Towards the Saho Anthroponymy: A study of the Semantics and Cultural Aspects of Saho Personal Names

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Abstract
This paper attempts an anthroponomy study on the semantics and cultural aspects of Saho personal names. Saho is a semetic language spoken in the horn of Africa region of Ethiopia and Eritrea. This paper establishes the meanings and the socio-cultural issues encoded in Saho personal names. Additionally, social cultural activities surrounding the naming process and naming trends are highlighted. This study makes a finding that Saho personal names aren't mere arbitrary symbols but in fact do point out to an individual's ancestry-family, clan, and the in-group and out-group identities that demarcate dialectal boundaries across the Saho dialects hence making personal names of greater significance to Saho community. Therefore maintaining these naming histories, together with the procedures and processes involved (just as is the case of this paper) is important for Saho personal name preservation.

Key Words

Semantics, Saho personal names naming trends, social-cultural, mid-wife and Islam-Islamic

1.0   Introduction

Saho is one of the nine ethnic groups and one of the four Cushitic (Saho, Afar, Bidhawet and Bilen) languages spoken in Eritrea. Of these four ethnic groups, Afar is the most culturally, linguistically and geographically related to Saho. Saho commands up to twenty clans that linguistically coalesce into three dialects. These clans define clan specific personal names although some personal names are shared amongst or across clans. The clans include Irob,

Baradotta, Galle Giya, Samhar, Asa Bora, Dabri Meela, Hado, Sheika and Salmunta. Others are Asawurta, Idda, Kabota, Naafeea, Sanafe, Gadafur, Hasabat Are, Saatot, Ginni Kara, Taru'a and Minifre. People whose fathers are from the same patrilineal clans mostly bear the same family names.

Generally names and naming trends fall under the domain of Onomastics in linguistics. Onomastics is the scientific study of names. Personal names that fall under a branch of Onomastics are called anthroponomy. Saho personal names convey social, religious, circumstantial, honorific, cross-seasonal, trans-dialectal, ancestral (genealogical), anthropological, tribal, ethnic, normative, formative, denotative and connotative meanings.

Saho naming process is a well-planned, deliberate and conscious ceremony. For Saho, an individual's name is an important socio-cultural memory, of significant value, an identity marker, and a great possession that's guarded religiously. Simply put, a name is a source of pride. Often, names of newly born signify issues such as time of the day, weekday, activity, gender, parental religious beliefs, daily events, ceremonies, weather, seasons, sub-clan, honor, and bodily defects. Categorizing names under such fields is of the prime importance in the analysis of socio-cultural meanings of Saho personal names.

Saho personal names have a voice and they speak loud and clear. Naming often at times defines both the in-group and out-group identities and boundaries across the Saho dialects hence making personal names of greater significance. As is captured in the data below, such Saho personal names define the clan and sub-clan boundaries. These clans speak different dialects of Saho language. So when native Saho speakers comes across certain names, they immediately place or categories them within certain dialectal boundaries. This in itself can be a source of group identity and solidarity on one side and convergence and divergence on the other. Such socio-cultural meanings are negotiated and agreed upon at thesociety level hence acting as 'an institutional memories that enunciate natural and man-made phenomena (Malande, 2011).

Child naming and the Saho naming practice are culturally dictated exercises that often involve a team of distinguished Sahos. Those who play a leading role in child naming ceremonies include the midwives, elders and distinguished Saho members. Traditionally speaking, the Saho baby naming ceremony was not a rushed one day event but rather a time consuming and a well-thought of activity. At the heart of the child naming ceremony laid the Saho traditional midwives. Saho midwives were selected from a pool of experienced and

culturally knowledgeable women. They would define the family lineage and pick personal names agreeable to a newly born's family lineage granted 'African names are generally not predictable, for until the child is born and under what circumstances it is born, the name cannot be determined with accuracy' (Batoma, 2009). To arrive at a child's personal name, the Saho traditional midwife would consider kinship, circumstance at child birth and religion.

