

A Context-Based Approach to the Study of Names: Case of English Major Students of the University Of Burundi

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Abstract: This study aims at analyzing Kirundi surnames. It attempts an investigation of their meanings, origins, and role in the Burundi linguistic landscape. This study further focuses on the relationship between Kirundi surnames and the socio-cultural environment of Burundians. From a comparative perspective, the study also draws sample surnames from the Befit language in Cameroon as well as surnames from other parts of the world. The problem that was observed came from the fact Kirundi surnames, unlike those of other societies; do not identify the name bearers with their families. This issue motivated an enquiry to find out the essence of Kirundi surnames if they do not serve for family identification. The data used for this study were obtained from English major students of the University of Burundi. The simple random sampling technique was used for the data collected through the questionnaire whereas the convenience sampling technique was used for those obtained through the interview and focus group discussion. The data from the questionnaire were displayed in tables in terms of frequencies and percentages and analyzed quantitatively while those from the interview and focus group discussion were analyzed qualitatively. The study revealed the following: 1) Kirundi surnames reflect the Burundians' relationship with their socio-cultural environment; 2) Kirundi surnames portray the conditions under which the name bearers' families live with their neighbors; and 3) Kirundi surnames illustrate the Burundians' belief in God. From a close examination of the results of the study, it is noticed that the majority of the Kirundi names that were given during the traditional period depict the Burundians' close attachment to their culture whereas the majority of those that were given after the arrival of Christianity showed deep religious coloring. In the light of this investigation, it is recommended that parents should give to their children names with positive meanings.

Keywords: Case of English Major, comparative perspective, language in Cameroon.

1. GENERAL INTRODUCTION

1.1 Introduction:

This study entitled "A Context-Based Approach to the Study of Names: Case of English Major Students of the University of Burundi" seeks to investigate the link between Kirundi surnames and the socio-cultural environment of Burundi. The key term in this study is *naming* and specifically the *surnames* that are given to Burundians in particular and people in general. Naming falls in the sphere of communication. Every group of people irrespective of where they are living needs to communicate. The names that people give to their children play a preponderant role in communication. On www.diaryfrenchpua.com/english/the-importance-of-first-name-in-communication/, the importance of first names in communication is stressed. The current study, on its part, does not focus on first names but surnames. Names transmit messages. They also identify where people come from as well as their families. The bearing of names is not a Burundian affair alone but a universal issue. This view can be confirmed if we examine the point of view of Coleman and Veka (2010). They propose to people the measures to take in order to give to their babies first names and surnames from

Scandinavian countries like Norway, Sweden, and Denmark. This issue of naming is a delicate one. Consequently, parents in particular or name givers in general should not just give names at random or base on their musicality, but should take into account the cultural and semantic implications of the names and the impact that they can have on the name bearers.

Names serve as identities for people. When people are asked by the police to show their identity cards, they are expected to present papers on which their pictures and names are displayed. If you present an identification paper without a name to the police, they will not consider it as valid. Ayancho (2015: 239) discusses an aspect of naming but it is in the domain of blacksmiths. He focuses on the names that are given to some tools and products of blacksmiths in Burundi. This shows that names are not only important to human beings but also to tools as well as other species of animals, among others. Even in the domain of trade we have brand names which identify products with their manufacturers: there are, for example, marks like Adidas, Nike, Coca cola, Shell, Total, Microsoft, and Nestle. Such brand names have become so popular that products which use them as seals tend to attract many customers. Block (2009:1) also discusses this aspect of identity. He talks of the possibility of stealing a person's identity. This is what he says:

It is surprisingly easy for someone to steal your identity -all it takes is a discarded bank statement or utility to get into the wrong hands. Criminals can use your personal details to open bank accounts and get credit cards, loans, passports or driving licenses in your name.

The theft of identity that Block (op. cit.) talks about is made possible because of the person's name that is stolen and used for criminal purposes. This shows the vital role that a name plays in a person's life. As such, any person should make sure that they handle their names well.

In terms of definition, a surname is a name that is given to a person at birth. In terms of position, it appears after the first name, and that is why it is sometimes referred to as the last name. I consider the surname as a family name because it identifies or is supposed to identify the bearer with their family, for example, the *Obama*, the *Kenyatta*, the *Biya*, the *Nkurunziza*, and the *Annan* families. According to the *referencedictionary.com*, a surname is defined as "the name that a person has in common with other family members, as distinguished from a Christian name or given name". Thus, a surname identifies a person with a particular family. This implies that in a family of nine, each of the children takes up the family surname and adds a first name which is specific to him or her. Let us illustrate this with the Jackson family in the United States of America which is famous for popular music. Each of the nine children bear the surname, Jackson, to which is attached their first name; thus, we have in order of age seniority, Jackie Jackson, Tito Jackson, Jermaine Jackson, Marlon Jackson, Randy Jackson, Michael Jackson, Rebbie Jackson, La Toya Jackson, and Janet Jackson (https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jackson_family).

Naming is an aspect of language. Language is a tool or an instrument of human interaction (exchange). Names are regularly used when any group of people uses a language. The relation between naming and language is made possible at the level of communication. When the name of a person attracts attention, it communicates a message. According to Etier (2015), the messages that names transmit go as far as providing information with respect to the name bearers' characters. This is what Etier (op. cit.) states with regards to the prominent action film actor, James Bond in Picture 1 below; "It was the character who made the names James Bond famous and unforgettable". When the names, James Bond, are mentioned, the image of action is brought to the minds of people who are used to the films of James Bond.



Source of Picture 1: Etier FC, 2015

Picture.1: James Bond

Fish (2011) emphasizes the ability of names to convey information. This is what he says, “Names communicate a lot of information, which is subject to both interpretation and misinterpretation”. He goes further to specify by saying this, “Last names convey cultural information -though that information can easily be misinterpreted by making unjustified assumptions, or distorted through stereotypes”. This precision of last names, otherwise known as surnames, is necessary because when someone is referred to by using the first name, confusion can arise in a situation in which many persons bear the same name. Let me take the case of my forename, Julius. I cannot recall the number of times that people around me make this remark, “Are you Julius Caesar or Julius Nyerere?” On the contrary, when I am addressed simply by using my surname, Ayancho; such questions pertaining to my precise identity do not crop up. The above illustrations highlight the strength of surnames in the identification of name bearers.

Names can provide information with respect to the name bearers’ former occupations. This view point is supported by Roncevic (2004) when he intimates thus, “Surnames motivated by occupation can be found all across Europe”. He specifies that such names abound in Europe; but from my view I think that occupation-motivated names are found all over the world. Everywhere in the world there are occupations that people take up. When they retire, some of them adopt names which pertain to their former jobs. In some cases, former doctors are still referred to as doctors even though they are no longer in active service. Former ministers are still referred to as “Mr. Minister”. Former professors, that is, professors emeritus, are still called professors. I also have a family experience to present here. When I was in the primary school, that is, about nine, my paternal uncle was a primary teacher. All members of our family called him, “Papa Teacher”. This appellation continued even after he retired. Now that he is death, when we want to make reference to him we still say, for example, “Papa Teacher’s son or daughter”. We notice here that the real name of our uncle is not even known by many people. At times when some people refer to him using his original name, those who know him as “Papa Teacher” are confused about who reference is made to.

This phenomenon of naming is closely associated with culture. However, this link is not without difficulties. Some of the complications that arise as a result of the relation between names and culture are brought to the limelight online on <http://www.hrd.apec.org/index.php/> as thus, “In dealing with multiple cultures, you may encounter names that you cannot even pronounce much or less spell. In some cases, you won’t have a clue which one is the first name or which is the surname”. Such a situation can be witnessed by interlocutors who come from different mono-cultural countries like Burundi and Rwanda. This is confirmed by Ammon et al (2004: 197) who state that Burundi and Rwanda are not only monolingual but also linguistically homogeneous. Linguistic homogeneity goes hand in glove with mono-culture. In a multicultural country like Cameroon, such difficulties in the pronunciation and spelling of names are experienced by Cameroonian people who interact. At times names from different parts of Cameroon which are spelt differently are erroneously pronounced in the same way. This is the case with the following pairs of names: *Ngwa* and *Ngoa*, *Che* and *Ntche*, and *Sirri* and *Swirri*. One of my Bafut surnames, *Suh*, is sometimes confused with the Chinese surname *Su*. In spite of the fact that the names, *Suh* and *Su*, are from different continents, Africa and Asia, and spelt differently, they are sometimes pronounced in the same way. This leads to confusion in the identification of the true name bearers.

When Fish (op. cit.) talks about the possibility by some people to misinterpret the information transmitted by some names, we can take a number of things into consideration: First, those who misinterpret the message conveyed by the names are certainly not of the same culture and linguistic background with the name bearer. Second, those who attempt to interpret the meaning of the name are not necessarily well grounded in the culture of the name bearer. This can be explained by the fact that the name bearer and the name interpreter may not share the same linguistic and cultural background but the interpreter has sound knowledge of the language and culture of the name bearer. I can substantiate this with myself. I am not of an English background but I am able to interpret the meaning of many English names. According to www.surnamestudies.org.uk/variance/dialects.htm, “migration is often cited as the single most important cause of surname corruption”. From my own perspective there are other reasons for the misinterpretation of names apart from that of migration; these include the following: 1) The mispronunciation of names can result in the misinterpretation of surnames. 2) The wrong spelling of surnames can be done either by people from different countries or those who are not well educated.

I earlier indicated that language is closely related to the phenomenon of names. This is possible because both naming and language fall in the sphere of communication. Linguistically speaking, Kirundi is the sole language that is spoken by all Burundian nationals. This highlights the fact that Burundi is a mono-linguistic country with Kirundi as the main local language that happens to be one of the two official languages that are operational (www.omniglot.com/writing/kirundi.php). This monolingual nature of Burundi has an impact on the way names as given to children at birth. The fact that

Kirundi is used and understood by all Burundians plays a vital role in the naming system in Burundi. Within the ranks of Burundians, the same surnames are given to children who do not have the same family links. This is because Burundi is a single linguistic community and as such the minds of its nationals are shaped according to such a linguistic background. This is in conformity with the opinion of Malmkjaer (2002: XXXV) when he posits thus, “An extreme form of the Sapir-Whorf Hypothesis claimed that the human mind could not escape from the cognitive constraints of specific linguistic systems”. The Burundians are constrained to give surnames the way they do in keeping with the norms of their society.

The naming system falls in the sphere of language in the society, that is, sociolinguistics. I can define sociolinguistics as the science which examines language as it is used by members of a particular speech community. Wardhaugh and Fuller (2015: 2) have this opinion, “Sociolinguistics is the study of our everyday lives -how language works in our casual conversations and the media we are exposed to, and the presence of societal norms, policies, and laws which address language”. This view falls in line with that of Ayancho (op. cit.241) who defines sociolinguistics as “that branch of linguistics which is easily experienced in the society”. He goes ahead to say this, “The knowledge of the language alone does not suffice; the language user needs to be conversant with the context of the language use”. This means that the inhabitants of the speech community in question use language with the strict respect of the rules that guide the smooth functioning of the activities of their society. Anyone who does not respect the rules of the society concerned is considered as a *persona non grata* and is ostracized. In such a case both nationals and foreigners residing in the community concerned have to respect these rules. We have heard of several personalities who have been sent out of their host territories because of their utterances. These rules also apply to names because people should not joke with an issue that concerns a person’s identity, that is, his reputation.

Language in collaboration with other aspects has control over the way the inhabitants take part in routine activities, among which is the naming phenomenon. This is what Mayr (2008:1) says with respect to the foregone view, “Language, power and institutions have considerable control over the shaping of our routine experiences of the world and the way we classify that world. They therefore have power to foster particular kinds of identities to suit their own purposes”. The issue of “identities” discussed above by Mayr (ibid.) is highlighted by the naming system in Burundi as it is the case in other societies. That is to say, a person’s name constitutes a major means of identifying him/herself. Immediately a person’s name is mentioned, his or her identity is disclosed. It is for this reason that any person of standing always ensures that his or her good name is not tarnished in whatsoever circumstance. In this case when a person’s name is mentioned, their wish is that it should be for an honorable cause, not what would lead to shame or disgrace.

1.2 Components of the Topic:

Before I embark on a discussion of the components of the topic under study, it is important to recall the topic. It is entitled, *A Context-Based Approach to the Study of Names: Case of English Major Students of the University of Burundi*. The topic under study constitutes the following components: context, approach, study, names, English majors, students, and University of Burundi.

Context can be examined from various perspectives. I can say that context refers to the situation of language use in terms of space and time. That is to say, context has to do with the examination of circumstances within a specific period. In the case of surnames, they are normally supposed to be given within the context of socio-cultural circumstances. According to the www.dictionary.cambridge.org, context is “the situation within which something exists or happens, and that can help explain it”. This implies that the context within which a name is given throws light on the meaning and essence of the name. The context also provides the circumstances that surround the giving of the name. From the perspective of www.businessdictionary.com, context is the “background, environment, framework, setting, or situation surrounding an event or occurrence”. The event or occurrence in question is the naming system under study. According to Plutschow (1995: 171), the naming system in Japan reflects their cultural context. He says that in the Japanese culture “People are registered by their surnames: *Miyauchi*, *Sakiyama*, *Okame*, etc; but when people moved into the village from elsewhere, they were registered by their village of origin, or by their district names”. This means that the Japanese do not give names to people at random; they take into account the context of the area in which the name bearer comes from. Plutschow (op. cit. 175) continues with respect to the context of name giving in the Japanese culture. This is what he says:

Peasants used surnames in connection with some official duties vis-à-vis the local authorities. This meant that if a villager assumed communal duties he was allowed to use a surname vis-à-vis daimyo or village authorities. Of course the use of this surname commanded respect from other villagers and enabled him to impose his authority.

The above view attests the fact that the context of naming in the Japanese culture is so important that people's names are changed in order that they fit their modified statuses: an honorable name is given to an authority. In this case the name of a person tells the people around him what his position in the society is. This is advantageous to people in authority but disadvantageous to the downtrodden in the society. Such a context can enhance the existence of discrimination in the society.

Approach is a component which can be discussed as follows: It is the method or manner of doing something. With respect to the topic under study I can say that approach is the method that is used to carry out the investigation on the naming system in Burundi. The Macmillan Dictionary defines approach as "a particular way of thinking about or dealing with something". It proposes the following as synonyms: view, mind, perspective, viewpoint, logic, school of thought, and habit of thought". As far as I am concerned, I propose the following synonyms for *approach*: method, framework, and manner. For any thorough investigation to be carried out, a specific framework has to be adopted. The framework referred to here is what I call approach. This approach gives details regarding the procedures and variables that are worthy of adoption in order that a standard research be done. An investigation which incorporates an appropriate approach comes out with reliable results which effect positive change in the domain of interest.

Study is a noun which means to find out or research in order to acquire knowledge. *Study* has as synonyms, investigation, research, and learning. It is the search for knowledge. In the case of the topic under study, *study* is the search for knowledge on the naming system in Burundi. The freedictionary.com defines study as follows: a) "The effort to acquire knowledge, as by reading, observation, or research"; b) "An act or effort made in the pursuit of knowledge"; c) "Attentive examination or analysis"; d) "A detailed examination, analysis, or experiment investigating a subject or phenomenon". From the aforementioned definitions, the one which goes thus, "A detailed examination, analysis, or experiment investigating a subject or phenomenon", fits our purpose in this study. According to the businessdictionary.com, *study* is defined as "systematic research, examination, identification, and understanding of the aspects or factors associated with an activity, event or phenomenon". This component, study, indicates that the present thesis makes a profound examination of the naming system in Burundi, a microcosm of the world at large.

A *name* is what identifies a person. According to the Wikipedia Free Encyclopedia, a name is described as thus:

A name is a word or term used for identification. Names can identify a class or category of things, or a single thing, either uniquely, or within a given context. A personal name identifies, not necessarily uniquely, a specific individual human. [...] A name can be given to a person, place, or thing; for example, parents can give their child a name or scientists can give an element a name.

From the above definition there is the word, context, which strikes my attention. The word, context, plays an important role in the study because surnames are analyzed within a specific socio-cultural background. The background under which the names are given throws light on the naming system in Burundi. The name that is given to a person can provide information with regard to the person's family or social standing. The identification of a person's status can be got from the title that is attached to a name; for example, His Excellency, Her Majesty, His Holiness, Professor, Doctor, or Barrister.

English majors refer to students who are studying in the University to obtain a diploma or a degree in English. The English majors under study are the students of the University of Burundi. The University of Burundi has two departments that train English major students: The Department of English Language and Literature of the Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences, based in the Mutanga Campus, and the English Department of the Institute for Applied Pedagogy, based in Rohero Campus. It is in the Mutanga Campus that the Central Library of the University of Burundi is located (See Picture 2 below). It is in this library that the English majors of the English Department carry out their research. According to Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia, English major is portrayed as follows:

The English major (alternatively "English concentration", "B.A. in English") is a term in the United States and a few other countries for an undergraduate university degree focused around the consumption, analysis, and production of texts in the English language. The term may also be used to describe a student who is pursuing such a degree.

Those described above constitute the main informants in the investigation under study. Even though Burundi is a Kirundi and French speaking country (www.everyculture.com/wc/), my informants have undergone training as English majors and this provides them with a solid background to respond properly to my questionnaire, interview, and interact in the focus group discussion in English.

The word, *students*, refers to those, whose profession is to learn, that is, to study. According to the freedictionary.com, a student is “one who is enrolled or attends classes at a school, college, or university”. The American Heritage Dictionary of the English Language (2011), on its part, defines a student as “a person following a course of study, as in a school, college, university, etc”. The students in this investigation are those who study in the Department of English Language and Literature of the Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences, based in the Mutanga Campus, and the English Department of the Institute for Applied Pedagogy, based in Rohero Campus. The students study more than eighty percent of their courses in English. The few other courses, which are pedagogy courses, are studied in French and Kirundi for two main reasons: first, Burundi has French and Kirundi as the two official languages that are operational in the country; second, the pedagogy courses are jointly taught to students of the English Department and those of other departments.

With respect to the component, *University of Burundi*, I can say what follow. It was created in 1964 (www.ub.edu.bi). It is made up of many faculties situated in different campuses. The English Departments of Mutanga and Rohero Campuses are located in Bujumbura, the political capital of Burundi. The Department of English Language and Literature is one of the departments of the Faculty of Arts, Letters, and Social Sciences. It was created in the 1980s (Nizonkiza, 2006).



Source: <http://bibliotheque.ub.edu.bi>

Picture.2: The Central Library of the University of Burundi, Mutanga Campus

It is in the central library in Picture 2 above that the students of the English departments of the University of Burundi carry out their research. According to Nizonkiza (ibid), the creation of the Department of English Language and Literature was an attempt by the Burundi government to reinforce the teaching of English and thus, the spread of English in Burundi. The Burundi government is leaving no stone unturned to ensure that English spreads its tentacles in the entire national territory of Burundi. I am one of the Cameroonian lecturers who have been sent from English departments in Cameroon universities to reinforce the English Department of the University of Burundi in literature and linguistics courses. This is in an inter-university cooperation accord signed between the University of Burundi and Cameroonian state universities. According to the IWACU Group, a prominent newspaper in Burundi, the Burundi parliament has adopted a law which empowers English with the status of an official language to add to the already two existing official languages, Kirundi and French, (Uwimana, 2014).

1.3 Statement of the Issue:

The name given to a person is a symbol of identification. Though a Cameroonian by birth, I have resided in Burundi for the past five years. During this period of stay in Burundi I observed, not as a passive observer but as an active one, the names given to Burundians. I considered myself an active observer because, as a linguistics lecturer at the University of Burundi, I interacted with students (who constitute my sample respondents) on daily basis. After my observation I noticed that most of the names that students bear do not have any relation with their families. Thus, my motivation to select this topic was not haphazard. My attention was attracted to this phenomenon of naming in Burundi when I just arrived in Burundi in 2010. One morning as I was doing the roll call before the start of my lectures, I realized that two students had the same name, Nduwimana. One of the students was present while the other was absent. When I asked the present student where his brother was, the rest of the class, including the student to whom my question was addressed, laughed. I was amazed at the students' reaction because I could not identify the source of the humor. When I enquired about the

reason for their laughter, they replied that the two students who had the same name did not have any family relationship. After further probe I noticed that the two students with the same name were not the only case. The problem I observed that needed to be investigated was this: If names are symbols of identification, what are the criteria that guide the giving of names in Burundi if they do not help in throwing light on the name bearer's family?

Names and specifically, surnames are supposed to serve as identification of people as individuals as well as the families to which they belong. From the point of view of Fish (op. cit.), "Last names convey cultural information". This implies that names can serve as a vehicle of cultural values. As far as Roncevic (op. cit.) is concerned, names can communicate information with respect to the bearers' former occupations. Irrespective of the fact that names play a significant role in identification, surprisingly, the use of people's names directly can be avoided in a situation which Anchimbe (2013: 199) refers to as "name escapism". Many Cameroonians in some ethnic groups are culturally prohibited to call people, especially older or unknown people, by their names. Considering all conditions constant, any name is given to a particular bearer on purpose.

This study has a number of objectives which include the following: 1) to make an inventory of the surnames of my informants and those of their parents, 2) to analyze the surnames of the English major students with the purpose of finding out the impact that the Burundi society and culture have on the choice of names, and 3) to find out why Burundians give particular names to their children. Thus, this study provides answers to the following research questions: 1) How meaningful are surnames in Burundi? 2) To what extent do surnames relate with the Burundi society and culture? 3) What role do surnames play in Burundi? 4) What role do surnames play in the world at large? As tentative answers to the above research questions we formulated the following hypotheses: 1) The majority of surnames in Burundi are meaningful; 2) Only a negligible number of surnames relate with the Burundi society and culture; 3) Surnames in Burundi portray the relationship that the name givers have with God; and 4) The role that surnames play in the world at large is immense.

1.4 Conclusion:

Names play a very significant role in any society of people. This chapter throws light on the views of some scholars about the issue of naming, specifically, surnames. These scholars provide their views on this naming issue in Burundi, other countries and continents. This chapter introduces the study by giving a bird's eye view of the work. It highlights the components of the topic, showing how they are connected to the entire work. This chapter also states the issue that is debated in the work under study. That is to say, the thesis that is discussed is expressed in this chapter. The next chapter reviews the literature that is related to this study.

2. ELEMENTS OF PROCEDURES

2.1 Introduction:

There are procedures which must be adopted in any research work in order that reliable results are obtained; the current work is not an exception. Procedures bring to mind the idea of various steps that are incorporated in an organized manner. With procedures come the methods that are used to collect and analyze the data of the study. This is what www.businessdictionary.com says about procedures, "A fixed, step-by-step sequence of activities or course of action (with definite start and end points) that must be followed in the same order to correctly perform a task". Ayiro (2012) stresses the necessity of following a specific procedure in any research endeavor. This chapter handles a number of aspects. First, the methodology is presented. That is to say, the modalities of the debate are spelt out. Second, the choice of the variables of this study is discussed. This means that there is a presentation of an overview of the ways data will be manipulated. Third, the possible outcomes of the study are portrayed. Here, there is a presentation of the hypotheses of the work under study.

2.2 Presentation of the Methodology:

The methodology in this study involved the use of a number of research instruments: a pilot study, questionnaire, interview, and a focus group discussion.

2.2.1 Data Collection Procedures:

A number of steps were followed in the collection process of the data under study. The following measures and instruments were used to collect the data of this work: pilot study, questionnaire, interview, and focus group discussion.

2.2.1.1 Pilot Study:

Pilot studies can be described as thus, “The term, *pilot studies*, refers to mini versions of a full-scale study (also called feasibility studies), as well as the specific pre-testing of a particular research instrument such as a questionnaire or interview schedule” (<http://journals.rcni>). I started with a pilot study to test my questionnaire to ascertain its feasibility. This was the initial step that I took to make sure that the questions which constituted my questionnaire were not ambiguous. This measure was taken to ensure that my respondents understood my questions. It is important to state here that we can only get reliable data if the informants understand the questions. In this pilot study I administered five copies of the questionnaire to randomly chosen informants. After collecting the questionnaire copies a day later, I realized that some questions were not properly answered while others were left blank. This made me to reformulate the ambiguous questions. The pilot study also made me to modify some of the ambiguous questions in my interview guide as well as those for the focus group discussion.

