard that her grandson could not come home because of his sickness. As the only senior person in the family after the death of her husband, the grandmother decided to ask for protection from the ancestors and demanded that they look after the newborn so that he could have a speedy recovery. She consulted the ancestors and performed a ritual meant to request the ancestors to rescue the newborn. According to Triebel (2002:189) persons that neglect their ancestors put their own life in danger, as well as the life of the entire community since ancestors' wrath may bring bad luck, sickness, famine and death. As a result, it is imperative to acknowledge their love and kindness to sustain life. It is important to note that a grandmother has the authority to consult ancestors in Swazi culture in the absence of the grandfather (Vilakati and Msibi, 2006). As a result of the newborn being sick, the name ***Mphephiseni*** was assigned. This name was addressed to the ancestors to save the baby from the sickness. It is believed that the ancestors were able to hear the message as the child recovered and was subsequently discharged from the hospital.

***Mphephiseni*** says that even though he does not believe in Swazi traditional religion and ancestors, he likes the message entailed in the name and approves of it. He likes it that the message has a commanding voice, not just a mere request.

77) Name: ***Khanyani*** ‘Be bright’

Gender: Male

Name-giver: Father

The message expressed through the name is directed to the ancestors of the father and it was bestowed on his son. It came about due to love relationship problems that the father had experienced in life. The father had seven children from different women and the newborn was his first child from his wedded wife. He was happy to have a child after marriage because all the other children he had before the wedding lived with their mothers. This was the first time he would have a child who would live with him. The name has a message which insinuated that the ancestors be bright and thereby bring light into the life of the family, by endowing the members with luck and prosperity. In Siswati when one prospers, we say *indlela yakhe iyakhanya* meaning ‘his or her way is bright’, hence the command ***Khanyani*** ‘be bright’ is used in this context. The father was pleading for blessings from his ancestors. This name shows that the name-giver believes that prosperity is granted by ancestors, and he must acquire blessings from them. The name alludes to the strong belief in ancestors by Swazi communities.

The name-giver considers the name positive because of the message it holds. He accepts that light, which has darkness as its opposite, is associated with a plentiful supply of all desirable things.

78) Name: ***Wakheni*** ‘Establish the homestead’

Gender: Male

Name-giver: Father

The name ***Wakheni*** is a command addressed to the ancestors. According to the father, the ancestors should be the ones establishing the homestead now that a son is born. The name was bestowed after the father had been requesting a boy child from his ancestors. He had four girls from his wife and had tried to have a boy from another woman outside his marriage but was disappointed when she also gave birth to a girl. The IRIN (2009) observed that women in Swaziland [Eswatini] are often subjected to pressure by their husbands and in-laws to never cease giving birth until a boy child is born because of the

status accorded to a boy child. It was imperative for them to have an heir before they died. It was for this reason that the father decided to consult diviners, who advised him on what to offer to appease the ancestors so that they may grant him a boy child. The diviners are known to be able to speak with ancestors. They are usually asked to assist and mediate on behalf of fathers who are leaders of households (Curle, 2016:44). After three years of waiting, the ancestors positively responded to his request and his wife delivered a boy. The name ***Wakheni*** 'Establish the homestead' was then bestowed on the newborn heir. The father was making an earnest and desperate appeal to the ancestors to assist him in making sure that his homestead does not come to nothing, but that they support him and his household to withstand all the difficulties that come along with establishing a homestead. To Ndlovu et al. (2009:23) clan/family ancestors manage the affairs of all family members and are regarded as the strongest and most powerful influencers in a Swazi homestead. Their role is to protect their relatives from harm and disaster, as well as to heal and provide physical blessings. EmaSwati believe that conducting rituals and providing offerings would sustain the living bond and oneness between them and their ancestors. It was for these reasons that the father trusted and commanded the ancestors to participate in the affairs of his home to which they belong as guardians of the family. He assigned them to work with him and the newborn who would grow up already earmarked as an heir.

***Wakheni*** indicated that he likes the name because it was given to him by his parent, and he thinks he had the authority to do that. It is also his aspiration that his father's homestead will experience positivity in all aspects. He hoped to achieve his father's desire by extending the existing parental home and by constantly living with his parents.

#### **4.4.1.8 Personal names in the form of commands addressed to God**

In Swazi culture commands run from the elders to the young ones and are never reciprocal (Dlamini, 2008:58). However, in naming, we have names that are polite commands directed to God as a Supreme Being wherein name-givers respectfully petition

Him to do some desired actions for them. The following are examples of personal names that are commands which are addressed to the Almighty:

79) Name: **Siphamandla** [*Nkholi*] ‘Give us strength Lord’

Gender: Male

Name-giver: Maternal grandmother

The name means ‘give us strength’. It was a name given to the newborn because the mother was economically struggling after she had been impregnated by a man who had no income. The woman had no money for hospital consultations such that it was the sole responsibility of the newborn’s grandmother to assist her financially. By assigning the name **Siphamandla**, the name-giver was politely petitioning God to give them financial strength, to be able to raise the child regardless of the bad environment in which the baby was born. The name was a polite command addressed to God to intervene and make the situation better so that the boy could grow up well. The name-giver told the mother that God is faithful and whenever they asked something from Him, He surely answered their prayer. The naming in this situation gave a direct route in which the name-giver could address God and pass her message on to Him. Through the name, we learn about the faith of the name-giver and how a name can be used to communicate to a deity.

**Siphamandla** likes his name because it indeed gave his mother the necessary strength to raise him as a single parent. He believes that God heard the message communicated to Him by his grandmother who gave him the name.

80) Name: **Sihawukele** ‘Pity us’

Gender: Male

Name-giver: Father

The name **Sihawukele** means pity us. This name is a polite call made by the father to God wherein he implored Him to be commiserate with the family. Many people view God as having power to regulate the world and the fortunes of humankind. He intervenes and rescues people from their predicaments (Mbiti, 1969:48). This name was assigned to the newborn because of prior sad events that had occurred. The couple had two children who

died at the same time due to a car accident on their way from school. The mother was devastated and admitted to a psychiatric hospital for about three months. The father had to live alone as his spouse was still hospitalised for mental health recovery. Thereafter, she recovered and was discharged from the medical centre. Within the same year, she conceived a baby. After childbirth, the father named the newborn, **Sihawukele** which was an obsecration to God to be kind to them and protect the new baby as well as the entire family. The message in the name suggests that the name-giver was confident that the addressee (God) would act on the command by giving the family a better life. If one analyses the name given, it could be deduced that it depicts the faith of the name-giver in God.

**Sihawukele** likes the name because he also subscribes to his father's religion and strongly believes that he lives because of God's compassion. If it was not for that reason, he could not have made it in life without God's intervention.

#### **4.4.2 Personal names in the form of requests**

According to House and Kasper (1987), requests are directives where a speaker asks a listener to execute an action and, Brown and Levinson (1987) see requests as face-threatening acts since requests hold the ability to be intrusive and demanding. Although this is the case when requests are generally issued, the use of requests in naming does not always carry the element that requires the addressee to act on them. The name-giver will only bestow a personal name in the form of a request to reveal his or her feelings about the circumstances that surround the birth of the newborn.

The following are examples of personal names that are requests:

##### **4.4.2.1 Personal names in the form of requests addressed to ancestors**

In personal naming, some names allude to ancestors. As mentioned above, ancestors provide rewards and goodwill to members of their clan. People who pay respect to

traditional customs receive favour from them and they serve to strengthen family bonds. Power is typically ascribed to ancestors to reward relatives who keep a relationship with them unbroken with benefits such as good health for elders, children and cattle, and protection from harm. They provide good yields, bless the increase of children in the family as well as the reproduction of cattle. However, being neglected by their descendants can annoy them and cause them to unleash calamities such as drought, hunger, dreadful diseases, thunder and lightning (Mekoa, 2019:103). Due to the important role ancestors play in the life of emaSwati, people make specific requests to them. These requests also manifest in personal names.

The following are examples of names in the form of requests communicated to ancestors:

81) Name: **[si]Celukuphila** 'We request to live'

Gender: Male

Name-giver: Paternal grandfather

The circumstances that brought about the naming of the baby with the name **[si]Celukuphila** which means 'We request to live', is that the boy was born with a twin sister. In many traditional African societies, the birth of twins has complex and extraordinary meanings (Gusinde, 1954:685). In Nguni cultures such as in Xhosa, one twin was always killed at birth while in Zulu some families allowed them to live secretly. Zulu people have similar beliefs which emaSwati subscribe to. They claim that if an epidemic occurs it always attacks twins first (Schapera, 1927:126-128). The World Trade Press (2010:18) reports that

during the 1950s, there was a popular belief that the first-born of a set of twins was haunted by demons. The remedy was to throw the first-born twin off a cliff. The second-born twin, who was believed to be a good child, was kept alive. This custom only ended after Christian missionaries convinced the parents to give the 'demonized' twin to them instead. The Swazis then saw that both of the twins grew up as normal children.

Some parents among emaSwati still hold on to a cultural belief that when twins of different gender are born, one usually survives and the other in most occurrences dies even though they are no longer physically killed. Thus, having twins for any parent is still received with

different emotions that are based on the religious and cultural ideologies of the immediate family/parents. So, the grandfather was sceptical of the situation that was bound to unfold around the babies, based on the existing traditional understanding. He wanted the babies to survive, especially the boy whom he was fond of because he was earmarked to be the family heir that would lead and increase the clan once he reached adulthood. The grandfather as the one who traditionally has absolute authority to communicate with ancestors on behalf of everyone in the family gave the boy the name *[si]Celukuphila* ‘we request to live’. He was requesting the ancestors to keep the boy alive and safe. The use of the first person plural subject concord *[si-]* ‘we’ indicates that the name-giver was communicating on behalf of the entire family. The reason for the name-giver to consult the ancestors in such a dire situation is that, in Swazi culture, the role of ancestors is to protect all members of their family. Hence, the name-giver had to solicit protection for his grandson from them. He wanted the ancestors to hear the message and respond timeously and positively before anything bad could happen to the boy.

**Celukuphila** loves the name because he believes that the ancestors gave him the life which his grandfather asked for and they also allowed his twin sister to live. Therefore, this shows that his family’s ancestors were generous to them as twin babies and prevented their death.

82) Name: *[si]Celimphilo*<sup>1</sup> ‘We request life’

Gender: Female

Name-giver: Paternal grandfather

The name-bearer was assigned the name because she was born before thirty-seven weeks, during the seventh month of the pregnancy. As a result of her premature birth, she had to be kept in an incubator until full term. The name-giver feared that the newborn could not survive as a premature baby. He then decided to communicate with the ancestors and request them to give the baby continued existence and healthy life. The name was a message to the ancestors in which the grandfather requested that the ancestors keep the premature baby alive. The name-giver even slaughtered a goat in trying to appease the ancestors so that they would hear the message delivered to them.

This was accompanied by basic rituals which include the burning of incense and brewing of traditional beer that is done when elders consult and ask for ancestors' interventions. After four months, the baby was discharged from the hospital fully developed. Hence, the name *[si]Celimphilo* was bestowed on the baby. The grandfather was jubilant when he heard the good news.

In communicating with the ancestors, we observe that not only a ritual is conducted, but a sacrifice is also used as an incentive to appease them. In the case of **Celimphilo**, the name-giver knew that a sacrifice had to accompany the supplication, perhaps he realised that the premature birth was an indication that the ancestors were angry. Therefore, they needed the sacrifice to accept the request. A sacrifice in the form of a chicken, a goat, a sheep or even a cow is ordinarily needed as part of the request ritual. The animal is sacrificed on behalf of a family member by the family head. Such kinds of sacrifices are offered to save an endangered life (Mbiti, 1975:58-59). Therefore, in the situation under discussion, the safe arrival of the baby at her grandfather's home is a manifestation that the addressee(s) indeed heard and responded to the obsecration.

**Celimphilo** is fond of her name as it is the only name she received from her lovely grandmother. She believes that it is a name with a special meaning and bearing on her life.

#### **4.4.2.2 Personal names in the form of requests addressed to family members**

83) Name: *[ngi]CeI'umusa*<sup>1</sup> 'I ask for mercy'

Gender: Male

Name-giver: Mother

The name emanates from the unfortunate situation that the mother experienced. She got pregnant just after completing high school. Her pregnancy was a surprise and a disappointment to her Christian parents. She embarrassed her family in church as well as in the entire community. By becoming pregnant, she let down her parents, and her father was very depressed because he loved her so much as a firstborn. The parents

expressed their infuriation and scolded her for being a bad example to her young siblings and other teenagers at church. After giving birth, the mother was so remorseful that she chose to name her child *[ngi]Cel'umusa* which means 'I am asking for mercy'. This was a message that she directed to her parents wherein she requested them to be merciful because she had humiliated them. She was profusely pleading for forgiveness. The message in the name shows remorse and humility of the name-giver to the intended addressees. The situation that informed the naming alludes to the expectation of parents from their children. Children are not expected to fall pregnant before marriage and when this does happen, the parents are humiliated. Society expects children of Christian parents to be well behaved as per their religious teachings. So, if one transgresses, one must apologise and the addressee to which the message is addressed is required to accept the admission of guilt. Therefore, the parents of the daughter who has done wrong are asked to adhere to the request by forgiving and accepting her with the baby.