Owing to rapid globalization, parental naming trends are changing resulting into a sudden loss of interest in some native Saho names which are viewed as conservative, primitive and too local. The Saho naming culture has been immersed into global intercultural share of value systems. The Saho have borrowed names of global icons such as Gaddafi, Osama, Rihanna, and Zenedine Zidane. In so doing, Saho modern parents are at anthroponomical war with their language. Death of native names implies the death of important identity markers. These native names have deep cultural and contextual meaning which can act as a tool for maintenance of the Saho societal identity and history.

2.0   Reviewed Literature, Theory and Methodology of the study

This paper reviewed and adopted a name analysis framework from several onomasiological and anthropological linguists' writings that have generated a lot of data on naming patterns and name meanings. Of prime importance were the onomastics works on African languages as espoused in local or native-African languages. Such studies by Guma (2001), Légere (2004 & 2008), Agyekum (2006), Batoma (2009) and Malande (2006, 2011) have looked at the semantics of people, plant and place names. They largely examined Eastern, Western and Southern Africa Bantu naming cultures. This study goes beyond the Bantu by venturing into the Cushitic-semeticlanguage groups in the horn of Africa. Notably, The current study introduces 'the midwife factor' in naming ceremonies-a concept alien in previous studies in Africa. Bright (2003) defines Onomastics as the study of proper names that has been of concern to many branches of scholarship, including philosophy and history. He applied the viewpoints of anthropological linguistics, to study personal names and place names among North American Indians. He raised questions as to whether terms which embody a description can be considered proper names. Grammatical peculiarities of place names were also considered, and examples were given from Karuk (California), Greek (Oklahoma) and Nahuatl (Mexico). However, when one reads his discussion of place name origins, one finds the persistent bit of folklore that the

meaning of words is, on some essential level, to be found in their histories, rather than in their use. This missing socio-functional component of naming is aptly examined and covered in this paper. Bussmann (1996) defines Onomastics as the scientific investigation of the origin, the meaning, and geographical distribution of names. He looks at the Onamastics' sub-disciplines such as Anthroponymy (study of personal names), Hydronymy (study of names of bodies of water) and Typonymy (study of geographical place-names). These are among the oldest and most transparent linguistic forms, that are an important source of hypothesis about the history of language, dialect, geography and language families. He looks at names as a semantically defined class of nouns that unequivocally identify objects and states of affairs within a given context. However, he leaves it open to debate on whether proper names have meaning and how they differ from generic names and (definite) descriptions. While this research agrees in principle with his views on categorizing nouns dependent on use-context, it goes further to explain how such nouns-like Saho names may be structurally manipulated to achieve cultural objectives such as kinship objectives.

Malande (2011) observes that names have got meanings that can be studied both denotatively and connotatively and that some names have positive and or negative attributes. He further presents a sense relation framework amongst some personal names. Malande credits several factors for name formation namely: history, human or made activities, natural occurrences-seasons, and Morpho-semantics (the interplay between Semantics and Morphology). He posits that morphology builds the personal name on which semantics confers a socially negotiated meaning. Such name formation processes aren't deliberate since most names are passed-on from one generation to another. His study exercised The Generative Morphology and Semiotics theories in name formation. Malande (2006) proposed further research on non-agglutinative names and in cases where name formation is done without considering genealogies/inheritance. Whereas Malande looked at semantics of Luloogoli (Bantu) personal names, this research studied Saho (Cushitic) personal names from both a semantic and socio-cultural perspectives.