2.2.1.2 Questionnaire:

I used the questionnaire as one of my research tools for data collection. The questionnaire is a useful research instrument. It gives the researcher the means to obtain large scale data within a limited period of time. According to McLeod, S. A. (2014),

Questionnaires provide a relatively cheap, quick, and efficient way of obtaining large amounts of information from a large sample of people. Data can be collected relatively quickly because the researcher would not need to be present when the questionnaires were completed.

The questionnaire of this study was made up of closed-ended and open-ended questions. This method enabled the respondents to provide as much information as they had in stock. My use of the questionnaire was not motivated by the cost and speed aspects. I was urged by the fact that the questionnaire gave the opportunity to my respondents to answer the questions freely without any stress that usually characterizes the physical presence of the researcher. With the use of such an instrument the informant provides much information as honestly as possible. I distributed one hundred copies of the questionnaire but only seventy copies were returned.

2.2.1.3 Interview:

This interview instrument gave me the opportunity to have a face-to-face contact with my informants. The data that are obtained through interviews are analyzed qualitatively. The qualitative data are not displayed in tables because they are not numerical, and as such cannot be quantified. I interviewed twelve students who were selected using the accidental sampling technique, also known as the convenience sampling method. Convenience sampling, as the name implies, is a specific type of non-probability sampling method that relies on data collection from population members who are conveniently available to participate in the study. (www.research-methodology.net/sampling/convenience-sampling).

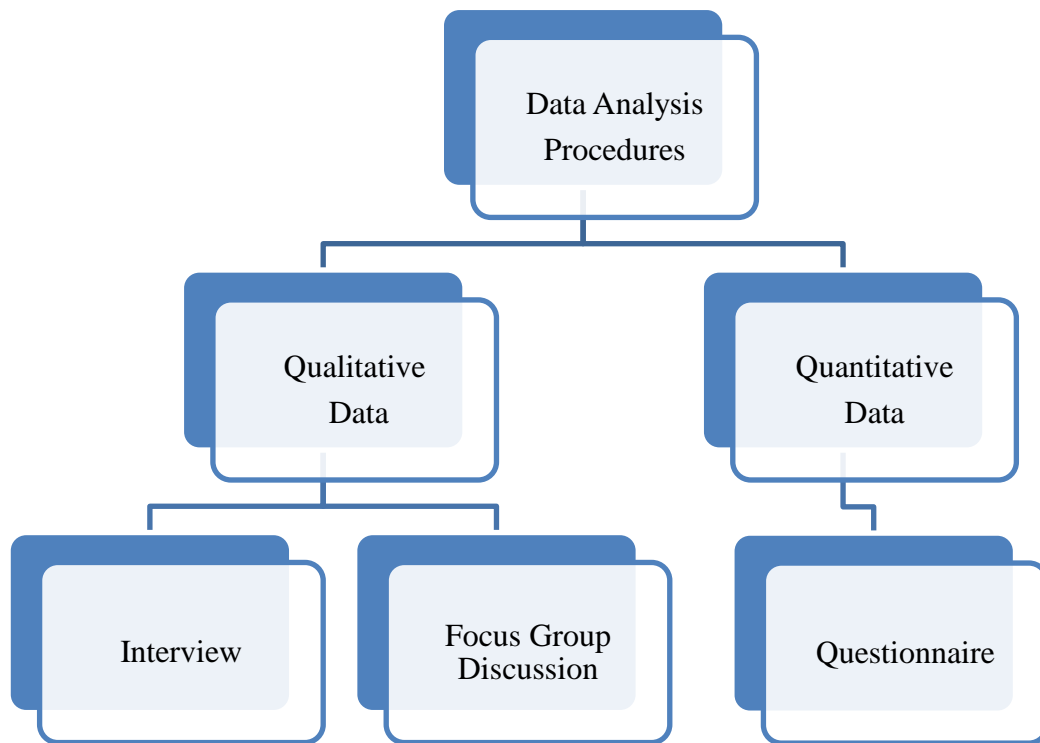
2.2.1.4 Focus Group Discussion:

Before we proceed, it is worthy to provide some information about a focus group discussion (FGD). According to Morgan (2009), “A focus group discussion is a good way to gather people from similar backgrounds or experiences to discuss a specific topic of interest [...] FGDs can be used to explore the meanings of survey findings that cannot be explained statistically”. This focus group discussion took place between me and the BAC 3 2014 / 2015 academic year students of the Department of English Language and Literature based in the Mutanga Campus of the University of Burundi. I scheduled the discussions daily from Monday to Friday for a week between 12 noon and 14:00, which is the break period for both students and lecturers. They accepted to sacrifice their recreation period for one week because I made it crystal clear to them that the findings of this research would be useful to them and to me. Our discussions centered on the following areas: the meaning of Kirundi surnames, the relation between Kirundi surnames and their culture, and the relation between Kirundi surnames and Christianity. I also asked them some of the essential questions found in the questionnaire that I addressed to their mates in the Rohero Campus. I used this method to be very sure of the reliability of the answers furnished in the questionnaire. With this method I discussed with them the meaning of the names found in the answers to the questionnaire. Furthermore, I enquired from them their views on the naming system in Kirundi.

2.2.2 Data Analysis Procedures:

According to Madhu (2005), “Data analysis procedures (DAP) help you to arrive at the data analysis. The uses of such procedures put your research project in perspective and assist you in testing the hypotheses with which you have started

your research". She goes further to state that with the use of DAP you can a) convert data into information and knowledge, and b) explore the relationship between variables. The data from the questionnaire are analyzed quantitatively in tables in terms of frequencies and percentages, and some in text form. The data from the interview and the focus group discussion are analyzed qualitatively. Diagram 1 below is a chart in which are displayed the main constituents of the data analysis procedures that we have adopted in this study. At the top we have the main box in which we find the caption, *data analysis procedures*; immediately below, on the left we have a box in which is written, *qualitative data*; at the same level on the right we have a box with the inscription, *quantitative data*. Further below in the chart we have on the left the box which contains the following: *interview* and *focus group discussion*, which are examples of research methods which can enable us to obtain qualitative data. At the same level on the right we find the box in which there is an instrument for quantitative data, that is, *the questionnaire*.



Source: Personal Initiative

Diagram.1: A Data Analysis Procedures Chart

2.3 Choice of Variables:

My variables constituted the 2014 / 2015 academic year student majors of the Mutanga and Rohero campuses of the University of Burundi, irrespective of age, sex or province of origin. For the interview, I used the convenience sampling technique, also known as the accidental sampling technique as indicated above. As far as the questionnaire was concerned, I used the stratified sampling technique, that is, 1/3 of the student population of 3rd year English majors. The students represent all the eighteen provinces of Burundi, (www.statoids.com/ubi.html). The respondents represent all strata of the society and they are able to respond to my questions in the target language of the research, English. The choice of informants who are at the same time my students encourages them to provide information which is quite reliable. I am very confident of this opinion because during my daily interactions with them on matters of names and other sociolinguistic matters, I usually observe the zeal and enthusiasm that they display to react to my questions. I usually interact with different groups of students on different occasions and the responses are the same on the same topic. This implies that the answers they give are reliable because different individuals cannot give the same wrong answer. If different respondents give different answers to the same question on a basic common issue, we will have doubts about the veracity of their responses.

2.4 Possible Outcomes:

Here, I discuss the hypotheses of this study which are tentative findings. These hypotheses are confirmed, modified or completely thwarted after the analysis of the data and interpretation of the results of this study in Chapters IV, V and VI. This study is streamlined by the following research questions: 1) How meaningful are surnames in Burundi? 2) To what extent do surnames relate with the Burundi society and culture? 3) What role do surnames play in Burundi? 4) What role do surnames play in the world at large?

The possible outcomes are the tentative answers to the above-mentioned research questions. The hypotheses are as follows: 1) The majority of surnames in Burundi are meaningful; 2) Only a negligible number of surnames relate with the Burundi society and culture; 3) Surnames in Burundi portray the relationship that the name givers have with God; and 4) The role that surnames play in the world at large is immense.

2.5 Conclusion:

This chapter treats the methodological aspects that the work under study has adopted in order to collect and analyze the data used for this investigation. It also announces the research questions that are used to streamline the investigation, thereby opening the way for the formulation of hypotheses. The next chapter makes a review of related literature.

3. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

3.1 Introduction:

This chapter handles the review of literature that is related to the work under study, that is, the sphere of surnames. Here we examine past literature as well as modern literature. We go ahead to make a comparison of both past and modern literatures in the domain of surnames. This chapter also probes into the Burundi linguistic situation. The inclusion of the linguistic situation of Burundi is deemed necessary because naming is an important aspect of language.

3.2 Past Literature Review:

In this section I discuss works that were produced before the year 2000. Here we review works to find out what they say about the Kirundi naming system.

3.2.1 African Societies and Identities:

In most African societies, surnames play a vital role in the identification of name bearers in terms of cultures. In Cameroon where there are hundreds of ethnic groups, (https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ethnic_groups_in_Cameroon). Each of these cultural entities has names which are typical to their group. For example, the Bamilekes have surnames which are specific to their ethnic group (*Ndongmo*, *Tchuenteu*, and *Talla*); the Bamouns, on their part, have names such as *Seydou*, *Njoya*, and *Mbombo*; the Betis have *Mengue*, *Mvondo*, and *Biya*; and those from Bafut give names such as *Ndonwi*, *Ngwa*, and *Suh*. These examples from Cameroon substantiate the fact that through the names that people bear we can identify their ethnic group and the region they come from. This is what Ntahombaye et al (1999:6) state with regards to African societies and identity, "Many other persons believe that the crisis within African society is basically a cultural crisis. According to them, social renewal can only be achieved through the recovery of cultural identity as a basis for development". When the scholars above talk of the recovery of the cultural identity of the African societies, they have in mind the revival of "the traditional *bashingantahe* institution" in the case of Burundi (Ntahombaye et al, op.cit, 7). The *bashingantahe* institution in Burundi comprised mature men aged at least 25, who were honest and courageous to stand as judges and custodians of the culture and peace maintenance. From my perspective, I think that surnames which are well thought out before being given to people can serve in the revival of the cultural identity of the name bearers. Ntahombaye et al (ibid: 5) talk of the transformation of African societies politically, socially, culturally, and economically since the colonial period. Their focus is on the "deterioration of the cultural values of those societies" as well as the "destabilization of their basic structures and their institutions". I share their point of view but my focus is slightly different. I believe that the giving of foreign names to bearers by Africans is a sort of neo-colonialism. When an African, for example, is named, *Johnson* or *Pierre*, for instance; where is the African identity in these names? Thus, when names do not reflect the roots of the bearers, I think that there is a serious issue of the bearers' identities.

3.2.2 Importance of a Name:

All over the world people live in permanent and keen interaction to make easy their everyday life in the society. Language is the most important tool to build a society. Thus, it is said that society is built on language. A name is built on words and language is also built on words. Language is an important instrument used to achieve smooth communication; and we can transmit messages through names. According to Adler (1978), a name is more than a word; it does several things through the community. He goes ahead to say that a name identifies someone in the society and proves his presence and existence on earth. I share the view of Adler (op.cit) because when the death of someone is announced, it is often asked “Who has died?” The one who poses this question expects an answer to be the name of the death person. Imagine that an answer such as this is given: “He has no name”. An answer like this would certainly raise eyebrows and people would consider the so-called death announcement a non-event. Baziruwisabiye (1994: 55) in her study on Kirundi animal names given to people found out that the choice of a name is neither hazardous nor gratuitous. It is a channel through which parents express themselves and send messages towards their community. I agree with her point of view here because the names that parents give to their offspring unpack their minds. If Burundi parents give animal names to their children there is a reason: they may want to deceive death or may want their children to adopt the qualities of the animal whose name is chosen. For example, the name of a lion may be given to a child if their parents want them to be brave in future. I want to stress here the fact that the giving of animal names to people is not peculiar to Burundians. Even some stars of international fame that are of diverse nationalities have been given animal names. I can cite these examples: Florence Nightingale, Tiger Woods, Larry Bird, and Dick Wolf. (www.biography.com/people/groups/people-with-animal-names).

According to Rodegem (1965), when parents give names to their children, the intention is not to give funny and bizarre names. They wish to ward off death and camouflage life so as to prevent the children from being victims as their siblings. Rodegem stresses the fact that a parent always has a reason for giving a particular name to their child irrespective of the meaning of the name. In our investigation we also came across such names in Kirundi and Bafut languages. Examples of such names are *Kabwa* and *Akoh* which mean “a small dog” and “toilet” in Kirundi and Bafut languages respectively. Rodegem’s study dwells on other profound Burundi cultural aspects but my study focuses simply on the context-based phenomena of surnames as vehicles of social values and cultures.

Bigangara (1982) asserts that a name in the traditional Burundi society was not arbitrarily imposed on the name bearer. He goes ahead to state that the naming process of a child followed a certain conception of events as well as life experiences and obeyed cultural orders. I can say here that Bigangara did his research when the Burundi society still had a solid foundation in traditional customs with respect to names. In my study I observe that parents now have a lot of freedom in matters of naming their children. Some parents even go as far as giving the names of friends and/or stars who are foreigners. Such names rather convey cultures of the bearers’ namesakes, not those of Burundi. Thus, Bigangara (ibid)’s study lays emphasis on Kirundi names based on the premise that they respect the cultural values of Burundi. The work under study posits that the naming pattern in Burundi is modified with majority names relating to God.

Ntahombaye (1983) probes the naming issue in Burundi from psychological and sociological perspectives. He posits that Kirundi names are linguistic realities since they constitute verbal messages whose signs reflect daily language use. As results, Ntahombaye (op.cit) reveals the following: Kirundi names portray ethnologic realities; they constitute an expression of cultural values; and they exhibit psycho-social realities since they reinforce the network of relations in which the individual finds themselves socially. He dwells on the psychological effects that Kirundi names have on the name bearers. His results converge on the communication of psycho-cultural realities by Kirundi names. In the work under study I also look at the cultural impact of Kirundi names, but I move ahead to look at the religious impact on names. I do not only examine the context of Kirundi surnames but I relate it with that of Cameroon which, though an African environment like Burundi, is quite different as it is immensely multi-ethnic, (Schutz: 2015, 104). I also draw examples of the nature of surnames from other continents apart from Africa. My results display the great impact that the advent of Christianity in Burundi has had on Kirundi surnames.

Lyons (1977) asserts that the basic function of words has been seen as that of naming. He, thus, makes a link between words and names in that, words serve as the raw material for names. He goes on to argue that names, as they are employed in everyday language behavior, have characteristics of being referential and vocative. The views of Lyons tie in with mine because the work under study shows how names are referential. Someone can be referred to by the mere mention of their name even when they are not present. The current study further stresses the religious impact of names in a society that faces the dichotomy of tradition versus religion in the aspect of naming.

3.3 Modern Literature Review:

In this section I review works that were produced from the year 2000 onwards. This is because this period is the 21st Century, which falls in the modern period since we are currently living in this period.

3.3.1 Burundi Linguistic Situation:

Burundi is a country in the African Great Lakes region of East Africa, bordered by Rwanda to the north, Tanzania to the east and south, and the Democratic Republic of the Congo to the west. It is considered part of central Africa. Burundi's capital is Bujumbura. The southwestern border is adjacent to Lake Tanganyika. (<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Burundi>). The official languages of Burundi are Kirundi, French, and English. Swahili is also spoken but it does not have official status. Education for deaf individuals uses *American Sign Language*, introduced by the deaf American missionary, Andrew Foster. (https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Languages_of_Burundi).

In spite of the fact that there are currently three official languages, Kirundi, French, and English, operating in Burundi, the dominance of Kirundi in the linguistic landscape is spectacular. It is not surprising that Kirundi enjoys a privilege position in Burundi. According to Moore (2012), all Burundians speak Kirundi. In all administrative places like schools, hospitals, and government ministries, Kirundi is used with a lot of eloquence and pleasure. Even in the Department of English Language and Literature of the Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences, and the English-Kirundi Department of the Institute for Applied Pedagogy, all of the University of Burundi where this study was carried out, students and lecturers at times interact in Kirundi regarding academic matters. I, a foreigner, find it very difficult to interact in some places like the market and football fields. On the bus, when I answer a telephone call in English or French, all the other passengers, including the bus conductor turn and focus their attention at me. As they look at me, they usually murmur *umunyamahanga* which means "a foreigner". I remember a day when I answered a telephone call in English on a bus in Bujumbura city. The bus almost collided with an oncoming vehicle because the bus conductor focused his attention on me, the non-Kirundi speaker. When I enter the bank or any office, those working there speak to me in Kirundi until I indicate that I do not understand Kirundi. Some non-Africans like Americans, Europeans, and Asians who have been living and working in Burundi for many years communicate with Burundians in Kirundi. Most of the foreigners, who use Kirundi eloquently when interacting with Burundians, are usually business people and missionaries. This is because such foreigners exercise their duties with the grassroots. It is important to mention here that in Bujumbura, a cosmopolitan city, we can find some Burundians who speak and understand only Kirundi. The foregone discussion portrays the pride of place that Burundians give to their mother tongue, Kirundi.

This importance attached to Kirundi by Burundians is commendable as Burundi is among the few African countries which use their local language as one of the official languages. Cameroon, for instance, where I come from, does not have this opportunity to use a local language for instruction or in official circles. This inability for Cameroonians to use a local language officially is due to the abundance of home languages which I refer to as linguistic chaos, a situation which Mforteh (2006) describes as a "terrible Babel". This is because the number of mother tongues in Cameroon is significant, about 314 according to Anchimbe (2013:199). It is because of the status of Kirundi in Burundi that an aspect as important as surnames need to be given much attention as this work is trying to do.

3.3.2 Society and Names:

There is an aspect, *society*, which is worthy of discussion in this study. The knowledge of society is important here because naming constitutes an integral part of any society. Aletum (2008: 148) presents a society as "the largest number of human beings who interact to satisfy their social needs and who share a common culture". His definition incorporates the notion of *culture* which he presents as "traditional modes of conduct practiced by a given group of people and transmitted from one generation to another as a body of traditions either by writing or by oral transmission". Ayancho (ibid.) refers to society as thus:

Society can be defined as a group of people who live together. They are not brought together haphazardly. They live as a community because they share a number of issues and qualities. Some of the things that people of the same society can share are language, culture, dressing habits, food, drinks, and music.

The view of Ayancho (op.cit.) on society provides details on the things that members of the same society can share. The people of the same society normally share the same culture. There is no way I can discuss society without talking about culture. This is because both society and culture are interwoven. From my perspective I can define culture as all those things and aspects that bind people together as a society or community. Culture includes the norms of any society. When I talk of norms I mean the rules that members of a given society must abide by them in order to be considered as an

aggregate group. In a society anyone who does not respect the norms of that society is ostracized and considered persona non grata. One of the essential aspects of the culture of a group of people is the naming system. In every normal society people give names according to well defined guidelines of the custodians of the society in question. This is because the surnames which parents give to their children are normally supposed to reflect the society that they come from. It is for this reason that we can suggest the nationalities of some people basing are arguments on the names that they have. (www1.umn.edu/humanrts/edumat/hreduseries/rrr/sess4.html). This also explains the reason why some people change their names when they take up a new nationality. There is a cousin of mine who left Cameroon for Libya. When he arrived in Libya, being a Roman Catholic, he changed his name from John Niba to Ali Ahmadou and started practicing the Moslem faith. When I asked the raison d'être of his decision, he told me that this was to enable him adopt an identity that would facilitate his stay in Libya. This anecdote is used to demonstrate the interwoven relation between names and cultural backgrounds.

According to Emerusabe (2015:18), "In communication we can use some expressions through which names would be created". He goes ahead to illustrate his assertion as such, "When someone is in bad conditions, he says *Imana irambona* which means, I am in God's hands". In such a situation, Burundians give the names *Manirabona*, *Manirakiza*, and *Manirambona*. These names pragmatically denote that the family of the name bearer would surmount all the difficulties they are going through because with God all problems are solved. In Emerusabe (op.cit)'s study, he focuses on God related Kirundi names whereas in my study I dwell on Kirundi surnames in general without distinction. I focus on the link that Kirundi surnames have with their society, culture, and beliefs.

Ndayishimiye (2011:2), on his part, examines Kirundi names as found in what he calls the "Pre-Christian Period". This is what he says, "The naming practices of the pre-Christian Burundians contributed to the construction and understanding of the social relations that bound people together with their surroundings". Ndayishimiye (op.cit) focused on the Kirundi names of the pre-Christian period because he realized that the way Burundians named their children after the arrival of American and Western missionaries tilted towards the use of Christian related names. He gives as examples the following pre-Christian Burundi names: *Bazompota* and *Kabwa*. The name *Bazompota* means "They will revenge me". This name expresses a situation in which the parents of the name bearer have been ill-treated by their neighbors and that their newborn is the one to revenge for them. The name *Kabwa*, on its part, means "A small dog". This is a diminutive name which undermines the qualities of the name bearer. With the arrival of Christianity in Burundi, some of such names were replaced by God related ones which mostly exhibited positive and neutral situations. Ndayishimiye focuses on Kirundi names of a specified period, whereas I take into consideration all Kirundi surnames irrespective of era.

3.4 Comparative Reading:

Past literature substantiates how Kirundi names revealed the relationship between the name givers and their environment as well as with their neighbors. Ntahombaye (op.cit) and Rodegem (op.cit) throw light on the relationship that existed between Kirundi names during the traditional period and the society. That is to say, past literature showed how more names were closely linked with the name givers' society and culture. Nonetheless, it also showed how there were few names related to God, but the ratio of religious names was minimal. Modern literature, on its part, demonstrates how the majority of Kirundi surnames are God related and only a minority is non-God related. The main finding, comparatively speaking, is that both past and modern literatures converge on the fact that some Kirundi surnames are God related whereas others are non-God related. The difference between both literatures lies in the ratio between God related and non-God related Kirundi names.

3.5 Conclusion:

This chapter sheds light on the available written material on naming and related aspects. It focuses on the views of scholars on the Kirundi names that were given and are being given. This chapter further makes a comparative evaluation of the nature of names that were given in the pre-colonial period and those that are currently being given to Burundian offspring. The following chapter provides a detailed analysis of the data obtained in this investigation.

4. DETAILED ANALYSIS

4.1 Introduction:

This chapter makes a presentation and a detailed analysis of the data obtained for the work under study. The data presented and analyzed in this chapter are those obtained through the questionnaire, interview, and focus group discussion.

4.2 Actual Process:

Here the data obtained through the questionnaire are first presented, followed by those from the interview, and finally those from the focus group discussion.

4.2.1 Presentation of Data from Questionnaire:

From the first informant we had the following information: name = *Ahishakiye*, sex = feminine, commune of origin = Cankuzo, province of origin = Cankuzo. The name, *Ahishakiye*, means “the pride of his masculinity”. This name was given by the name bearer’s father. The name bearer does not know the origin of her name.

From the second informant we had the following information: name = *Barenzako*, sex = male, commune of origin = Mubimbi, province of origin = Bujumbura. The name, *Barenzako*, means “People give more information about what is already known”. This name was given by the name bearer’s father. This name originates from the Burundian culture.

From the third informant we had the following information: name = *Bigirimana*, sex = masculine, commune of origin = Cendajuru, province of origin = Cankuzo. The name, *Bigirimana*, means “Anything is done by God”. This name was given by the name bearer’s father. This name, according to the name bearer, originates from the Burundian culture.

From the fourth informant we had the following information: name = *Bigirimana*, sex = male, commune of origin = Musaga, province of origin = Bujumbura. The name, *Bigirimana*, means “God is the origin of everything”. This name was given by the name bearer’s father. With respect to the reason why the bearer was given this name, the bearer gave the following details: “My father gave me the name referring to what happened in the family. The first and the second children in the family are ladies. From that, my father was tired of getting ladies and I have been born in a needful time of a boy in the family. As my parents were believers (Now they have passed away); they called me so to mean that God is the origin of everything”.

From the fifth informant we had the following information: name = *Bigirimana*, sex = masculine, commune of origin = Nyabiraba, province of origin = Bujumbura. The name, *Bigirimana*, means “God does all things”. This name was given by the name bearer’s father and mother. This name, according to the name bearer, is a Kirundi name.

From the sixth informant we had the following information: name = *Bizoza*, sex = masculine, commune of origin = Matana, province of origin = Bururi. The name, *Bizoza*, means “They (things) will come, implying that there is hope”. This name was given by the name bearer’s father. This name, according to the name bearer, is from their ancestors.

