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MORPHOLOGICAL AND SEMANTIC ANALYSIS OF BIRTH ORDER IN DOGON LANGUAGE: THE CASE OF TOROSO (SANGHA)

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Résumé
Ce travail présente une analyse morphologique et sémantique des anthroponymes dogon dans le cercle de Sangha, Région de Bandiagara. Les anthroponymes sont des étiquettes qui facilitent la compréhension des réalités identitaires et socioculturelles. A ce jour, les Dogon ont tendance à abandonner la pratique traditionnelle du système d'attribution des prénoms. Cette recherche analyse l'ordre de naissance et se propose de valoriser la culture dogon et plus particulièrement de protéger les prénoms de la disparition dans la région de Bandiagara. L'étude adopte la démarche mixte. Une série d'entretiens et d'enquêtes avec les personnes âgées de Toguna in Sangha ont permis la collecte des données. Les résultats montrent qu'il existe des prénoms de série chez les dogon et que des facteurs tels que l'influence du christianisme, de l'islam et de la mondialisation entrent en jeu lors de l'attribution des noms aux enfants**.**
Mots clés : : anthroponymes, milieu dogon, onomastique, prénoms, Sangha.

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Abstract
This work presents a morphological and semantic analysis of the Dogon system of naming persons in the municipality of Sangha in the Region of Bandiagara. Names are the labels which help in the understanding of the bearer's identity and sociocultural realities. To date, Dogon people tend to give up the traditional practice of naming system. This research analyses the order of birth of birth and focuses on how to value the Dogon culture and specifically protect first names from disappearing in the area of Bandiagara. Utilizing a mix-method methodology, this research consisted of a series of interviews and surveys with the elderly persons at the Toguna in Sangha. The results show that birth order in the Dogon culture is serial and factors such as the influence of Christianity, Islam, and globalization come into play when naming children.
Key words : **anthroponyms, Dogonland, names, onomastics, Sangha.**

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Introduction

One of the main strengths of African society is the place that holds the first names. The interest of first names or anthroponyms is vital for everyone. Not only does a first name express our

singularity and belonging to groups of communities but also it allows us to identify ourselves and connect to social realities and events.

Research shows that anthroponymy falls under the umbrella of onomastics that deals with the study of proper names including their forms and uses (Dianka, 2020). In our cultural context, we name people order to differentiate, recognize and finally know who they are. Onomastics studies the science of proper names; its best-known areas of research are toponymy (place names) and anthroponymy (person names).

According to Houis (1963), the Dogons usually receive three names: a common name given by the patriarch, a private name given and used by the maternal family only and finally a secret name given by the priest. The knowledge of the meaning of Dogon first names gives insight into their philosophy, thought, environment, religion, language and culture. In addition, the symbolic nature of Dogon personal names and their interpretation depict Dogon religious beliefs and the interaction of the latter with foreign cultures. To this end, a name may refer to different elements of human lived experiences. Therefore, personal names are referential. Some philosophers and linguists have attempted to characterize names logically in the absence of social contexts. From this standpoint, names are only considered as arbitrary labels that refer to certain signified entries, and the signifier and the signified may not share certain intrinsic qualities. However, according to Anderson (2007, p. 276), "although early linguistic debates determined that names only denote an entity when they are inactive and don't have meaning, naming in traditional society was not haphazard". In other words, names are given to children based on some sociocultural realities. In addition, names, according to naming traditions in different cultures, carry meanings in the original form from the point of creation. The proper names which are not put in the plural forms constitute one of the commonplaces most frequently used to define the proper name, which is obviously completely false (Faivre, 2012)[1]. In addition, Liu (1996) and Van Langendonck (1983) postulates that proper names are perceived as 'rigid designators'. For these authors, proper names designate the same individuals across possible worlds. So a person can bear more than one first name. As a result of such naming systems, the Dogon people have several first names. In this ethnic group, names may be given by religious leaders as well as maternal and paternal families. Some children may also receive names through reincarnation from deceased persons. Furthermore, Dianka (2020) explains that the very important role of the proper names in the mental structure, classification of places and social identification of individuals has always aroused the curiosity of men. In this perspective, he reports the statement of Leguy (2012) in this term, "Désigner une personne par un nom est d'abord un phénomène de langage. Nommer, c'est en effet attribuer certains sons à une entité. Nommer une personne, c'est désigner vocalement cette personne[2]» (Leguy, 2012, p.51). Research by Prieur (1991) portrays the following: "*De tous les objets de langage, les noms propres sont à coup sûr ceux qui ont inspiré le plus d'intérêt, dans des domaines variés à l'extérieur de la linguistique.* Furthermore, some languages morphologically mark the difference between proper names and common names: according to Hockett (1958). But in

[1] Les noms propres ne se mettant pas aux pluriels constitue un des lieux communs les plus fréquemment utilisés pour définir le nom propre, ce qui est évidemment complètement faux.