Semiotics Theory as espoused by Martin & Ringham guided us through this study. According to Martin & Ringham (2000:1-13), as a literary theory, semiotics has increasingly gained ground in the last two or three decades of the twentieth century. Yet while theoretical research into the discipline has advanced – particularly in France - to many the very term

'semiotics' has remained a riddle and thus its demand controlled. The term semiotics is derived from the Greek word semeton denoting 'sign'. Already in the seventeenth century, the philosopher John Locke referred to semtottfea, which he defined as 'the Doctrine of Signs; the business whereof, is to consider the Nature of Signs, the Mind makes use of for the understanding of Things, or conveying its knowledge to others'. In modern usage the concept semiotics refers to a theory of signification. There are different branches of semiotics under this heading. There is an American branch, for instance, strongly influenced by C. S. Peirce, which focuses on logic and meaning and has become central in linguistics linked to philosophy. Much of Peirce's work is devoted to the development of sign categories such as making a distinction between icon, index and symbol. This approach differs considerably from European semiotics, represented by the Paris School (Ecole de Paris) founded by A. J. Greimas. The Paris School is concerned primarily with the relationship between signs, and with the manner in which they produce meaning within a given text or discourse. Importance is attached not only to the elaboration of theories but also to their application as methodological tools for textual analysis. Compared to Peirce, the Paris School thus takes a more wide-reaching approach and, in the final analysis, is of greater practical use. Semiotics according to the Paris School posits the existence of universal structures that trigger and give rise to meaning. These structures are susceptible to representation in the shape of models which - conversely - can also be applied to any signifying object to decode and interpret its effects of meaning. Being concerned with structures, however, does not mean that semiotics is synonymous with structuralism, a theory concerned solely with the perception and description of structures. Neither is it simply a sign system; it should not be confused with semiology. Nor is it confined to the theories of Roland Barthes. Semiotics, in fact, has a much wider aim: the theory purports to explore the generation of signification, any signification, not only that of the written word, meaning in all its guises and to its full extent. Semiotics thus covers all disciplines and signifying systems as well as social practices and signifying procedures. Saho names are therefore studied as signs that signify and or stand for something else. Such signs-names have meanings that are highlighted in this paper.

Data on Saho personal names were generated from the field from two sources: The use of documentary review such as pupils school attendance registers, questionnaires and personal interviews of Key informants amongst the Saho. Data analysis was done using both the qualitative and quantitative data analysis procedures. The researchers identified the main themes,

assigned codes to them (those main themes) under semantic fields, then went ahead to clarify responses under such main themes and integrated those themes and responses into the text of the paper.

3.0 The Traditional Midwife and the Saho Child Naming Ceremony

Like in all African societies, a child would be seen as the surest way of lineage extension. Pregnancy was therefore not only celebrated with bated breath but also carefully handled to necessitate safe delivery of the newest member of the family tree. In ancient times, when there were no maternity hospitals and clinics like there are today, some experienced, courageous and knowledgeable women were appointed to help the child delivery processes. These courageous and experienced women were unique and well-known amongst the Saho community and were called *Umlat ina* (midwives). As soon as a pregnant woman entered her sixth or seventh month of pregnancy, the wisdom and guidance of *Umlat ina* was sort. Either her mother or her husband had the sole responsibility of choosing the best available midwife to attend to the expectant woman. *Umlat ina* would live in pregnant woman's house and look after her until her delivery. *Umlat ina* would talk to the expectant mother at the level of girlfriend; treating her kindly and with compassions eventually developing the strong bond of love and harmony. With this in place, all matters would be discussed without suspicion and secrecy. This made it practically easy for the fetus to be given the best prenatal care.

In the meantime the midwife would prepare herself and collect tools and equipment that would help her during the delivery process. When the time was up for the baby to be delivered, the midwife would use her experience and courage to make sure that the mother and the new born baby were safe and in perfect health. Once the child was safely delivered, several events would follow that would announce the gender of the new born. If it is a male child, the midwife ululates three to seven times to inform the family members, who would anxiously be waiting outside the delivery room, about the successful delivery and also the gender of the new born (baby). For a baby girl, the *Umlat ina* ululates only two times. So in Saho culture you don't need to ask about the gender or sex of the newly baby born, you just count the number of the ululations. A male child in Saho community brings pride and joy granted its patriarchal inclinations.