From the seventh informant we had the following information: name = *Bucumi*, sex = male, commune of origin = Burambi, province of origin = Bururi. The name, *Bucumi*, means “the tenth child”. This name was given by the name bearer’s father. This name, according to the name bearer, finds its origin in the Burundian culture. This name bearer said that his father gave him the name and explained the reason in the following words, “It means that the father in our society is the authority”.

From the eighth informant we had the following information: name = *Bukuru*, sex = male, commune of origin = Bururi, province of origin = Bururi. The name, *Bukuru*, means “the first of twins”. This name was given by the name bearer’s parents. This name, according to the name bearer, “is one of the names attributed or given to children who are born to the same mother and at the same time”.





Sources: <https://www.google.com/pictures+of+Burundi+male+twins> & [thm. & ngm.nationalalgeographic.com/](http://thm.ngm.nationalalgeographic.com/)

Pictures.3: Pictures of two Pairs of Twins (Males and Females)

Pictures 3 above contain two pairs of twins of both sexes and of different races. This diversity in the images above portrays the fact that this phenomenon of twins is neither limited to any sex nor to any race. Thus, the issue of twins is universal but there are differences in the way people view twins in different parts of the world. According to Deluzain, H. E. (1996), "Parents tend to think of twins as a single person who happens to have two bodies, and they often choose names for them that reinforce the idea that the twins have a single shared identity". This view is not shared in all communities. In the Bafut community twins are often dressed in the same attire to show that they are one. Fortunately or unfortunately, this habit is gradually dying out in the Bafut tradition with modernity. However, there is a global similarity in the way people view twins in most communities. Most families, into which twins are born, consider themselves as lucky and blessed. As indicated above, the name, *Bukuru*, in Kirundi means the first born of twins, whereas in the Yoruba culture the first born of twins is called *Taiwo* which means "having the first taste of the world" (Leroy, F. et al, 2002: 134). In Bafut, twins can be identified from their names. That is to say, there are special names reserved for twins. The following are examples: *Akongnwi*, *Muyanwi*, *Azinwi*, and *Afanwi*. These names mean "God love", "Thank God", "God knows", and "God gives" respectively. If we examine these names closely, we will observe that the underlined suffix, *nwi*, meaning "God", is present or attached to all the names that are given to twins in Bafut.

From the ninth informant we had the following information: name = *Cishahayo*, sex = male, commune of origin = Mugamba, province of origin = Bururi. The name, *Cishahayo*, means "that God realizes things according to His own way". This name was given by the name bearer's father. This name, according to the name bearer, has its origin from the family's living situation.

From the tenth informant we had the following information: name = *Gahimbare*, sex = male, commune of origin = Nyamurenza, province of origin = Ngozi. The name, *Gahimbare*, means "joy". This name was given by the name bearer's parents. This name, according to the name bearer, is given to the third child and who is the second son of the family.

From the eleventh informant we had the following information: name = *Habintwari*, sex = male, commune of origin = Kabarore, province of origin = Kayanza. The name, *Habintwari*, means "the child is victorious". This name was given by the name bearer's mother. This name has its origin from the word, "intwari", which means "victorious".

From the twelfth informant we had the following information: name = *Habonimana*, sex = male, commune of origin = Guagara, province of origin = Cankuzo. The name, *Habonimana*, means "Thanks be to God (since it is God who gives children)". Campbell (2005) is of the same view when she says, "Children are gifts from God". This name was given by the name bearer's parents. This name, according to the name bearer, has its origin from God since their ancestors believed in God. Miller (2010) goes ahead to suggest the reason why God gives people children in these words, "One reason God gives us kids is to sanctify us, to become more like Christ, whose very identity is wrapped up in self-emptying and sacrificial love". This view of Miller is a proposal to people as to how they should consider their children. Most Burundi people are really applying Miller's view. They show their appreciation to God for the special gift of children through names which highlight God's greatness.

From the thirteenth informant we had the following information: name = *Harerimana*, sex = male, commune of origin = Matana, province of origin = Bururi. The name, *Harerimana*, means “It is God who educates”. This name was given by the name bearer’s mother. This name, according to the name bearer, has its origin from the bearer’s culture which is imbued with the worship of God”.

From the fourteenth informant we had the following information: name = *Hazigamayo*, sex = male, commune of origin = Bukemba, province of origin = Rutana. The name, *Hazigamayo*, means that “God rescues his people”. This name was given by the name bearer’s father. This name, according to the name bearer, has its origin from the fact that when the name bearer was three months old he suffered from tetanus and almost died, but fortunately he recovered thanks to God. The implication here is that the bearer of the name, *Hazigamayo*, did not have this name at birth but was renamed after his recovery from the tetanus attack indicated earlier.

From the fifteenth informant we had the following information: name = *Ingabire*, sex = masculine, commune of origin = Makamba, province of origin = Makamba. The name, *Ingabire*, means “A gift from God”. This name was given by the name bearer’s mother. This name, according to the name bearer, was given due to the problems his mother met while giving birth to him.

From the sixteenth informant we had the following information: name = *Irakoze*, sex = masculine, commune of origin = Rutovu, province of origin = Bururi. The name, *Irakoze*, means “Thank God”. This name, according to the name bearer, was given because his parents were very grateful to God because he, the name bearer, was the fifth child in their family.

From the seventeenth informant we had the following information: name = *Irakoze*, sex = male, commune of origin = Gihanga, province of origin = Bubanza. The name, *Irakoze*, means “Thanks be to God”. This name was given by the name bearer’s aunt. This name, according to the name bearer, has its origin from the fact that his parents were Christians.

From the eighteenth informant we had the following information: name = *Ishimwe*, sex = male, commune of origin = Ryansoro, province of origin = Gitega. The name, *Ishimwe*, means “God be praised”. This name was given by the name bearer’s father. This name, according to the name bearer, “is a Kirundi name which Christian people like”.

From the nineteenth informant we had the following information: name = *Kabura*, sex = male, commune of origin = Musongati, province of origin = Rutana. The name, *Kabura*, means “the sixth child”. This name was given by the name bearer’s father. This name, according to the name bearer, originates from the Burundian culture.

From the twentieth informant we had the following information: name = *Kubwimana*, sex = male, commune of origin = Shombo, province of origin = Karusi. The name, *Kubwimana*, means “It is for God that I exist”. This name was given by the name bearer’s father. According to the name bearer, the origin of this name is God.

From the twenty-first informant we had the following information: name = *Manirakiza*, sex = masculine, commune of origin = Gisatubi, province of origin = Gitega. The name, *Manirakiza*, means that God enables sick persons to recover. This name was given by the name bearer’s uncle. This name, according to the name bearer, originates from the Christian church.

From the twenty-second informant we had the following information: name = *Manirakiza*, sex = masculine, commune of origin = Buyengero, province of origin = Bururi. According to the bearer, the name, *Manirakiza*, means that God saves his people. This name was given by the name bearer’s parents. According to the name bearer, *Manirakiza* is a Kirundi compound name related to God.

From the twenty-third informant we had the following information: name = *Mbonayo*, sex = masculine, commune of origin = Rutovu, province of origin = Bururi. According to the bearer, the name, *Mbonayo*, means “that everything for me comes from God”. This name was given by the name bearer’s father. According to the name bearer, *Mbonayo* originates from a Christian act from God.

From the twenty-fourth informant we had the following information: name = *Mukamarakiza*, sex = male, commune of origin = Vyanda, province of origin = Bururi. According to the bearer, the name, *Mukamarakiza*, means “praise be to God, the one who heals people”. This name was given by the name bearer’s parents. According to the name bearer, *Mukamarakiza* comes from the Burundian culture.

From the twenty-fifth informant we had the following information: name = *Mure*, sex = male, commune of origin = Butaganzwa, province of origin = Ruyigi. According to the bearer, the name, *Mure*, is an abbreviated form of

Murekambanze which means “let them tempt me first”. This name was given by the neighbors of the name bearer’s family.

From the twenty-sixth informant we had the following information: name = *Ndacayisaba*, sex = masculine, commune of origin = Matana, province of origin = Bururi. According to the bearer, the name, *Ndacayisaba*, means “I am still asking things from God”. In terms of the origin of the name, the bearer says this, “In Burundian culture we know everything is from God”.

From the twenty-seventh informant we had the following information: name = *Ndahabonayo*, sex = masculine, commune of origin = Gisozi, province of origin = Mwaro. According to the bearer, the name, *Ndahabonayo*, means “In all my things I see the presence of God”. In terms of the origin of the name, the bearer says this, “In the point of view of things of our grandparents”.

From the twenty-eighth informant we had the following information: name = *Ndayikengurukiye*, sex = masculine, commune of origin = Rumonge, province of origin = Bururi. According to the bearer, the name, *Ndayikengurukiye*, means “I thank God”. This name was given by the name bearer’s father. In terms of the origin of the name, the bearer says this, “Religion”.

From the twenty-ninth informant we had the following information: name = *Ndayishimiye*, sex = male, commune of origin = Butaganzwa, province of origin = Kayanza. According to the bearer, the name, *Ndayishimiye*, means “thanking God”. This name was given by the name bearer’s parents. According to the name bearer, *Ndayishimiye* “takes origin from God”.

From the thirtieth informant we had the following information: name = *Ndayizeye*, sex = male, commune of origin = Kayogoro, province of origin = Makamba. According to the bearer, the name, *Ndayizeye*, means “I believe in God”. This name was given by the name bearer’s parents. According to the name bearer, *Ndayizeye* “takes its origin from the surrounding community”.

From the thirty-first informant we had the following information: name = *Ndayizeye*, sex = male, commune of origin = Biharo, province of origin = Rutana. According to the bearer, the name, *Ndayizeye*, means “I believe in God”. This name was given by the name bearer’s father. According to the name bearer, *Ndayizeye* “found its origin in Christianity”.

From the thirty-second informant we had the following information: name = *Ndayizeye*, sex = male, commune of origin = Gasorwe, province of origin = Muyinga. According to the bearer, the name, *Ndayizeye*, means “someone believes in God”. This name was given by the name bearer’s parents. This is what the name bearer says with respect to the origin of the name, *Ndayizeye*, “The origin of my name is Christian family”.

From the thirty-third informant we had the following information: name = *Ndayizeye*, sex = male, commune of origin = Vugizo, province of origin = Makamba. According to the bearer, the name, *Ndayizeye*, means “I am hopeful in God”. This name was given by the name bearer’s father. This is what the name bearer says with respect to the origin of the name, *Ndayizeye*, “My parents are Christians, so they gave me it to show that, though, there are many difficulties in the family, they keep on hoping in God”.

From the thirty-fourth informant we had the following information: name = *Ndereyimana*, sex = male, commune of origin = Mbuye, province of origin = Muramvya. According to the bearer, the name, *Ndereyimana*, means “the child who is being brought up belongs to God”. This name was given by the name bearer’s father. This is what the name bearer says with respect to the origin of the name, *Ndereyimana*, “The belief of my parents in God”.

From the thirty-fifth informant we had the following information: name = *Ndagijimana*, sex = male, commune of origin = Kirundo, province of origin = Kirundo. According to the bearer, the name, *Ndagijimana*, means “I vow to God’s surveillance this child”. This name was given by the name bearer’s father. This is what the name bearer says with respect to the origin of the name, *Ndagijimana*, “It originates from the belief in God’s surveillance”.

From the thirty-sixth informant we had the following information: name = *Ndikumasabo*, sex = male, commune of origin = Rusaka, province of origin = Mwaro. According to the bearer, the name, *Ndikumasabo*, means “Every person lives with help from God”. This name was given by the name bearer’s parents. This is what the name bearer says with respect to the origin of the name, *Ndikumasabo*, “Its origin is from the wish that my parents want God to help me”.

From the thirty-seventh informant we had the following information: name = *Nduwayezu*, sex = male, commune of origin = Gatara, province of origin = Kayanza. According to the bearer, the name, *Nduwayezu*, means “I belong to Jesus and I will follow Him till His coming”. This name was given by the name bearer’s father. This is what the name bearer says with respect to the origin of the name, *Nduwayezu*, “In the book of songs which praise our Lord”.

From the thirty-eighth informant we had the following information: name = *Nduwimana*, sex = male, commune of origin = Ngozi, province of origin = Ngozi. According to the bearer, the name, *Nduwimana*, means “to be one of God”. This name was given by the name bearer’s father. This is what the name bearer says with respect to the origin of the name, *Nduwimana*, “is from God”.

From the thirty-ninth informant we had the following information: name = *Nduwimana*, sex = male, commune of origin = Gahombo, province of origin = Kayanza. According to the bearer, the name, *Nduwimana*, means “I am for my Almighty God”. This name was given by the name bearer’s father. This is what the name bearer says with respect to the origin of the name, *Nduwimana*, “takes its origin in a religious background”.

From the fortieth informant we had the following information: name = *Nduwimana*, sex = male, commune of origin = Giteranyi, province of origin = Muyinga. According to the bearer, the name, *Nduwimana*, means “I belong to God”. This name was given by the name bearer’s school. This is what the name bearer says with respect to the origin of the name, *Nduwimana*, “It has a religious origin”.

From the forty-first informant we had the following information: name = *Nduwumwami*, sex = male, commune of origin = Rango, province of origin = Kayanza. According to the bearer, the name, *Nduwumwami*, means “I am a son of the King (Jesus Christ)”. This name was given by the name bearer’s mother.

From the forty-second informant we had the following information: name = *Ngarukiye*, sex = male, commune of origin = Mbuye, province of origin = Muramvya. According to the bearer, the name, *Ngarukiye*, means “You have come to save me”. This name was given by the name bearer’s father. This is what the name bearer says with respect to the origin of the name, *Ngarukiye*, “period of crisis (ethnic and political problems)”.

From the forty-third informant we had the following information: name = *Ngendakumana*, sex = male, commune of origin = Isare, province of origin = Bujumbura. According to the bearer, the name, *Ngendakumana*, means “I am protected by God”. This name was given by the name bearer’s parents. This is what the name bearer says with respect to the origin of the name, *Ngendakumana*, “the Bible”.

From the forty-fourth informant we had the following information: name = *Ngendakumana*, sex = male, commune of origin = Ruyigi, province of origin = Ruyigi. According to the bearer, the name, *Ngendakumana*, means “I am guided by God”. This name was given by the name bearer’s father. This is what the name bearer says with respect to the origin of the name, *Ngendakumana*, “Its origin is God, to mean that there is no other guide in our everyday life but God”.

From the forty-fifth informant we had the following information: name = *Nihorimbere*, sex = male, commune of origin = Bugarama, province of origin = Bujumbura. According to the bearer, the name, *Nihorimbere*, means “that God is in front of me in everything”. This name was given by the name bearer’s father. This is what the name bearer says with respect to the origin of the name, *Nihorimbere*, “It comes from the Burundian socio-culture, especially religious”.

From the forty-sixth informant we had the following information: name = *Nimubona*, sex = male, commune of origin = Rutana, province of origin = Rutana. According to the bearer, the name, *Nimubona*, means “God protects me in whatever circumstances”. This name was given by the name bearer’s father. This is what the name bearer says with respect to the origin of the name, *Nimubona*, “My family was hated and children died when they were still young”.

From the forty-seventh informant we had the following information: name = *Nindorera*, sex = male, commune of origin = Bisoro, province of origin = Mwaro. According to the bearer, the name, *Nindorera*, means “God sees on my behalf”. This name was given by the name bearer’s father. This is what the name bearer says with respect to the origin of the name, *Nindorera*, “It is of Christian origin”.

From the forty-eighth informant we had the following information: name = *Nininahazwe*, sex = male, commune of origin = Kibago, province of origin = Makamba. According to the bearer, the name, *Nininahazwe*, means “that it is worth glorifying God the Almighty”. This name was given by the name bearer’s father. This is what the name bearer says with respect to the origin of the name, *Nininahazwe*, “Its origin is simply from religious beliefs”.

From the forty-ninth informant we had the following information: name = Nininahazwe, sex = male, commune of origin = Ngozi, province of origin = Ngozi. According to the bearer, the name, Nininahazwe, means “that only God needs to be glorified”. This name was given by the name bearer’s father. This is what the name bearer says with respect to the origin of the name, Nininahazwe, “Its origin is in the Bible”.

From the fiftieth informant we had the following information: name = Nininahazwe, sex = male, commune of origin = Ruhororo, province of origin = Ngozi. According to the bearer, the name, Nininahazwe, means “God is glorified”. This name was given by the name bearer’s father. This is what the name bearer says with respect to the origin of the name, Nininahazwe, “No origin, I’m the first to have this name in my family”.

From the fifty-first informant we had the following information: name = *Niyibizi*, sex = male, commune of origin = Bukinanyana, province of origin = Cibitoke. According to the bearer, the name, *Niyibizi*, means “It is God who knows everything”. This name was given by the name bearer’s father. This is what the name bearer says with respect to the origin of the name, *Niyibizi*, “It was a name of one of my father’s great friends”.

From the fifty-second informant we had the following information: name = *Niyikiza*, sex = male, commune of origin = Kayanza, province of origin = Kayanza. According to the bearer, the name, *Niyikiza*, means “God is the only one responsible for prosperity, wealth, and life”. This name was given by the name bearer’s father. This is what the name bearer says with respect to the origin of the name, *Niyikiza*, “It is from the Burundians’ religious belief in God’s power”.

From the fifty-third informant we had the following information: name = *Niyonsavye*, sex = male, commune of origin = Muhanga, province of origin = Kayanza. According to the bearer, the name, *Niyonsavye*, means “I ask all only from God”. This name was given by the name bearer’s father and mother.

From the fifty-fourth informant we had the following information: name = *Niyonzima*, sex = masculine, commune of origin = Ruhororo, province of origin = Ngozi. According to the bearer, the name, *Niyonzima*, means “God is good”. This name was given by the name bearer’s father. This is what the name bearer says with respect to the origin of the name, *Niyonzima*, “It is from my ancestors”.

From the fifty-fifth informant we had the following information: name = *Nizigama*, sex = masculine, commune of origin = Mpinga-Kayove, province of origin = Rutana. According to the bearer, the name, *Nizigama*, means that God is our protector. This name was given by the name bearer’s parents. This is what the name bearer says with respect to the origin of the name, *Nizigama*, “It has the origin from God because it is related to Him”.

From the fifty-sixth informant we had the following information: name = *Nkunzimana*, sex = male, commune of origin = Kabezi, province of origin = Bujumbura-Rural. According to the bearer, the name, *Nkunzimana*, means “I love God because it is from the verb to ‘love’”. This name was given by the name bearer’s father. This is what the name bearer says with respect to the origin of the name, *Nkunzimana*, “It is a Christian name from Western culture”.

From the fifty-seventh informant we had the following information: name = *Nkunzimana*, sex = male, commune of origin = Bururi, province of origin = Bururi. According to the bearer, the name, *Nkunzimana*, means “I love God”. This name was given by the name bearer’s father. This is what the name bearer says with respect to the origin of the name, *Nkunzimana*, “It is from God’s love”.

From the fifty-eighth informant we had the following information: name = *Nsabiyumva*, sex = male, commune of origin = Nyarusange, province of origin = Gitega. According to the bearer, the name, *Nsabiyumva*, means “I pray God who hears”. This name was given by the name bearer’s father. This is what the name bearer says with respect to the origin of the name, *Nsabiyumva*, “It is a Burundian name”. From the explanation that this informant gave with respect to his name, I can say that some Burundians are not in a position to state the source of their names.

From the fifty-ninth informant we had the following information: name = *Nsavyimana*, sex = male, commune of origin = Kibago, province of origin = Makamba. According to the bearer, the name, *Nsavyimana*, means “I demand from God”. This name was given by the name bearer’s father. This is what the name bearer says with respect to the origin of the name, *Nsavyimana*, “It is a Burundian name but my mother took a long time to give birth”.

From the sixtieth informant we had the following information: name = *Nsavyimana*, sex = masculine, commune of origin = Kigamba, province of origin = Cankuzo. According to the bearer, the name, *Nsavyimana*, means “I ask God”. This name was given by the name bearer’s father. This is what the name bearer says with respect to the origin of the name, *Nsavyimana*, “It originated from our grandparents”.

From the sixty-first informant we had the following information: name = *Nsengiyumva*, sex = male, commune of origin = Bukinanyana, province of origin = Cibitoke. According to the bearer, the name, *Nsengiyumva*, means “I pray the Lord who listens”. This name was given by the name bearer’s father. This is what the name bearer says with respect to the origin of the name, *Nsengiyumva*, “A name from God”.

From the sixty-second informant we had the following information: name = *Nshimirimana*, sex = male, commune of origin = Bukeye, province of origin = Muramvya. According to the bearer, the name, *Nshimirimana*, means “It is the moment of thanking God’s actions”. This name was given by the name bearer’s parents. This is what the name bearer says with respect to the origin of the name, *Nshimirimana*, “Its origin is from the Christian belief after giving birth to children”.

From the sixty-third informant we had the following information: name = *Ntakarutimana*, sex = male, commune of origin = Gishubi, province of origin = Gitega. According to the bearer, the name, *Ntakarutimana*, means “Nothing is superior to God”. This name was given by the name bearer’s parents. This is what the name bearer says with respect to the origin of the name, *Ntakarutimana*, “The origin is in the conception of God, the Almighty”.

From the sixty-fourth informant we had the following information: name = *Nungubumwe*, sex = feminine, commune of origin = Nyarusange, province of origin = Gitega. According to the bearer, the name, *Nungubumwe*, “invites me to be united to others or to help others to be united, to love others”. This name was given by the name bearer’s parents. This is what the name bearer says with respect to the origin of the name, *Nungubumwe*, “I think the unity of our country was not guaranteed at the time I was born; my parents wanted me to change things”.

From the sixty-fifth informant we had the following information: name = *Nyakuri*, sex = male, commune of origin = Rumonge, province of origin = Bururi. According to the bearer, the name, *Nyakuri*, means “He (God) is the truth”. The name bearer does not know who gave his name because he fled to Rwanda during the Burundian genocide. Thus, he escaped from Burundi before he had time to ask who gave his name. This is what the name bearer says with respect to the origin of the name, *Nyakuri*, “You know, I was born in Rwanda”. The implication here is that the name bearer does not know the origin of his name because he was born in a foreign country.

From the sixty-sixth informant we had the following information: name = *Nyandwi*, sex = masculine, commune of origin = Gisuru, province of origin = Ruyigi. According to the bearer, the name, *Nyandwi*, means “I am the seventh child”. This name was given by the name bearer’s parents. This is what the name bearer says with respect to the origin of the name, *Nyandwi*, “The origin is from Burundi society. They count children”.

From the sixty-seventh informant we had the following information: name = *Nzambumuremyi*, sex = masculine, commune of origin = Matongo, province of origin = Kayanza. According to the bearer, the name, *Nzambumuremyi*, means “I ask God to keep my child and protect him”. This name was given by the name bearer’s father. This is what the name bearer says with respect to the origin of the name, *Nzambumuremyi*, “Its origin is from the faith in God”.

From the sixty-eighth informant we had the following information: name = *Ntirandekura*, sex = male, commune of origin = Rango, province of origin = Kayanza. This is what the bearer says in relation to the name, “I don’t know the meaning but it’s meaningful”. This name was given by the name bearer’s father. The name bearer says that his name is from the Burundian culture.

From the sixty-ninth informant we had the following information: name = *Sibomana*, sex = male, commune of origin = Bweru, province of origin = Ruyigi. According to the bearer, the name, *Sibomana*, means “Men are not equal to God; He is above all”. This name was given by the name bearer’s father. This is what the name bearer says with respect to the origin of the name, *Sibomana*, “It is of Kirundi origin”.

From the seventieth informant we had the following information: name = *Sindayigaya*, sex = masculine, commune of origin = Bugenyuzi, province of origin = Karusi. According to the bearer, the name, *Sindayigaya*, means “I haven’t hated God”. This name was given by the name bearer’s parents. This is what the name bearer says with respect to the origin of the name, *Sindayigaya*, “Its origin is from Christian beliefs”.

4.2.2 Presentation of Data from Interview:

I got the following data from the interview I conducted with a sample of students from the Department of English Language and Literature of the University of Burundi. They were selected following the accidental sampling technique.