The name-bearer doesn't like this name because the message embedded in it suggests that his birth was not planned. It overtly suggests that he was conceived mistakenly, hence forgiveness was solicited from his grandparents so that his birth could be accepted.

84) Name: *[ngi]Celucolo*<sup>1</sup> 'I ask for forgiveness'

Gender: Female

Name-giver: Mother

The name was assigned by the mother to the newborn. She was addressing her aunts to forgive her after she was rebuked for getting pregnant while she was unmarried. The aunts were insulting her and claiming that she had made her entire family a laughingstock in the village. As a chief's daughter, she was compelled to maintain high cultural values and be a role model to all maidens in the community by virtue of being a senior princess. The name-giver had fallen pregnant during *umcwasho*. Van Rooyen and Hartell (2010:320-321) explain that "*umcwasho* is a custom that forbids young, unmarried females from engaging in any form of sexual activity for a specified period, the length of which is determined by the king on a national or regional level". Van Rooyen and Hartell (2010:320) also postulate that *umcwasho* can be understood as "the custom of chastity

and sexual restraint". This traditional chastity was reintroduced by King Mswati III in the year 2001 to prevent the spread of HIV by prohibiting men from engaging in sex with girls under the age of 18 and to avoid teenage pregnancy (Root, 2009:296). During the period of *umcwasho*, maidens who fall pregnant are charged a fine in the form of a cow from each girl's family and the guilty boyfriend is also obliged to pay a cow. Princesses are usually well respected and oversee that such cultural events are properly followed.

Therefore, the pregnancy of the princess was regarded as a cultural disgrace and a taboo which infuriated the aunts in the royal chiefdom. With the message in the name, the name-giver was humbly asking for forgiveness because of the shame she brought to the royal chiefdom. She was remorseful for the mistake she had committed. So, the message was directed to her aunts as well as to her father as a chief and it yielded the desired results as the name-giver mentioned that she was forgiven.

**Celucolo** likes her name as she was told that her mother's request for forgiveness was accepted, and her maternal grandfather agreed that the newborn would be raised in her maternal homestead until the mother gets married.

85) Name: *[ngi]Celucolo*<sup>2</sup> 'I ask for forgiveness'

Gender: Male

Name-giver: Mother

The name *[ngi]Celucolo* is a sincere request for forgiveness made by the name-giver to her parents after she disappointed them. The mother fell pregnant while she was still a student at a college. The college was a Christian mission, and in the past if an unmarried student fell pregnant during the academic year, that student had to drop her studies and come back after she had delivered the baby. The pregnancy angered the father of the name-giver because his daughter's future was now at a disadvantage. He blamed both his wife and the daughter for what had happened. He felt that the wife had failed to instil good morals in her daughter, hence she was easily deceived by men when she went to college. It is not surprising to note that the mother was blamed for her daughter's mistakes. In a Swazi traditional home setting, it is customarily the responsibility of the

mother to teach and instil good behaviour in all the girls in the family so that they grow up to be good wives (Mbiti, 1975; Dlamini, 2008). She must sensitise the girls about the disadvantages of engaging in sexual affairs before marriage.

According to Mdluli (2013:108) a girl is mentored and prepared for marriage by her mother and grandmother. They must ensure that the girl grows up well-behaved. The father puts much blame on his daughter for humiliating them as a family in the community and for being a bad example to all Christian children. Therefore, with the name *[ngi]Celucolo*, the name-giver was earnestly and humbly asking for forgiveness and compassion. The name-giver mentioned that she was forgiven. The name reveals that the name-giver was remorseful. In this situation, the addressee was able to receive the message as he accepted the newborn and hired a maid for the baby so that the mother could continue pursuing her studies at the college.

**Celucolo** likes the name because his grandfather eventually forgave his mother. The forgiveness is attested by the fact that even today the name-bearer still lives in his maternal grandfather's home. He thinks that the message that was communicated through his name was accepted by the addressee, hence he regards himself as a beloved grandson.

#### **4.4.2.3 Personal names in the form of requests addressed to in-laws**

86) Name: *[ngi]CeI'ukuthula* 'I ask for peace'

Gender: Male

Name-giver: Mother

The name-giver through the name assigned to the newborn child was requesting peace from her marital family members. The wife was still new in the marital homestead when she fell pregnant. She perceived, however, that she was not well received by her in-laws especially her mother-in-law because she was not able to do all the chores expected to be done by married women in a rural family setting seeing that she was permanently employed. Having a full-time job meant that she had to stay in town with her husband and

could only meet her in-laws the end of the month. This made her mother-in-law complain that her son had wasted his cattle by offering *lobolo* for a woman who does not participate in family duties. Herbert (1990:457) describes the status of a newly married woman in the following manner “the initial position of the young wife is one of subservience to her mother-in-law. She often lives with her mother-in-law, cooks for her, and is under her constant surveillance and supervision”.

However, Dlamini (2008:61) makes it clear that there is a distinction between an urban and rural wife. The latter must work *emasimini* ‘in the fields’ during planting, weeding, and harvesting seasons. She must also collect firewood and fetch water. In this situation under discussion, none of these duties mentioned by Dlamini (2008) were done by the wife as she lived in urban areas. This led to a toxic relationship between her and her in-laws. So, she was sceptical about her welfare in the marital family. To avoid any further misunderstandings, she decided that after giving birth to her firstborn baby boy, there was a need to request peace from all members of the family so that everyone could live in peace and harmony. Because the name-giver could not say her request directly to her in-laws due to the *hlonipha* custom which means “respect by avoidance” (Raum, 1973:5), the naming presented her with an opportunity to address her in-laws even though she was not supposed to voice her concerns as a wife.

**Cel'ukuthula** likes his name because he believes that the request made was well received such that his mother was never ill-treated by her in-laws. He also thinks that the name has a positive influence and bestowed a responsibility in him to always bring peace between his siblings as the eldest son in the family.

#### 4.4.2.4 Personal names in the form of requests addressed to God

87) Name: *[ngi]CeI'umusa*<sup>2</sup> '[I] ask for mercy'

Gender: Male

Name-giver: Father

The message in the name was directed to God. The father was communicating with God whom he asks for forgiveness. He felt that he has betrayed his Christian teachings which forbid sex before marriage and deems it a sin by having had a child before marriage. Through the boy's name, the father was pleading for forgiveness from God. He was asking God not to punish either him or his son. He feared God's wrath which might punish him for transgressing. In Christianity, once someone has offended God, it is required that he/she ask for forgiveness through prayer. In this instance, the name-giver utilised the name like a prayer in which he asked for God's pardon. It is a common practice for Christian families to give their children names that speak to their religious beliefs and doctrines. The naming process affords them a channel to voice special requests to God either for them or on behalf of the person being named.

**CeI'umusa** has no problem with his name since nobody has ever told him how the name came about. He is still young to be told about the situation that informed his name, hence, only the information from his father was ascertained.

88) Name: *[ngi]CeI'umusa*<sup>3</sup> '[I] ask for compassion'

Gender: Male

Name-giver: Mother

The name is a request that is directed to God. The context which informed the newborn to be given the name *[ngi]CeI'umusa* was that the mother had only four boys and no girl among her children before she conceived the fifth baby. When she discovered that she was pregnant with a fifth child, she asked God to give her a female child as she was desperate for her. She requested God to be kind to her and her spouse by granting them their wish. However, she delivered a boy child and was disappointed. Despite being discontent, she said that she would continue to ask for grace until God hears her request.

This is how the newborn got to be named **Cel'umusa**. Therefore, the name was a supplication by the name-giver directed to God. The name-giver waited for God to reciprocate. The naming process in this context reveals how some Christians address God through names and believe that He answers their requests through action. In this case, if the mother eventually gives birth to a female baby, it will mean that God has heard the message and acted on it. If the wish has not been granted, it means that God is yet to respond.

The name-bearer likes the name even though his mother's wish was not fulfilled through his birth. He perceives the name as humble and depicts faith and hope in his life. It reminds him that all things happen in life because of God's grace. Hence, everyone must always ask for God's favour in life.

89) Name: *[ngi]CeI'umusa*<sup>4</sup> 'I ask for grace'

Gender: Male

Name-giver: Mother

The name-giver directed the message that is entailed in the name to God the creator. She was asking God to be gracious to her child so that he would grow up and take care of her. The mother was motivated to ask for God's assistance because of her plight. She was left homeless and despondent when her in-laws forced her out of her marital home. Some of the marital family members suspected that she was practising witchcraft. Kuper (1963:65) claimed that "the propensity to witchcraft is transmitted through a woman to her children, males and females; a male does not pass it on to his offspring". Perhaps this was the reason that inspired the family to chase the wife from the home. As per the Swazi law and customs that govern traditional marriage, a wife can be returned to her parental home if there is evidence that she is practising witchcraft or has been found to have committed adultery (Van Schalkwyk, 2006:210) In this case, the woman was kicked out of her home based merely on speculations from her marital family members. What is surprising is that even her spouse did not protect her from the malicious allegations levelled against her. Because of her predicament, the mother had to look up to God for her son's protection and mercy. Therefore, the name is a request communicated

specifically to God to execute. In this name, the religious belief of the name-giver is exposed; as a Christian believer, she solicited help from God whom she consults when confronted with problems.

**Cel'umusa** accepts the name and believes that God heard his mother's request. He thinks that he lives happily because of God's favour upon his life.

90) Name: [si]**Cel'umusa**<sup>5</sup> [wakho] 'We request your grace'

Gender: Male

Name-giver: Mother

The situation that informed the allocation of the name **Cel'umusa** to the newborn was that the mother had had a miscarriage before the birth of this baby. The stillbirth depressed her, and she was afraid to fall pregnant for the second time. After two years, she eventually had her second pregnancy and earnestly asked for God's grace and favour that would protect the unborn baby. The name given was a prayer request to God to prevent another stillbirth. The mother believed that her message was heard by God when a healthy baby was born. The name was also an extension of the plea that God must continue to look after the baby boy and protect him as he grows. With the naming, name-givers find ways to communicate with God and ask for specific favours in the lives of their children. They believe that it is only God who can fulfil their wishes and that of their offspring. The name reveals the strong belief of the mother and her faith in God.

The name-bearer likes the name because he feels that it shows God's power in answering prayer and how God's kindness was manifested to his mother through his birth.

91) Name: [si]**Celimphilo**<sup>2</sup> 'We ask for life'

Gender: Male

Name-giver: Paternal grandmother

The name **Celimphilo** is a request made before God. The name came about after the mother had a complicated pregnancy and delivered a preterm baby. She was very sick after the birth of the child and the premature baby had to be kept in an incubator and on a ventilator for some weeks before he reached full development. The sickness of the

mother and the ill-health of the baby devastated the paternal grandmother of the child. She was praying daily over the life of the two people to get well. The name given to the newborn was an adjuration directed to God in which the name-giver was asking for a better and healthy life for them. This message issued by the speaker (name-giver) was a supplication to the Deity on behalf of both the child and the mother so that the Deity would provide healing and supply abundant life to them. The speaker believed that if the Supreme Being could act on the message communicated, the victims could survive. Name giving seems to be another productive avenue name-givers use in conveying messages to God. The naming process plays a significant role in the life of the name-givers and to anyone for whom the communication is made.

**Celimphilo** appreciates his name. He believes that the name is a prayer for his wellbeing to God even today. Thus, he relates to it as it is in harmony with his religious belief which is Christianity.

#### **4.4.3 Personal names in the form of interrogatives**

An interrogative sentence is “a sentence that asks a question or makes a request for information” (<https://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/english/interrogative-sentence>). Interrogatives are formed by affixing the interrogative suffixes [-ni?] and [-phi?] to verbs. They are derived from action words and facilitate the communication of asking questions. All interrogative names in Siswati will end with a suffix [-ni?] or [-phi?]. Usually, the speaker asks a question to the addressee on a specific issue to which a response is expected. In naming, the responses to the questions are not overtly expected. As in the speech acts that have been analysed in this study, the issuing of the speech is to express how the name-giver feels about the situation surrounding the birth of the newborn. The name-giver’s communicative intention is made known by the speech act. However, a name-giver may also bestow a personal name in the form of a question addressed to the newborn or various other entities for self-examination or introspection.

The following are examples of personal names that are interrogatives:

#### 4.4.3.1 Personal names in the form of interrogatives addressing the newborn

92) Name: *[u]Fikelephi<sup>1</sup>*? ‘What bad situation were you born into?’

Gender: Female

Name-giver: Great grandmother

The name is a rhetoric question that was addressed to the newborn. The question was asked because the child was born at a time when there was drought and famine in the country. People had nothing to eat and many domestic animals such as cattle were dying. The family could not afford three basic meals per day, they could only eat twice. The name-giver was heartbroken and worried that her great granddaughter would die of starvation because the mother could not eat well to be able to breastfeed the baby adequately. Thus, the great grandmother bestowed the name **Fikelephi** in which she was questioning the child concerning the bad conditions she was born into. The question asked does not necessarily require a response but shows the concern the great grandmother had for her granddaughter.