Next step involves the midwife naming the baby. The name is given bearing in mind the *kisho* (clan). The midwife must choose a name within 24 hours of delivery; this is largely due to fear of the death of the newly born baby without a name, which is a taboo. So, if the newly born baby dies, she or he dies with a name. If it survives later, the family decides whether to give the baby a new name or to stick to the name chosen by the midwife. As the child grows-up, it respects the midwife and calls her senior mother.

Amongst the Saho, baby naming is a big ceremony punctuated with heavy feasting. This naming ceremony (*Qhamse*) is done from between the seventh day of the child's birth up to a month. The father of the baby invites people from both maternal and paternal families, neighbors and close friends to the ceremony or feast. The father slaughters one goat for a baby girl and two goats for a baby boy largely borrowing from the Islamic culture-a majority of Saho are practicing muslims. After feasting, the father welcomes and thanks the guests and informs them about the sex of the baby and the name that was given by the midwife. Later on, the father gives chance to the elders to discuss and decide whether to stick to that name or choose a new one. In the deciding the baby's name, both baby's maternal and paternal families play an equal role. If the newly born baby is a boy the decision goes to his male relatives from both his maternal and paternal (such as grandfather and uncle) and if it is a girl the decision goes to her female relatives (such as grandmother and aunt). It should be noted that the place where an expectant mother delivers from also plays an important role in the naming of the child. In Saho culture, a woman delivers for the first time (*rishsho*) at her mother's house, hence the baby's maternal side plays a significant role in baby naming. But after her first delivery, the subsequent deliveries are within her husband's family granting them a bigger role in the choice of a child's name. Admittedly, the child's name is heard for the first time in a naming ceremony whether it was given by midwife or elders. Thus a child's name is only known at the naming ceremony.

4.0   Semantics and Cultural aspects of Saho personal names

This section deals with the semantics and cultural aspects of Saho personal names. The Saho personal names have been grouped under semantic fields whereby similar names fall under similar categories.

4.1   Names borrowed from Islamic religion

A majority of Saho practice Islamic religion. Either they borrow and use these religious names as they are or nativise them by adding some suffixes mostly with a view of fulfilling their religious ambitions and desires. A well-established Islamic tradition, as noted in the holly Qur'an, enumerates 99 names of Allah (God), each representing a certain attribute or description of God. Names such as AR-RAHMAN and AR-RAHIM are most frequently mentioned in the Qur'an, both meaning the "most merciful", but with varying degree of emphasis in meaning. Under this semantic field there are two categories:

4.1.1   Islamic religious names with denotation of the day a child is born

The Saho select a child's name depending on the day it is born. Days are believed to carry or convey unique properties that may define fate, future, behavior and deity of an individual. Importantly, days carry tags and designations which Saho believe are inherited and or uniquely acquired by such people. Except in few cases, this day-specific names are retained and not tampered/interfered with. For example, a male child who is born on Monday acquires either the name Mohamed (Hammad, Mahammad) as a whole name or prefixed such as Hammadcali, HammadCumar, HammadSaalix and HammadCusban. A female born on Monday acquires either the name Fathuma as the whole name or prefixed such as FaathumaZahra, FaathumaSitti, FaathumaSaaliha, and SacaadaShaama.

This is due to an Islamic religious tradition that Allah's messenger of peace-prophet Mohammed (Mohammad) died on Monday; making this day (Monday) honorable and divine. There is another superstitious belief that if a parent gives the prophet's name to his four children either as the whole name or with an affix, then at the koranic stipulated Day of Judgment, the parent, to some extent will be freed from the guilty conscience. Thus, a Monday-born person is supposed to be peaceful and calm, and that is why the name Mohammed (Mohammad) is frequently used in every Islam and likewise in Saho community. While a Friday born is a khothba (united, come together) and a Thursday born is given any name, because there is a saying that many religious followers were born on Thursday. A Wednesday born is considered was brave and a great warrior, and naturally people afraid from him/her. See Table 1 below showing religious names that relate to days:

Day		M	Mahammad, HammadCali, HammadNasir, HammadSaalih .etc.
Monday	Sani	F	Momina, Faatuma, FathumaZahra, FaathumaSaaliha..etc.
		M	Saalih, Sacad, Sacid.Sulthaana, Ahmad

Tuesday	Salus	F	Sacaada, Siciida, Ciisha, Sacdiya
Wednesday	Rabuc	M	Abrahim, Abobakar, Abdulqaadir,
		F	Raadiya, Raxma, Haliima
Thursday	Hamus	M	All Islamic male names can fit here.
		F	All Islamic female names can fit here.
Friday	Jumcat	M	Jaamic, Adam
		F	Jumca, Haawa
Saturday	C/Sambat	M	Seleeman, Moosa
		F	Haalima
Sunday	N/Sambat	M	-
		F	Kadiiga,

Table 1: shows Religious names that relate to days

Some Saho name givers do manipulate the naming system by overlooking the day a child is born and opting for a family lineage name that relates to a significant person. In such cases, a child's name may only be altered for another in a situation where the person the child is being named after was born on a different day. For example, if a person wants to name their son after his grandfather called Ibrahim (means one born on Sunday), then the child is delivered or born on Friday (Jaamic) to keep the family lineage the son's name changes to Ibrahim disregarding day of birth name- Jaamic.

4.1.2 Suffixation of religious names

These are personal names which are crafted by adding a morpheme-suffix "religion" (*din, dini*) at the base of some religious names believing in so doing the child is sacra-religious, zealous and a devotee. For example *dini* is appended to male names such as *Alidini*, *Hummadini*, *Omardini*, and *Hammadini*. It is also suffixed in names such as *Fatumadini* and *Halimadini*. Moreover, when the Saho call each other's name they usually suffix letter "o" at the base of their names. Personal names such as Cusman, Cumar, and Ahmad become Cusmano, Cumaro and Ahmad. Once these names are modified in Saho culture they become part of peculiar Saho cultural names which enable to identify or differentiate the Saho community from other Islamic societies.

4.2.0 Saho Native or Indigenous personal names

These names cover a broad area that carries Saho specific name denotative and derivatives. These names include: family lineage names (*waladot migoc*), incidental names, aspiration and wish names, designation and label names, Teknonym (names which describe physical appearance and defects) and pet and praise names. Family names define an individual within the

confines of a tribal nomenclature with the family at the base and tribe or ethnic group at the top. Like many African and middle Eastern names, Saho personal names are the ointment that links the wheels of family to ancestors on one hand and to sub clans to clans/tribes (ethnic group) on the other thus forming a social construct. Within the above social construct, matters of language-specifically Dialectology-sets a footprint. Saho commands up to twenty clans that use three dialects of Saho language. These clans define clan specific names. The clans include Irob, Baradotta, Galle Giya, Samhar, Asa Bora, Dabri Meela, Hado, Sheika, Salmunta, Asawurta, Idda, Kabota, Naafeea, Sanafe, Gadafur, Hasabat Are, Saatot, Ginni Kara, Taru'a, and Minifre.

4.2.1   Gendered Saho Native or Indigenous personal names

Each of these clans has their peculiar names, although some personal names do often overlap. Notably, Saho personal names are gendered thus realizing specific names for both male and female. Within a certain family lineage, it is possible to have a male personal name with a corresponding female personal name just by attaching a feminine suffix "a" as is the case for dhictoli (Male) and Dhiica (Female). Additionally, certain Saho personal names Hammaddini (M) and Fathumadini (F) have the same morphological form (suffix –dini) for both male and female. Clan specific names are captured in the table below:

S/N	Clan Names	Example of family names
1	Assorta	Urduwa(M), Undhuwa(M), Hammadzen(M) Calishum(M), Cayyana(M), Leelish(M), Shaasho(F)
2	Gaso	Gacas(M)
3	Dabrimeela	Filla araaish(M), Dabra (F)
4	Hazo	Cakka(M), Hakaba(M), Calaawi(M)
5	Taru'a	Gallidhic(M), (Haysama), Roble(F), Adeela(F), Emel(F), (Sarromece)

Table 2 shows some Saho (native) personal names against their patrilineal clans.