From the first informant of the interview we obtained the following data: name = *Irakoze*, sex = masculine, commune of origin = Nyabihanga, province of origin = Mwaro. According to the bearer, the name, *Irakoze*, means “It is a kind of thanks to God”. This name was given by the name bearer’s father. This is what the name bearer says with respect to the origin of the name, *Irakoze*, “It has a Christian origin”.

From the second informant we obtained the following data: name = *Manirambona*, sex = masculine, commune of origin = Bisoro, province of origin = Mwaro. According to the bearer, the name, *Manirambona*, means “God sees me, is with me at anytime and anywhere”. He goes further to give the following details: “*Manirambona*, my family name simply means, God is always on my side, in either hard times or good times; that is, when I am experimenting difficulties, I should remember that I am not alone, and thus, keep hope! This name is related in meaning to a name, Emmanuel, as found in the Bible, and simply meaning ‘God is with you’. Emmanuel was and is a name given to Jesus Christ, our Savior as seen in the Holy Book, the Bible”. Here, the informant is making reference to the Bible Book of Isaiah 7: 9. The name bearer goes ahead to say this, “In meaning, the two names, Emmanuel from Hebrew ‘*Immanuel*’ and Kirundi ‘*Manirambona*’, are the same though expressed in different languages. This name was given by the name bearer’s father and mother. This is what the name bearer says with respect to the origin of the name, *Manirambona*, “It is related to Christianity, religious belief”. According to www.nameberry.com, the name Emmanuel denotes the presence of God in the midst of those who believe in Him. When Burundians give the name, *Manirambona*, they bring the protective strength of the Almighty God to the limelight. That is to say, if the parents or family members of the name bearer were insecure within the ranks of their neighbors, the name, *Manirambona*, which means Emmanuel, is transmitting a strong message that God is with them and as such the threats of their enemies are inconsequential as no human being can fight a battle with those who have the Almighty’s support.

From the third informant we obtained the following data: name = *Mpawenayo*, sex = masculine, commune of origin = Gahombo, province of origin = Kayanza. According to the bearer, the name, *Mpawenayo*, means “I am given by Him (God)”. This name was given by the name bearer’s father. This is what the name bearer says with respect to the origin of the name, *Mpawenayo*, “Belief in God by parents”. He continues to give these details about the origin of his name, “I was named thus because the first wife of my father didn’t give birth to any son before her death. She had three girls. The expectation of having a son by my father had gone. Then after her death, he legally married my mother who gave birth to me with other four boys. He had prayed before to have a son to inherit his possession after his death”. The implication here is that Burundi is a monogamous society in which any additional wife after the legally married one is not recognized by the law. Only the death of the first wife can give right to the husband to marry another wife whose child can inherit. This is explained by the fact that polygamy is illegal in Burundi, (www.wikiwand.com/en/Polygamy_in_Burundi).

From the fourth informant we obtained the following data: name = *Nihorimbere*, sex = masculine, commune of origin = Rumonge, province of origin = Bururi. According to the bearer, the name, *Nihorimbere*, means “May God be ahead”. This name was given by the name bearer’s parents (especially his mother). This is what the name bearer says with respect to the origin of the name, *Nihorimbere*, “Burundi societies (Kirundi language)”.

From the fifth informant we obtained the following data: name = *Niyongabire*, sex = male, commune of origin = Mugina, province of origin = Cibitoke. According to the bearer, the name, *Niyongabire*, means “they have missed many children and then it is a gift”. This name was given by the name bearer’s father.

From the sixth informant we obtained the following data: name = *Niyonkuru*, sex = masculine, commune of origin = Buganda, province of origin = Cibitoke. According to the bearer, the name, *Niyonkuru*, means “God is strong, powerful, or forceful”. This name was given by the name bearer’s parents (especially his mother). This is what the name bearer says with respect to the origin of the name, *Niyonkuru*, “Its origin is from our ancestors”.

From the seventh informant we obtained the following data: name = *Niyorugira*, sex = male, commune of origin = Gashikanwa, province of origin = Ngozi. This is what the name bearer says in relation to the meaning of the name, *Niyorugira*, “As the Burundian society believes that there is the unique God, *Imana*, the name refers to the power and generosity of the Almighty. *Niyorugira* stands for *Niyo* (Him = God) and *Rugira* (Almighty). Thus, God is Almighty; God is the overall supervisor of everything”. This name was given by the name bearer’s father. This is what the name bearer says with respect to the origin of the name, *Niyorugira*, “*Niyorugira* draws its origin in the pre-colonial Burundi where people glorified *Imana* (God) through *Kiranga*, god’s messenger and representative on earth. *Kiranga* is also a spirit who is the leader of all the dead ancestors (www.uganda-rwanda-travelguide.com). In order to ensure the protection of their offspring, they name their children with names related to God”.

From the eighth informant we obtained the following data: name = *Niyungeko*, sex = male, commune of origin = Matana, province of origin = Bururi. According to the bearer, the name, *Niyungeko*, means “that God should add or that God adds, to mean that the family was still in need of children and recommended that God, even if He had given that child, He might still give another child so as to fulfill the need of the family”. This name was given by the name bearer’s father. This is what the name bearer says with respect to the origin of the name, “*Niyungeko* draws its origin from the fact that Burundians often ask God to give them what they need, and even when He gives them what they need, they ask Him once more in order that they may get satisfied”. The name, *Niyungeko*, portrays the true nature of Burundian believers in particular and those of the world Christian believers in general. Here, I mean that human nature is such that they always ask for more whenever something is given to them. That is to say, the insatiable nature of the human being in general is exhibited in the name, *Niyungeko*.

From the ninth informant we obtained the following data: name = *Ntahorutaba*, sex = masculine, commune of origin = Butaganzwa, province of origin = Ruyigi. According to the bearer, the name, *Ntahorutaba*, means “Death and hatred are found everywhere on earth”. This name was given by the name bearer’s father. This is what the name bearer says with respect to the origin of the name, *Ntahorutaba*, “As told in some Kirundi stories, certain persons used to flee from their families or neighbors because of family members’ or neighbors’ hate. They, however, ended up returning for they found people who did not love them wherever they went. The case was the same for those who fled from their homes, fearing to be killed by witches or other persons with whom they had conflict”.

From the tenth informant we obtained the following data: name = *Ntakarutimana*, sex = masculine, commune of origin = Rusaka, province of origin = Mwaro. According to the bearer, the name, *Ntakarutimana*, means “God is so big and powerful”. This name was given by the name bearer’s father. This is what the name bearer says with respect to the origin of the name, *Ntakarutimana*, “social situation during my birth”.

From the eleventh informant we obtained the following data: name = *Ntunzwenayo*, sex = male, commune of origin = Gisuru, province of origin = Ruyigi. According to the bearer, the name, *Ntunzwenayo*, means “God is the one to keep my life”. This name was given by the name bearer’s father. This is what the name bearer says with respect to the origin of the name, *Ntunzwenayo*, “It is from many other Burundian names related to God”.

From the twelfth informant we obtained the following data: name = *Nzeyimana*, sex = male, commune of origin = Kanyosha, province of origin = Bujumbura. According to the bearer, the name, *Nzeyimana*, means “That everything comes from God”. This name was given by the name bearer’s father. This is what the name bearer says with respect to the origin of the name, *Nzeyimana*, “It originated from the belief that God is the only provider”.

4.2.3 Presentation of Data from Focus Group Discussion:

From the focus group discussion I got data which revolve around a number of themes. These themes include the following: 1) the informants’ view on Kirundi surnames; 2) the relation between Kirundi surnames and the socio-cultural environment of Burundi; 3) names related to sexes; 4) informants’ appreciation of the naming system in Burundi.

4.3 Illustrations:

4.3.1 Analysis of Data from Questionnaire:

The majority of Kirundi surnames are given by the name bearers’ fathers. Table 4 below illustrates this father dominance in the giving of names to children. According to this table, 54.29 % of offspring names are given by their fathers. This is considered by some analysts as alright since the father is often considered as the head of the family. This situation highlights the fact that Burundi is a patriarchal society, (www.worldreliefmoline.org/burundi-cultural-profile).

The majority of Kirundi surnames are God related. For instance, the meanings given by the three name bearers of the name, *Bigirimana*, converge on the fact that God is the source of everything. It is in this light that most Burundians resort to God in the midst of predicaments. They, thus, use surnames as the tool to express their attachment to the Almighty God. This can be substantiated by the fact that out of seventy respondents of the questionnaire, fifty-eight of them have God related Kirundi surnames, representing 82.86 %, (cf. Table 5 below).

In the Burundi society, names are not only given by the name bearer’s biological parents, as is the case with the bearers of the names, *Bigirimana* and *Manirakiza*, as indicated by them. Any extended family member, any friend, or a co-worker of any of the parents of the name bearer can give the name. This is also true of the Bafut society in Cameroon, my nationality. From this study we observe that the names of the seventeenth and twenty-first informants, *Irakoze* and

Manirakiza, were given by their aunt and uncle respectively. The name bearer of *Irakoze* goes further to state the origin of his name by saying that his parents were Christians. This explanation leads us to infer that the name bearer's aunt only proposed the name and his parents accepted because they were Christians; since the name, *Irakoze*, has a Christian coloring (Thanks are to God). The above discussion ties in with the fact that the parents of any child have the final say in the name that the child bears. Let us take this illustration: A parent who does not buy the ideals of Al Qaida cannot accept to give the name, Osama Bin Laden, to their offspring. This implies that the principles which a family incarnates play a vital role in the names that parents give to their children.

4.3.2 Analysis of Data from Focus Group Discussion:

As already indicated above, the method of focus group discussion as a research instrument was the participatory one since I was a participant in the debate in order to allay fears of suspicion. This strategy was necessary because Burundi, my research environment, was going through turbulent political and social upheavals when I was conducting this research, ([https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Burundian_Unrest_\(2015-present\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Burundian_Unrest_(2015-present))). This task was a little bit facilitated by the fact that my respondents were my students. From my observation in the focus group discussion I got the following names and meanings: *Ndihokubwayo* = I live since God exists. This is a name which instills hope in the bearer. Such a name is positive because many people who live in difficult conditions continue to survive due to the fact that there is hope in God's existence. They live happily in spite of the hardship they are going through because they believe that with God all difficulties can be surmounted.

We have the name, *Ntakaburimvo*, which means there is nothing without a cause; that is, anything has a cause to happen or to exist. This name conveys a moral lesson. The lesson here is that people should always do good acts because they would be paid in their coins when judgment time arrives. This name brings to mind the fact that names constitute an essential aspect of communication. Thus, those who pay attention to names and their meanings gain a lot from the messages transmitted by names.

There is *Ntamwishimiro* which means "He who laughs last laughs better". The implication of this name here is that it is better to experience great times in last position than earlier. This name means that you should surround yourself with happiness especially as you had once gone through difficult moments.

We have the name, *Nzajibwami*, which means "I am to go to the palace or to the king's living area or I will go to the kingdom". This name highlights the residence of a king, kingdom, which is the symbol of leadership. The word, kingdom, is denoted in the name, *Nzajibwami*. The bearer of such a name would strive to become a king or any great person of the status of a leader.

From my observation I realize that not only the names of human beings are meaningful in Kirundi but also the names of spirits. This assertion can be illustrated with the name, *Kiranga*. *Kiranga*, according to the Burundian culture, is a spirit. This spirit is considered as a god who intervenes in the activities that link Burundians with their ancestors. *Kiranga* is a name which signals the incarnation of the Burundians' ancestors. Thus, *Kiranga* is a mediator between Burundians and their gods. According to them, these gods represented by *Kiranga* are found in shrines where sacrifices were used to be offered during the pre-Christian Burundi period. This belief was prominent in the pre-colonial era when Christianity had not yet been introduced in Burundi. This is what Paulme (2013:182) says with respect to *Kiranga* and the Burundi society:

The Rundi describe their society as a hierarchy ordered by Imana, the Supreme Being, who is at its summit. Among the human beings, it is the mwami, the king, who is superior to all. In the past, there was also Kiranga, the legendary head of a possession cult. He was said to be of approximately the same rank as the mwami.

From the above view of Paulme (op.cit), we see the role of *Kiranga* in the Burundi tradition and consequently, the Kirundi language (since language is a vehicle of tradition). Thus, the mere mention of the name, *Kiranga*, instills respect within the ranks of Burundians.

God related Kirundi names are many for a number of reasons. The discussions in the focus group revealed that some of the God related Kirundi names are given to avert the diabolic acts of witch doctors. The informants indicated that the parents from the areas which abound in witchcraft give God related names to their offspring so that such names can

protect their children because God is a supreme being which is above all forces, whether positive or negative. Some of the informants cited some provinces as the areas in Burundi where people believe are full of witch doctors. You would agree with me that the influence of God is more visible in areas of adversity than in those without difficulties.

4.4 Preliminary Results:

4.4.1 Christianity and Names:

Surnames in Kirundi have a serious foundation in Christianity. This is normal in a society which had been rocked by civil war and conflict, (www.globalsecurity.org/military/world/war/burundi.htm). Kirundi surnames are not specific to particular regions of Burundi. This can be illustrated with the name, *Bigirimana*, which is given to three bearers from three different communes, Cendajuru, Musaga, and Nyabiraba of Burundi. These three informants bearing the same name, *Bigirimana*, do not only come from three communes but also from two different provinces, Cankuzo and Bujumbura. This implies that one name bearer of *Bigirimana* comes from Cankuzo Province, whereas the two other bearers come from Bujumbura Province, but precisely from different communes. Thus, the naming system in Burundi is different from that of Japan, where the name of a bearer indicates the part of the country where they come (Plutschow, op. cit.).

The importance of twins in the Burundi society is highlighted in Kirundi surnames. This is substantiated in a name like *Bukuru* which means the elder or first of twins. (cf. the name of Informant 8 of Appendix II).

4.4.2 God Related versus Non-God Related Names:

There is a serious Christian foundation in Kirundi surnames. According to the data obtained through the questionnaire, the ratio of non-God related names to God related names is about 1 to 5. That is, 12 non-God related names against 58 God related names, representing 17 % as opposed to 83 % respectively (cf. Table 5 below).

In the Burundi society, names are not only given by the name bearer's biological parents. Any extended family member, any friend, a co-worker of any of the parents of the name bearer can give the name. This is also true of the Bafut society in Cameroon where I come from. From this study we observe that the name of the seventeenth informant, *Irakoze*, was given by his aunt.

Some Kirundi surnames also indicate the birth position of the child in the family. We can cite the following examples, *Kabura*, meaning "the sixth child", *Nyandwi* meaning the seventh child, and *Bucumi*, meaning "the tenth child".

4.4.3 Kirundi Names with Similar Meanings:

There are some Kirundi surnames which, though different orthographically, mean the same. Let us illustrate with the following names: *Irakoze*, *Ndayishimiye*, and *Ndayikengurukiye*. All these three names mean "I thank God". Here we need to stress the fact that even though these names mean "thanks", there are slight differences in terms of the grade of the gratitude expressed to God. The name, *Irakoze*, displays the lowest level of thanks. *Ndayishimiye*, on its part, expresses a higher level of thanks to God than *Irakoze* does. If we consider all the three names, we will notice that *Ndayikengurukiye* shows the highest grade of thanks to God. The inference we can make here is that the choice of which of the three above mentioned names to be given to Burundian children is determined by the circumstances which surround the birth and naming process of the name bearer. If the circumstances require simple thanks, the name, *Irakoze*, will be given; if the situation needs great thanks, the name, *Ndayishimiye*, will be given; and if the context demands that the greatest gratitude be displayed, the name, *Ndayikengurukiye* will be given, (cf. Diagram 2 in Chapter VI).

Some names are got from books. This is the case with the name, *Nduwayezu*, of the thirty-seventh informant of the questionnaire. This informant said that his father got this name from a Kirundi book of songs which praise the Lord, Jesus. The father of *Nduwayezu* did not choose this name by accident. This was because he believed in Jesus. Consequently, he gave the name, *Nduwayezu*, to his offspring which means that the child belongs to Jesus and that he will follow Jesus till His second coming. The implication here is that irrespective of the name that is given to a child, the name must tie in with the belief of the parent. According to Ager (2014), caution should be taken when giving to a child a name that is based on their parents' faith. She says that the words which constitute the name should be carefully selected because they can have an impact on the life of the name bearer. I share the view of Ager (ibid.) because names convey messages. If you convey a negative message through your child's name, then, expect negative effects on your offspring.

Some names are given by schools. This is the case with the thirtieth informant's name, *Nduwimana*. This name was given by his school. It is a Christian name, implying that the school is a Christian school. There are some Christian schools which force their pupils into the Christian faith and one of the measures of enforcing the faith of a denomination is through names.

4.4.4 Kirundi Names which Reflect the Burundi Crisis Period:

There are some Kirundi surnames which reflect the period of crisis that Burundi went through during the civil wars that perturbed the country. An example of such a name is the name of the forty-second informant, *Ngarukiye*, which means "You have come to save me". The informant indicated that this name was given by his father. From a close examination of the socio-cultural situation of Burundi, we can infer that the informant's father gave him this name because he was considered as a sort of savior who would save him from the problems encountered during the Burundi crisis. This impression by the informant's father is reasonable because in most societies children are considered as a source of protection for their parents.

I indicated earlier that most Kirundi surnames are given by the name bearers' parents, especially, fathers. I went ahead to say that in a situation in which the child's name is given by a different person or institution, the name bearer's father must give his blessing. However, this is not the case with the 52nd informant of the questionnaire. At birth this informant was given the name, *Nzokirantevye*, by his father. This name means one who is embarrassed of being unsuccessful. If we analyze this meaning closely, we will realize that it has a pejorative connotation. A lot of researches have shown that a person's name can have an impact on their future life. This opinion is shared by Goudreau (2015) who says that your name can affect your success or failure in business. The bearer of the former negative name, *Nzokirantevye*, later on in life changed his name to a more positive one, *Niyikiza*. The new adopted name means "God is the only one responsible for prosperity, wealth, and life". This change of name was the personal decision of the name bearer, without his father's authorization, but that of the legal institutions of Burundi. When an individual comes of age, that is, when they are adults depending on the laws of the state concerned, they can take any major decisions about their lives, including the change of name. It is for this reason that the 52nd informant of this study changed his name from *Nzokirantevye* to *Niyikiza* with the seal of the Burundi Ministry of Justice. The inference we can make here is that nobody should be a slave to their name. They should change their names whenever the need arises, but they should ensure that this is not done for criminal purposes. This should rather be done within the ambits of the laws of the state or nation concerned.

4.4.5 Names which show the Link between Religious Beliefs and Ancestors:

There is the exhibition of the link between religious beliefs and ancestors in names. Such a situation is illustrated in the circumstances under which the name of the 54th informant was given. The name of the 54th informant is *Niyonzima* which means that God is good. This name, according to the informant, originated from their ancestors. Since the name, *Niyonzima*, is semantically related to the goodness of God and originates from the ancestors of the name bearer, the implication is that the Christian background of some Kirundi surnames is linked with the name bearers' ancestors. The mention of ancestors here implies the roots of name givers and name bearers. This notion is highlighted on <http://africa-facts.org/african-last-names/>, "One way of keeping and telling others about your roots is African surname". An African who bears an authentic African name should be identified from their name as an African irrespective of where they find themselves.

The Christian background of Kirundi surnames is, to an extent, the influence of Western culture. This is what Clasberry (2012) says to support this opinion, "Each European colonial power in Africa promoted its specific naming culture". This view is exhibited in the situation of the 56th informant named *Nkunzimana*. According to this informant, his name means "I love God". He goes forth to say this, "It is a name from Western culture". Even though the name, *Nkunzimana*, is a Kirundi name comprising the morphemes, *nkun-* and *-imana* which mean *love* and *God* respectively, the collective meaning of the two morphemes display the influence of the Western culture which brought Christianity to Burundi whose mother tongue is Kirundi. It is worthy of note to indicate here that Burundi is the former colony of Belgium (which is a Western nation). Burundi was under Belgian trusteeship from 1914 -1962 (<http://www.historyworld.net/wrldhis/PlainTextHistories.asp/>). It should be recalled that colonizers did not only impose their political views but also economic as well as religious. The strength of Christianity in Burundi is quite substantial. This Christian influence is illustrated in

the fact that “Sixty-seven percent of the population of Burundi is Christian (62 percent Roman Catholic and 5 percent Protestant); twenty-three percent of the people follow exclusively traditional beliefs, and the remaining ten percent are Muslim” (www.uganda-rwanda-travelguide.com).

There are names which are given because they have meanings which can enhance unity among the divided factions of the population of a country that has been fragmented by civil war or any other sort of national unrest. This is true of the name of the sixty-fourth informant, *Nungubumwe*. This name, according to the bearer, was given to her at birth by her parents to transmit the message of unity in their country. This circumstance shows how names can be used to provide solutions to social unrests and civil wars. The name, *Nungubumwe*, which means “unity”, is welcome and appropriate in a society like Burundi which had been rocked by decades of civil war, and is still being plagued by socio-political unrest, ([https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Burundian_Unrest_\(2015-present\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Burundian_Unrest_(2015-present))). Such a name can convey a message of peace (referred to as *amahoro* in Kirundi) to the stakeholders in the socio-political set-up of Burundi. The importance of peace in Burundi is so needful to the extent that the word, *amahoro* (peace) is often used as a greeting in Kirundi by Burundians and non-Burundian Kirundi speakers on daily basis when they meet.

In Burundi like in most African societies the number of children plays an important role in determining the strength of families, (Howard, 2015). This situation is illustrated in the designation of the position of the child in the meaning of some Kirundi surnames. The name, *Nyandwi*, of the sixty-sixth informant is an example of a Kirundi name that indicates the position of the child in the family. *Nyandwi* means “I am the seventh child”. When one is addressed by such a name, the implication is that the family has seven or more children and, thus, commands respect in the Burundi society.

There are some name bearers who do not know the meaning of their names. This is the case with the 68th informant. He says that he does not know the meaning of his name, *Ntirandekura*. He goes ahead to say that even though he does not know the meaning of his name, it is meaningful. What he says is not reliable because if his name were meaningful, he would know it because his name is in Kirundi and he is a Kirundi speaker. I am convinced that meaningless names exist. This can be explained by the fact that my middle name, *Suh*, as far as I know, does not have any meaning in the Bafut language. The Bafut language is one of the hundreds of languages that exist in Cameroon. Lauber (2011) provides highlights for the Bafut language.

4.4.6 Names which Show the Position and Importance of Twins:

There are specific names reserved for twins and their positions of birth. Examples are *Bukuru* (the first twin), *Butoyi* (the second twin), and *Ciza* (the follower of twins). All these names are given to both male and female twins. The distinction here is only in terms of their positions. In general *amahasa* is the Kirundi name for twins whereas *ubushuri* is used to designate triplets. In the Bafut language which is the mother tongue of my ethnic group, twins are referred to as *mufa'a*, meanwhile the follower of twins is called *furenefa'a*. The names that are given to twins in Bafut are for example, *Afanwi*, *Akongnwi*, and *Azinwi* which mean God-given, God-loves, and God-knows respectively in English. If we examine these names in the Bafut language which are given to twins, we will realize that they have the same suffix morpheme, *-nwi*, in the names, *Afanwi*, *Akongnwi*, and *Azinwi* which stand respectively for the English versions: God-given, God-loves, and God-knows with the prefix morpheme, God-. The morpheme, *-nwi*, that is, God-, highlights the fact that twins and triplets constitute a special gift from the Almighty; as such the presence of God should be made to be felt in their names.

The family to which twins or triplets are born is considered as blessed. Since the birth of such special children is shrouded in mystery, their order of arrival is also not made clear to the twins themselves or those around them in Bafut culture. Only the parents of the twins or triplets know the positions of these children but they keep it a secret. Consequently, the names given to twins and triplets in Bafut do not indicate their order of arrival. It is believed in Bafut tradition that if the twins are made to be aware of their position, jealousy will crop in on the part of the younger one and pride on the part of the older one. Such a situation, according to Bafut people, can result in the death of the younger twin. When the twins come of reasoning age, they usually ask their parents who is the younger or older of them. Their parents usually respond thus, “You are of the same age because you were born on the same date and at the same time”. I have experience on several occasions that when such an answer is given by the parents of the twins, they smile or laugh as a sign of satisfaction. Deluzain (op.cit.) quotes Robert Plank in a study he carried out on the names of twins. Robert Plank realized

from his investigation that the names of the twins he studied had a common pattern, which is, beginning with the same letter: Richard and Robert (Richy and Robby), Joseph and Judith (Joey and Judy), Louise and Louisa, Paul and Paula, Patrick and Patricia.

