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Naming Practices and Language Planning in Zimbabwe

Busi Makoni [a] , Sinfree Makoni [a] & Pedzisai Mashiri [b]

[a] College of Liberal Arts , Pennsylvania State University , USA

[b] Faculty of Arts, University Of Zimbabwe , Harare, Zimbabwe
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Naming Practices and Language Planning in Zimbabwe

Busi Makoni and Sinfree Makoni
College of Liberal Arts, Pennyslvania State University, USA

Pedzisai Mashiri
Faculty of Arts, University Of Zimbabwe, Harare, Zimbabwe

Studies of African naming practices focus almost exclusively on the meanings and etymology of names and details about the circumstances surrounding how such names are assigned. Such research has not examined the implications naming has for language planning, ideologies of language, and language shift. Focusing on names and naming practices in Zimbabwe from 1960 to 1990, this paper departs from this well-established tradition. The paper provides empirical evidence to show that naming provides significant insights into language planning, language ideology, language shift and the development of new varieties of English. It demonstrates the effects of non-Standard English on naming practices between the 1960s and 1990s and how this subsequently brought changes not only to the use of African languages, but also to use of names drawn from non-Standard English. This we view as an indication that the policy of promoting indigenous African languages is in sync with practice as ordinary citizens articulate their cultural practices in African languages. In addition, the promotion of English results in the spread not of standard English, but of non-standard varieties of English in the area of naming.

Introduction

Research into the discursive construction of naming in Southern Africa is carried out largely in the linguistic sub-fields of onomastics and ethno-linguistics. In spite of the potential significance that a study of onomastics has for wider phenomena such as identity and language planning, it has remained, until recently, an area of marginal significance in linguistics (Joseph, 2004). Thus one of the major goals of this article is to analyse the nature of naming practices as a prism through which to conceptualise language planning. The article explores changes in naming between 1960 and 1990. Naming is susceptible to change. It is therefore conceivable that new naming practices have emerged as a result of the contact that Africans had with colonialism, Christianity, and Western education in the early part of the 20th century.

In sociolinguistics, a distinction is drawn between corpus planning and status planning (Fishman, 2004). Corpus planning is an instance of language standardisation manifested in the creation of new words, the modification of

old ones, and the selection of words among competing forms (Cooper, 1989). Naming is largely an instance of corpus planning that involves the creation of new words and selection among alternative forms. A study of naming therefore brings into focus the distinction between corpus and status planning. The question a study of naming practices raises is: to what extent does status planning have a spill-over effect on corpus planning.

This paper analyses the nature of language planning in Zimbabwe from the perspective of naming of Africans between 1960 and 1990. Indeed, there is a vast amount of, and a continuously growing, literature on language planning in Africa, and on naming (see e.g. Afful, 2005; Akinnaso, 1981; Alford, 1988; Bangeni & Coetser, 2000; Herbert & Bogatsu, 2001; Koopman, 1989; Suzman, 1994) but rarely has there been any systematic research into language planning carried out from the viewpoint of naming, particularly in Zimbabwe. An analysis of the naming practices of Zimbabweans is opportune, because of an increasing interest in the daily linguistic practices of ordinary citizens and their impact on language policies. Naming as an instance of language use sheds light on the effects of language planning on everyday language usage. This may lead to a development of models in which the common person is directly involved. Currently, the 'common man – the "consumer" of LP programmes – is present only by proxy, carrying the elite "cross"'(Khubchandani, 1983: 149). It is mainly the educated custodians of languages who decide 'what is "good" for the masses, by virtue of their hold on the socio-political literary scene' (Khubchandani, 1983: 149). If research into naming opens up possibilities of including the common person in a serious anthropological sense, on their own terms, and not on the scholars', then there is a possibility that there might be closure on issues about status planning (Fishman, 1990).

The rationale in choosing the period from 1960 to 1990 is that each of these three decades reflect three different historical epochs in the history of Zimbabwe. The 1960s reflect the early years of nationalism, whilst the 1970s are characterised by the rise of African nationalism in which nationalists used African languages as part of military activities (Ranger, 1985). There are indications that there were significant changes in naming as suggested by Ranger when he writes:

> If in the 1930's no one in Makoni would have described themselves as 'Shona' by the late 1950's, when the nationalist movement came to the district, very many people thought in such terms. (Ranger, 1989: 243)

In this regard, the Shona language had become a powerful symbol of and instrument in the constitution of an ethnic idea in the rapidly modernising country.