Family lineage personal names act as a feature identity markers for dialectal differences among the Saho. In fact, family names may tell us which of the three Saho dialects a person belongs. For example, personal names such as Baroli (M), Leelish (M), Emel (F), Macaaro (F), Ayyana (M), Dhctole (M), and Galledhic (M), exclusively belong to Northern Saho dialect which is spoken by Taru'a and the Asuworta. Secondly, personal names such as Neena (M), Damanna (M), Sonabara (M), Iyyicilo (F), Fillacaarish (F), and Cadooni (M), point to the

Central Saho dialect that is spoken by DabriMeela and Minifre. Thirdly, personal names such as Cakka (M), Suba (M), Hagayta (M), Akado (F), Kayyu (M), and Summe (M), indicate the Southern dialect which is spoken by Irob and Hazo. Fourthly, Saho personal names may indicate a person's geographical origin. A personal name such as Dammana, has roots in Senafe town.

4.3.0   Incidental Names

These are names based on the circumstances surrounding the birth of a child. They may relate to the period, time, festivals or sacred days, manner of birth, and death of children as soon as they born. Within this semantic field we have names relating to the time of birth, manner of birth, death prevention and survival names.

4.3.1   Names pointing to significant occurrences at birth

Days are not 'just mere days' amongst the Saho. Dates and days convey or carry meanings especially when punctuated by significant events. The period of birth may relate to the most important and the greatest Islamic religious festivals such as Eid al-Fitr and Eid al-Adha. During these festivals Saho people feel happy by visiting each other's house and apologize one to another, and pacify-appease the God and ask for forgiveness, good health, prosperity and peace for their life. The child born during this time is given a name which in turn can describe the meaning and religious message of these festivals. For example, a male child born during the time of Eid al –Fatr is given the name HammadCiid and a female child born is given a name Ciidiya.

And a male child born during the time of Eid al –Adha is given a name Hajji and a female child is given a name Hajjiya. Similarly a male child born during the month of Ramadan is given a name Ramadan (fast), and a female child is given a name Siyaama (fast). Another important thing is that some children get their names from the name of Independence Day. For instance, a male baby born during the Independence Day anniversary is named Amaan (peace) and Hurriya (peace) for females.

Moreover, a male child born during the period where the family of the child is in economic boom or prosperity is given names such as Gaddaali (wealth), Feere (surpass), Haali (lucky) while females are called Raka (plenty-of), Gaddo (wealth), Raaha (enjoyable) and Rihiisa (satisfaction). Children born at times of household triumph or achievement are named Nasre (victory) for males and Nasrele (victory) for females.

Children born when families are experiencing moments of joy are named Cafadish (pleased), Ayfarax (blissful) for sons and Cadooni (lovely) and Farhe (happy) for daughters. Children born during the heavy rains or rainy seasons are named Cadeela (rainfall), Emel (the morning rainfall), and Roble (rain) for a female child. Rain is considered a source of divine blessings amongst the Saho.

Saho also have names that signify natural and unnatural situations obtaining when a child is born. Calamities and obstacles such as privation, destitution, adversity, misery, wanton need, paucity, dearth, and period of bereavements, are named Maahisho (change-from darkness to light) for a male child and Maaha (change-from darkness to light) for a female child. These names are usually a spiritual pronouncement to the deity to change things for the better. This kind of naming imputes the spiritual-superstitious nature of Saho personal names.

4.3.2 Names connoting prenatal, postnatal periods and state of pregnancy

Such names include personal names for twins; Saalih gango is a name for a male twin while Saaliha gango for a female twins. Calaawi (meaning one who stayed too long) denotes a name for a state of pregnancy that lasted for more than ten months. Barhabe (meaning come before appropriate time) is given to a child who is born through a pregnancy that lasts less than nine months. This name is unisex Dhiica (stop or enough) denotes a situation whereby a mother has delivered female children consecutively and there is a desire for males. Dhiica thereby stands as a request to the deity to stop the sequence and give her males. Children are considered to be spiritual gifts from gods by the Saho.