There are some names which indicate their positions of birth in Burundi. Examples are Kabura (meaning the sixth child), Nyandwi (meaning the seventh child), and Bucumi (meaning the tenth child).

4.4.7 Dichotomy of Traditionalism versus Christianity in Names:

The Kirundi naming system displays the dichotomy of Traditionalism versus Christianity. My view here is substantiated by the fact that there are Kirundi names which convey traditional beliefs and those which transmit Christianity. Table 1 below presents examples of names which portray this above mentioned dichotomy. The debate on Traditionalism versus Christianity is an age-old one. In every society, there are advocates of Traditionalism and those of Christianity. Each of these camps postulates arguments in support of its camp. My intention in this section is not to support this or that camp. My argument in this section is not to state the camp whose views should be upheld. I am positing here that in Burundi, like in some other societies, the names that are given to children originate from both religious and traditional backgrounds. This view of mine is substantiated by the identification, through my research, of the fact that Kirundi surnames come from both religious and traditional backgrounds.

Table.1: Kirundi Names and Meanings of Christian and Traditional Origin

Names of Christian Origin		Names of Traditional Origin	
Names	Meanings	Names	Meanings
Bigirimana	Anything is done by God.	Ahishakiye	The pride of his masculinity
Cishahayo	God realizes things according to His own way.	Barenzako	People give more information about what is already known.
Habonimana	Thanks be to God	Gahimbare	Joy
Harerimana	It is God who educates.	Habintwari	The child is victorious.
Hazigamayo	God rescues his people.	Bizoza	They (things) will come, implying that there is hope.
Ingabire	A gift from God	Bucumi	The tenth child
Ishimwe	God be praised	Bukuru	The first of twins
Kubwimana	It is for God that I exist.	Butoyi	The second of twins
Manirakiza	God enables sick persons to recover.	Ciza	The follower of twins
Mbonayo	Everything for me comes from God.	Kabura	The sixth child

Table 1 above shows samples of Kirundi surnames of Christian and traditional origin. Even though the table displays an equal number of name samples for both Christian and traditional names, this does not mean that there is equality at a general level. If we look at Sections IV.1.1 and IV.1.2 below which exhibit the total number of names under study and their meanings, we will realize that Kirundi surnames of Christian origin are dominant.

According to Ayancho (1994:20), there are names that are avoided when their bearers are referred to. This is the case with important personalities and people with titles: A doctoral degree holder or a medical doctor is simply referred to as “doctor”; Queen Elizabeth of England is simply referred to as “Her Majesty”; A Head of State is simply addressed as “His Excellency”, whereas a Member of Parliament is just called “Honorable”. When these titles are used, the inclusion of the title bearers’ names is no longer very necessary. In some cases the inclusion of the title bearer’s name can be considered impolite.

4.4.8 Relationship between Surnames and First Names:

Surnames and first names have a relationship which can be considered as significant. Each of them has a role to play in the identification of the name bearer. According to Sharma (2010), difficulties occur in the use of first names, middle names and surnames when ladies get married. The problems step in because of the choice of adopting the husband’s name or continue using the maiden name. Surnames facilitate pronunciation within inner circles, that is, family members. The

first names enhance pronunciation for outsiders, that is, those who do not share the same speech community with the name bearer. There are some people whose first names cannot be easily distinguished from their surnames. The name, Barack Obama, is an example of a name which is difficult for people who are not of that family to differentiate the first name from the surname. It is only because it is the name of a prominent figure that this distinction can be made from the order in which the names are placed. With a name like John Kerry, every educated person knows that John falls in the category of first names while Kerry is a surname. In Burundi, we have names in this order: Pierre Nkurunziza, Antoine Ndayisenga, and Joseph Nduwimana. From these names we can identify the first names because of the order in which they appear and also because they are typical forenames. In some African linguistic communities, the family names (surnames) appear before the first names. This is seen in official documents like birth and marriage certificates as well as in documents signed by prominent officials. In my birth certificate, this is the order in which my names appear: Ayancho Julius Suh. If I send an official document internationally with my names appearing in this distorted order, the reply to my letter may either be missing or sent to the wrong person if the name in the position of the first name is abbreviated as thus: A. Julius. It is for this reason that the international harmonization of name order is mandatory.

4.4.9 Conclusion:

This chapter makes a profound analysis of the data obtained through the various research instruments used in this study. It further provides illustrations and discusses preliminary results. The chapter, which follows, deals with the overall outcomes of this work.

5. OVERALL OUTCOMES

5.1 Introduction:

This chapter provides an overview of the findings of this study. It presents in a general way the results of this investigation. It presents the actual results; displays illustrations; and links the findings to real life.

5.2 Actual Results:

5.2.1 Illustration of Names Specific to Sex as well as Neutral Ones:

In Kirundi, there are surnames which are specific to males, some to females, and others to both. The following are examples in Table 2:

Table.2: Classification of Kirundi Names and Meanings According to Sexes

Names given to Females	Meanings	Names given to Males	Meanings	Names given to both Sexes	Meanings
Gakobwa	A little girl, a beautiful girl, a thin girl	Gasore	A little boy, a handsome boy	Bukuru	The first of twins
Kamariza	Sympathy	Muheto	The first boy in the family who is expected to be a good fighter.	Barenzako	People give more information about what is already known
Kankindi	Someone who is beautiful	Gahungu	A small boy, a thin boy	Kubwimana	It is for God that I exist

The above table displays names which are given to males, females, and both sexes. However, from my investigation, I found out that the majority of names in Kirundi are those which can be given to both male and female individuals. This situation is also true of the Bafut language. In Bafut we have a classification which is exemplified as in Table 3 below:

Table.3: Classification of Bafut Names and Meanings According to Sexes

Names given to Females	Meanings	Names given to Males	Meanings	Names given to both Sexes	Meanings
Akoh	Toilet	Afutih	A tree leaf	Afanwi	God given
Ngeehe	Grass	Akoneyee	One who likes to see	Azinwi	God knows
Sirri	No meaning	Ngeh	Suffering (noun)	Fuh	No meaning

Table 3 above presents the three categories into which Bafut names are grouped. The names that are only given to females are *Akoh*, *Ngeehe*, and *Sirri*. Those that are only given to males include *Afutiuh*, *Akoneyee*, and *Ngeh*. The names that are given to both sexes, that is, males and females, are *Afanwi*, *Azinwi*, and *Fuh*. Among the Bafut names in the table above, there are names which are meaningful and those which do not have clear cut meanings. The names which are meaningful are these: *Afanwi*, *Afutiuh*, *Akoh*, *Akoneyee*, *Azinwi*, *Ngeehe*, and *Ngeh*. The meaningless names comprise the following: *Sirri* and *Fuh*. Some of the names in the table above are quite special. The names that fall in this special class are *Akoh*, *Afutiuh*, and *Ngeehe*. I consider these names as special because they are usually attributed to inanimate things. These names, *Akoh*, *Afutiuh*, and *Ngeehe*, mean “toilet”, “a tree leaf” and “grass” respectively. These names are usually given to children whose parents have put to birth and lost many offspring. It is believed in the Bafut culture that when such names of lifeless things and objects are given to children whose older siblings have died, death is deceived and consequently, they survive.

Nature is also represented in some of the names that are given to bearers. Examples of such names are *Munyana* and *Kageregere* which stand for a type of animal and a species of birds respectively. Names like these reflect the natural environment of Burundi. This view ties in with the opinion of Sapir (1921). It is worthy to indicate the fact that Sapir stresses the close link which exists between language and the natural environment of the language users concerned. The use of names with meanings related to fauna and flora brings to the limelight the fact that Kirundi surnames do not only reflect the socio-cultural environment of Burundi but also the natural one.

5.3 Interpretation of Results:

5.3.1 Results:

In Burundi, like in many African countries, child birth constitutes the cornerstone of most if not all families. This importance is embedded in the name that the child takes up at birth. At times we hear people say that “this or that child has dragged the family name in the mud”. Such an expression comes from the fact that a particular child has done a horrible or scandalous thing which brings shame to the family. When such a terrible act is committed, the family is easily identified through the name of the criminal. This is in the case where the family is identified from the name that their child bears. In Europe and America, for example, a childless couple can create a foundation in their name so that when they are already dead; their family name would not go into oblivion. Some barren couples write books which would serve for posterity when they are no more. In most African countries, the situation is different. There are cases in which families have broken up because of barrenness be it on the part of the wife or husband. A family without children is not respected in most African societies. In bars or any other public place, you can hear someone say, “When people with children are talking; people like you should keep quite”. In most African families, when a person does not have a child, his situation is worse than that of someone who has killed a human being. Even the Bible stresses the importance of children. In Proverbs 17: 6, it is said, “Grandchildren are the crown of the aged, and the glory of children is their parents”. It is for this reason among others that surnames play such a vital role in the society. It is important to say that what is important is usually given a worthy name to reflect the thing or person that bears the name concerned.

5.3.2 Summary of Results:

This study came out with the following results: 1) The majority of Kirundi surnames are meaningful. The following are examples: *Ahishakiye* “the pride of his masculinity”; *Bigirimana* “everything is done by God”; and *Habonimana* “thanks to God”. However, there are some in the minority which are not meaningful. The names which fall in this category are those which are used to deceive death especially in families which have lost many children. Examples are *Kabwa* in Kirundi which is a small dog and *Akoh* in Bafut which refers to a toilet. Even in other continents like America and Europe such names exist; for example, *Bush*, *Rice*, and *Brown*. Irrespective of the reasons for giving such names in those continents, they fall in the same category I am concerned with here.

2) There are Kirundi names which relate with the Burundi culture. Such names were more regularly given in the past than now. When I talk of the past, I mean, before the arrival of Christianity in Burundi. Example are *Nungubumwe* which means “you will bring unity and love among us” and *Ntahorutaba* which means “Death and hatred are found everywhere on earth”. That is to say, with the advent of Western religions in Burundi, the frequency of culture related names has reduced considerably.

3) Kirundi surnames exhibit the relationship that the name givers have with God. Names in this category were few in the past whereas they abound nowadays. Examples are *Mpawenayo* which means “I am given by God”; *Nihorimbere* which means “May God be ahead”; and *Niyonkuru* which means “God is powerful”.

4) Kirundi surnames portray the relationship between the name givers and their neighbors. Examples are *Baranyanka* which means “They hate me” and *Ndimurwimo* which means “I am in a quarrel”.

5.3.3 State of the Research Questions and Hypotheses:

In this section we illustrate whether our research questions were answered or not. Furthermore, we portray each hypothesis, indicating whether it was confirmed, modified, or completely rejected. Thus, it is worthy to recall our research questions and hypotheses. The research questions were as follows: 1) How meaningful are surnames in Burundi? 2) To what extent do surnames relate with the Burundi society and culture? 3) What role do surnames play in Burundi? 4) What role do surnames play in the world at large?

As tentative results we proposed the following hypotheses: 1) The majority of surnames in Burundi are meaningful; 2) Only a negligible number of surnames relate with the Burundi society and culture; 3) Surnames in Burundi portray the relationship that the name givers have with God; and 4) The role that surnames play in the world at large is immense.

As far as our four research questions are concerned, our investigated provided answers. With respect to Research Question 1, which inquired about the meaningful nature of Kirundi surnames, the answer was got from the responses given by informants to Questions 9 and 11 of the questionnaire. The informants proved that Kirundi surnames were meaningful by providing the meanings of their respective names. They went ahead to give the origin of their names. Some of the informants further gave a list of other names and appended their meanings to them. This shows how they were enthusiastic about the Kirundi names and their meanings because the questionnaire did not require them to provide information on additional names. However, this additional list of Kirundi names given by some of our informants rendered us more confident in the authenticity of the data we obtained from them. Out of 70 respondents to the questionnaire, only 1 did not know the origin of their name, the reason being that they were taken to Rwanda (because of the genocide in Burundi) before he came of reasonable age. Thus, hypothesis one was confirmed.

Concerning Research Question 2, which asked the extent to which surnames relate with the Burundi society and culture, the views of the respondents converged on the fact that only few names portray the Burundi society and culture. They indicated that most names are God related. Thus, the second hypothesis, which stated that only a negligible number of surnames relate with the Burundi society and culture, was confirmed. There is an issue I want to state, though it is debatable, I still want to stress it here because no burning issue can receive 100% support. What I want to say regarding this second hypothesis is that some analysts, I included, believe that God related matters constitute part of culture. This can be explained by the fact that culture has to do with the way of life of any group of people, Aletum (op.cit). If this school of thought is given due consideration, we will infer that the second hypothesis is modified, meaning that it is only partially confirmed. That is to say, most Kirundi names are related to the society and culture of Burundi.

As far as the third research question, which requested the role which surnames play in Burundi, is concerned, answers were provided thanks to the responses given to Questions 9, 10, 12, 13, and 14 of the questionnaire. Some of the data from the focus group discussion also gave answers to this research question number three. The responses to the above mentioned questions and the revelations from the focus group discussion converged on the fact that most Kirundi surnames exhibit the name givers' relation with God, and that these names convey to their surrounding what they feel about them. The third hypothesis which was the tentative answer to this research question was, thus, partially confirmed. This third hypothesis stated that surnames in Burundi portray the relationship that the name givers have with God, but our results revealed that there are some Kirundi surnames which are not related to God. Examples of such names are *Gahimbare* which means “Joy”; *Nyabenda* which means “The ninth child”; and *Bazompota* which means “They will revenge me”.

With reference to the fourth research question which went thus, “What role do surnames play in the world at large?” a number of answers were got. Answers to this research question were obtained thanks to the responses given to Questions 13 and 14 of the questionnaire. Some of the data got from the interview and the focus group discussion also provided responses to this fourth research question. The answers centered on the fact that names play a crucial role in every society.

The informants supported their arguments for the vital place of names in the world at large by providing a number of points. Some said that names reflect the cultural norms of the communities of the name givers and bearers. This view ties in with that of Al-Qawasmi (2016:178) when he says this, “Every society has its own traditions when it comes to naming their newborns. When parents name their children, they tend to avoid names which may violate their social norms”. Other informants said that most of the names reflect the parents’ attachment to Christianity, which is religion. They went ahead to support their viewpoint by saying that religion is the foundation of any society since it helps, most of the time, in the resolution of conflicts. Religion is at the base of most societies and, thus, an important aspect like naming should take it into account. This view is shared by Al-Qawasmi (ibid) in his study on the newborn names in Jordan when he says that religion is one of the factors that affect the naming system as the Jordanian society changes with modernization. In the light of the answers given to the fourth research question; I can say that the fourth hypothesis, “The role that surnames play in the world at large is immense”, was confirmed.

5.4 Link to Real Life:

Naming is a phenomenon which is true to life. Whether reference is made to human beings, animals, plants, or places, names are given to them. Insofar as anything or any person exists, it must be given a name. The main objective of a name is to serve as a means of identification. The Kirundi naming system, which is the core of this study, is a microcosm of what obtains anywhere in the world at large. The naming system in Burundi is not the same as in other parts of the world, but this is normal because the socio-cultural, historical, geographical, and linguistic realities of Burundi are not the same as those of other countries of the world.

Whether at the local, national, or continental level, people give names. These names distinguish one person from another. Names are generally given in a way that reflects the norms of the communities of the name givers concerned, Deluzain (ibid). When the name bearer grows up and realizes either that the realities of where they are living have changed or that their names have a negative impact on their lives, they can take up new names. Remarkable instances of name change can be illustrated with these two late former Heads of State of former Zaire, now the Democratic Republic of Congo, and the Republic of Gabon. In January 1972, Mobutu changed his name from “Joseph Désiré Mobutu” to “Mobutu Sese Seko Koko Ngbendu Wa Za Banga”, (www.britannica.com/.../Mobutu-Sese-Seko). Omar Bongo took the name “El Hadj Omar Bongo” when he converted to Islam in 1973 and added “Ondimba”, his father’s name, in 2003, (www.britannica.com/biography/Omar-Bongo). These illustrations confirm the fact that the name change which some of my informants indicated is realistic to what obtains in the world.

Through names we can unpack our minds, express our emotions (vent our anger; express our happiness, pain, and disgust). Thus, names constitute a subtle and indirect way of communicating our views. The names we give our children can convey our messages to those who come in contact with our children. The giving and using of names constitute an integral aspect of life. Wherever there is a community of people, names are bound to exist so as to distinguish each person from another. When people meet for the first time, they get to know each other by introducing each other through names. There are Kirundi names which depict the relationship between the name givers and their neighbors. If they live in a hostile manner, the names will exhibit hostility. If on the other hand, they coexist harmoniously, the names that their children bear will portray harmony. You would agree with me that all societies harbor happy and sad moments. All societies have conflicts, though in varying degrees. Some of these societies try to solve their differences by resorting to war like Syria, Afghanistan, and Iraq. Others express their anger in a permanent manner; that is, through names. I say permanent because the message communicated by a name is ongoing so long as the name bearer is alive or has not changed their name.

5.5 Conclusion:

This chapter gives details and provides examples to show how the topic under study is real to life. The next chapter analyzes some salient data of this study.

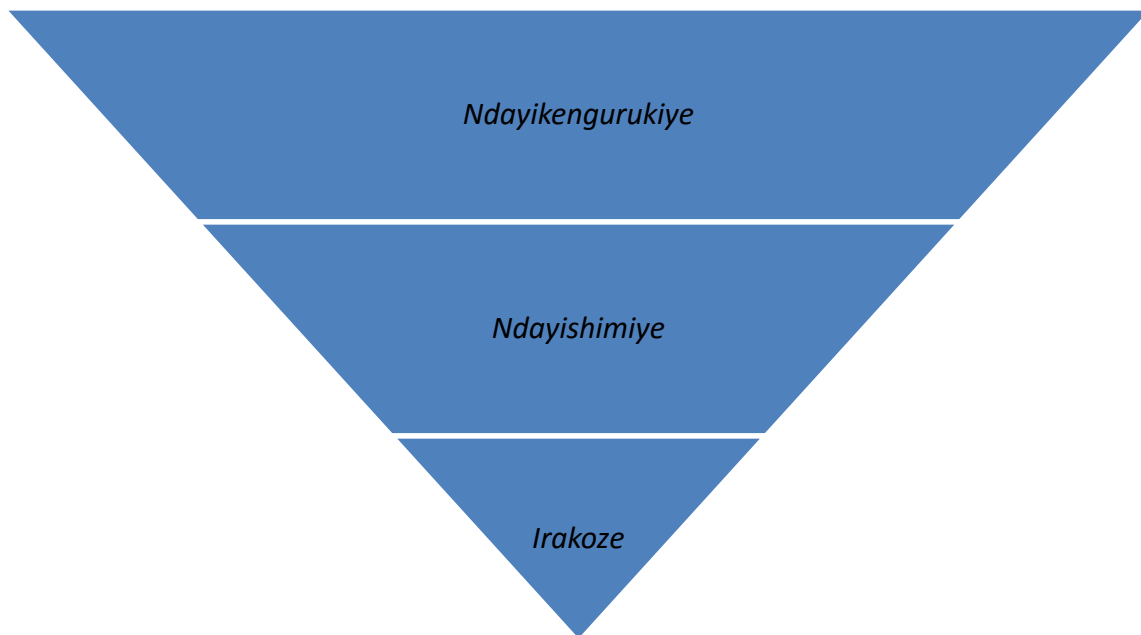
6. ANALYSIS

6.1 Introduction:

This chapter handles individually, not collectively, the analysis of data obtained through specific instruments. These tools include the questionnaire, the interview, and the focus group discussion.

6.2 Isolated Analysis:

There are some Kirundi surnames which, though different orthographically, mean the same. Let us illustrate with the following names: *Irakoze*, *Ndayishimiye*, and *Ndayikengurukiye*. All these three names mean “I thank God”. Here we need to stress the fact that even though these names mean “thanks”, there are slight differences in terms of the grade of the gratitude expressed to God. The name, *Irakoze*, displays the lowest level of thanks. *Ndayishimiye*, on its part, expresses a higher level of thanks to God than *Irakoze* does. If we consider all the three names, we will notice that *Ndayikengurukiye* shows the highest grade of thanks to God. The inference we can make here is that the choice of which of the three above mentioned names to be given to Burundian children is determined by the circumstances which surround the birth and naming process of the name bearer. If the circumstances require simple thanks, the name, *Irakoze*, will be given; if the situation needs great thanks, the name, *Ndayishimiye*, will be given; and if the context demands that the greatest gratitude be displayed, the name, *Ndayikengurukiye* will be given. I can illustrate this phenomenon of surname gradation in the diagram below:



Source: Personal Initiative

Diagram.2: Gradation of Names with the same Meaning

6.2.1 Presentation and Analysis of Data from Questionnaire:

The data analysis is done here quantitatively. That is to say, the data are presented in tables with results displayed in frequencies and percentages.

Question 8: Who gave your name? This question was asked to find out the persons who play an important role in naming in Burundi. The information from the answers to this question can throw light on the meaning and reasons for giving names in the Kirundi language.

Table.4: Presentation of the Data on Kirundi Name-Givers

Answers	Frequency	Percentage
My father	38	54.29
My mother	4	5.71
My parents	20	28.57
Others	7	10
No answer	1	1.43
Total	70	100

As I discussed earlier and as displayed in Table 4 above, the respondents who answered my questionnaire were 70. The respondents whose names were given by their fathers stood at 38 out of 70, representing 54.29 %. With regards to the informants whose names were given by their mothers, the number was 4 out of 70, representing 5.71 %. The names that were given by both parents of the informants represented 28.57 %, that is, 20 out of 70. One respondent did not give any answer, representing 1.43 %. With respect to the informants who gave other responses, I summarized the following: –“My name was given by people surrounding my home”; when they talk of “people surrounding my home”, they mean their neighbors. –“My name was given by my aunt”, –“My name was given by my uncle”, –“I gave my names myself”: The implication here is that the informant changed the name that was given to him by his parents. He went ahead to say that the former name given to him by his parents brought ill luck to him. He went to the Burundi Ministry of Justice; fulfilled the required legal formalities and had his name changed. The change of name by an individual himself is possible. This can take place when the individual is considered an adult by law.

The age of an individual to be considered as an adult varies from nation to nation. In Cameroon, my country of birth, the age of an adult is 18. This is what Angwafo (2014) says in this respect, “In Cameroon, the age to possess the national identity card is 18 years”. At this age of 18, the individual is authorized by law to make an identity card. In the identity card, the most important section is that which contains the name of the bearer (which is the subject of this investigation). On control, the police check the identity cards of people in order to ensure security. In Cameroon any person aged 18 and above caught without a valid identity card is considered a criminal and punished as such. If people did not have names, I do not think that identity cards would be very useful. In Burundi an individual is considered an adult when they are of a voting age, and the voting age in Burundi is 16 years and above. This is confirmed by Irakoze (2013) when he says that the voting age in Burundi is from 16 years old and more. To him, this age of 16 is considered as that of an adult in Burundi because if you are not an adult you cannot be enfranchised.

The last three views expressed by the respondents of Question 8 are as follows: –“My name was given by my school”. The implication here is that the respondent whose name was given by the school had their name changed. I can justify my assertion by the fact that a child cannot be nameless until the age to be enrolled in school. Children’s names are usually given at birth. This situation here is certainly one in which the respondent’s name given at birth was not considered appropriate at the enrolment time. As such, the school authorities propose, not impose, the replacing name, usually in agreement with the name bearer’s parents. –“I don’t know who gave my name. I was born during the genocide in Rwanda. We fled before I got someone to ask”. The informant who said that he did not know who gave his name explained that he was born during the genocide; and they fled to Rwanda before he had time to ask questions about his name. This disclosure by the informant shows how socio-political crisis can bring about information with regards to names and name bearers. –“My name was given by the Ministry of Justice”. This case of a name bearer’s name having been given by the Ministry of Justice indicates the fact that the request of name change is made either by the name bearer himself or the name bearer’s family. This can be explained by the fact that the Ministry of Justice can accept a request of change of name on examination of the legal implications of such a decision. The change of a person’s surname, forename, part of the name, or the entire name is possible; but this must be through the enforcement section of the Ministry of Justice of the country of origin of the person concerned (<https://www.justice.gov.uk/courts/rjc-rolls-building/queens-bench/enforcement>).