**Fikelephi** likes the name because she survived regardless of the hard situation she was born under. The name teaches her that no matter how difficult a situation is, there is always a way.

93) Name: *[u]Fikelephi<sup>2</sup>*? ‘Where did you arrive at?’

Gender: Female

Name-giver: Maternal great grandmother

The newborn was assigned the name by her great grandmother after she said that the baby reminded her of her missing daughter who was also named **Fikelephi**. The name-giver’s daughter ran away from home because she did not want to be married through *kwendziswa* which is an arranged marriage to the late King Sobhuza II. *Kwedziswa* is a type of traditional marriage in which a young woman is offered by her parents to a man to marry her. According to Kuper (1978:570) in this type of marriage, “the initiative is taken by the parents of the boy or girl” but in most cases, it is the girl’s kinsmen that begin the negotiation with the man’s family.

In the scenario under discussion, the woman's parents wanted her to marry the king so that they could acquire wealth as they were going to receive numerous cattle as bride price from the king. The daughter did not want to be a king's wife and decided to escape to South Africa. She went missing for many years. So, when the newborn was born, the great grandmother said that she looked like her daughter **Fikelephi** who ran away from home. Therefore, it was on this basis that she decided to name the baby after her missing daughter. The name-giver was trying to console herself. After 20 years in absentia, the 'original' **Fikelephi** returned home having children who were now grown up and discovered that there was now a young girl who had the same name as hers.

According to the younger bearer of the name **Fikelephi**, she dislikes her name because *ligama labogogo* (a granny's name) is nowadays usually associated with old age people. She said that she has noted that you rarely find young people with such a name. She says that even at school other learners ridicule and laugh at her because of the name. They say that she is using a name for grannies. She feels that there was no need to assume a name that had already been given to another older family member.

94) Name: *[bewu]Lindeni?* 'What have you been waiting for?'

Gender: Female

Name-giver: Uncle

The question *[bewu]Lindeni* which means 'what you have been waiting for?' was addressed to the newborn baby after her mother died hours after giving birth. The mother had complications during the delivery after she went through labour for many hours but could not deliver normally. Doctors had to perform a C-section to deliver the baby. After a successful operation, the mother died. As a result, the uncle decided to name the child **Lindeni**. The name-giver was inquiring as to what had caused the baby not to be delivered normally, resulting in the mother's death. The question directed to the newborn child was not meant to get a response but was a reaction to what had happened. This question shows the sadness of the uncle on losing his sister during child delivery and how the death emotionally affected him.

**Linden**i does not like her name because it insinuates that she was somehow responsible for the death of her mother, yet she could not even recall what happened or what her mother looked like.

95) Name: *[u]Phumaphi?* ‘Where do you come from?’

Gender: Female

Name-giver: Uncle

The name was given by the baby’s uncle because his sister, that is, the mother of the newborn, had unexpectedly birthed a baby girl. When the mother had a firstborn boy child, she expressed her desire to have a girl child as a second born. However, her wish was never realised as she delivered another boy child. This did not stop as the thirdborn was also a male child. The mother then lost hope that she would ever bear a girl. When she eventually gave birth to a baby girl, the uncle was amazed that his sister had finally given birth to a girl. Due to his bafflement, the question was uttered by the name-giver to the newborn. One would expect a response to the question, however, in this scenario, the name-giver did not necessarily require a response from the infant as she could not be expected to have an answer to the question asked. But he was only expressing how perplexed he was to see that his sister’s wish to have a female child had finally come true. The relationship between the uncle and the mother made him eligible to assign a name that the mother approved of.

**Phumaphi** likes her name because it expresses that she came as a surprise when no one in the family had predicted that she would arrive. Her unexpected arrival as a girl made her to be treated differently as she is still the only girl in the family.

#### 4.4.3.2 Personal names in the form of interrogatives addressing family members

96) Name: **Simephi**<sup>1</sup>? ‘Where do we stand?’

Gender: Female

Name-giver: Paternal grandmother

The question **Simephi** was directed to the family members of the child’s father. **Simephi** was born as a first child to her mother but an eighth child to her father because the father had multiple partners. The father’s multiple relationships were worrisome to the children’s grandmother. The grandmother wanted to know who her son would marry because **Simephi** was born in the same month as another baby from one of the father’s girlfriends that gave birth for a second time. The granny had known all along that her son would marry the woman who already had two children as the father had previously said that, but she was surprised when **Simephi**’s mother came to report her pregnancy to the family. When the two babies were born by different mothers, there was confusion caused by the promiscuous father. The grandmother asked the family where they stood concerning what the father had done. The question means that the family was in the dark as to when the father was going to marry and who he was going to marry among all the eight ladies that he had children with. The question as entailed in the name was a result of dismay by the name-giver. It was a question that intended to find out the position of the family concerning the affairs of the father. She sympathised with all the women who had children with him and were hoping to be married to the playboy.

Traditionally, when a man wants to marry, he reports to his mother who then informs senior members of the family on his behalf. If a man keeps on having children without marrying, his mother has the authority to ask him to explain what prevents him from marrying one of his partners. Therefore, the name-giver was prompted by the malicious behaviour of her son to ask the family members to state their opinion when it comes to the behaviour of the man. The grandmother felt that the man was tarnishing the family name’s reputation by being a bad example to other young men in the family as well as in the community, hence the family members were to intervene and bring him to order.

**Simephi** hates the name as it was given as a first name, but she decided to use it as a second name after reaching adulthood. She has the view that the meaning of the name has very negative connotations such that she feels it has an undesirable impact on her life. The name connotes a dilemma which now overshadows her life. She believes that her unstable relationships might be caused by the depressing name she has.

97) Name: **Sibangani**<sup>1</sup>? 'What are we fighting for?'

Gender: Male

Name-giver: Mother

The name was given to the newborn because her mother was in a polygamous marriage. In polygamy, the other wives that were supported by some members of the family did not like her. There were frequent feuds between her and other members of the family. When the baby was born, the mother got a precise platform to address the family using the name. The question that is contained in the name was directed to all the family members who hated the name-giver. She was asking them why they were fighting her. She did not see a valid reason for them to hate her, hence she wanted a response from them for their hatred. She did not understand why they were quarrelling since they were one family headed by the same man. The name-giver was expressing her misery and disappointment because of the harsh treatment she received at the home. The naming in this context allowed the name-giver to address those concerned while avoiding confrontation which could have resulted in physical fights. A married woman is required to respect her family members and the other women with whom she shares a husband. Fights between members of a household are discouraged and if a wife is aggrieved about a certain issue, she must consult the mother-in-law who would then address that issue on her behalf. However, in some situations, you find that the wife and her mother-in-law are in a toxic relationship that impedes any healthy communication between the two, and that often leads to the wife not being supported by her mother-in-law. If this happens, the victim will look for other options which could make her voice to be heard. In this case, the name-giver used the naming to find a voice that would be heard by those in the family.

**Sibangani** has no problem with this name, he accepts the name as it was given by his mother in which she was clearly expressing her discontentment because of the ill-treatment she received from the family.

#### 4.4.3.3 Personal names in the form of interrogatives addressing the in-laws

98) Name: **Senteni**? ‘What have we done?’

Gender: Female

Name-giver: Paternal grandmother

The name **Senteni** means ‘what have we done?’ The name is a question directed to the girl’s father who did not permit his daughter to marry the man who had impregnated her. The pregnancy came after the girlfriend’s father declined when the boyfriend requested to marry his daughter. No reason was given for the disapproval, but he only told the boyfriend that there was no way he could allow the marriage to take place. Hence, the girlfriend could not marry without her father’s acceptance and blessings. When the baby was born in this particular relationship, the child’s paternal grandmother named her **Senteni** which was a question directed to the in-laws to explain why they hated them to an extent that they refused permission for her son to marry their daughter. Through the name, the grandmother conveyed her strong frustrations to the in-laws. She could not confront them openly as it is culturally not acceptable. Hence, she used the name to frankly convey the message to them. When the girl’s father out of curiosity asks why the child has been given such a name, he will discover that it speaks to him.

**Senteni** dislikes her name because she feels that she could have been given a positive one. She questions the decision of her grandmother to involve her in their disputes by trying to resolve their conflicts using the name.

#### 4.4.3.4 Personal names in the form of interrogatives addressing the community

99) Name: **Sakhephi**? ‘Where must we build?’

Gender: Male

Name-giver: Father

The name is a question directed to the community in which the father of the newborn child was establishing his home. The name-bearer was born during a time when there was a dispute over land which his father had been allocated by a chief. The father had been given the land in the rural areas known as Swazi Nation Land (SNL) for building a home and growing his crops. According to Dlamini and Masuku (2011:301), chiefs govern SNL, which they distribute through traditional systems referred to as *Kukhonta*, that is, “a process by which an individual seeks residence in a chiefdom by approaching local traditional authorities. From this process, an individual is allocated a piece of land with user rights to build on and cultivate the land, including inheritance to his/her descendants”. A day after the father had fenced off his acquired land and built a pit latrine, he found that the fencing had been destroyed as well as the toilet that had been erected. He wondered who was responsible for the destruction because all the families in that community paid allegiance to the same chief that had allocated the land to him. When it comes to land, conflict and disputes over ownership, rights, and usage are almost always unavoidable. At a chiefdom level, disputes usually arise over encroachment on someone’s land and field borders as well as land use rights such as grazing land.

Land issues involving chiefdom residents are expected to be resolved at chiefdom levels, according to Swazi land and custom (Manyatsi and Singwane, 2019:23). After the father had discovered the destruction, he reported the matter to the chief. Subsequently, all community members were summoned to a meeting held at the chiefdom. That is where some members expressed their complaint that the boundary of the father had encroached on some grazing lands which they had been using for years. The chief’s council ruled that the father was to continue with his building project as the chief had approved his request for the land. Consequently, when the child was born, the father bestowed him with the name **Sakhephi** which was a question in which he asked the community where they

wanted him to build a home for his family if they did not approve of the land he was given by the chief?

**Sakhephi** approves of the name since he knows how it came about. He is happy that it points to a dispute that was eventually resolved without bloodshed. Thus, he sees his name as being meaningful.

100) Name: **Sibangani**<sup>2</sup>? 'What are we fighting for?'

Gender: Male

Name-giver: Father

The name **Sibangani** is a question that was addressed to community members. Before the birth of the child, the father had cows that were poisoned while they were grazing *emadleweni* which refers to pastures where every community member has a right to let his livestock graze. Amongst the poisoned cattle, three cows died, and nobody knew the person responsible for the evil act. As a result, the father was very angry and wanted to know why he was suffering because he believed that he had no enemy in the community. He perceived the act as an indication of unknown feuds, and he was eager to know exactly what the fight in the community was all about. The question asked is an expression of anger and dismay from the name-giver. Thus, when the child was born, the name **Sibangani** was given to him. This was a direct question to every community member who might know the reasons for the killing of the cows on the grazing land.

**Sibangani** said that he had neither positive nor negative sentiments about the name. But he thought that his father was hated by some jealous community members since he was perceived as a rich man due to the number of cows he owned. Thus, to some extent, the name given to him is justified.

101) Name: *[li]Zwelithini?* ‘What does the nation say?’

Gender: Male

Name-giver: Paternal grandfather

The name was given after the mother gave birth for the first time after ten years since she got married. She had health issues that prevented her from having a child and was receiving treatment since she could not conceive. Many members of the family had lost hope concerning her having children. It was the grandfather who kept on advising the couple to use both western and traditional medicine to treat the problem.

After many years, the woman got pregnant and gave birth to a bouncing baby boy. The grandfather was so overjoyed that he slaughtered a goat to show his jubilation in which he thanked the woman for finally giving the family a male child. The slaughtering of a goat after childbirth is a very old custom that emaSwati practised in the past but it is no longer common nowadays. The meat would be boiled and the *umsobho* ‘gravy’ would be given to the mother who would be replenishing protein after losing blood during childbirth. The skin of the goat would then be dried and used as the *imbeleko* ‘baby carrier’ for the newborn baby (Jones, 1963:174). Bogopa (2010:2) refers to the practice as *imbeleko*, a birth ritual in the Zulu culture in which a mother is grounded indoors for ten days after giving birth. When the stipulated days have elapsed, a white goat is slaughtered for her of which she eats some of the meat. Such a ritual was performed to express gratitude to the ancestors for protecting the mother and newborn child.

In the situation under discussion, the grandfather wondered what the community would think now that the woman they thought was infertile had a son. Hence, he assigned the name **Zwilithini** to the newborn child meaning ‘what does the nation say?’ The word nation here refers to the community. The name-giver was bragging and applauding the mother for proving doubters wrong about her infertility. He wanted to hear the opinions of all those who were not supporting the couple during hard times and those who were calling the woman by all sorts of bad names because she had difficulties in having a child. The name calls on the community members to swallow their pride since the woman has not just given birth but also gave the family a boy. The naming in this situation presents

a different view in that we see a woman being appreciated by her father-in-law while in some naming this does not happen. This shows that different families treat married women differently. The name of the child *Zwelithini* is not merely a question but also ostentation as illustrated by the situation that informed its creation.