4.3.3   Death Prevention and Survival Names

Generally death is revered and it isn't considered a natural event. Basically no death is natural within the Saho community thus it (death) is held in superstition. Therefore, series of names that connote this mystery abounds in Saho vocabulary where they either represent loss or experience. Coinage, borrowing and conversion as name formation processes come in to play. Parents may name their children with strange or bizarre names (*ilaacan migoc*) and keep it out of sight of strangers or known witches. Names that are coined or borrowed are usually antonyms (of opposite meanings) or names denoting qualities and characters of animals and birds. Such names include Lacane (eagle), shared names like Gabre (achiever), Hagos (cheerful) and Garba (belly).

Such names are believed to shield children from an evil eye of strangers and witches that would otherwise cast an evil spell on the baby.

4.3.4 Aspiration and wish names (farhi kee niyat migoc)

Naming is not only a social-cultural duty but also a spiritual appeal-connection with the gods of nature and ancestors by asking them to intervene and grant petitions. Since names are meaningful and can affect character and fortune, the Saho choose names with aspirations and wish for success. For example, names such as Maaha (harbinger), Cadeela (rain water), Hanle (milk), Dahabi (golden), are given to a female child. It is believed that such names are an appeal to gods and ancestors.

4.3.5 Designation and label names (*Hishmat migoc*)

Age, kin terms and names associated with marriage (Teknonyms) are revered and constitute a sizeable number of Saho naming vocabulary. Amongst the Saho, it is wrong to address 'people of honor' with their names-rather culturally sensitive terminologies are applied. Examples:

'Yiballo' is an address for father in law

'yiballo' to address one's mother in law

'yimacattak' to address her brother in law

'yimaarhan' to address her sister in law

'yizama' to address his brother in law

'yizamay' to address his sister in law.

'Yihalaale' for 'groom' and yimalamma (bride) are names for newlyweds.

When children are born, they address each other by the name of their first born son. Like Hammad- ina means mother of mohammad and Ab -mahammad means father of mahammad. In the event that they don't get children, they refer to each other by their fathers names. If her father in-law is called Ibrahim; then she calls him ab-Ibrahim. If his father in-law is Ali, then he calls her Ali-tina. For Saho, it is a taboo for couples to refer to each other by their personal name.

Age is also governed by custom which in turn is reflected in naming. The young are obliged to honor and respect their elder and parents. For example Ina (*wayna*) is a title for mother while Abba represents a father. Ayya plus (+) his name are used for an elder brother whereas Add + name are used for an elder sister as in AyaIbrahim (elder brother) and

Addyasmin (elder sister). Children address elders or people older than them using kin terms + the personal name, for example:

Anna + _____ (personal name), for a female from either family

Abba +_____ (personal name), used for males from patrilineal side

Abo + _____ (personal name), for males from maternal side

Ingot + _____ (personal name), used for a very old female from either family

However this rule doesn't apply while addressing first aunties, uncles, grandmothers and grandfathers.

Likewise, people with kindness, big heartedness, bounty, power, authority, wisdom, awareness and knowledge are respected and honored greatly among the Saho. They are greeted with honorific names such as:

Oonat (hero) +_____ (personal name)

Shum (leader) + _____ (personal name)

Sheikh (sacri-religious person) + _____ (personal name)

Hajji (a person who visits Mecca) + _____ (personal name)

4.3.6 Praise or Pet Names (Hinqhaaqet hido hanaawit migoc)

The use of pet names or praise names is a common practiced phenomenon in Saho. Usually praise names are given to Saho females because such names are culturally loaded with meanings connoting beauty, grace and admiration; names for boys denote character in strength such as strong, firm or conquest. Examples of pet names for females include: Luuli (diamond), Aleela (higher and above anything), Dahabi (made of gold), Akadi (plenty of), Dooro (the best of the very best), and Macaani (Goodness). For example, Macaani is a praise name given for a girl to express her good reputation and righteous deeds. Dooro is a praise name given to express that she is the very chosen and she is the best of the best. Akadi is given to express both economic and material possession.