Question 10: What is the origin of your name? This question was asked in order to get knowledge of the sources of the names of Kirundi surname bearers. The answers to this question illuminate certain issues related to whether the names originate from the Burundi culture, religion of name bearers and givers, or other sources.

Table.5: Presentation of the Data on the Origin of Informants’ Names

Answers	Frequency	Percentage
Christian (God-related Names)	58	82.86
Culture-related Names	6	8.57
Others	4	5.71
No answer	2	2.86
Total	70	100

The data from Table 3 above shows that 58 respondents out of 70, representing 82.86% said that their Kirundi surnames are God-related. We should note the fact that notions on religion and God-related issues constitute part of culture. When people of a particular country change their habits from traditionalism to Christianity or Islam, this is a modification of cultural habits. We should also note that not everybody in a particular area can be of the same religious denomination.

The choice of the religion to practice is usually an individual or a family decision; and on most occasions when a person changes their religion, they also change their name. This was the case with the late former Gabonese Head of State Omar Bongo when he started to practice the Islam religion, (www.britannica.com/biography/Omar-Bongo). Such a situation is justified by the fact that a name does not only identify an individual with their family but, at times, also with their denomination. Six informants out of seventy, representing 8.57% said that their surnames are related to culture. Two informants out of seventy, representing 2.86% did not give any answer. The 4 remaining respondents, representing 5.71% provided other answers. The following constitute a presentation of the other answers given by these four respondents: -“I am the 3rd child but the 2nd son of the family, thus, my name means *joy*”. -“My name originated from a period of victory; that is why my name means *victorious*” because boys are cherished in African communities. -“My name is from the period of ethnic crisis in my country, Burundi”. -“My name was to serve as a source of unity because my name, *Nungubumwe*, means *unity*”.

With respect to the views of the four informants who gave other sources of origin of their names, I can state the following: Concerning the opinion of the first of the four respondents in this category who said that his name means joy since he was not only the 3rd child but also the second son, I can say that his view is worthy. This worthiness is substantiated by the fact that children are a blessing to most homes irrespective of the country or continent. The joy is greater when the new-born child is a boy as is the case here. The respondent who said that their name came from the fact that their name means victory also had a convincing argument. I support this informant’s view because the birth of children is the victory over infertility. One of the respondents said that his name originated from the period of ethnic crisis in Burundi. It is worthy to recall here that Burundi has experienced intermittent decades of ethnic conflicts since the 1970s, (www.globalsecurity.org/military/world/war/burundi.htm). I think that no one can gainsay the fact that when there is a serious crisis notwithstanding the nature, this affects the linguistic situation of the speech community concerned. Since names form an essential aspect of a community, they pick up and modify themselves with what goes on in their ecology of existence. This view ties in with the Sapir/Whorf Hypothesis, (Ash: 2012). The fourth informant said that their name stemmed from the need to unify. Thus, the name, *Nungubumwe*, of the informant which means unity was welcome in a country like Burundi in dire need of unity after decades of conflicts. Such a name can be very effective in consolidating unity because the moment it is mentioned, people visualize the importance of unity. This situation can be related to the word, *amahoro*, in Kirundi which means peace. This word is used on daily purposes in Burundi as greetings, that is, specifically, “good morning”. The word, *amahoro*, is very essential in Kirundi because it reminds the Burundians of the turbulent years of the past and, thus, the need to avoid them today and tomorrow.

Question12.a) According to you, is there any relation between Kirundi surnames and the socio-cultural environment of Burundi? Yes No

b) If yes, give details.....

This question was asked to find out the respondents’ views on the relationships between Kirundi surnames and the socio-cultural environment of their country, Burundi.

Table.6: Presentation of the Data on the Relation between Kirundi Surnames and the Socio-cultural Environment of Burundi

Answers	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	69	98.57
No	1	1.43
Total	70	100

Out of the 70 respondents to whom the questionnaire copies were given, 69 said, yes representing 98.57%. The 98.57% of the respondents, who said yes, supported the view that there is a close link between Kirundi surnames and the socio-cultural environment of Burundi. This is in keeping with the Sapir/Whorf Hypothesis, Ash (op.cit). If we make a close examination of the Kirundi surnames under study and their meanings, we will notice that their etymology has a solid foundation in the Burundi culture. Whether the names are God related or non-God related, their origins are in the Burundi socio-cultural environment. From my investigation I found out that during the Burundi pre-colonial period, most of the names were not God related. The sudden change to God-related names reflected the Burundians’ adoption of the Christian religion.

With regard to the one informant who said ‘No’, I can say that their view cannot be taken seriously because they did not explain the reason for this answer. Thus, the implication here is that the respondent gave the answer haphazardly. One can

only give a careful thought to an answer whose reason has been explained; especially when the question concerned requires a yes or no answer.

With respect to the follow up question 12 b) which required that the respondents give details concerning their choice of yes or no, I have provided highlights of their opinions below.

–“When, for example, parents have lost many children and they finally have one child, they could call them *Misigaro* or *Rupeu*, meaning death, so that, according to them, the death could be afraid of the new born child”. This explanation of the informant is in conformity with the belief in Bafut culture, where names such as *Akoh* and *Afutiih*, meaning “toilet” and “tree leaf” respectively are given to children to deceive death under similar circumstances like those in Burundi referred to by the informant above.

–“Kirundi surnames are based on socio-cultural environment because in Burundian culture parents name a child according to the situation of the moment, or they want the continuity of the father’s family because the Burundian society is a patriarchal one”. The Burundian society like most African societies gives much powers and honor to the man, who is husband and head of the family. The influence of men in the Burundi society is seen in the fact that most names are given to children by their fathers. As we can see in Table 4 above, 38 informants out of 70, representing 54.29 %, constitute those whose names were given by their fathers, while only 4 out of 70, representing 5.71%, had their names given by their mothers. From these statistics we observe that the discrepancy between fathers and mothers in Burundi in terms of giving names is too great, 54.29 % as against 5.71% respectively.

–“Of course yes; there is a relationship between Kirundi surnames and socio-cultural environment because any Kirundi surname must have its meaning or information to convey linked to the socio-cultural environment of Burundi”. Here the informant highlights the fact that names communicate messages in the society where they are used. However, not all names, from my point of view, are related to socio-cultural environment. This can be explained by the fact that some parents sometimes give the names of their friends, who are not from the same socio-cultural environment, to their offspring. In this case the choice of this name is determined by the relationship between the name giver and their friend whose name has been used.

–“There is a relationship between surnames and the socio-cultural environment of Burundi. Those names of people are chosen by referring to the deeds of God. Not only people’s names but also animals’ names can be chosen by referring to the objects that are around in the society. For example, the names of cows or dogs can take their origin from nature”. This opinion is true because in Kirundi we have such names as *Inamariza* and *Kanyana* which mean a young cow. These names are often given to girls because young girls who are mature for marriage are referred to in Kirundi as *inka* meaning a cow.

–“There is a relationship because Burundians give surnames to their children according to the situation upon which they are”. This impression is relevant because there are Kirundi surnames that are given to reflect the turbulent socio-political situation of Burundi. Consequently, we have names which call for unity and peace like *Nungubumwe* and *Unamahoro* respectively.

–“Kirundi surnames are given to children in accordance with the circumstances their parents are undergoing. In this sense you can determine the circumstances one was born in if they tell you their name. You can also know which part of the country they come from (North, South, East, and West)”. It is good to identify where somebody comes from through their name. However, discrimination can set in when the region of origin of a person can be known by simply looking at their names. That is to say, it can be easy for partiality to take place on the basis of where people come from in the selection of people for jobs. Such a situation of discrimination is at times visible in Cameroon when people are recruited into the public service on ethnic basis. This is made possible because of the fact that Cameroon is a multi-ethnic country and this is easily identified from surnames which do not only vary from region to region but also from one ethnic group to another, Ayancho (1994: 25).

–“Some surnames are given as a way of thanking God or recognizing the power of God such as *Niyongabo* and *Ndayishimiye*. Other surnames depict the relationship within the society (*Ndimurwanko*), bravery (*Ntwari*), the place the child occupies in the family (*Kabura* = the 6th child and *Nyandwi* = the 7th child).

–“Let us take an example from my name. My parents told me that around my birth they had been threatened and they quarreled with some people. They had fought with my family and my family came out victorious. My parents did not continue squabbling with them and they gave me the name, *Murekambanze*, meaning “Let him/her begin or tempt me

first". Such a name serves as a warning to trouble makers that if they start problems, they will face the consequences. Thus, a name like *Murekambanze* transmits a moral lesson.

–“There is a relation because many Burundians give names to their children after observing what is happening around them in the community or the society”. This system of naming is in conformity with the Sapir/Whorf Hypothesis, Ash (ibid), which states that language frames the world view of things and that the world view of the society determines the way language is used. Names which constitute an essential aspect of language reflect what takes place in the surrounding ecology.

–“It is because Kirundi surnames are based on things which happen in our society. Some relate to things or situations which were in your family or country where you were born for them to strengthen things if they are good and to change things if the situation is bad”. The impression here is that there are names which have an impact on the society and environment in which they are used.

–“Yes, because people give names to their children referring to how people who live in a certain society have good relations or bad relations or bad behavior, or the names refer to God since ancestral time Burundians believed in God”. It is worthy of note here that Burundi is a country that had been rocked by socio-economic conflicts for decades, and is still experiencing sporadic turbulent episodes, (https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Burundian_Unrest). Such a country needs a solid foundation in religion; the use of God-related surnames constitutes a manifestation of religious attachment.

–“In Burundi, children are given names according to the socio-cultural environment. Parents give a name to a new born according to how they live or interact with others (neighbors) and do that so as to facilitate the continuation of the family name, since Burundi practices the patriarchal system”. From this explanation we notice that some Kirundi surnames exhibit the way people interact daily and this is an aspect of the culture and environment of Burundi.

–“There is a relation between Kirundi surnames and the socio-cultural environment of Burundi because when parents name their children, they name them according to what they saw in their socio-cultural environment; that is, according to what happened in their living compound”.

–“There is some relation between Kirundi surnames and the socio-cultural environment because a child when he is born, he is not only named according to the situation in which his family lives, but also in accordance with the way, manner, or the issues of the society and culture”.

–“There is an important relation between Kirundi surnames and socio-cultural environment because many names have the suffix “-mana” which means God. This is because many Burundians believe in God and that it is Him who gives children. Other names denote some social events that occur often in our society; for example, *Ndaruzaniye*, which means “When most of the children have died, the new-born may also die”. The implication here is that the names that are given to children give information about the birth and death rate in the families concerned.

–“Burundians believe that the Almighty Father in heaven is responsible for what happens on earth as well as in heaven. Then to give names to their children, most of the cases, we find the presence of God; for example, Bigirimana, Habonimana, and Harerimana”.

–“There is a relation indeed. For example, when a family is hated by many neighbors, if a child is born in that family, he may be called *Ntacobazongira* which can be translated thus, ‘they cannot do anything against me’. This is to show those neighbors that whether they hate the family or not, the family members will remain alive”. This means that some names help in protecting the family to which the name bearer is born against aggressive neighbors.

–“From time immemorial, Kirundi surnames are related to religious belief which illustrates its relationship with socio-cultural environment”. The inference we can make here is that Kirundi surnames, like those of other speech communities, portray the religious beliefs of their name bearers and name givers.

–“According to what is usual in Burundi culture, it is very scarce, if not impossible, to meet a surname with no such socio-cultural reflection. It is so because very few are family names; they rather refer to the society”. This confirms the view that language is a reflection of society (Ayancho, 2015). Felecan (2012: ix), on his part, states that names reflect socio-cultural transformations. This implies that as society changes, such modifications are reflected in the names that name givers give to name bearers. In spite of the fact that names reflect transformations in the society, Felecan (op.cit.) goes ahead thus, “People have the freedom to name people, places and products that result from human activity”.

–“Yes, there is obviously a relation between Kirundi surnames and the socio-cultural environment of Burundi because Burundians while naming their children refer to culture and the situation in which they are when they want to name their children”. Thus, the Kirundi names, in most cases, are a result of the circumstances in which the name givers find themselves. In some cases when the name bearers grow up and find themselves in different circumstances, they change their names to suit the current realities.

–“There is a system mostly used in the traditional environment. There, a child is named according to which number he or she comes. For example, from the sixth child, they have a special naming system. There is also a naming system for twins as well as the one who follows them. Also, if one twin dies, the other is given a special and different name”. It is essential to state here that the special situations indicated by the informant are culture-based because they vary from culture to culture and thus, from society to society.

–“Yes, because there are, for example, Kirundi surnames which are given according to the situation or circumstances in which a child is born. For example, *Karikunzira* which means the one who was born during the mother’s trip or voyage”. The implication here is that any activity which marks the birth of a child influences the name that the child takes up.

–“Yes, there is, because Burundians find themselves referring to the manner in which they live in the society. Some surnames are related to the manner they live daily in their society”. Thus, living conditions in the society are reflected in names.

–“Yes, because there are Kirundi names which say more about the socio-cultural environment of Burundi such as *Misagaro* which means a child whose mother died during his birth and others like *Nganzurwimo* which means the child who was born during the war events”. This implies that there are names which mark spectacular events in the lives of the family or the society concerned.

–“There are names like *Kantungeko* which is appropriate to a child born when there were many children who died before him or her in the same family due to witchcraft. There are also some parents who give all children the same name even when the circumstances of birth are not the same”. The impression we get here is that the same name can be given in different circumstances; it all depends on the parents and their reasons for the choice of names.

–“First, in Burundi, we believe in God and it is seen in the naming system in Burundi. Second, Burundians give names according to what they are living. For instance, when a child is born after a prolonged suffering by the mother, he is named *Mvuyekure* which means ‘I come from afar’ “.

–“Kirundi surnames and the socio-cultural environment of Burundi are interwoven because Kirundi surnames are closely connected or really related to the way of life of Burundians, their relations, and their beliefs”. This implies that Kirundi surnames intervene in any aspect of life of the Burundian society.

–“Yes, because names like *Kanyana*, *Munyana*, and *Musaninyana* are given by families which breed cows which are part of the socio-cultural environment of Burundi”. It is important to note here that cows play a vital role in the economy of Burundi. Burundi is country with economic difficulties. Thus, it is obvious that an economic product like the cow should be reflected in an aspect which is as sensitive as names. To further prove the strength of the cow in the Burundi culture, we can indicate the fact that the image of the cow is that which is given to a young girl who is ready for marriage. You will agree with me that girls are jewels in any society because they are the source of life. This means that without girls human societies would end because people would grow up, get old and die without replacements. Thus, using the image of a cow in names is an acknowledgement of the important role of women in the Burundi society in particular and the world at large. Names related to the cow are generally given only to females in the Burundi society.

–“Kirundi surnames are closely interrelated to the socio-cultural environment of Burundi. That is to say, a child is named according to the society in which it was born. For example, a child who was born in the family of witches would be named *Ntahomvukiye* or *Ntamakuriro*. These names have meanings which are related to the practice of witchcraft.

–“When naming, Burundians refer to the conditions in which they are living, which explains the relationship between Kirundi surnames and socio-cultural environment”.

–“In past years, many parents liked to name their children referring to the ways in which they were living. In Burundi, the system of naming children usually takes into consideration their culture. Believers of God name their children basing on religion”. If believers name their children with God related Kirundi names, the implication is that non-believers will give to their offspring names that have no link with religion. Table 1 above throws light on what I am explaining here.

However, we should note that there are some unbelievers who give God related names to their children and some believers who give to their offspring names which have nothing to do with religion.

–“It is true that socio-cultural elements have an impact on the way people (Burundians) name their children but we can notice that there is a lot of implication of God. This is because a long time ago Burundians believed in an Almighty creator that regulates and controls as well as protects all people and everything”. As far as I am concerned, I feel that some Burundians still believe in the Almighty God. I can justify this with the fact that most Burundians currently give God related names to their offspring and relations.

–“Of course, yes, because Kirundi surnames are given due to the way they live, their beliefs, the problems that they encounter in their everyday life, without forgetting the events which are happening when a child is born”. Here, the informant gives a summary of the situations under which Kirundi surnames are given, all which are linked to the culture and environment of the name givers and name bearers concerned.

–“This assertion is validated by the fact that naming in Burundi refers to how/what people of a given clan (tribe) are facing. If the tribe is characterized by rampant outbreak of diseases, all newly born babies are this time named regarding those diseases. If it is facing a joyful period, they will give delighting names”. Thus, from a person’s name we can decipher whether the name bearer was born during happy moments or sad ones.

–“There are names related to animals, for example, *Munyana*, which means cows, and others related to birds, for instance, *Kageregere*, which means a species of birds”. Here, we observe that the naming system in Burundi also reflects fauna and flora. Thus, nature is highly represented in Kirundi surnames.

–“Yes, because many surnames in Burundi reflect the way the family lives. For example, there is this surname, *Nzokiranjevy*, which means that the child was born when the family lived miserably and they don’t see any way of escaping; they were in despair of becoming rich because of how they lived”.

–“For me, I am sure that there is a relation between Kirundi surnames and the socio-cultural environment of Burundi. First of all, Burundians believe in God. Many years before colonization they believed in a God called *Imana* through *Kiranga*”. *Imana* is the Kirundi word for God whose messenger is the spirit called *Kiranga*.

–“Kirundi surnames are closely linked with the socio-cultural environment of Burundians. If we make a deep analysis of what is revealed in these surnames given to Burundians, we will find out that most Burundian citizens try to express their belief, feeling, anger, ambition, or wish in the way they name their children”.

–“According to me, there is a relation between Kirundi surnames and the socio-cultural environment of Burundi because Burundians give names to their children according to the way they live, their neighborhood, and their religion. This means that through a surname, Burundians are able to understand how the parents of a child lived the time they gave birth to that child”.

–“There is a relation between Kirundi surnames and the socio-cultural environment of Burundi because these surnames are related to Burundian culture and to what Burundians believe in. Some Kirundi surnames are related to the beliefs that Burundians have in God and others are related to the Burundian culture”.

–“There is a relationship because Burundians are people who are not used to reacting directly about situations but show their point of view by naming a child in such a way; for example, *Ndimurwanko* which means ‘I am not loved’ “. This confirms the fact that names communicate messages.

–“There is a relation between Kirundi surnames and the socio-cultural environment of Burundi. This is because some parents in Burundi name their children according to the situation in which they lived or according to what happened to them. They know that God is on the top of everything”. Most parents who consider God as omnipotent always give God related names to their offspring. This is because they believe that God would pass through those names to protect the children.

–“In Burundi, people give Kirundi surnames according to the situation and circumstances in which the family finds itself. Also, there are surnames which are given due to culture; for example, *Muhizi* which means someone who is excellent in hunting”. It is worth noting that hunting is a prominent daily activity in Burundi; thus, names related to hunting are

regularly given to newly born children. The hunting prowess of Burundians is confirmed on https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/wildlife_of_Burundi where it is said that extensive hunting takes place in Burundi. Thus, here we realize that any essential activity exerted in Burundi is also reflected in the names that are given to children.

–“There is a relation between Kirundi surnames and the socio-cultural environment of Burundi because all the surnames that are given to Burundians have a significant meaning sometimes due to the background of each family; for instance, if a family had undergone a terrible past, surnames will reflect that terrible past or simply as most Burundians are Christians, surnames also will be showing religious beliefs”.

–“Before the colonialism in Burundi and the short time after it, parents gave names to their children by analyzing the climate existing between parents and neighbors. But nowadays most surnames give praise to God and Jesus”.

–“In the naming system in Kirundi, all the names have meanings or messages to give to the society. Parents don't name their children at random. They refer to the situation of living during the naming ceremony. Other names are transmitted from generation to generation and from parents to children, especially fathers' = Fathers' names serve as family names”.

–“In the socio-cultural environment of Burundi, names are given in accordance with the neighborhood. If Christianity reigns in any environment, all names must address to God; if not, gossip is involved within the same society”.

–“In Burundi, surnames are given according to the environment where someone lives or according to what someone loves to do in his or her everyday life. Surnames also can be given in societies between its members depending upon what they want to signify”. This implies that the names which name givers give are those whose meanings convey the messages that the name givers intend.

–“Yes, there is a link because Burundians like God and in Burundian culture God is put in front of everything. Then, these names are very important and they are related in that case and many of them end in the morpheme, *-imana*, which shows that they belong to the Almighty”.

–“In my opinion, this relation refers to the fact that parents want to dedicate their children to God in order to protect them from evil”. The inference we can draw from this informant's opinion is that the majority of the names that parents give to their children are God-related. However, we should note the fact that not all parents are Christians. Parents who are traditionalists also reflect their belief by giving non-God related Kirundi names to their offspring.

–“Kirundi surnames are related to the socio-cultural environment in the fact that many families give their children names according to the circumstances which happened to them, and others for a wish or thanks to God who saves them from dangerous events. Others name their children relating to their grand-fathers' names in order not to forget their parents and grand-parents”. Thus, names can serve as a means of remembrance of loved dead relations. In this case when the names are called, they picture the image of the dead parents who have some sort of reincarnated in the newly born children.

–“In Burundian culture, if you, a woman, do not put to birth immediately you are married, you risk being sent away. So when you finally give birth to a child, you name him according the hard times you passed through. When you analyze Burundian names, you realize that they are closely related to family conditions and neighborhood ones”. Here, we notice that in Burundian tradition, child birth, family conditions, as well as neighborhood relations play a very vital role. Thus, such aspects are reflected in the selection of the Kirundi surnames that are given to children.

–“There is a great relation between Kirundi surnames and the socio-cultural environment of Burundi because these are given according to what Burundians believe; that is, names related to God's contribution in our life time. Also parents give surnames in order to manifest what they wish to their children”. In Burundi, it is believed that the names that you give to your children can have an impact on their future lives. It is in this regard that the names which parents give to their children are those with positive meanings, that is, those which reflect their wishes.

–“Yes, because most Kirundi names are concerned with God. According to their beliefs, Burundian people surname their children depending on their societies and their culture. Parents choose surnames for their children due to situations, feelings and what they analyze in their societies. Thus, surnames combine everything in their environments”.

–“Some Kirundi surnames are related to the mode of life of Burundians before colonization; while others are related to Christianity, especially the surnames we have during and after colonization”. From the above view we can infer that some Kirundi surnames mark important periods and events in the history of Burundi.

–“The relation that exists between Kirundi surnames and the socio-cultural environment of Burundi can be explained by the fact that Burundians give surnames referring to the situation in which they are. Otherwise, in the Burundian society and culture, they give an individual the name of a well known character who has been important in the society”. An example is *Rwagasore*, the name of the hero of Burundi independence.

–“In Burundian culture, Burundians name the new born according to the situation they are living in. For example, we have the name, *Bucanayandi*, which means that even if they are living in bad conditions, they hope that things will change. There is also the name, *Ndimubansi*, which means that they have so many enemies”. This means that Kirundi names can denote both happy and sad moments.

–“The way Burundians attribute names to their children frankly shows how they take God as Almighty and consequently, what they possess and what they do. Life in general depends on God who is responsible for unseen and seen things”. The implication here is that there are Kirundi names which portray the omnipresent nature of God.

–“There is a relation between Kirundi surnames and the socio-cultural environment of Burundi because these names reflect the truths of everyday life in the society which has a given culture”.

The above views are those of informants with respect to the relationship between Kirundi surnames and the socio-cultural environment of Burundi. Their impression is generally that the link between Kirundi surnames and culture is quite close. Their explanations stress the fact that most Kirundi surnames reflect the cultural and natural environment of the people and their beliefs as well as their ways of life.

Question 13 a) Do you appreciate the naming system in Burundi?

Yes No

b) Explain your point of view.....

.....

This question was asked to find out the informant’s point of view with respect to the naming system in Burundi. That is, to get their opinion on whether they appreciate or disapprove of the way surnames are attributed in Burundi.

Table.7: Presentation of the Data on Informants’ Appreciation of the Naming System in Burundi

Answers	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	60	85.71
No	9	12.86
Other(s)	1	1.43
Total	70	100

As displayed in the table above, we observe the following: Sixty out of seventy informants, representing 85.71% affirmed that they appreciated the naming system in Burundi. Nine out of seventy respondents, representing 12.86% said “No”, to mean that they disapproved of the naming system of Burundi. One out of seventy informants, representing 1.43% said that their impression on the naming system of Burundi was mixed, that is, both positive and negative. From the data displayed in Table 7 above, I can infer that the majority of Burundians approve of the naming system in Burundi.