*Zwelithini* loves and accepts the name because his birth was a surprise to many people. He is proud that his birth changed the attitude people had about his mother. It stopped doubters and those who despised her from calling her *inyumba* which is a derogative term for a barren woman. Ziyane and Ehlers (2007:9) noted that infertility is undesirable in Swaziland, with infertile women being socially humiliated and stigmatised.

#### **4.4.3.5 Personal names in the form of interrogatives addressing the parents**

102) Name: [wa]***Shonaphi***? 'Where did he go?'

Gender: Female

Name-giver: Maternal grandmother

The name was given to the newborn because her father went missing before the child was born. He was last seen when the mother went to report the pregnancy at the boyfriend's parental homestead. After that, the father is said to have gone to Johannesburg in search of a job so that he could provide for his child. However, he never returned home, and nobody knew his whereabouts. This upset the child's maternal grandmother because she did not want her granddaughter to be raised by a single parent. She was also worried that the child might grow up without knowing her father, which is not good for her wellbeing. The child was then born while her father's whereabouts were still not known. Hence the newborn was eventually given the name ***Shonaphi***. This was a question directed to the mother and it was intended to trigger her to begin searching for her boyfriend so that he could provide for the needs of the child. The name-giver wanted the mother to find out whether the baby's father was still alive.

***Shonaphi*** does not like her name because her father returned five months after her birth. He found that she had been given the name. She thinks that the question asked through

her name was answered and it is no longer relevant now. She likes her English name Precious which she was given by her father when he returned from South Africa.

103) Name: **Simakuphi**? 'Where do we end?'

Gender: Male

Name-giver: Mother

The name **Simakuphi** means 'where do we end?' This was a question which the name-giver asked her spouse after she gave birth to a tenth child. She asked the question because she felt that the children they had as a couple were adequate. Ziyane and Ehlers (2007:9) in a study of Swazi men's contraceptive knowledge, attitudes and practices, found that men believed that women must have as many children as they could. If such function is not fulfilled, the family may suffer embarrassment. This could have been the reason which resulted in the mother bearing ten children. As a result, she was curious as to when they might cease producing children and expected her husband to declare that the newborn would be their last. The name-giver decided to ask the question using the name because the message was going to be clear to her husband. She hoped that her spouse would respond by addressing the issue. After the name was bestowed, the husband asked about its meaning and his spouse was able to explain what it meant. They had a conversation, and an agreement was reached that indeed this would be their last child.

**Simakuphi** accepts the name because it was bestowed by the rightful person. He sees nothing wrong with the message of the name.

104) Name: **Simephi**? 'Where are we standing?'

Gender: Female

Name-giver: Father

The newborn was given the name because the mother was only giving birth to boys. The father was worried that if there were no girls in the family, he would never get *lobolo* 'the bride price' which usually enriches a father when his daughters marry. He was addressing both himself and his spouse, voicing his stressful experience and predicament. He did

not see how they were going to benefit in the future as they would never receive the bride price if they did not have daughters. The man was questioning their future's financial status as husband and wife if the wife continued to bear boys. He wanted to have girls as he believed that they would bring wealth in the form of cattle if they marry.

Female children are a source of wealth to the father as they would normally get married, and the father would in return get cattle when bride price is paid. The bride price enriches the father and improves his economic status especially if he is poor. This has reduced the status of women to commodities which men can 'buy' through the payment of bride price while parents can benefit through the 'trade' which is receiving the *lobolo* (Parker, 2015:178). Surprisingly, this name was decided on by the name-giver before the child was born. He was pessimistic and anticipated that his partner would deliver another male child. However, the father was shocked when he discovered that the woman had finally given birth to a girl. He was consoled by the accomplishment of his wish, but the name had already been chosen. Hence the name **Simephi** was bestowed. Some parents decide on a name before knowing the gender of the baby. This is prompted by different reasons such as premonitions. In the case of **Simephi**, the father had already lost hope and was asking the mother if she could foretell their economic state should they never have a female child. The question in the name expresses the doubt of the name-giver rather than requiring the addressee to respond.

**Simephi** likes the name as she believed that her father's question was answered when she was born. The birth of the girl consoled the father, and he has something to rely on in the future that will make him acquire *lobolo*.

105) Name: **Sitsini**? 'What do we say?'

Gender: Female

Name-giver: Both parents

The name was given after both parents agreed to have their last child since they had only girls. The parents were hoping that if they could try once more, they would get a boy. After they had consented, the mother conceived, and a girl child was born. Both parents were

very disappointed to have another girl. They asked themselves the question ‘what do we say?’ because it was evident that they would never have a boy. They did not know what to do as they believed that the girls were gifts from God. So, if it was God’s choice to award them with females only, they had no alternative but to accept.

Therefore, the question that was asked was directed to them because of confusion and dismay after they failed to have a boy child. The naming reveals the ideal gender that the name-givers wanted and their reaction after their wish was not realised. It demonstrates their desperation and the predicament which they had to accept and live with through their entire life as a family.

**Sitsini** dislikes the name as it indicates that her birth was a great disappointment to her parents as they no longer needed female children. She hopes that a better name could have been bestowed on her regardless of the feelings the parents had about her. She does not approve of the name but is obliged to use it as it was given by her parents.

106) Name: *[ngi]Gcinaphi<sup>1</sup>*? ‘Where will I stop?’

Gender: Female

Name-giver: Mother

In assigning the name to the newborn, the mother was asking herself why she had born only females. **Gcinaphi** was the third consecutive female child. Booth (2003:227) states that a woman's principal duties are procreation and childcare. However, the type of children a mother bears plays a huge role in a family. Usually, the birth of a girl child is expected to be followed by an attempt to bear a boy who will be an heir (IRIN, 2009). Thus, **Gcinaphi**'s mother was expressing her disappointment and frustration about not having a male child. She had hoped that the newborn child would be a boy because of the importance and status given to married women who bear male children in Swazi culture especially in the Dlamini family, a clan with kinship relations with Swazi royalty.

Kuper (1978:565) found that marriage and childbearing are the main reasons that have contributed to the continuing dominance and success of the Dlamini clan. Therefore,

through the name **Gcinaphi**, the mother was asking herself a rhetorical question, meaning ‘when am I going to stop giving birth to female children?’ She desperately needed male children so that she could be valued by the family. If she continued not bearing male children, that meant an heir was not going to be selected from her household as a senior wife. Culturally, an heir is the older son from the senior wife in polygamous marriages. Should the senior wife not bear a boy, that meant that she would forfeit the right to have an heir selected from among her children and the second wife would assume that right to have her son selected as an heir, that is, a senior prince who would take over as the chief once his father has passed away (Kuper, 1963). Therefore, having no male child is frustrating in Swazi royal families, particularly in polygamous marriages.

**Gcinaphi** does not like her name, she feels her birth was not treasured by her mother as she was regarded as a disappointment to her. She says that this name has very negative connotations to her. She would have liked to be given a positive name contrary to what her mother felt.

107) Name: [ngi]**Gcinaphi**? ‘Where will I stop?’

Gender: Female

Name-giver: Great grandmother

The name assigned to the newborn was a self-imposed question by the name-giver. The great grandmother was asking herself this rhetorical question to voice her disappointment over her bad experiences. She asked when she would stop raising children who fell pregnant before completing school? She was fed up because no one in her family, from her daughters to her grandchildren, had ever completed high school. They were all dropouts owing to pregnancy or cultural marriage. The final disappointment came when the mother of the newborn, also fell into the same trap by falling pregnant while she was still in school. This dismayed the great grandmother such that she asked herself the question when she would stop suffering and be disheartened by those who did not fulfil her dreams. This led to the name **Gcinaphi** being bestowed on the newborn. The question encapsulated in the name was addressed to the name-giver herself and she was not expecting a response from anyone, but this was to make her feelings known.

**Gcinaphi** accepts the name because she knows the meaning and the story behind it. She was so hurt to know that the name came from a dejected and broken heart. She made a promise that she would console the grandmother by being the first to complete school and go to a university. She wanted to make her great granny happy and proud of her. Unfortunately, the name-giver died when the name-bearer was at high school. But what comforts the name-bearer is that she fulfilled her dreams as she completed even tertiary education and got married. She wishes that her great grandmother could still have been alive to see that her teachings were not wasted because she kept the promises she made.

108) Name: *[ngito]Phephelaphi?* ‘Where will I seek refuge?’

Gender: Female

Name-giver: Mother

In common speech the verb stem *-phepha* ‘be safe’ is used in times of war. In like manner, the word can be used when an unsafe situation presents itself. The situation that informed the naming is that the mother wanted to have at least one boy among her children. This longing was caused by the non-existence of male children in her family. She had five girls and was very concerned about her wellbeing in the future because the girls would eventually marry and leave her alone in the homestead. Living alone would make her vulnerable as nobody would look after her and buy groceries. She hoped that having a male child would be an assurance that she would not suffer as the boy would grow and be a breadwinner in the future. However, the mother delivered yet another girl.

The birth of the female child did not excite her. She was dejected such that she posed a question to herself as to who would protect her if she has only female children. Where was she going to get protection from? The question asked through the name reveals the hopelessness and uncertainty the name-giver experienced about having only girls. She believed that only a male would protect and provide for her. The naming here depicts the cultural roles that are assigned to specific genders in Swazi culture. For example, adult males are supposed to take care of their parents while adult females are expected to marry and stay with their husbands. Traditionally, men must be breadwinners in a family and feed every family member. Therefore, the attitude of the name-giver had a bearing in

the naming process, it depicts how cultural perceptions have an overall influence on the beliefs of name-givers and expose how the parent feels about the gender of her children.

**Phephelaphi** dislikes the name because it shows that her mother was gender biased. She did not trust that a female child could be of help to her. The doubt her mother had made the child prove her wrong. The name-bearer has worked hard in life so that she could provide for her mother's needs. She does this to show that loving and caring for your parent is not gender oriented as many parents believed.

109) Name: *[ngi]Hleziphi?* 'Where am I placed?'

Gender: Female

Name-giver: Mother

The name *[ngi]Hleziphi* means 'where am I placed?' The situation that resulted in the naming of the newborn is that the mother was married to a widower that had old children who were her agemates. The children she found living with her spouse did not accept her as a stepmother well. They mocked her and stated that she was only in a relationship with an elderly man to inherit his fortune when he dies. These allegations hurt her because she loved her husband and thought that their relationship was based on love and not on financial gains. When she fell pregnant, she started to question what her position was in the relationship. The sad question emanated from the verbal abuse she received from her spouse's kids. It affected her such that she began to be doubtful about the future of their relationship and regretted having conceived a child with a widower. When the child was born, she assigned her the name **Hleziphi** which was a question that was addressing the name-giver herself and assessed her position in the relationship.

**Hleziphi** has no problem with her name, she accepts it and understands the reasons that informed her mother to give her such a name.

110) Name: **Sengcabaphi**? ‘Who do we surpass?’

Gender: Female

Name-giver: Father

The girl was named after her father’s great grandmother. **Sengcabaphi** was the aunt of Mswati II, and the father, being a Dlamini, decided to give the name to his daughter. The child was born after the father had broken up with many ladies whom he had impregnated and abandoned. When he finally decided to marry a woman without a child, there was tension and most of the ladies he had children with were aggrieved. They were jealous because the relationships they had with him did not work, yet he was now giving attention to his new bride. When **Sengcabaphi**’s mother got pregnant, everyone said *engabe kutotalwa ingilosi yini?* which means ‘is she going to give birth to an angel?’ This was because this woman was given special treatment and was well taken care of during her pregnancy compared to the others who already had children. They were wondering what made this child different from the others who had been born before her. According to the father, the newborn was not receiving any special treatment, he equally valued and treasured all his children. Even though the name is a question, it was bestowed on the newborn as a response to the former girlfriends of the father who were voicing their discontent after he did not marry them, yet they also had children with him. These ex-partners were asking what made this newborn better than she could make her parents get married.

**Sengcabaphi** likes the name that was given to her because it is distinct, and one can tell that it is a pure native Siswati name. However, a lot of people make fun of it and deliberately mispronounce it. Nevertheless, it does not bother her as it makes her unique from the rest of her father’s children and her birth received so much attention.

111) Name: **Velinjani**? ‘How did he appear?’

Gender: Male

Name-giver: Paternal grandfather

The child **Velinjani** was born a year after his father had gone to South Africa where he was working in the mines. The grandfather wondered how it was possible for a woman to

conceive when her husband was away. The speaker addressed the mother with the question ***Velinjani***, which means ‘how has he appeared?’ The name-giver was inquiring about the mother’s ability to become pregnant in the absence of her spouse. This statement was also interrogating the paternity of the newborn. By questioning the birth of the child, the grandfather was insinuating that the newborn was an illegitimate child and did not belong to his son. Culturally, the grandfather as a senior member of the family has the authority to ask the woman such questions. He might have used the name to avoid conflict with the mother, but he successfully delivered the message to the intended target. Elderly family members have various ways of sending messages to individuals in the family, of which naming is one as observed in the naming of ***Velinjani***.