4.3.7 Names that describe physical appearances and bodily defects (karimti ziyadnan kee naquse yashrihe migoc)

The physical body structure and complexion of a person can also act as a basis for naming newly borns with a suffix being attached to main name. Mostly, these names are used in informal

communication. For example, Baroli is a name given to both sexes based on the birth marker found on the children's' body. The name Baroli is unisex and can be used as a suffix HalimaBaroli, for females and AhmadBarol for males. The name Liixo is also given to children of both sexes who have 'the sixth finger' connected. Other examples include Gura (left handed), Haysama (a long-soft haired), Gaafu (missing teeth), Shariifo (tooth gab), and Thaahir (when a child is born with penis as if it is circumcised). Such names are given to children as soon as these bodily features appear.

4.4   Lexical loading in Saho personal names

The names Cafadish (M) and Heden (F) in Saho community are given to individuals as a way of expressing happiness, pleasure, and gladness or joyous situation; especially if an expectant woman faces difficulties or stress complications at the time of delivery. Furthermore, if a couple is divorced or separated then after some time are reconciled through a family intervention or mediation, the first baby born soon after the reconciliation is either named Cafadish (M) and Heden (F).

On the other hand, Cafadish and Heden as names may be bestowed on an individual born at the time of misery, crises, fear, sorrow, famine or starvation. A child delivered during such times represents joy intending to wipe away such pains and sorrows. Child birth procreation or delivery is viewed as a harbinger for joy, good economic wellbeing and comfort since Saho personal names are sacra-religious-superstitious. Notably, Cafadish or Heden is also given to newly born child to a couple that suffered bareness for a very long period in a marriage. Also, Cafadish or Xeden may be given to a child born at the same time when the family members are celebrating a kin's or friend's wedding ceremony; or generally speaking if a child is born at a time when a family is enjoying moments of joy and happiness.

5.0   Conclusion

The choice of a name for a newly born Saho child is often determined by meaning and socio-cultural issues including but not limited to a child's lineage, the day it is born, the circumstances at birth and the bodily defects. Categorizing names under such fields is of the prime importance in the analysis of socio-cultural meanings of Saho personal names. Saho personal names and the naming trends constitute a tradition steeped in complex social-cultural dynamics i.e. naming and

naming trends is systematic and dictated by traditional ceremonies. Amongst the Saho not everyone can name a child since naming ceremony is a sacra-religious event. The name it is believed speaks character and has a bearing on an individual's character, future and behavior. A naming ceremony involves the elders, the mid wives and other prominent and distinguished Saho. Saho naming process is a well-planned, deliberate and conscious ceremony. For Saho, an individual's name is an important socio-cultural memory, of significant value, an identity marker, and a great possession that's guarded religiously. Simply put, a name is a source of pride.

Saho personal names aren't arbitrary symbols but do point out to an individual's ancestry-family, clan, and the in-group and out-group identities that demarcate dialectal boundaries across the Saho dialects hence making personal names of greater significance to Saho community. Saho personal names convey social, religious, circumstantial, honorific, cross-seasonal, trans-dialectal, ancestral (genealogical), anthropological, tribal, ethnic, normative, formative, denotative and connotative meanings. Therefore maintaining and preserving these processes and procedures is important for name preservation.

The meanings and social-culture enshrined in Saho personal names are negotiated and agreed upon at dialectal level and are thus held as a Saho community heritage. Such personal names do act as institutional memories that enunciate natural and man-made phenomena amongst the Saho.

Saho personal names define a name holders age, physical attributes and status. Saho personal names are also gendered. At the mention of an individual's name, one can tell their biological nomenclature (sex), age, even physical bodily attributes-defects and status (relation). This enhances the personal names place as a cultural symbol.

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