With respect to the follow up question, that is, 13) b, I summarized the following explanations: With regards to the respondents who said, “Yes”, I came up with what follows:

–“I say, ‘Yes’ because someone can even know what happened before his birth basing on the history of his name”.

–“A child is named, referring to the socio-cultural environment in which it was born; and many names are related to God”. It is good to appreciate your society and culture because you cannot abuse where you come from. This view ties in with this adage in the Bafut language which can be translated thus, “You cannot spit in the womb that you come from”.

- “Yes, because the name must be given by the father and it is him the head of the family”. This explanation portrays the informant as patriarchal since they claim that the father is the one to name the child. This confirms the fact that fathers in Burundi give most of the names to children; Table 4 above illustrates this assertion.
- “I appreciate this system of naming because those names can have special meanings. They can suggest the importance of a given object, and they can remind us of the role and the place of God”.
- “I appreciate it because it makes anyone to realize the situation in which they were given birth to”.
- “Yes, because you can recognize easily where someone is from and the circumstances under which they were born”.
- “I really appreciate the naming system in Burundi because it gives the image of the society, of the family (whether it is Christian or not) and the relationship between families”.
- “Yes, because they name children according to the environment and condition in which they are which keep memory”.
- “It is because they are more significant. They indicate how good or bad things/situations were when you were born for you to do the same or to change if necessary”.
- “Yes, because when you hear the name of a certain person you can know why he is called like them”. This means that names provide information with regard to why they are given that name. Thus, names are not given at random.
- “I appreciate it because it makes a common characteristic of family members across Burundi to hold on to our culture inherited from our ancestors”. We can infer from this explanation that Burundi names follow a regular pattern, for example, ending in the suffix morpheme, *-imana*, which means God in Kirundi.
- “This system is to be appreciated as it reflects human achievements and analysis of the world”.
- “It is appreciable because Burundians use names related to God and environmental situations”.
- “Yes, because the naming system in Burundi portrays the reality of our society: beliefs, social events etc”.
- “I, too, am a believer; therefore, I approve of the naming of people”.
- “It is important to give a name to your child thinking about its meaning”.
- “Through such a naming system one’s history is set unforgettable and that of the country will be drawn from all”.
- “I appreciate the naming system in Burundi because they base on their culture to name their children”.
- “Yes, as long as it helps to differentiate people”. That is to say, this informant approves of any naming system which makes it possible for the name bearer to be identified.
- “Yes, because through the name you can learn who a person is”.
- “Yes, because the naming is related to our culture and to our language”.
- “Yes, I do because that manner of naming reminds us to understand the power of God and the daily life in the society”.
- “Yes, because many of them are based on Burundian culture and others towards God, that is, Christianity”.
- “Yes, because names are given with a reason, but not at random”. This means that names are meaningful and serve a particular purpose.
- “I appreciate the naming system in Burundi because through the naming Burundians mirror their lives”.
- “It gives us the meaning of it; when you hear a name, you can guess what his parents wanted to say”.
- “Families which give surnames by referring to God want to put their children in the hands of God. Others want them to inherit the way of breeding cows”.
- “A child is named referring to the socio-cultural environment in which it was born and many names are related to God”.
- “It is because it helps people to know and remember their history”.
- “I appreciate it because it proves what and how they believe, what they like or hate and how they conceive things in their everyday life”.

- “I appreciate the present day naming of Burundians because they totally surrender themselves to God”.
- “My point is that the next generations would be able to find out the reason why someone is named like this or like that”.
- “The naming system in Burundi is important because it reveals how Burundian citizens live”.
- “Yes, because those surnames show how people live and in what God they trust”.
- “My view is that this shows the culture of the country, its own naming system and its beliefs”.
- “The naming system of Burundi is good because Burundians call their kids with names which are meaningful and which are connected with what they want their children to become”.
- “I appreciate it because they use Kirundi surnames which have meaning in the unique language of Burundians, Kirundi”.
- “In Burundi, they give names according to the situational conditions of life”.
- “I appreciate the naming system in Burundi because it shows directly what they believe in and their culture”.
- “I appreciate the naming system in Burundi because sometimes they show that God is important in their lives”.
- “Yes, because it shows that our Kirundi surnames have their origin and their meaning”.
- “I appreciate the naming system in Burundi because it really connects Kirundi surnames and the socio-cultural environment of Burundi and the youths are able to interpret their ancestors’ surnames”.
- “I appreciate it because it helps us to know our language as good as possible”. This informant highlights the fact that names constitute an essential aspect of language.
- “It helps children not to be identified wherever they are by saying these are the children of Mr. X and you cannot be a victim of it”. This view is weighty because most Kirundi surnames do not identify the name bearer with their family, neither do they identify them with the commune or province they come from. Such a naming system can serve the name bearer from discrimination or victimization on the basis of their name. Such a situation can also avoid the bearer from benefitting undue privileges. Thus, such a naming system gives room from a society of equality.
- “It reveals the truth in which people live in social groups. It reminds them of which social situation their parents were living in when they got a child”.
- “Yes, because without God a man is nothing”.
- “In my opinion, I appreciate the naming system because it shows the belief people have in God”.
- “I quite appreciate the naming system in Burundi because it shows Burundian belief and cultural conception of life”.
- “They name children with names which are related to God like *Bivakumana* and *Bizimana* just to show that only God gives and offers children and only God knows”.
- “Yes, because when such surnames are given to a newborn, this can identify its purpose because the surname has a meaning when you analyze it”.
- “The naming system in Burundi, on my part, is appreciated because it is related to the relationships among Burundians and how they view the image of God”.
- “Yes, I appreciate it because it shows the historical situation, and helps us to identify our grandfathers’ feelings and beliefs”.
- “I appreciate it because it is a way of educating or giving advice or a reminder to the whole society”.

As far as those who said, “No” are concerned, the following views were compiled:

- “The naming system in Burundi is not quite appreciable because some surnames signify what is bad while they should name their children with names related to God”. I think this respondent is a bit too categorical because parents have the latitude to give the names of their choice to their offspring. From my investigation, I notice that the majority of Kirundi surnames are God-related. I also think it worthy to say that whether names are God-related or otherwise, they all constitute the socio-cultural environment of a speech community. This is because society and culture encompass all what takes place in the human entity concerned.

–“No because there are many people who complain because of their names”. This view is recurrent in most societies because many people have changed their names due either to the fact that their names denote bad luck or they do not sound musical.

–“I can’t appreciate because even now there are many names which are very difficult to explain because you don’t know what caused parents to give such names to their children”.

–“I cannot appreciate the naming system in Burundi because sometimes it can make conflicts get worse and bring war among Burundian community members”. This explanation is brought about by the fact that some Kirundi surnames, instead of calming down tempers, rather stir conflicts among neighbors or members of speech communities.

–“No, because there are many names related to families which talk about the things of the past which will affect the children in the future when their grandparents have done bad things in the society”. That is to say, if the name of a grandparent is given to a child, the child will suffer the consequences of the bad acts committed by their namesake grandparent.

–“No, because most Burundians have almost ignored the naming system which is related to their culture and have God related names”. The impression that this informant is creating is that all Kirundi surnames are God related. This is not totally true because there are Kirundi surnames which are not related to God; for example, *Bucumi* which means the tenth child in the family. It is also important to indicate here that even religion is a socio-cultural aspect. Thus, a naming system which has a religious coloring is also socio-cultural.

–“I don’t appreciate the naming system in Burundi because many children are given names of malediction or sorrow which is not good since they were supposed to be given a name of joy”. I think that there is a sort of generalization here because some names denote happiness. We have for example, the name, *Gahimbare* which means joy.

–“I don’t appreciate the naming system in Kirundi because there is nothing particular or special in it”.

–“I do not appreciate the naming system in Burundi because some names may create a certain kind of hatred”.

–“Sometimes a given name contributes to someone’s behavior, heroism, even laziness”. This can be supported by the fact that the name that is given to a child affects their behavior and character trait.

Concerning the one informant who said that they partially, not totally, appreciate the naming system; this is their explanation: “As far as I am concerned, I partially appreciate it. I appreciate, on the one hand, because they name a child well and properly. On the other hand, I don’t because some Burundians name their children anyhow they wish it”.

Since most of the Kirundi surnames reflect the socio-cultural environment of Burundi, the implication is that Burundians like culture and that is why they approve names which reflect this situation. The majority of the respondents approve of the naming system in Burundi. However, there is a minority which finds fault in this naming system. You would agree with me that there is no society in which all people can have a consensus in any aspect. Thus, differences are ingredients of any entity of people.

14) If there is anything that you want to say about the naming system in Kirundi which is not indicated above, you are welcome.

This question was posed in order to give the opportunity to informants to provide details on name-related issues which the previous questions had not made provisions for. The following views were obtained from our respondents:

–“The naming system in Burundi is very important and each name has a meaning in regard to how the Burundian people behave or appear physically”.

–“Sometimes, even women can give names to children. But in that case, it means that a wife doesn’t respect her husband. She seems to become more powerful than her husband”. This stresses the fact that Burundi is a patriarchal society because men play key roles in determining the way affairs are run, including naming ceremonies. If we examine closely Table 4 above, we will realize that the majority of Kirundi surnames are given by the name bearers’ fathers. This confirms how influential men are in the society under study.

–“I cannot stop my point of view here without reinforcing the idea of the place that we give to God in our society. Another thing to add is that all the Burundian names do not always sing the value of a given person or the place of God. They may also show the weaknesses of God towards people. For example, *Ntiyakunze*, is a name through which God is

accused of not having loved that person. What I appreciate in this naming system in Burundi is that names are meaningful”.

–“Nowadays, because of modernization some Burundians are adopting the western culture of naming children without taking into account their meaning. This is regrettable because from today up to twenty years to come we won’t realize if a given child is the first, the second, the sixth, or eleventh etc, and also we won’t realize in which situation their parents were when they were put to birth”.

–“In traditional Burundi they used to give bad names to children in the perspective that death may not take the children. Some children were named, for example, *Munuko*, meaning a stink (a terrible smell). They did so in order to frighten death; that is, if death comes to take the child and becomes aware of the name, it will divert its attention and leave the child because it cannot take something which is stinking”. Actually, surnames that are given to children are related to God, that is, they end in *-imana*, meaning God. Examples are *Nduwimana*, *Harerimana*, and *Nsengimana*”.

–“I have appreciated the naming system in Burundi, but things are tending to change. Now Burundians, especially the educated ones or people from towns are imitating foreign naming systems, a thing which I criticize”.

–“The naming system in Kirundi is being changed because in the cities nowadays people don’t observe the norms of their communities but most of them give names which are related to God”. This means that modernism is having a remarkable impact on the Kirundi naming system; that is to say, there are transformations in the naming system due to society trends.

–“I can say that the naming system in Burundi depends on parents. Some give their children names that relate to God for God to protect their children and to give them good education. Others give their children names depending on the situation in which they are; for instance, some may be called *Nsanzugwino* if they are born in the period of war. Others may give *Inamahoro* if peace is guaranteed in the family and the country; or *Nduwayezu* to mean ‘I believe in Jesus’. You may name your child other names which show a wish; for example, if you want your child to have joy, you may name him *Munezero* or *Mugiraneza* if you want your child to have a good heart to help others”.

–“I want to add that even though it is a good habit to continue to hold our culture, I suggest that it should be children’s independence to choose the names they want and a clarification for some surnames is needed because some of them are complicated or are not easily understood”. I think it is a bit difficult to implement the recommendation of this respondent because by the time children are supposed to be christened, they are too young to propose the names they wish to take up. It is unlikely that parents wait for their children to come up to the age of reasoning so as to choose their own names. It is for this reason that when some children come of age of maturity, they change their names for personal reasons. Some may change their names because, according to them, they bring ill luck upon them; others may change their names because they are old fashioned and not musical enough to appeal to their instincts. Some children may do so because they consider their names as obnoxious; for example, most children in Bafut who are given at birth the name *Akoh* which means toilet, finally replace this name with a more appealing one.

–“The naming system in Kirundi reflects every aspect of life in the image of what is hidden and make everyone to be aware of the world, bad and good spheres”.

–“What I can add here is that now in Burundi, when parents name their children, they give names which are related to God but hitherto, they named their children according to what they saw in the society”. I feel that nowadays not all parents give God related names to their children. There are still some who give non-God related names; some even give the names of foreigners. For example, some parents name their children ‘Obama’ or ‘Bin Laden’; it all depends on whose ideals appeal to the parent.

–“Naming is an opportunity for families to express their issues by telling what happened, what they like or dislike, and by sending their messages indirectly”.

–“I would simply say that the naming system in Burundi changes throughout time. Before Christ was known in Burundi, people were naming their children according to the conditions they were living in, but now they give names related to God”. I wish to indicate here that not all parents in Burundi now give God related names to their children.

–“Very few Burundian names are of families. Many of them originate from the child’s parents’ feelings about something observed in the society, the gift itself or the past of the family”. This informant has made a very important point here. When we talk of a surname what immediately comes to our mind is the identity of the family. In terms of definition, a surname is the family name of the bearer. If we look at Kirundi surnames closely, we will notice that most of them do not

illuminate the family of the bearer as the informant has indicated here. Surnames which do not give information with regard to the family of the bearer are playing a role which is, according to me, deviant. This is because surnames should be imbued with the coloring of the bearers' families.

–“There are cases when the Kirundi surnames are transmitted from the grandfather, through the father, to his son. The same surname is shared by the whole family. It is easy to identify the members who belong to that family”. This view is contrary to the preceding one. This opinion highlights the situation of what a surname should be. Unfortunately, this situation is not what is recurrent in the Kirundi naming system.

–“There are names which are given to children depending upon the situation in which they were born such as misunderstandings with neighbors, poverty, and a season such as *Ndamukiriza* which means the month of April, or *Rwamwaka* which means one who was born at the end of the year. Some of the names are also given on the basis of the place in which he or she was born, for instance, *Kanyanzira* which is the name given to someone who is given birth to by his or her mother out of the hospital”.

–“Something I want to add is that there are some names that were given to children in the former times so as to protect them from death. Burundians gave children names such as *Gakoko* which means a very small animal so that when death comes, it is not going to take him since they believe that death will neglect the child for two reasons: first, death prefers people to animals; and second, death prefers big things to small ones.

–“Many Burundian surnames are related to the way of worship to the God they believe in. It is in this perspective that we find surnames such as *Ndahabonayo*, *Ndayisenga*, *Ndayisaba*, *Irakoze* and many others”.

–“In the naming system, parents are somehow inspired because the children can behave according to how they are called. The name of a child may have a positive or a negative impact on him or her”.

–“The naming system in Kirundi does not only relate Kirundi surnames and the socio-cultural environment of Burundi but also, it shows bravery; for instance, the surnames, *Ntare Rugamba* and *Muheto* denote such a quality”.

–“The naming system in Burundi is complicated. You can find that a child has a surname giving praise to the lord but if you try to analyze it, you find out that the name criticizes the neighbors or others. In addition, if your father has done something wrong, anybody (except your neighbors) is going to find out that you are the child of Mr. X and you will be the victim. Thus, in Burundi, it is rare to find a parent who gives the same surnames to his children. The surname varies. Some literate people give the same surnames to their children but it is the name of the father, not that of the mother”.

–“In many families, all children share the surname of their father. This is very important because the idea of previous generations will not be neglected or forsaken”.

–“It is worth mentioning that the former naming system of Burundians was attached to their culture and it reflected their lives and beliefs, contrary to the one we are facing nowadays which may even be imported from abroad”.

–“In our country we have also names which are for males and others for females. There are some names which are given according to the physical appearance of the new born; for example, when he or she is thin, or has big eyes, long nose, short nose, or wide nose”.

–“There is another way of naming which contains insults for other persons and other names serve as talismans. Such names are outdated and when name bearers of such names grow up, they feel sorry for their names. Some of such traditional names are rejected by Priests when the name bearer wants to be baptized. This is because such names are rude in the Christians' eyes”.

–“The naming system in Kirundi is critical in the way that parents give names to their children according to the life they undergo. For instance, when the family is in a certain crisis like poverty, the child will be named *Magorwa* which means bad times”.

–“The naming system in Kirundi is sometimes given some connotations: Some say that if a parent gives his child a name that is semantically related to a curse or a misfortune, it is like the parent is predicting the misfortune that will befall his kid in future. That is why they are currently adopting the system of naming children with blessing or success names, trying to give names predicting blessings”.

–“People should name their children using and referring to names of very important people so that the children when they grow up, they can try to imitate the way these people live or lived. This is because the name may be the source of the person’s success”. This is the case with the use of names of dead and living icons like Mandela and Obama.

–“What I can add is that nowadays, the naming system in Kirundi is not the same as in the past. I say so because it has some influence such as religion or a foreign language such as Swahili. Also, modernity has brought some changes in the Kirundi naming system”.

The above mentioned views are those of the informants with respect to additional elements which the questions in the questionnaire did not make provisions for them to present. If we make a close look at their opinions, we will realize that they converge on the fact that there are Kirundi surnames which exhibit the socio-cultural environment of Burundi, while others throw light on the relationship between name givers and God. Some of the names convey messages which display the living conditions of parents and their neighbors; that is, showing whether the name bearers’ parents are cohabiting peacefully or not with their neighbors and relations.

VI.1.2. Presentation and Analysis of Data from Interview

The data analysis is done here qualitatively. That is to say, the views of the interviewees are grouped and presented according to the convergence of ideas. The following are the views of interviewees with respect to the meanings and origins of their names:

One of the interviewees said that he was called *Irakoze* which means “thanks to God”. He said that this name was of Christian origin. In terms of the relation between Kirundi surnames and the socio-cultural environment of Burundi, this is what he said, “There is a relation because while naming a child, the parents take account of what they expect their child to become and how they expect him to behave in the society. Kirundi surnames give an idea on how the Burundian environment is and how to live in Burundi”. In terms of his impression about the Kirundi naming system, he had this to say, “This naming system is good because it shows immediately the wish a parent has towards his child”. The naming system in Kirundi is related to that of other countries to an extent in that there are many other countries which give names with a Christian coloring as Burundians do. The naming system in Kirundi reflects people’s relations with the environment and with the Almighty. The name *Irakoze* is an expression of thanks by the name givers to God. This gratitude is occasioned by the fact that parents are happy for having received a precious gift from God. This gift is the newly born child. The birth of a child is often accompanied by joy and this merriment is conveyed through the name that is given to the child. This view is shared by Pappas (2011) when she says, “Children make parents happy”. It is for this reason that parents irrespective of their status usually celebrate when a child is born into their family.

With respect to another interviewee, we obtained this information. He is named *Manirambona* which means “God sees me; God is with me at anytime and anywhere”. In terms of the origin of this name the interviewee said that it is imbued in religious belief, specifically, Christianity. Pragmatically this name is given in a context because the bearer is instilled with the courage to avert all adversities by human beings. The name bearer would not have any fear because God Almighty, who is stronger than all human forces, sees everything, both bad and good. Thus, God protects all those who believe in Him. Concerning the relationship between Kirundi surnames and the socio-cultural environment of Burundi, the interviewee had this to say, “Socio-cultural factors also affect the diversity of the regions in which culture varies from one region to another. For example, in the northern part of Burundi, where the local culture tends to be mixed with Rwandan culture, as a result of its proximity with the border of both countries, children from that area are sometimes given names that are similar to those of children in the bordering area in Rwanda. There are, for instance, the names, *Manzi* (meaning beautiful and handsome respectively for girls and boys), *Mukamana*, and *Mukaruguiza*, which do not originate from the Burundian culture”. This informant’s information brings to mind the fact that the names which are given to children in frontier regions have a speciality. Such surnames have a specific feature in that they encompass an admixture of multi-cultures. The inference we can draw here is that names can convey more than one culture. The situation indicated by the interviewee here is quite significant in that, it highlights the cultural and historical relations that had existed and still exist between Burundi and Rwanda. Language is an essential vehicle of culture. Thus, since names constitute an integral part of language, it is not surprising that names also convey cultural traits. Since we have what is called cross border languages or trans-border languages, I can propose that the appellation, *trans-border surnames*, should be given to names which exhibit bi-cultural aspects.

The interviewee, *Mpawenayo*, furnished me with the following information. This is what he said with regards to the meaning of his name, "I am given by Him (God)". In terms of the origin of this name, he said that it came from the belief of his parents in God. This implies that the name bearer's parents consider his birth as a gift from God, and they acknowledge this fact by praising God through the child's name. This view is normal because God is the author of births; science only helps in facilitating them, not at the origin. This is confirmed on www.biblehub.com where it is said, "Children are a heritage from the Lord, offspring a reward from him". In terms of the interviewee's impression on the naming system in Burundi, he had this to say, "It is good because it gives pieces of advice on how to behave, what to believe in, what to fear, and what to avoid". He goes ahead to say that the naming system in Burundi focuses on love, hate, belief, social class, and death. Thus, the naming system in Burundi makes a portrait of the Burundi society in a large spectrum of aspects.

There was an interviewee by name *Nihorimbere* who provided the following details: He said that his name denotes a plea for God to be ahead. Contextually, I can say that this name indicates that any action that is undertaken with God at the forefront always meets with success. In terms of his impression with respect to the Kirundi naming system, he stated that the naming system in Burundi is closely related to their culture, practices, and to God. In terms of additional details he said that some Kirundi names can hamper the smooth functioning of the bearers' lives. Such names are those with negative connotations. Such names include the following *Nzirubasa*, *Barantota*, and *Bampoyubusa* which bring out aspects of hatred, dislike, and brutality.

Generally, the opinions of my interviewees converge on the fact that Kirundi surnames focus on the socio-cultural background environment of Burundi. They state that the majority of these names bring out aspects like hatred, love, happiness, and hope. These respondents dwell on the fact that most of these names bring out the religious beliefs of the name bearers and their family members.

6.2.3 Presentation and Analysis of Data from Focus Group Discussion:

The data analysis in this focus group discussion section is also done qualitatively. The views of the participants in the focus group discussion are compiled, presented, and analyzed in the following terms:

A participant named *Niyonkuru* expressed the following opinion. He said that there are names which have a profound religious impact. He substantiated this assertion with his name, *Niyonkuru*, which means that God is powerful. The inference here is that no one can surpass God in terms of strength. The Burundi society like any other society is characterized by a demonstration of force. This strength can be manifested in leadership at the family, communal, provincial, or national level. In some cases this display of force is physical with people fighting on daily basis with each claiming to be the victor. As far as the naming system in Kirundi is concerned, there are names which show that even if the name givers are not strong physically, the names, through the influence of the Almighty God, can exhibit their strength. The name, *Niyonkuru*, is an example of such a name. In terms of the relation between Kirundi surnames and the socio-cultural environment of Burundi, he said that there is a close link. As justification, he said that Burundi has a society and, consequently, its own culture which is reflected in Kirundi surnames. In terms of the appreciation of the Kirundi naming system, the participant's impression was affirmative. They substantiated their point of view thus, "The naming system in Burundi shows your position in everyday life or it shows that you detest or agree something". Thus, the participant is saying that the Kirundi naming system reflects the Burundi society.

In terms of additional information I got this from a participant, "Here, I can say that Burundian people were more intelligent and were prayerful because the names attributed to their children were taken from sources related to our God. Also, Burundians know that no one is able to do everything in its own manner; all are from God. That is why they always named children with respect to God". This implies that the Burundi society is composed of people who are God fearing in the majority, and this is reflected in the naming system.

With regard to the names that are given to boys and those given to girls, the participants in the focus group discussion converged as follows. All of the participants agreed that the Kirundi naming system operates in such a way that gives opportunities for some names to be reserved specifically to boys and others to girls. They went ahead to indicate that the majority of the Kirundi names are neutral in terms of gender; that is to say, most Kirundi surnames are given to both males and females. The following examples of Kirundi surnames illustrate the foregone explanation: -Names given only to males: *Gasore*, *Muheto*, and *Gahungu*; -Names given only to females: *Gakobwa*, *Kamariza*, and *Kankindi*; -Names given to both sexes: *Bukuru*, *Barenzako*, and *Kubwimana*. These examples portray the fact that Kirundi surnames manifest variety, and you would agree with me that variety is a spice which embellishes any aspect of language.