***Velinjani*** dislikes the name because it makes it clear to almost everyone that he is a product of adultery. He thinks that this is a shameful name to him as he did not choose to be born this way. He wishes that his grandfather could have used a different medium to address the mother, not this name. He hates the fact that the name is a permanent stigma that he possesses. If he could be given a chance to name himself, he would use a neutral name that does not expose the wrongdoing of his mother to the public like his current name.

112) Name: [u]***Khontaphi***? ‘Where do you worship?’

Gender: Female

Name-giver: Grandmother

The name [u]***Khontaphi*** means ‘where do you worship?’ This is a question that was addressed to the mother of the newborn child. When the woman became pregnant, she used to go to the church of the Nazarene. However, she stopped visiting the church after discovering she was pregnant because she was embarrassed that people in the church would mock her for being pregnant while unmarried. Her mother was astounded that her daughter fell pregnant despite claiming to be a devout Christian who attended church every Sunday. The woman claimed to be living according to Nazarene Christian values. She always refused to participate in several Swazi cultural rituals done at her home. It surprised her mother that she as a devout Christian had fallen pregnant. When she

stopped going to church because of the pregnancy, her mother inquired as to where she was worshiping now. The question was posed since she used to boast about her Western faith and disliked traditional customs. The inquiry not only demanded an answer but also mocked the pregnant woman for failing to adhere to the principles of the faith she professed to follow. As a result, the name-giver was using the child's name to berate and ridicule the child's mother.

***Khontaphi*** dislikes the name since it implies that her grandmother did not sympathise with her mother after discovering the pregnancy. She wonders what type of mother makes fun of her daughter for being pregnant. She hates the message of the name, although she has no other Siswati name to use.

113) Name: **[i]Velephi [intfombi]**? ‘Where did the girl come from?’

Gender: Female

Name-giver: Paternal grandmother

The newborn was given the name since her maternal grandmother had exclusively given birth to boys in the family. She had hoped to have at least one female child but was unable to do so. Her inability to have a girl child led her to wish for her daughter-in-law to have a girl when she began to bear children. The grandmother was delighted when the daughter-in-law delivered a baby girl, as was expected. She congratulated her daughter-in-law for doing something that she had failed to achieve in the family. She questioned as to what was stopping her from having a female child, as well as where the females had been hiding now that they were joining the family. The question asked was an expression of excitement from the name-giver. During the naming process, a speaker (name-giver) may pose a question to communicate her sentiments about the child's birth. In this case, the name-giver had intended to have a female child, but she was unable to do so. Then her daughter-in-law was able to give birth to the first female baby for the mother-in-law, and she was appreciated by her. As a result, the question stated in the name does not require an answer from anybody.

**Velephi** approves of the name since she was the first female to be born, and her birth gave excitement to the entire family, prompting her grandmother to wonder where this child was emerging from. She says that her grandma was pleased with her birth, which makes her a favourite grandchild.

#### 4.4.3.6 Personal names in the form of interrogatives addressing God the Almighty

114) Name: *[u]Sipheni?* ‘What have you given us?’

Gender: Female

Name-giver: Father

The name is a question that was asked by the father when he was told that his wife had delivered a baby. The father was so curious to know the gender of his child because the mother had previously given birth to four girls. He was hoping that this time a boy would be born. However, he was dejected to find out that his spouse had given birth to another baby girl. The question in the name was mainly addressed to God wherein the father was asking what he had been given this time. He was expressing his discontent on the gender of the child that his spouse had delivered. He wondered why God was giving them female children only. The name-giver was expressing his discontentment to the Deity who is believed to be in charge of bestowing children to mankind. The father wanted to know why God was destroying his household by depriving him of boys who would look after his home after his death. He thought that all the girls would leave them as parents and marry once they reach adulthood. He feared that they would have no one to look after them, once the girls were married. The name-giver decided to address God directly with the name given because he had previously communicated with Him through prayer, but He still gave him female children. Perhaps a change in the way he communicated with God would yield the desired results in the future, hence the name was chosen to address the Deity.

According to Towns and McFarland (1999:80, 83) God responds to prayer in accordance with His desire, not everyone else's. He can say yes, no, or wait. When He says yes, you receive precisely what you had requested. If He says no, your request is denied and when

He says wait, it means what you had asked for will be delayed in reaching you. Therefore, God does not always function according to our time, and He cannot be coerced into changing His will to ours. So, in this case under discussion, the name-giver was despondent because his wish was not yet answered by God.

**Sipheni** likes the name. She thinks that it is exclusive because she has never heard of any person with a similar name. She understands that other people are fond of the name and some people even ask her about its meaning and why she was assigned such a name.

115) Name: **Soneni**<sup>1</sup>? ‘What wrong have we done?’

Gender: Female

Name-giver: Paternal grandmother

The birth of the child occurred a day after a granny's hut was struck by lightning at the homestead. Traditionally, this hut was used by mothers at home to deliver babies. The hut is regarded as a fortress where each member seeks protection, and family meetings are also held in the granny's hut which is usually located at the centre of the homestead, facing the cattle kraal (Mohammed et al., 2009:13). In the past, women often delivered babies at home because hospitals were far, and they could not reach them in time once labour had begun. As a result, many children were delivered with the assistance of grandmothers and other experienced elderly women in the community as opposed to midwives. Mbiti (1969:146) observed that “in many areas almost any elderly woman can under normal circumstance act as a midwife, though this is done by specialists”. When the lightning struck the hut, that incidence was perceived as an omen and bad luck. The birth of the child after the grandmother's hut was struck by lightning meant that she did not have a suitable house that could be used as the ‘maternity ward’ to assist the woman to give birth safely. She had to use *lidladla* ‘the cooking hut’ as an alternative for the child's delivery as the weather was also cold and they needed a warm place. The whole situation was risky for the newborn. Luckily, she was born safely, and the grandmother assigned her the name **Soneni**.

This name is a question which was addressed to God, in which the name-giver asked what wrong they had done as a family that He could be so merciless to them. The lightning accident was regarded as a sign that God was punishing them for something they had done. So, the grandmother wanted to find out from God what exactly they did wrong that deserved such harsh punishment. This question was informed by the fright and traumatic experience that the grandmother had witnessed as all her belongings were burnt in that hut. Such naming shows the name-giver's sentiments about God concerning the accident that occurred. She questions God for the misfortune that happened.

**Soneni** accepts the name. She believes that what the family went through during her birth is traumatic and questionable. She also has questions about why her birth coincided with the granny's hut being struck by lightning.

116) Name: **Nkosithini**? 'What are you saying Lord?'

Gender: Female

Name-giver: Paternal grandmother

The name is a question directed to God. The name-giver was asking what God was saying to the parents by giving them a baby with a disability. The baby was born with her feet bent towards the chest and could not be straightened. The grandmother was perplexed when she discovered that her granddaughter had a disability. She took this as a sign that God wanted to send a certain message to the parents. She wanted Him to be specific because she could not figure out what He was trying to say hence the question was asked using the name. The name-bearer resorted to using the name because this was the available channel that could be used immediately to address God. Other people resort to using prayer to question God but naming as a medium of communication was aptly employed by this name-giver.

**Nkosithini** likes the name because missionaries from Holiness Union Church came to pray for her and took her to the hospital for operations. Thereafter her feet were straightened out. She believes that the combination of prayer and the successful operation showed that God was responding to the question asked by her grandmother.

Even today her name still stands as a first name. The name-bearer has also noted that other people like her name, because of its uniqueness.

117) Name: *[u]Gcinaphi<sup>3</sup> [ngekunginika emantfombatana]* 'Where do you stop giving me girls?

Gender: Female

Name-giver: Mother

The question entailed in the name was addressed to God. The name-giver was complaining to God after she gave birth to a third baby girl. She was unhappy that none amongst her children was a male and wanted to find out why God was giving her only girls. The question was, when would God stop giving the mother female children as she felt that they were now enough. She also wanted to know the reason for God denying her male children. This question requires God to respond by making the mother bear a male as a fourth child. The name also expresses the displeasure the mother had after giving birth to a baby girl which she never wished for. The mother could have chosen to address God using the name because it is uncommon for Christians to question God in a prayer which is the basic way to communicate with Him. However, using the naming meant that a new avenue was used to interrogate God and articulate discontentment regarding the gender of the child by the name-giver.

**Gcinaphi** dislikes this name because she thinks that it was a common name a long time ago and people who currently bear this name are now very old. Hence the name nowadays is associated with old age people and none of her peers are called by the name. That makes her ashamed of the name, she only uses it because she has no alternative as her second name is an English name of which she does not even know the meaning. Other people regard the name as funny for a young lady in the 21<sup>st</sup> century and often tease her by clipping the name to *Gci*.

118) Name: ***Siphephelophi***? ‘Where must we seek refuge?’

Gender: Female

Name-giver: Paternal grandmother

The baby was born at a time when wildfires burnt many homes in the northern part of Hhohho region in Eswatini in 2007. The home to which the child belongs was not spared neither a maize crib that was full of maize cobs and beans. All the food that was stored in the crib was reduced to ashes. This sad incident left the family devastated because they lost all the harvest for that particular year. The grandmother could not contain her sadness as she cried hysterically when she saw the incident unfold. When the baby was born, the grandmother named her ***Siphephelophi*** meaning ‘where must we seek refuge?’ This was a question that was directed to God. The name-giver wanted to find out from God where He wanted them to seek refuge as far as food was concerned because He allowed the fire to destroy everything that they had that sustained their livelihood.

Naming as a mode of communication for the name-giver facilitated the sending of the message to the intended addressee. This naming shows the extent of desperation experienced by the name-giver due to the disaster that coincided with the birth of the child. The desolation she felt made her address God using the name of the newborn. Bulman and Wortman (1977:362) found that accident survivors ascribed their misfortune to God. Gray and Wegner (2010:11) support that “Christians ascribe responsibility to God for a range of negative life events”. This demonstrates that it is not uncommon for Christians to attribute negative things that happen in their lives to God. Hence, in this case, the name-giver attributed the destruction of property to God and wanted Him to show where He wanted them to find protection.

The name-bearer has no feelings about the name, she uses it because it is the name that was assigned to her. The message of the name does not bother her in any way.

119) Name: **Senteni**? 'What have we done?'

Gender: Female

Name-giver: Paternal grandmother

The baby was born during a cyclone and the mother could not go to hospital as roads were slippery. The bridge she also had to cross was washed away by floods. The grandmother's hut in which she had to give birth then collapsed due to the heavy rains as it was built of sticks and mud. The family was desperate such that they had to use *intsanga* which is the girls' hut for delivering the baby. The grandmother decided to ask God why He was punishing them as she believed that this was not just a coincidence of events, but an act of God. She wanted to know what they had done as a family to deserve such wrath. Therefore, the message was conveyed directly to God, whom the name-giver accused of all the disasters that threatened the newborn's life. She wanted to know if God had deserted them because of what they had experienced as a family.

**Senteni** has no attitude towards the name, she believes it is merely a name for identification purposes that her grandmother chose to assign to her.

#### **4.4.3.7 Personal names in the form of interrogatives addressing the ancestors**

120) Name: **Soneni**? 'What have we done?'

Gender: Female

Name-giver: Father

The name **Soneni** 'what have we done?' is a question addressed to the family ancestors. The question was asked after four cows had been struck by lightning at night while they were in the family kraal. The event happened a day before the child was born and her father was depressed after losing his precious assets due to the natural disaster that happened. He attributed being struck by lightning and the death of the livestock to the ancestors. When ancestors are displeased with their descendants' behaviour, they express their displeasure and use painful methods to punish all who disobey (Daniel, 2010:25). In this case, the father asked the question **Soneni** 'what have we done?' because he did not know of any wrongdoing that the family might have committed that

would have angered the ancestors. However, an undesired behaviour of a family member is not the only factor that could anger ancestors, neglecting them by not giving offerings and sacrifices can also result in disasters such as thunder and lightning (Mekoa, 2019:103). Therefore, the name **Soneni** is a question in which the father expresses his dismay at the behaviour of the family ancestors. The question does not need a response, but the father can consult *tangoma* ‘diviners’ who are believed to be able to communicate with ancestors (Curle, 2016:44) if he wants to know what exactly the ancestors are displeased with.

**Soneni** does not like the name as it was given from a background of Swazi Traditional Religion that she does not follow. She said that as a Christian, she does not believe that her father’s cattle were killed by ancestors but that it was just a natural disaster that could have befallen any livestock owner.

#### 4.5 Conclusion

This chapter discussed three main types of directive speech acts involved in Siswati personal naming. These include commands, requests and interrogatives. It has been established that speakers/name-givers that are involved in naming include great grandmothers, grandmothers, grandfathers, parents, parents’ friends, aunts and uncles. These people meet the felicity conditions concerning naming as they have authority to bestow the names and have relations to the name-bearer. Those name-givers who are not relatives are given consent by the child’s kin to issue a name on their behalf. The names are also given at an appropriate time and place, typically after the birth of a child while some people decide about the name to be given just before the child is delivered. All names given to newborn babies only come into effect after the child is delivered and is alive.