[2]Translation mine: To designate a person by a name is first of all a phenomenon of language. Naming is actually assigning certain sounds to an entity. To name a person is to designate this person vocally.

other languages such as French and English, there is no valid morphological characterization, so we cannot generalize this rule either.

Kodio, A. et al. (2020) conducted another study on Dogon anthroponyms in three remote rural communal villages (Madougou, Barapireli and Dangaténé) in the municipality of Koro, Mopti Region. This study is an ethno-linguistic account of naming system in the tɔrɔsɔ speakers' community. The article analyzes the naming systems of the Dogon people and their underlying socio-cultural functions and provides an insight into the classification and circumstances characterizing Dogon personal names. A sample of 50 elderly key informants (30 men and 20 women) was purposively selected as participants. The. study was supplemented by the researchers' introspection as some of them were natives of the investigation area. They gathered data through focus group discussions, interviews and personal observation

This research focuses on the morphological and semantic analysis of the Dogon anthroponyms. It describes the Dogon anthroponymy in the Region of Bandiagra. Specifically, this research focused on how to value the Dogon culture and specifically protect first names from disappearing in the area of Bandiagara. The specific objectives that this research aims to achieve are the following:

1. To identify and analyze the typologies of birth order and describe the Dogon anthroponyms morphologically and semantically.
2. To show the importance of Birth order.

The analysis of the above stated objectives is appropriate to answer the following research questions:

1. What are the typologies of birth order and how could the Dogon anthroponyms be described morphologically and semantically?
2. What is the importance of birth order?

To attain the above stated objectives and provide answers to the formulated research questions, the paper is divided into two major sections. The first one presents and describes the methodology of the study and the last section which is section II presents and discusses the findings of the study.

I. Methodology

This section provides information about the methodological approach adopted in the investigation of this research**.**

1.1. Research Design: Qualitative approach

A research design is a mapping strategy. It is essentially a statement of the object of the inquiry and the strategies for collecting the evidences, analyzing the evidences and reporting the findings (Singh, 2006, p.77).

This study employs a qualitative method research approach (Gay and Airasian, 2003). Documents, registers from schools and hospitals were used to gather data; and the researcher's personal experience was used to complement the data.

1.2.Justification for Using Qualitative Approach

Nowadays, most researchers use qualitative method approach because it allows researchers to use a variety of tools to explore a research problem (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2011). In this study, a qualitative method was chosen in order to explore quality information about the problem under study.

1.3.Research Population and Samples

The population of this research is the 30 people who participated to the study.

We interviewed participants from the municipality of Sangha. We interviewed five elderly persons at the *Togouna* in *Sangha Ogoley*, five women leaders in *Sangha Da* and five young people or two girls and three boys in *Sangha Bongo.*

These participants were selected on the basis of their professional experience. The intended purpose was to collect the research informants' perceptions about the practice of Dogon anthroponyms. The interviews were conducted in French.

1.4.Data Analysis Methods and Interpretation

These data collected qualitatively were treated and analyzed in French then translated into English. The data were analyzed by using words and content analysis. The researcher transcribed the data in French and then translated into English for analysis. Then, the data gathered from the various tools were combined interactively to analyze and interpret the research on the morphology and semantics of the Dogon birth order names.

The reporting of data involved an elucidation of the findings, answering research questions, and making sense of the data described. The researcher adopted a triangulation of qualitative research tools was used to help increase the accuracy of the findings.

II. Results and Discussion

Further to the data collected from the various sources including documents on onomastics, anthroponymy and anthroponomastics that pertained to uncovering practices of naming systems, registers from schools and hospitals that included the first names of school children or patients, interviews with elderly persons, women leaders, and young people at the *Togouna* in Sangha, accurate information about the birth order in the Dogon's anthroponymy was provided. In the table below, the Dogon's first names are given according to birth order. Also, the table presents its morphological structure and semantic interpretation.

Table 1: Typology of first names according to birth order

Nbr	Fist Names	Morphology		Semantic Interpretations
		Morphemes	**Nbr**	**Contextual Meaning**
1.	*Ato*	A (masculine gender) to (seed)	2	*Ato* means "first child born seed man." Hope of the family.
2.	*Atime*	A (masculine gender) time (superposed)	2	*Atime* " second child born" superposition; he increase
3.	*Atanou*	A(masculine gender) tanu (three)	2	*Atanu* "the third born"
4.	*Anay*	A(masculine gender) Nay (fourth)	2	*Anai "*the fourth born"
5.	*Anu*	A(masculine gender) Nu (fith)	2	*Anu "*the fifth born"
6.	*Aperu*	A (masculine gender) peru (ten)	2	*Aperu "*ten born child"
7	*Assigué*	A (masculine gender) sigue (eleven ,rest, better)	2	*Asigue "*the eleven child born"
.8	*Aley*	*A* (masculine) *ley* (twelve)	2	*Aley* (twelve child born)