As far as additional information is concerned, the following ideas were obtained: They indicated that the naming in Kirundi had changed after the arrival of white missionaries. They said that before that period, names were not related to God; but now people tend to look for names related to God or His son, His works, love, and good qualifications given to God. They gave the following examples: *Nduwimana* which means, "I am a child of God"; *Nduwayezu* which means "I am a child of Jesus"; and *Nizeyimana* which means "I believe in God". Thus, God related Kirundi names exhibit this transformation of the Burundi society from Traditionalism to Christianity. It is worthy to note here that this transformation has not affected all Burundians and this is reflected in the fact that some Burundians still give non-God related names to their offspring.

The focus group discussion also revealed that the Kirundi naming system reflects the name givers' ambition towards what they believe as true. This exhibits a system which shows what people think about social events. They went ahead to say that the Burundian naming system is analogous to the Rwandan and this is explained by the fact that these two neighboring countries share a common history.

Some of the participants also indicated that some names are given with respect to the period of the day or night a child is born. They gave as examples the following names: *Kajoro* for someone who is born during the night and *Gitondo* for a child who is born in the morning. These two names originated from the Kirundi words, *Ijoro* and *Igitondo*, which mean "night" and "morning" respectively. This is a sort of naming in relation to the horoscope. In this respect some analysts talk of the relation between names and the horoscope as that of compatibility (www.sofeminine.co.uk>Horoscope> Numerology). Those who name their children in this manner are trying to conform to the view that children's names can have an impact on their future. Bryner (2010) shares this point of view when she says that good or bad baby names have long-lasting effects on the name bearers. Thus, parents, while giving names to their offspring, need to think twice so as to select those names that would impact positively on their future lives.

Generally speaking, the focus group discussion participants converged on the fact that the naming system in Burundi is appreciable. According to them, there is diversity in the selection of Kirundi surnames and the messages that these names convey exhibit the culture of Burundians and their attachment to Christian values. These participants further indicated that the majority of these surnames portray the Burundians' relations with their neighbors and what they wish for their children.

6.3 Comparative Analysis:

Here we do a comparative analysis of the data obtained through the various instruments incorporated in this study: questionnaire, interview, and focus group discussion. The data, which we got, converged on a number of issues. First, the revelations from the various informants indicated that most Kirundi surnames are meaningful; thus, they convey the messages that are embedded in their minds to both the surrounding community and to the Almighty God. Even those names which are apparently not meaningful have a role to play on the part of the name givers and their neighbors. The respondents agreed that most Kirundi surnames are God-related.

In terms of the choice of the names to be given to children, parents play a pivotal role. The majority of the names are given by the name bearers' parents. This situation ties in with the patriarchal nature of most African societies. It is also important to state here that God first created man to portray his position as head of the family. If we scrutinize the orthography of the word, *woman*, we notice that the word, *man*, is included and the feminine coloration is only a prefix, *wo-*. This implies that a woman is part of man and that is why when they get married, they become one but the wife adopts the surname of her husband. As examples we have Michelle Obama, Denise Nkurunziza, Chantal Biya, and Eveline Ayancho, who are spouses of Messrs Barack Obama, Pierre Nkurunziza, Paul Biya, and Julius Ayancho respectively. Desai (2014) highlights this issue of the adoption of husbands' last name by women after marriage. This adoption of name issue is raising a lot of dust as not all women sit down to allow themselves assimilated by their husbands as if they (women) are not also human beings. Thus, some women consider this adoption of husbands' last names as a complete loss of feminine identity. In the light of this some Japanese women took their government to court so that this discriminatory situation could be resolved legally (www.theguardian.com>world>Japan).

6.4 Questions about Alternatives:

The alternatives of surnames can be the following: first names, middle names, maiden names, nicknames, and name escapism. A first name is also known as the forename. According to www.dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/english/first-name, a first name is the name that was given to you when you were born and that comes before your family

name. It is the name that appears first when a person's name is written. The middle name is the name which follows the first name and precedes the surname. Let us illustrate what I am saying with my name, *Julius Suh Ayancho*. In this name, *Julius* is my first name, *Suh* is my middle name, and *Ayancho* is my surname. My first name is usually used by either non-family members or those from other societies with different cultures. My middle name is the one I am called by members of my close family (my parents and siblings). My surname is that of my father. This name is used to distinguish me from members of other families. When I am filling official documents, I include all these names because they appear in my birth certificate and national identity card.

I can also talk about the use of parents' names, especially fathers' names to call their offspring. For example, when I was still very young, the elders in my village who did not know my name but knew my father's name simply called me "Ayancho" instead of "Julius Suh". This was because my father was called "Boniface Ayancho". This alternative of using the father's name goes a long way to reinforce the family bonds in surnames.

From another perspective I can mention situations in which a family decides to give the father's name to their boy child or the mother's name to their girl child. A glaring example is the case of the Bush family in the United States of America, where the name George Walker Bush is given to the father and the son. We only differentiate the father from the son in terms of names by attaching the words 'senior' and 'junior' to the father's and son's names respectively to have 'George Walker Bush Senior' and 'George Walker Bush Junior'. It is also interesting to note that these Bush family personalities both ruled the United States of America as Presidents. This in one way or another confirms the fact that the names that are given to people can impact on their future lives. We see here how a son follows his father's footsteps and becomes a president as his dad.

A maiden name is the name of a young girl before she gets married. My spouse, for instance, was called Eveline Bih before she got married. When she was married she became Eveline Ayancho. Such a problem of name change is only faced by females, not males.

With respect to nicknames, they are names which are given to people on casual basis. These names are not the real names of the bearers but are sometimes given by friends to denote some qualities that the bearers possess. At times nicknames are given on the basis of what the bearer regularly says. When I was in secondary school, we had an American Peace Corps volunteer English literature teacher called Mr. Gillette. He regularly used the expression, "Now then". Consequently, we nicknamed him "Now then". In serious and official matters nicknames cannot be used.

Name escapism comes into play when the title of a person or a substitute word or expression is used in place of their real name. Anchimbe (2013) says that name escapism is name avoidance. This is mostly when a subordinate is addressing a superior. For instance, a secretary would address her employer as "Boss". In some cases important personalities like Heads of States, Parliamentarians, and Kings are addressed "Your Excellency", "Your Honorable", and "Your Majesty" respectively.

Another case is giving the name of famous or notorious figures we admire to our children, for instance, Osama Bin Laden, Obama or Mandela given by people who share their views. The giving of names of personalities also go to places; for example, Obama Shop in Bujumbura, Burundi; Pharmacy Mandela in Yaoundé, Cameroon; Avenue Patrice Lumumba in Bujumbura, Burundi; Avenue Kennedy, Ahmadou Ahidjo Stadium, and Chantal Biya Foundation hospital in Yaoundé, Cameroon; and the Jomo Kenyatta International Airport in Nairobi, Kenya. There is an interesting case in Uganda in which a boy was named Bill Clinton because he was born when Bill Clinton first visited Uganda in 1998 (Kanani, 2012), see images below:





Source: <https://www.google.com/search?q=A+child+named+clinton+in+uganda&htm>

Pictures.4: Former President Bill Clinton with Baby and Adolescent Bill Clinton

6.5 Conclusion:

This chapter analyzes the data obtained from the individual instruments used in the work under study. The isolated analysis is followed by a comparative examination of the data. The next chapter concludes this study and proposes recommendations in the domain of surnames.

7. GENERAL CONCLUSION

7.1 General Discussions:

The naming system in Burundi is quite special with the prominence of the morpheme, *imana*, *God*, in most surnames. Some Burundi surnames identify the position of the child in terms of birth, for example, *Kabura*, which means the sixth child. Such names are given to both males and females. In this case both boys and girls children are given these names because there is no birth position that is specific to males and another reserved for females.

In a general perspective, Kirundi surnames do not help in the identification of the name bearers with their family. Even though the mere mention of a surname brings to mind the family of the bearer, the case in Kirundi is different. We rather find surnames which are meaningful in the portrayal of the relationship between the name bearer's family and their neighbors as well as those which show the name givers' attachment with God. The majority of the names show the belief that the family members of the name bearers have with the Almighty.

Names constitute an essential and an integral part of any group of people. This opinion is shared by Deluzain (ibid) when he says, "The truth is that names are a part of every culture and that they are of enormous importance both to the people who receive names and to the societies that give them". He even goes ahead to compare the naming process of a person to the Roman Catholic ceremony of baptism. He substantiates his view by saying that during the baptismal ceremony of a child, the presiding priest usually asks the name of the child from the parents and god parents of the child to be baptized before placing the sign of the cross on the forehead of the child. This implies that no baptismal ceremony can take place when the child does not have a name.

Names fall in the domain of sociolinguistics. Deckert and Vickers (2011:1) consider sociolinguistics to be "how people use language in their everyday lives across a variety of life events and language experiences". Whittemore (2014), on his part, views sociolinguistics as the study of language and how it is affected by region, social class, relationship, and even gender. According to Ayancho (2015), sociolinguistics deals with all the salient aspects of the language used in any speech community. These important elements include dressing habits, music, and food. It is also important to mention here that the naming system of any society constitutes an important aspect of the community concerned. This is because names can serve as a tool to convey messages.

There are situations in which a married woman's surname is replaced by her husband's surname; for instance, Eveline Bih becomes Mrs. Eveline Ayancho. This is because after marriage, a woman takes up her spouse's name since she has left

the family of her parents and siblings to form hers whose head is her husband. This phenomenon is what I refer to as conjugal name assimilation. It is for this reason that when a married woman is filling official documents, there is space for her maiden name, that is, the name that she had before she became married.

There are some names which are given as honorifics. Such names are given to those who have furnished their communities with meritorious services. In the British society such individuals are called Knights, but in Bafut in Cameroon, they are called *Nchindas*. In the British society those who have been knighted have their names preceded by *Sir* for men and *Dame* for women (www.churchill-society-london.org.uk/HnrSystem.html). In the Bafut society the highest title, *Fon*, also known as *Mfor*, is given to the paramount traditional ruler of the Bafut people (https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Fon_of_Bafut). The status of the Fon of Bafut is also recognized by the state. It is for this reason that the paramount ruler of Bafut, like other Fons, serves as the auxiliary of the Cameroon administration (https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Traditional_administrative_system_of_Bafut). In Burundi, there are titles such as *Mwami*, King; *Mwamikazi*, Queen; *Umuganwa*, Prince; and *Umuganwakazi*, Princess (Buyers, 2012). Also, in religious set-ups, there are titles, implying that, even in the church there is a sort of discrimination in terms of names, for example, we have in the Catholic Church titles such as His Holiness, the Pope; His Eminence, the Cardinal; His Grace, the Arch-Bishop; His Lordship, the Bishop; and Reverend, the Father. In the Catholic community, no Christian who has not attained the level to be given any of the above-mentioned titles can be addressed as such.

It is also worthy to indicate here that even in the United States of America and Europe, there are names which are drawn from inanimate things and objects. Examples are the names, George Bush, Condoleezza Rice, and Leonard Bloomfield for Americans; and Gordon Brown for British. In the African context, especially in Burundi and Cameroon, such names are given to children whose older siblings have died. In this case when such names are given, the new born children slip from the hands of death and survive. Most of such children usually work hard and become great people in future. I do not know the circumstances under which the names of the cited American and European individuals above were given. What I know is that they have worked hard and made indelible marks in world history at the political and intellectual levels. The inference I can make here is that when the name of an inanimate thing is given to a person, death is deceived and the individual survives. In the Bafut culture, it is believed that death always chooses excellent and great things and that is why bizarre names are given to children whose parents have had visions that they would be prominent.

It is important to note that whether names are God-related or tradition-related, they have a foundation in the country or region of the name bearers and name givers. This is because we can talk of a religious culture as well as a traditional culture. In line with the foregone discussion, I can say that a name is to a person what a trademark is to a product.

7.2 Recommendations:

The issue of naming is very important irrespective of the society in question. Consequently, a lot of caution should be taken when names are given to children, relatives, and friends. In the light of this study I recommend the following to parents, relatives, name bearers, and the civil status officials of any local government.

The names that are given to children can have an impact on their bearers; as such names with positive connotations should be the ones to be given or taken up. Note should be taken of the fact that names are not only given to children at birth. Adults may change their names whenever they realize that these names are having a negative impact on their lives. In some multi-ethnic and multi-racial societies, some jobs are given only to people from certain cultural backgrounds. In such cases these people are identified based on their names. I know of cases in which people have had to change their names to benefit from the largesse of prominent people in such societies. Cameroon is an example of such a multi-ethnic society in which there is discrimination on the basis of names. Whether names are given in a multi-ethnic or a mono-ethnic society, the choice should be based on positive factors, not negative or discriminatory ones.

Even though I have indicated above that some adults may change their names; this should only be made possible after a careful examination (by the name bearers and those concerned with the naming system) of the circumstances under which those names were given. In such a situation the civil status department in charge of legalizing the birth certificates should be informed for adequate actions to be taken. In this case the court, under whose jurisdiction the birth certificates were issued, should be informed for adequate legal action. When an individual embarks on changing their names, they should also think of the consequences that accompany such changes. The following are examples: loss of popularity and the inability to use certificates that were issued in the former name.

Names serve principally for identification. As such, parents should give names which identify the bearer with their family. I am sure that it is the pride of every parent to be identified through their offspring. When the name of the former Republican United States President, George Walker Bush Junior, for instance, is mentioned, I am quite sure that his father, who is also a former president in the same country, is proud. In Africa most parents come to the limelight thanks to the success and/or prowess of their children. Thus, in a situation in which a prominent individual from a particular community has a name which does not make it possible for their family to be identified, the parents are in a state of oblivion with issues concerning such an icon. This is the case with the majority of Kirundi surnames which do not identify the name bearers with their families. The situation is different in Japan where names identify the bearers with their status and the commune they come from (Plutschow: op. cit.).

Surnames which do not identify the bearers with any family, region, country, or continent can be described as neutral names. The use of neutral names should be encouraged in most circumstances. I say so because when neutral names are used, discrimination on nepotistic terms is discouraged or reduced. For example, in the situation of neutral names, undue favors cannot be made on the mere identification of those to whom privileges are awarded on the basis of their names.

I think that twins should not be given names which are specific to them as opposed to those given to non-twins. I make this recommendation because if twins and non-twins are given separate names, this will be a kind of name discrimination. We all know that discrimination irrespective of the form is bad and should not be encouraged. Names constitute an important socio-cultural aspect. Consequently, discrimination should not meddle in the process of names. If twins and non-twins are given different sets of names, then, the implication is that twins are more important than non-twins or vice versa. According to Christian believers and the teachings of the Bible, everybody is equal irrespective of gender, race, color, or otherwise. The equality of human beings is also preached by international humanitarian organizations. The equality of people is also highlighted by Hakonardottir (2011) when he says, "Humans are entitled to a life as conscious, autonomous actors in respect to those needs. In this respect all humans are equal". The equality of human beings should also be maintained in the names which are given to both sexes.

Fathers, or let me say men, should not be those with the prerogative to give names to children. If we examine Table 4 above, we will see that fathers are the givers of the majority of the surnames in Kirundi. I think that the decision on which name to be given to a child should be the result of a consensus between husbands and wives or among members of the families of the child to be named. I feel that the impact that a name can have on the future life of the bearer is not determined by the one who has given the name but by the name that is chosen.

Names which constitute an important aspect of language should reflect the society. This is in conformity with the view of Ayancho (op.cit.). Since names convey messages in the light of the society in which they are given, they should exhibit the views of that society. It is in the same light that Sapir (1921) says that language has a setting. He goes ahead to say that language does not exist apart from culture. Here, I agree with Sapir because the Kirundi surnames that form the base of this study have a setting which is the Burundi society. With respect to culture, I observe that the majority of the names under study reflect the culture of Burundi. Consequently, parents in particular and name givers in general should give names which reflect the culture of the name bearers.

There are names which convey the cultural values of two or more countries. Examples of such names are *Manzi*, *Mukamana*, and *Mukaruguiza* which transmit the cultures of Burundi and Rwanda. I recommend, firstly, that such names should be called either *cross border surnames* or *trans-border surnames*. Secondly, I suggest that parents should be encouraged to give surnames which portray the cultures of two or more countries. If this is done, there will be a sort of multi-national unity and this can reduce the conflicts which crop up between neighboring nations.

Each society evolves as time passes. Thus, name givers should reflect the changes in their societies in terms of the types of names that they give to their offspring. This is also the view of Felecan (ibid.) when he says that socio-cultural transformations are reflected in the names that are given to people, places and products.

This study is not exhaustive because it does not cover all aspects and types of names. Thus, I recommend the following to future researchers: Future researchers can explore related domains such as the following: -The use of forenames in a specific linguistic environment, -A study of place names in Burundi or any other environment, -The study of product names in a particular country, and -A study of the impact of names on name bearers.

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APPENDICES

Appendix 1: Questionnaire for Informants:

A Context-based Approach to the Study of Kirundi Surnames: This is a study that sets out to find out the link between Kirundi surnames and the socio-cultural environment of Burundi. The data got through this questionnaire would be used to carry out research in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the award of a doctorate in English.

I appeal to the respondents to be as honest as possible because the findings would clarify certain issues about Kirundi surnames which are not very clear till date. I promise confidentiality in the treatment of the information that you will provide to me. If the space provided is not sufficient, you can use the verso of the page.

1. Name (preferably the surname).....
2. Sex.....
3. Level of education.....
4. Commune of origin.....
5. Province of origin.....
6. Father's name.....
7. Mother's name.....
8. Who gave your name?
9. What does it mean
10. What is its origin?
11. In the same light as you have done for your name;
 - a) Say what you know about your father's name.....
.....
.....
 - b) Say what you know about your mother's name.....
.....
.....
12. a) According to you, is there any relation between Kirundi surnames and the socio-cultural environment of Burundi?
Yes No
- b) If yes, give details.....
.....

13). a) Do you appreciate the naming system in Burundi?

Yes No

c) Explain your point of view.....

14) If there is anything that you want to say about the naming system in Kirundi which is not indicated above, you are welcome

Thanks a lot for your contribution.

Appendix II: An Inventory of Informants for Questionnaire:

No.	Names of Informants	Fathers' Names	Mothers' Names
1.	Ahishakiye	Rusake	Ntirwandekeye
2.	Barenzako	Bancirimisi	Nahimana
3.	Bigirimana	Ngendabanka	Gahinga
4.	Bigirimana	Ntanura	Sibomana
5.	Bigirimana	Sinkibashikako	Barakekenwa
6.	Bizoza	Ntibanyiha	Hatungimana
7.	Bucumi	Bangurambona	Ntwengeye
8.	Bukuru	Niyonkuru	Niragira
9.	Cishahayo	Nduwayo	Ntakirutimana
10.	Gahimbare	Rwasa	Rwajeguhumba
11.	Habintwari	Ciza	Ntibazonkiza
12.	Habonimana	Ntuntu	Nabutono
13.	Harerimana	Niyungeko	Hafashimana
14.	Hazigamayo	Butoyi	Ndayishimiye
15.	Ingabire	Nahimana	Kabura
16.	Irakoze	Karukurubu	Mfatukobiri
17.	Irakoze	Ntakarutimana	Ndayabandi
18.	Ishimwe	Ngerageze	Nibogora
19.	Kabura	Buyoya	Nzorijana
20.	Kubwimana	Nkurunziza	Girukwishaka
21.	Manirakiza	Ndabahagame	Mbabarempore
22.	Manirakiza	Nibigira	??
23.	Mbonayo	Baranyanduza	Nibafasha
24.	Mukamarakiza	Kabura	Nyawakira
25.	Mure	Ndarugiriye	Gakobwa
26.	Ndacayisaba	Nahayo	Havugimana
27.	Ndahabonayo	Rutebuka	Gahuzenge
28.	Ndayikengurukiye	Barutwanayo	Kabura
29.	Ndayishimiye	Bunyakamwe	Gakobwa
30.	Ndayizeye	Ntahonkuriye	Ntibashirakandi
31.	Ndayizeye	Ndorere	Nzinahora
32.	Ndayizeye	Rwasa	Nshimirimana
33.	Ndayizeye	Sindabavimbere	Hamenyimana

34.	Ndereyimana	Kabirigi	Ntawuyankira
35.	Ndagijimana	Nkunzumwami	Mukankuranga
36.	Ndikumasabo	Ndikumasabo	Ndayirorere
37.	Nduwayezu	Ndayiragije	Bakanibona
38.	Nduwimana	Bapfana	Nzeyimana
39.	Nduwimana	Kirimi	Kabirigi
40.	Nduwimana	Mutabazi	Kabirori
41.	Nduwumwami	Bitariho	Barahevye
42.	Ngarukiye	Barinakandi	Bapfekurera
43.	Ngendakumana	Bagwizubuvugo	Sinzohahora
44.	Ngendakumana	Ntarukundo	Nahimana
45.	Nihorimbere	Nzoziyobiri	Nikobanye
46.	Nimubona	Rucintango	Nyandwi
47.	Nindorera	Mbonayo	Nkenguje
48.	Nininahazwe	Cezumuryano	Nintunze
49.	Nininahazwe	Gahungu	Kanyarutara
50.	Nininahazwe	Nkinahamira	Ndoricimpa
51.	Niyibizi	Harerimana	Ntamutumba
52.	Niyikiza	Ntamakiro	Ntamakiro
53.	Niyonsavye	Nzirubusa	Manirakiza
54.	Niyonzima	Ndimurirwo	Kamariza
55.	Nizigama	Nyandwi	Nzeyimana
56.	Nkunzimana	Ndikumana	Ntibindaba
57.	Nkunzimana	Niyongabo	Sabiyumva
58.	Nsabiyumva	Bucumi	Gakobwa
59.	Nsavyimana	Sindibarura	Niragira
60.	Nsavyimana	Puku	Bugaru
61.	Nsengiyumva	Ngenzemaki	Bacamurwanko
62.	Nshimirimana	Manirakiza	Nijimbere
63.	Ntakarutimana	Sakubu	Bigirimana
64.	Nungubumwe	Nimpagaritse	Girukwayo
65.	Nyakuri	Niyonkuru	Mukandahiro
66.	Nyandwi	Barindambi	Barandereka
67.	Nzambumuremyi	Ntahomvukiye	Nshigajahimana
68.	Ntirandekura	Ntawumenya	Nyabenda
69.	Sibomana	Simbayimbere	Nakokurubu
70.	Sidayigaya	Misigaro	Namushahu

Appendix III: Interview Guide:

- 1) What is your name?
- 2) Tell us in detail the meaning of your name.
- 3) a) Do you know the source of your name? Yes No
- b) If yes, tell us.
- 4) What is your father's name?
- 5) Tell us the meaning of his name.
- 6) What is your mother's name?
- 7) Tell us the meaning of her name.

8) a) From your point of view, is there any relation between Kirundi surnames and the socio-cultural environment of Burundi? Yes No

b) If yes, explain.

9) What is your impression about the naming system in Burundi?

10) a) Can you compare the naming system in Burundi to that of the world at large? Yes No

b) If yes, give details.....

.....

Appendix IV: An Inventory of Informants for Interview:

No.	Names of Informants	Fathers' Names	Mothers' Names
1.	Irakoze	Kayanda	Ngorwanubusa
2.	Manirambona	Gahungu	Nzohabonayo
3.	Mpawenayo	Harimenshi	Ntahimperera
4.	Nihorimbere	Ntahondihiye	Ndabasamaje
5.	Niyongabire	Havyarimana	Hatungimana
6.	Niyonkuru	Barakamfitiye	Nahimana
7.	Niyorugira	Ndirakuragabo	Icoyitungiye
8.	Niyungeko	Niyungeko	Ntakarutimana
9.	Ntahorutaba	Bakurakubusa	Miburo
10.	Ntakarutimana	Sindayihebura	Gakobwa
11.	Ntunzwenayo	Birintanya	Vyigero
12.	Nzeyimana	Bucumi	Ndakazi

Appendix V: Focus Group Discussion Guide:

1) What is your view on Kirundi surnames?

2) a) Do you think there is a relation between Kirundi surnames and the socio-cultural environment of Burundi?

Yes No

b) If yes, give details.....

.....

3) a) Are there some names which are only given to males and others to females?

Yes No

b) If yes, please, give examples.....

4) a) Do you appreciate the naming system in Burundi? Yes No

b) Explain your answer.....

.....

5) If there is any other thing that you would want to say, you are welcome.....

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