Name-givers issue names that are messages/utterances addressing specific addressees and containing intentions. Those addressed include newborns, parents, family members, in-laws, community members, ancestors and God. Each name has its unique background

and addresses the addressees differently. The contexts that influence the naming differ, they depict cultural, social and religious traits and attitudes of emaSwati. The situations that influence the bestowal of the names, evolve from the daily life, activities and experiences of the people. It is through the names bestowed on children that the name-givers express their wishes, fears, requests, petitions, sentiments, and question specific things that could be happening when a child is born.

It has also been established that different families have gender preferences for the children they wish to have, which play a significant role in naming and the kinds of names conferred on newborn children. Parents who want a son are motivated by the desire to produce an heir who will inherit and carry on the family's propagation. Some people require children who would care for them when they are unable to do so themselves. Some parents prefer girls because they perceive them as a way of enriching themselves when they ultimately marry. As a result, the naming process is not done carelessly, but rather as a well-thought-out procedure in which the messages expressed are crafted wisely, using selected words so that the addressee receives the message and the intended meaning.

## **CHAPTER 5**

### **FINDINGS AND CONCLUSION**

#### **5.1 Introduction**

In this chapter, the findings of the study are discussed and interpreted, and the conclusions drawn. The aim of this study was to pragmatically explore Siswati naming practices. Directive speech acts in the form of commands, requests and interrogatives in personal names collected were investigated. In Chapter 4 these names were analysed, to examine the messages that are conveyed by the name-givers to their interlocutors.

#### **5.2 Outline of the chapters**

This study was systematically structured into five chapters which can be encapsulated in the following manner:

Chapter 1 dealt with the introduction and background, the problem statement, the aim, and objectives of the study. The study aimed to investigate the pragmatic meaning manifested in Siswati personal names and to establish the traits embedded in Siswati naming practices. The objectives were: to examine the messages emaSwati express through naming, to identify types of names given by emaSwati to their newborn children, to establish the people addressed and contexts under which names are bestowed in Swazi culture, to bring to light attitudes attached to some personal names in Swazi culture, and to investigate traits of the emaSwati embedded in naming practices.

Chapter 2 interrogated the literature related to the study. Works which deal with naming were consulted to find out how intellectuals have studied naming in various cultures and to see gaps that need to be filled particularly in Siswati scholarliness.

Chapter 3 covered research design, methodology and the theoretical frameworks used in the study.

Chapter 4 discussed three main types of directive speech acts involved in Siswati personal naming. These were commands, requests and interrogatives. The messages issued, and the persons addressed by the utterances conveyed by the names, were established. The attitudes of the name-bearers towards the names they were bestowed with, were also revealed. It was found that Siswati personal names are indeed speech acts in which a name-giver acts when bestowing a name on a newborn child.

### 5.3 Findings

The study found that Siswati names are bestowed by appropriate name-givers. People that are involved in personal naming are great grandparents, grandparents, parents, parents' friends, aunts, and uncles and sometimes siblings. These individuals satisfy the felicity conditions for naming since they have the authority to bestow the names and have some relations to the name-bearer. Name-givers who are not relatives are given consent by the child's kin to issue a name on their behalf. The names are also given at appropriate times, and places that are distinct for each family after the birth of a child while some people decide about the name to be given just before the child is delivered. All names given to newborn babies only come into effect after the child is delivered and is alive.

Some Siswati names are in the form of commands, interrogatives and questions. The commands issued by name-givers direct the name-bearer to perform a specific task. A speaker or name-giver assigns a particular responsibility which the name-bearer must execute when he/she has grown up. For instance, the name **Vus'umutiwendvodza** 'Establish a man's homestead' is a mandate in which the name-giver instructs the young child to build his father's homestead since he was born after his father's demise. The boy child is given the responsibility to step into his late father's shoes as an heir and take charge of the family affairs as he grows up. Similarly, the command **Bhek'ikhaya** 'Look after the homestead' instructs a boy child to look after the homestead when he is a grown person. It expresses the mother's desires and aspirations which she could not accomplish because of being a woman with a child out of wedlock, while the name **Gcinumuzi** 'Keep

the homestead' orders the child to keep the homestead as the first boy child who is regarded as an heir in a Swazi traditional setting.

It was also established that some names that are commands express aspirations and wishes of the name-givers. For example, the name **Vus'isizwe** 'Uplift the nation' expresses the father's desire that his son would be of help in future to the family and the whole community. He hoped that the newborn would be able to provide for his family so that they could live well. Meanwhile, some names give authority to male children and imbues them with the spirit of supremacy. For instance, in the **Busa** 'Reign' the father of the child bestows power on his son to reign over the family.

Other commands address name-bearers to be self-reliant and hard working. Such names are directives that are mostly given to male children in Swazi families in which they are required to be independent. For instance, in the name **Zenzele** 'Do it yourself', the addressee or the name-bearer is instructed to create his own wealth and never rely on others as no man is expected to be looked after by another once he reaches adulthood. The name-giver compels the child at a young age so that he grows up knowing what is expected of him in the future, as he is ordered to be industrious and responsible.

Names in the form of commands also direct name-bearers to bring wealth to their families. Such commands are given to girls to remind them to be well-behaved so that their parents may profit completely when they marry. The names are associated with *lobolo*, the bride price, in which a girl is advised to make sure that she behaves well to avoid becoming pregnant before marriage, so that the father would obtain all of the cattle necessary as *lobolo* for the daughter. Bride price is used as a form of acquiring wealth in Swazi societies and such expectations manifest through the names bestowed on girls. For example, the names **Tselifa** 'Bring in wealth' and **Lethumcebo** 'Bring riches/wealth' are commands in which the speakers or name-givers issued peremptory orders to the girls to bring wealth. The name-givers want to get money from their daughters in the form of *lobolo*, which they are likely to get if their daughters are well-behaved when they get married.

Names that are commands also instruct name-bearers to follow their parents' religion. In such names, the name-giver would order the child to believe either in God or in ancestors. For instance, the name ***Thembel'enkhosini*** 'Trust in the Lord' is a command from the father, who gave his daughter the name, to believe in the God of Christianity. The parent does not believe in Swazi traditional religion and believes that the true religion that his daughter must abide by is Christianity. As a result of employing the name as a speech act, the name-giver can execute an action that he wishes his child to perform.

Moreover, names that are commands are bestowed on newborn children to charge good health and prosperity to the addressee. They are often the desires of the name-givers concerning the name-bearer. For instance, the names ***Phila*** 'Be alive' and ***Lulama*** 'Get well' direct the newborn children to receive good health and recover from their ailments. Names are powerful utterances in which the commands made through them are believed to have effects on the hearers or the people addressed. Such commands in the names ***Phila*** and ***Lulama*** are believed to be bound to be fulfilled.

Other commands issued to a newborn child indicate the speaker's or name-giver's confidence in the child upon whom the name is bestowed. The name would command the name-bearer to bring joy to the name-giver who is in affliction because of family feuds at the time of the child's birth. For instance, the name ***Cedusizi*** 'End sorrow' gives the child a mandate to ease the mother of the pain she experienced. The name alludes to the fact that the boy was born at a period when the mother was in pain and hoped that the arrival of the male child would bring her pain to an end. In the name ***Lethukuthula***<sup>1</sup> 'Bring peace', the name-giver commands the child to bring peace between family members because he was born when conflicts prevailed. In Swati culture, the birth of a child is regarded as a blessing. Therefore, the name-giver perceives the child as a peacemaker and instructs him to somehow make the family reconcile.

Furthermore, some names that are classified as commands address young children to be responsible citizens in the future. For instance, the name ***Zam'okuhle*** 'Attempt doing good things' is a command assigned to the newborn child in which he is encouraged to

have positive life goals and accomplish them to live harmoniously. The name-giver understands that a true man strives for greater achievement in life and wishes for his child to follow in his footsteps. Such a demand is thought to have good effects on the name-bearer, and it is presented as an order that the newborn must follow.

The study also established that personal names in the form of commands are addressed to the parent or parents of the newborn child. Many names that are commands are mainly addressed to the mother of the newborn child rather than the father, while some are commands that are addressed to both the father and the mother of the child. The commands deal with specific issues which the addressee must act on.

Other commands entreat the mother to earnestly trust in God the Almighty for particular interventions. For instance, the commands **Tsembayena** ‘Trust Him’ and **Themb’umenzi** ‘Trust the creator’ are directed to the mothers of the name-bearers to trust in God. The name-givers instruct the mother through the name given to put everything in God’s hands and have faith that God will provide a solution. The name-givers believe in the Almighty’s abilities to intervene in human life hence they instruct the child’s mother to wholeheartedly trust in God.

Personal names in the form of commands also instruct the mother to unconditionally forgive her in-laws. A name such as **Batsetsele** ‘Forgive them’ is an instruction from the child’s father to the mother to forgive her in-laws, particularly her mother-in-law, who had been mistreating her. The command was issued because the woman was never accepted by members of her marital family. Regardless of the circumstances, the child’s father instructed his wife to forgive them to keep the peace.

Some command names address the newborn’s mother to convey information to her in-laws in the absence of her spouse. In such cases, it is the husband who sends the wife to speak to the in-laws by relaying a certain message. A name such as **Batjele**<sup>1</sup> ‘Tell them’ is an order from the husband in which the mother of the newborn child was directed to speak a message to the in-laws.

Moreover, some personal names in the form of a command direct the child's mother to pay more attention to the health of her child. This usually happens after a tragedy occurred to a child who was born before the newborn, such as an illness that killed the child. For instance, in the name **Bhekayena** 'Take care of him' the child's mother was instructed to concentrate on the newborn child following the death of a sibling who died immediately after birth. The name-giver holds that the mother has to be ordered to pay full attention to the baby boy to eliminate risk and sustain the child's safety and health.

Other names in the form of commands instruct the mother to cease having children when an older family member has deemed them adequate. Names such as **Gcina** 'Stop' and **Gcinangaye** 'Let him be the last' command the mothers to cease bearing children. The spouses of these mothers were in both instances content with the number of children they wanted. In the case of **Gcina** 'Stop,' the father of the newborn was delighted at the arrival of his long-desired son and he thought it was appropriate to instruct his wife to ensure that the baby was their last child. With the name **Gcinangaye** 'Let him be the last' the father discerned that they already had seven children and that if they continued to birth more, he would be unable to sustain them financially. As a result, this newborn child was meant to be the last born.

Personal names may command both parents of the newborn child to show gratitude to ancestors for blessing them with the child. In such commands, the name-givers instruct the parents to express gratitude to the family's ancestors, who are thought to have a direct impact on the wellbeing of every family member. For example, the command **Bongisisa** 'Give thanks exceedingly' is addressing the child's father to express deep appreciation and gratitude to the ancestors for enabling his wife to have a son as his firstborn. The name-giver believes that it was because of the intervention of ancestors that the father had a boy child that he needed. Thus, the naming reflects emaSwati cultural beliefs, notably the name-giver's perception of the importance of ancestors in their lives. Meanwhile, other names give orders to both parents of the name-bearer to rest and stop procreating. For example, in the name **Phumlani**<sup>1</sup> 'Rest,' as a name-giver, the child's grandmother believed that the parents already had enough children, and they were

struggling to provide for the needs of their children. As a result, they had to be compelled to cease having children.

Some Siswati personal names in the form of commands also address the parents never to give up, be optimistic, or reconcile. This is conveyed by the name-giver, encouraging both parents to be resilient. For example, the name **Zamani**<sup>1, 2</sup> 'Keep trying' was assigned to the baby, and the message was directed to the parents as a constant reminder that perseverance is the mother of success. While an identical name **Zamani**<sup>3</sup> [*kulungisa tinkinga*] 'Try to resolve your problems' has a different illocution in which the parents are instructed to resolve their marital problems and ensure that the child is born in a healthy relationship.

Personal names in the form of commands are similarly addressed to the siblings of the name-bearer. For instance, the name **Busani** 'Live comfortably' was given when the mother gave birth to twins, a boy and a girl, the latter being the first female child in the family. The name is a command that decrees that all of the males in the family live contentedly since they now have a sister who will assist them with some of the home tasks that are traditionally considered to be the responsibility of women.

In this study, it was established that personal names in the form of commands are issued to newborns to address their grandparents. Names such as **Lethukuthula**<sup>2</sup> 'Bring peace' is a command given to the child's paternal grandmother to forgive the parents for what they did so that there would be peace among them. Meanwhile the name **Batjele**<sup>2</sup> 'Tell them' is an order given to the child's grandfather to inform the ancestors that they did a wonderful job by forgiving the child's father and providing the family with a firstborn baby boy. The locution of this speech act was an instruction to notify the ancestors that the family is sincerely appreciative of the gift they had bestowed upon them which was the birth of a boy child. Although instructions generally proceed from a senior member of the family to a junior member of the family, in this example, the name-giver is a son who issues a directive to his father, who is traditionally the best person to communicate with the ancestors.

Personal names in the form of commands are also addressed to immediate family members. In such names, the family members are ordered to respond in a particular way to the speaker or name-giver. For example, the name ***Mbukeni*** ‘Behold a boy child has been born’ is an order issued to all family members to acknowledge that they were incorrect in concluding that the woman was barren after struggling to have children for seven years of marriage. So the name is a speech act inviting all family members to look at the child's mother and respect her.