The table above presents birth order in the Dogon culture. A birth order denotes the rank of the child in the family. The rank of birth counts a lot for rights and duties in the Dogon society. So children born of the same mother know their rank. This rank appears in the names. It can be changed by the birth of a girl after several boys or by that of a boy after several girls and also by a birth occurred in exceptional conditions. As indicated in the table above, the typologies of birth order first names include the following: Atɔ, Atimɛ, Atanu, Anay, Anu,, Apɛru, Asigɛ,

and Aley. The birth of the first child in the Dogon family usually happens in the maternal family. This is why the placenta of the first child is always buried in the maternal home. Thus, this practice is indented to powerfully unite the child to the maternal home. The bonds between the father's family and the mother's one are preserved through the burying of placenta. This is why the first children stay in the maternal family until a certain age. And, traditionally, in the Dogon community, elderly persons taught us that a mother never rejects his children.

In the Dogon society, birth order plays an important role in the family. The youngest must respect the elder brothers or sisters. The term *Didé* is used to address elder brother and the term *dida* is used for elder sister. It is impolite for siblings to address their brother or sister by their names. The same is true for any children to call any older person in the community by their name. The use of *Dide* or *dida* is a requirement.

In general, Dogon first names start with the bound morpheme (*A*) for masculine and (*ya*) for feminine. For example, as the above table shows, *Ato* (first boy), *Atime* (second boy), *Atanu* (third boy) start with the initial letter */A/ Besides, Yato (first girl), Yatime* (second girl), *Yatanu* (third girl) are also examples of birth order for girls starting with the morpheme */Ya/.*

In consistence with the first research question, the data gathered from the interview with elderly persons at the *togouna*, document analysis have shown that birth order is prolific in the Dogon community. The first boy is called "Ato" and the first girl is "Yato". The second child says called "Atime" and the second girl is "Yatime". The third child " Atanu" for the boy and " yatanu" for the girl. We have The number three. The fourth " Anay" for the boy and " yanay" for the girl. We also have the number four. Fifth we have " Anu" for the boyand " yanu" for the girl. The sixth seventh eighth and ninth their first names will be by first name circumstance. On the other hand, the tenth is called " Aperu" for the boy and " Yaperu" for the girl. Eleventh " Assigue" for the boy and " yassigue" for the girl. Twelfth " Alley" for the boy and " yaley" for the girl.

Among the Dogons, a woman who does ten maternity wards has really done a lot and moreover the maximum. this is why the eleventh child is considered a plus. Certainly there are women who exceed eleven. First names in birth order stop at 12.

The order can be disturbed after two or more successive births of the same sex.

Example: After the birth of two boys, if the third is a girl, the first name " yassama" is given . Who wants to change. We had two boys but now a girl has come to change the birth order.

After the birth of two or more girls, if a boy is born, the first name " Assama" is given . Which means change.

There is also " yassamadial" which means " yassama" with medal. They say the sister of men. She is the only sister and the protected of all. She was born after several boys.

Research findings reveal that Dogon in is important. The study pointed out several reasons why anthroponyms matters to the Dogon people. They tell us who we are, so they inform us about our identity. Besides, they give us a sense of belonging to a family and a community. Anthroponyms are carriers of cultural meanings. In the family, the people who are born first are easily identified with the names they carry by order. In addition, the first name is so closely

linked to being itself that it is the last bulwark of intimacy and should only be used with great care. The study recommended that Dogon people give the traditional first names to their children. These names should be written in the official papers. It was also recommended that first names be used in textbooks and taught at school. This paper also recommends that parents in the municipality of Sangha give their children first names whose meaning they know. We know trees through their fruits, then we know human by his culture. In this case, a first name represents a cultural heritage.

Conclusion

This Article has shown that first names in the Dogon community are first and foremost a message and not simple labels on human beings. Generally, this message circulates between at least three people. Firstly, there is the emitter, the one who gives the first name; if he chooses such a first name it is to say what he thinks and expresses his point of view on a situation. Secondly, there is then the receiver, the one to whom the transmitter is addressed. The analysis made here makes it possible to understand that first names are an integral part of the Dogon way of life and social system. The findings highlight that anthroponyms represent secular links between several generations. They also constitute a connection between man and God. As such, this analysis has just opened up an important project in Dogon anthroponymy about which we cannot say everything in a sociolinguistic context. It has provided such linguistic data as first name syllabic structure. In addition, it has revealed that Dogon first names are monosyllabic, bisyllabic, trisyballic and can be used in social interactions. Each of the syllables in all Dogon first names, whether abbreviated or unabbreviated, can be stressed, and that the vowel that occurs finally in any Dogon first names that are bisyllabic can be lengthened. Sometimes a member of the family or the village but some other times someone of the hereafter (God, spirits, souls of the dead, etc). Finally, there is the support. It is the child himself who bears the first names.

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