Some personal names direct family members to love the newborn child. The utterance of such a speech act is informed by family feuds that exist at the time of childbirth. For instance, ***Mthandeni***<sup>1</sup> ‘Love him’ is a command that is directed to the child’s stepmother and the child’s paternal family to love and accept the baby regardless of the fact that he was given birth to by the husband’s girlfriend. The name-giver wanted the family members to love her son unconditionally.

Other personal names that are commands reprimand family members to refrain from doing certain things. For instance, the name ***Khawulani*** ‘Stop’ was bestowed by the father in which he was addressing his elderly family members to stop demanding that his wife bear many children. He decided that the three children he had were enough for him and his wife. Thus, he ordered the elders to stop demanding more children since he knew that having many children meant added responsibilities on him as the breadwinner. The name ***Phumlan***<sup>2</sup> ‘Rest’ was assigned to the newborn child by the mother in which she ordered the elders of the family to rest and stop demanding that she bear more children. She insisted that they be pleased since the male child they desired had been born. The name ***Lindani***<sup>1</sup> ‘Wait’ is a directive to every family member not to rush in celebrating the birth of the baby boy but rather to wait to see if the baby was going to live. This instruction was given as a warning since the newborn child was born following the death of a sibling.

Other personal names in the form of commands instruct family members to celebrate the birth of a child, especially a boy in the family by thanking God. Names such as ***Jabulani*** ‘Be joyous’, ***Dumisani*** ‘Praise’, ***Bongani*** ‘Give thanks’ and ***Sibongiseni***<sup>1, 2</sup> ‘Rejoice with

us' fall in this category of commands. The name **Jabulani** commands the family members to rejoice since a boy has been born into the family. The father as a name-giver wanted the family to celebrate the birth of a male child which meant the continuity of the family clan name. The name **Dumisani** is a command in which the child's father wanted the immediate family members to praise and thank God for bringing forth an heir into the family on his wife's first child delivery. As a family that professed Christianity, the name was also bestowed to thank God who made it possible for the mother to be fertile. The name **Bongani** compels family members to thank God for an uncomplicated and safe delivery of the baby. The command was given as a name since the baby was born at home, which could have put him in danger, as opposed to most newborns who are delivered in hospitals. As a result, his safe birth deserved to be celebrated. Then the name **Sibongiseni**<sup>1, 2</sup> is a summons to everybody at the homestead to partake in celebrating the arrival of a new member of the family.

In addition, some personal names in the form of commands address the immediate family to accept the paternity of the newborn child. For example, the name **Mvumeni** 'Accept him [the child]' was bestowed on the newborn by a paternal grandfather in which the message was communicated to the child's father and his family to accept the child as biologically belonging to him. This was after the presumed father's family said that only the characteristics of the baby after birth would reveal who the biological father was when the woman came to disclose the pregnancy in accordance with the Swazi tradition of *kubika sisu*, or 'pregnancy reporting'. Thus, such a command compels the family members to comply with the promises they made before the birth of the name-bearer.

Other personal names in the form of commands are used to address conflicts between family members and resolve disputes. For instance, the name **Lethukula**<sup>1, 2</sup> 'Bring peace' is used by the name-giver to call for peace in the family and the name **Zamani**<sup>3</sup> [*kulungisa tinkinga*] 'Try to resolve your problems' demands that problems must be resolved by the parents of the child so that the entire family would live in harmony.

The study also determined that personal names in the form of commands are addressed to the in-laws of the child's parents. Some of these names are demands for unpaid *lobolo* bride wealth for the child's mother in which her in-laws must pay. For instance, the name ***Velani*** [*nemali yelobolo*] 'Appear with the bride price' and ***Buyisani*** [*imali yelobolo*] 'bring the [bride price]' are demands for bride price. The name ***Velani*** was bestowed by the maternal grandmother of the child in which her son-in-law and his parents were addressed to pay bride price which was never paid after six years of marriage. The name ***Buyisani*** was also given by a maternal grandmother of the child in which she ordered the father of the newborn child to pay the bride price. The name-giver was livid that, although her husband had been requesting the baby's father several times to offer bride wealth, no arrangements to that effect were made. The failure to accede to the demands made is a violation of Swazi culture and custom which stipulates that a man must offer bride price to his wife's family after marriage.

Furthermore, some commands in the form of personal names address the in-laws of the baby's father to allow him to give his surname to the child without marrying the mother. For example, the name ***Sivumele*** is directed to the in-laws of the baby's father. The father who is Swazi had impregnated a Ndebele woman and wanted his child to assume his surname as per the norm among emaSwati. However, his girlfriend's family objected because he had not offered *lobolo* for his girlfriend nor given them cattle as damages to claim paternity for the child. Therefore, the name is a command that directs the in-laws to grant the father his wish.

In addition, some commands are addressed to the in-laws of the child's father to accept and love the newborn. A name such as ***Mthanden<sup>2</sup>*** 'Love him' was bestowed by the father in which he demanded his in-laws from his partner's home to love and take care of his son. This was after he had impregnated the mother while they were at high school. He anticipated that the child might not be well received in his maternal family, thus he instructed his in-laws to adore his child regardless of the circumstances that led to his birth.

The research also found that personal names in the form of commands are addressed to ancestors. Names are used as messages directed to ancestors in Siswati naming practices as the ancestors play a vital part in the lives of the living in Swazi traditional homesteads, where elders consult them in a variety of circumstances. In every family, ancestors provide guidance and protection to all family members. A name like ***Phendulani*** ‘Answer’ is a command directed to the ancestors in which the father expected the ancestors to answer by blessing him with the boy he had requested since he was satisfied with the female children he and his wife already had. The name ***Khethani*** ‘Choose’ is a directive by the name-giver in which the ancestors were obliged to choose between the mother’s life and that of the newborn child as both were in danger during childbirth. ***Mphephiseni*** ‘Save him’ is a command given by the paternal grandmother to the family ancestors to take care of the infant and rescue him from the illness he was born with in order for him to recover fully. In the case of the name ***Wakheni*** ‘Establish the homestead’ a command is issued to the ancestors since the father asked a male child from them and once given, he wanted the ancestors to be accountable for the development of the homestead by his heir.

Personal names in the form of commands that are addressed to God were also found in Siswati names. Even though in Swazi culture, commands are passed down from elders to young people and are never reciprocated, names that are polite commands are directed to God as a Supreme Being by name-givers to respectfully petition Him to execute some specific desired actions for them. Names such as ***Siphamandla*** [*Nkhosi*] ‘Give us strength Lord’ and ***Sihawukele*** ‘Pity us’ are polite commands in which the name-givers are addressing God. In the case of ***Siphamandla***, the name-giver was politely petitioning God to give them financial strength, to be able to raise the child regardless of the bad environment in which the baby was born, while in ***Sihawukele*** the father as the name-giver made an obsecration to God to be kind to him and protect the new baby as well as the entire family.

The study also found that Siswati naming practices involve personal names in the form of requests that are addressed to particular people. These requests are addressed to

ancestors, family members, in-laws of the child's parents, and God. Ancestors play an important role in the life of emaSwati and it is not surprising that name-givers request the ancestors' intervention through the utterance or messages contained in the names they bestowed on children at birth. Names such as *[si]Celukuphila* 'We request to live' and *[si]Celimphilo*<sup>1, 2</sup> 'We request life' are requests made to the ancestors by name-givers. The name *[si]Celukuphila* is a request addressed to the ancestors to grant the boy who is a twin long life so that he could be an heir of the family while the name *[si]Celimphilo*<sup>1</sup> was bestowed by the child's paternal grandfather as a name-giver of a premature newborn. He pleaded with the ancestors to give the baby continued existence and healthy life so that she may grow well.

Parents also use personal names in the form of requests in which they ask to be forgiven by family members. The requests are addressed to family members usually when a parent/parents of the child have offended certain members in the family before the child is born. For example, names such as *[ngi]Cel'umusa* 'I ask for mercy' and *[ngi]Celucolo* 'I ask for forgiveness' are requests issued to family members in which the name-givers plead for pardon. The request *[ngi]Cel'umusa*<sup>1</sup> was issued by the mother as a name-giver in which she was requesting her parents to forgive her after she was rebuked for getting pregnant just after completing high school while yet unmarried. The name *[ngi]Celucolo*<sup>2</sup> was uttered by the child's mother as a name-giver in which she was pleading for forgiveness from her parents after she fell pregnant while she was still at high school and disappointed her parents who wanted a bright future for her.

It was also observed that Siswati personal names in the form of requests are also addressed to the in-laws of the child's parents. For instance, *[ngi]Cel'ukuthula* 'I ask for peace' was given to the newborn boy by his mother, who asked peace from her marital family members since she was not welcomed by her in-laws due to her inability to fulfil all responsibilities required of married women in a rural family because she had a fulltime job.

Personal names in the form of requests are also addressed to God. The name-givers ask God to do a favour for them or someone very close such as pleading for mercy, compassion, grace, and healing using the names given to a child. The name *[ngi]CeI'umusa*<sup>2</sup> ‘[I] ask for mercy’ is a supplication made to God in which the father begs for forgiveness for betraying his Christian principles by having had a child before marriage. The name *[si]Celimphilo*<sup>2</sup> ‘We ask for life’ is also a request before God by the paternal grandmother after she had had a complicated pregnancy and delivered a preterm baby. With this request in the form of the name, the name-giver was making an adjuration to God for a better and healthy life for the newborn child.

The study also explored personal names in the form of interrogatives. It discovered that Siswati names in this category end with the suffix [-ni?] or [-phi?]. When interrogatives are normally uttered, the speaker poses a question directed to a particular hearer to which a response is required. However, in the naming process responses to the questions are not overtly expected.

Personal names in the form of interrogatives can be addressed to a newborn child in which the question is usually rhetoric. For example, the name which is a question *[u]Fikelephi*<sup>1</sup>? ‘What bad situation were you born into?’ is addressing the newborn child that was born at a time when there was drought and famine in the country. So, the name-giver bestowed the name in which she was questioning the child concerning the bad conditions she was born into. The question asked does not necessarily require a response but shows the concern the great grandmother had for her granddaughter. Meanwhile, the interrogative name *[bewu]Linden?* ‘What have you been waiting for?’ was addressed to the newborn baby after her mother died hours after giving birth. This is also a rhetorical question in which the name-giver was inquiring as to what had caused the baby not to be delivered normally, resulting in the mother's death.

Personal names in the form of interrogatives also address family members. In the case of these interrogative names, the name-giver questions certain behaviours or actions of a family member or members in which he/she expresses discontent and

frustration concerning the conduct of the intended hearer. For example, the name **Sibangani**<sup>1</sup>? 'What are we fighting for?' was given to a newborn child by his mother after she inquired as to why her marital family members despised her and were always quarrelling with her. It was because of the terrible treatment she suffered at the hand of the family that the name-giver was expressing her anguish and despair.

Personal names in the form of interrogatives also address the in-laws of the child's father. A name-giver addresses in-laws through the name given to the newborn child in which he/she asks the in-laws certain questions on which he/she seeks some clarity. For example, the name **Senteni**<sup>1</sup>? 'What have we done?' is a question aimed at the name-giver's girlfriend's father, who forbade his daughter to marry the guy who had impregnated her. He didn't provide a reason for his disapproval but informed the lover that he couldn't let the marriage happen. This prompted the name-giver to ask the question when the child was eventually born out of the relationship.

In this research, it was also established that personal names in the form of interrogatives address a community. The name-giver directs questions to the community in which he/she lives. The questions asked are usually meant to address disputes that seem to exist between the community and the speaker/name-giver. For instance, the name **Sibangani**<sup>2</sup>? 'What are we fighting for?' is a question posed to members of a community. Before the child's birth, the father had cows that were poisoned while grazing in the pastures where every community member has a right to let his livestock graze. Three cows died among the poisoned herd, and no one knew who was responsible for the heinous deed. Consequently, the father became enraged and enquired why he was suffering when he knew no enemy in the community. Therefore, the questioning was an outburst of dismay based on the sad occurrence that befell the name-giver.

The study has also revealed that Siswati personal names in the form of interrogatives are addressed to God. In interrogative names, the name-giver questions God about a particular tragedy or calamity that happened to the newborn's family during the time of birth. A name like **Soneni**<sup>1</sup>? 'What wrong have we done?' is a question directed to God

since the birth of the child occurred a day after a granny's hut was struck by lightning at the homestead. Traditionally, this hut was used by mothers at home to deliver babies as hospitals were far, and they could not reach them in time once labour had begun. The destruction of the hut meant that the mother did not have a suitable house that could be used to assist her to give birth safely. By giving the newborn child the interrogative name, the name-giver asked what wrong they had done as a family that God could be so merciless to them as they perceive the destruction as a sign that God was punishing them for something they had done. So, the grandmother wanted to find out from God what exactly they did wrong that deserved such harsh punishment.

Similarly, a name such as *[u]Sipheni?* 'What have you given us?' is a question expressed by the father after learning that his wife had given birth to a daughter. The name-giver was expressing his displeasure with the heavenly Father who is said to control the bestowal of offspring to humanity. He was curious as to why God was ruining his family by depriving him of sons who would care for his home when he dies. He assumed that once the daughters he had, reached maturity, all of them would marry and abandon them as parents.

In the same way, the name *Siphephelephi?* 'Where must we seek refuge?' was a question that was directed to God when the child's birth coincided with wildfires that burned a crib that was full of maize and beans meant to feed the family for the entire year. This disaster was attributed to God by the name-giver and she wanted to find out where God wanted them to seek refuge as far as food was concerned because everything that they had for sustaining their livelihood had been destroyed. In the same vein, the name *Senteni*<sup>2</sup>? 'What have we done?' was bestowed on a newborn child after she was born during a cyclone in Eswatini [Swaziland] in which bridges collapsed and a house in which the baby had to be delivered also collapsed due to the heavy rains as it was built of sticks and mud. The family had to look for an alternative house where the baby was eventually delivered. So, the grandmother as the name-giver decided to ask God why He was punishing them as she believes this was God's act, not merely a disaster that coincided with the birth of her grandchild.

Personal names in the form of interrogatives are similarly addressed to the newborn child's parents. A name like ***Simakuphi?*** 'Where do we end?' was issued by the child's mother, who wanted to know when both she and her husband were supposed to discontinue bearing children after giving birth to their tenth child. She posed the question as she believed that the children they had as a family were sufficient, and she expected that her husband would understand the message she sent to him when he inquired about the origin of the child's name. A name like ***Sitsini?*** 'What do we say?' is a question posed by both parents to themselves as name-givers in which they wanted to know how they would deal with the fact that they were failing to bear a male child after the mother had given birth to another girl child. The question was posed because the parents were at a crossroads as to what to do since they thought the girls were God's gifts.

Lastly, the study revealed that personal names in the form of interrogatives may be addressed to ancestors. The questions asked through the names are related to bad situations occurring within a family which are ascribed to the family ancestors who are supposed to be guardians of the family. EmaSwati hold that ancestors can harm family members especially when they are angry, and their unhappiness manifests in misfortunes experienced by family members. Interrogative names are then issued to newborns to question the ancestors on why they expose the families to dangers. For example, a name such as ***Soneni?*** 'What have we done?' is a question addressed to the family ancestors after four cows were struck by lightning a day before the child was born. The father as name-giver was at a loss and felt that his ancestors had turned their back to his family. He attributed the death of the livestock to the ancestors and wanted to know what had angered them. Thus, the question asked to them was to find out what exactly the ancestors were displeased with.

#### **5.4 Contributions of the study**

The research has contributed to the exploration of Siswati naming practices and has established how Siswati names are given to newborns at birth in Swazi communities. It was discovered that naming in Siswati is a speech act that involves directives such as demands, requests and interrogatives uttered by speakers/name-givers. Events that

happen and circumstances around a child's birth influence the directives. This study discovered that personal naming is a serious and well executed process since names not only serve as people's identities but are forms of communication that name-givers employ to address hearers.

## 5.5 Conclusion

In summary, the study has found that name-givers in Siswati culture use speech acts unwittingly to communicate distinct messages to specific hearers. In bestowing personal names at birth to children, name-givers perform acts that have intentions and aims. Speech acts in naming that have been discussed in this study are commands, requests, and interrogatives that are influenced by the way of life of emaSwati and their cultural traits, aspirations, emotions, and frustrations as they interact with one another in encounters such as failure to offer bride-price, the religious beliefs they profess, such as their belief in Christianity or ancestral worship, problems in marriage, and issues involving the paternity of a child, and their desires about the roles their children should play when they have grown up.

All the messages/utterances made through the name given to children at birth depict the contexts, circumstances, and affairs happening when a child is born. Hence, naming as a speech act is context-bound in Siswati naming. The naming practices also revealed that naming is a functional process wherein language is used to carry out actions such as making demands, request, and asking questions.

It was also found that various families have gender preferences for the children they intend to have, which have a big impact on naming and the types of names bestowed on children. Parents who want a son are driven by the desire to create an heir who will inherit and continue the family's lineage. When they are unable to care for themselves, some individuals rely on children. Some parents prefer females because they see them as a means of elevating themselves when their children marry since *lobolo* will provide them with a huge quantity of cows or cash. As a consequence, the naming process is not done

haphazardly, but rather as a well-planned process in which the messages presented are crafted adeptly by utilising chosen words so that the addressee gets the message and the intended meaning.

Moreover, it was discovered that different name-bearers have distinct attitudes toward the names they possess. With personal names in the form of commands, some name-bearers are proud of their names because of the informative and authoritative messages they contain as well as the manner in which they address intended hearers. On the other hand a few name-bearers dislike the meaning of their names especially when the name exposes complex information such as denied paternity in which the father must be forced to approve of the child. However, they use their names as permanent identity markers which they were given at birth.

Most name-bearers of personal names in the form of requests are happy about their names and approve of them, while name-bearers of names informed by interrogatives show different attitudes. Some name-owners are proud of their interrogative personal names while others despise the messages expressed through those names. Those name-bearers that are proud approve of both the illocution and perlocution of their names while name-owners who do not like their names are displeased with the circumstances that resulted in the establishment of the name.

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## **Appendix A: Name bearers**

The questions in this appendix will be used for both the interview and questionnaire for name-bearers

Name:

Sex:

Age:

Locality:

Educational qualifications:

1. What is your first name?
2. Who gave you this name?
3. Why do you think you were given these names?
4. What does your name(s) mean?
5. Who do you think was addressed with this name?
6. Why do you think this is the person who was addressed?
7. How do you feel about having this name?
8. Do you think that people might have certain attitudes towards your name?
9. Could these be positive or negative attitudes?
10. Why do you think people might have the attitude mentioned above towards your name?
11. Do you think that the person who gave you this name was following some patterns that are used in the naming of children in your family/community?

## **Siswati Language**

Imibuto lecondzene nemnikati welibito

Imininingwane lecondzene nawe

Libito:

Bulili:

Umnyaka wakho:

Indzawo lohlala kuyo:

Ticu temfundvo:

### **Imibuto**

1. Ngabe libito lakho unguhani?
2. Wetsiwa ngubani lelibito?
3. Uma ucabanga wetsiwelani lelibito leni?
4. Lisho kutsini lelibito lakho?
5. Ucabanga kutsi bekucondziswe/bekukhulunywa nabani ngekutsi wetsiwe lelibito?
6. Leni ucabange kutsi kucondziswe/kukhulunywa naloyo muntfu ngalelibito?
7. Utsini umuovo wakho ngalelibito lakho, ngabe liyakuchaza yini/uyalitsandza yini?
8. Uma ubuka bantfu ngabe balitsatsa njani lelibito lakho?
9. Ngabe kukahle yini kutsi balitsatse ngalendlela loyisho?
10. Uma ucabanga leni nje bantfu balitsatse ngalendlela bantfu lelibito lakho?
11. Uma ubuka lona lowakwetsa lelibito ngabe abeyilandzela yini indlela bantfwana labetsiwa ngayo emabito emndenini nasemmangweni?

## **Appendix B: Name-givers**

The questions in this appendix will be used for both the interview and questionnaire for name-givers.

Name:

Sex:

Age:

Locality:

Educational qualifications:

1. What is the name of your child? (Provide one Siswati name you have given to one of your children)
2. What would have prompted you to give your child such a name?
3. What does this name mean?
4. Who were you addressing when you gave your child this name?
5. Why do you think the person addressed in (4) above needed to receive this message?
6. Were there no other means in which the message in (4) above could have been conveyed?
7. Does anyone ever respond to these messages?
8. In what manner are the responses conveyed?
9. Don't you think that you might have violated your child's right by addressing another person by giving him/her a name?
10. Is this how names are bestowed to children in Swazi culture?

## **Siswati Language**

Imibuto lecondzene nemuntfu lowetsa libito

Imininingwane lecondzene nawe

Libito:

Bulili:

Umnyaka wakho:

Indzawo:

Ticu temfundvo

### **Imibuto**

1. Ngubani libito lemntfwana wakho?
2. Ngabe wentiwa yini kutsi umetse libito/emabito lanjena?
3. Ngabe lisho kutsi lelibito?
4. Bewucondzise/bewukhuluma nabani ngekwetsa lomntfwana wakho lelibito?
5. Ucabanga kutsi lomuntfu lomusho ngenhla bekudzingeka yini kutsi atfole lomlayeto?
6. Bekute yini lenye indlela yekumenta atfole lomlayeto ngaphandle kwekusebentisa lelibito lemntfwana?
7. Ngabe kukhona yini loke wakhomba kutsintseka ngalomlayeto lowendluliswa ngulelibito?
8. Ngabe bantfu bakhomba kanjani kutsintfwa ngulomlayeto lowedluliswa ngulelibito?
9. Uma ucabanga ngabe awukalinyatseli yini lilungelo lalomtfwana ngekutsi wedlulise umlayeto kulomunye umuntfu ngekutsi usebentise lelibito lakhe?
10. Uma ubuka ngabe ngiyo yini indlela bantfwana labetsiwa ngayo emabito ngenchubo yemaSwati?

## Appendix C: Ethical Clearance



### UNISA DEPT. AFRICAN LANGUAGES RESEARCH ETHICS REVIEW COMMITTEE

Date 14 August 2020

Dear Muzi Nkanyiso Matfunjwa,

**Decision: Ethics Approval from:**  
**29 August 2019 to**  
**31 December 2024.**

NHREC Registration # : REC-  
240816-052

CREC Reference # : 2018-CHS-  
Department- 4902-882-0

Name: Muzi Nkanyiso Matfunjwa

Student Number # :4902-882-0

**Researcher(s):** Name: Muzi Nkanyiso Matfunjwa

Email Address, telephone #: [49028820@mylife.unisa.ac.za](mailto:49028820@mylife.unisa.ac.za)

Mobile: 0732989647 Work: 0182852879

**Supervisor (s):** 1. Name: Prof Mthikazi Roselina Masubelele

Address: Dept. African Languages, PO Box 392, Unisa 0003

E-mail address, telephone #: [masrose25@gmail.com](mailto:masrose25@gmail.com)

0769049236 (Cell)

2. Dr Sisana Racheal Mdluli

Address: Dept. African Languages, PO Box 392, Unisa 0003

E-mail address, telephone #: [mdlulsr@unisa.ac.za](mailto:mdlulsr@unisa.ac.za)

Work: (012) 429 8535 Mobile: 082 950 6816

**A pragmatic exploration of Siswati naming practices**

**Qualifications Applied:** Phd

Thank you for the application for research ethics clearance by the Unisa DAL Ethics Review Committee for the above mentioned research. Ethics approval is granted for 29 August 2019 to 31 December 2024.

University of South Africa  
Preller Street, Muckleneuk Ridge, City of Tshwane  
PO Box 392 UNISA 0003 South Africa  
Telephone: +27 12 429 3111 Facsimile: +27 12 429 4150  
[www.unisa.ac.za](http://www.unisa.ac.za)

**The low risk application was reviewed by a Sub-committee of URERC in November 2019 in compliance with the Unisa Policy on Research Ethics and the Standard Operating Procedure on Research Ethics Risk Assessment. The decision was approved in August 2019.**

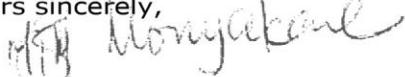
The proposed research may now commence with the provisions that:

1. The researcher(s) will ensure that the research project adheres to the values and principles expressed in the UNISA Policy on Research Ethics.
2. Any adverse circumstance arising in the undertaking of the research project that is relevant to the ethicality of the study should be communicated in writing to the CHS Research Ethics Committee.
3. The researcher(s) will conduct the study according to the methods and procedures set out in the approved application.
4. Any changes that can affect the study-related risks for the research participants, particularly in terms of assurances made with regards to the protection of participants' privacy and the confidentiality of the data, should be reported to the Committee in writing, accompanied by a progress report.
5. The researcher will ensure that the research project adheres to any applicable national legislation, professional codes of conduct, institutional guidelines and scientific standards relevant to the specific field of study. Adherence to the following South African legislation is important, if applicable: Protection of Personal Information Act, no 4 of 2013; Children's act no 38 of 2005 and the National Health Act, no 61 of 2003.
6. Only de-identified research data may be used for secondary research purposes in future on condition that the research objectives are similar to those of the original research. Secondary use of identifiable human research data require additional ethics clearance.
7. No field work activities may continue after the expiry date (31 December 2024). Submission of a completed research ethics progress report will constitute an application for renewal of Ethics Research Committee approval.

*Note:*

*The reference number **2018-CHS-Department** - 4902-882-0 should be clearly indicated on all forms of communication with the intended research participants, as well as with the Committee.*

Yours sincerely,



Signature

Chair of DAL RERC: Dr TMSMA Monyakane

E-mail: [monyatm@unisa.ac.za](mailto:monyatm@unisa.ac.za) Tel: (012) 429-3935

URERC 25.04.17 - Decision template (V2) - Approve

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