Furthermore, the inclusion of names of those born in the 1970s is intended to explore the extent to which the nationalistic ideology had permeated Zimbabwean society and the degree to which this was reflected in naming.

The 1980s were marked by celebrations of many types of freedoms, political, religious, and cultural. Language was widely used to express these freedoms. Children born during this period were popularly referred to as 'born free' (Chitando, 1998: 116). During the colonial period, the Christian arena was

dominated and monopolised by the main line missionary churches, for example Anglican, Lutheran, Wesleyan Methodist and Roman Catholic. Language use and naming practices tended to reflect the missionary discursive regimes. Politically-minded parents who spoke chiShona gave their children names such as *Rusununguko* ('Freedom'), or *Nkululeko* ('Freedom') in Ndebele and *Tongai* ('Govern') in Shona. Other parents who were affiliated to new Pentecostal churches gave their children pragmatic and creative names such as *Tineruvimbo* ('We have hope'), *Mutsawashe* ('God's grace') and *Petiri* ('God got us where we are').

In the Matebeleland region the celebration of the three freedoms was short lived as the North Korean trained Fifth Brigade popularly known as the Gukurahundi ('the storm that thunders') descended into the region and killed innocent civilians. The effects of this onslaught were also reflected in names of children born during that period. Names such as *Phephelaphi* ('where shall we go'), *Senzeni* ('what have we done'), *Soneni* ('what wrong did we do') and *Siphamandla* ('God give us strength to endure this torture') were prevalent. These names served as a meta-commentary on the repressive military regime that operated in the Matebeleland region.

The 1990s were a postcolonial period that, presumably, had a different language ideology, which has effects on language planning. The 1990s marked an amplification of invented binary distinctions between what is imagined as the imperial west, and the friendly eastern countries or what is termed by the Zimbabwean government as 'the look east policy'. In terms of language policy, this has translated into the formation of Confucian language centers in which local Zimbabweans are taught Chinese. (Local Zimbabweans have also responded by jokingly refereeing to Air Zimbabwe as *Air Zhim* and all products from China as *Zhungzhung*.) The discourses of language domination in Zimbabwe have become rather complicated by the potential emergence of Chinese as a possible competitor for space with English both commercially and academically as reflected in the setting up of Confucian centres.

Further binary distinctions were drawn between indigenous Zimbabweans and those defined as non-indigenous Zimbabweans, or those without a totem. A totem is imagined as a marker of cultural integrity in Zimbabwe. More nuanced distinctions were also made between indigenous Zimbabweans who had taken part in the liberation war and those who had not. Another set of new distinctions also emerged between Zimbabweans within Zimbabwe and those who are part of the diaspora. Zimbabweans outside the country were then regarded as *injiva* ('gold diggers'). In return Zimbabweans who are part of the diaspora view the name of Zimbabwe derogatively as an acronym for Zero Income Mainly Because All Brainy Workers Emigrated.

The period 1960–1990 thus enables us to examine the nature of language shift over three decades. Interest in language shift has been revived recently by continuing research into and public concern with language endangerment (Batibo, 2005; Makoni *et al.*, 2007; Mufwene, 2002; Nettle & Romaine, 2000; Phillipson, 2003; Skutnabb-Kangas, 2000). Scholarly concern with the nature of naming over three decades shows that some patterns become clearer over the *longue durée* (see Makoni *et al.*, 2007).

There are two main arguments in the literature with regard to language shift in Africa which have implications for language planning. First, it is stated that language shift is towards urban vernaculars rather than English (Abdulaziz & Osinde, 1997; Childs, 1997; Githiora, 2002; Makoni *et al.*, 2007; Spitulnik, 1988; Swigart, 2000). Secondly, it is suggested that the increasing domination of African languages by English constitutes a threat to the continued vitality of indigenous African languages (Batibo, 2005; Nettle & Romaine, 2000). In this paper these claims are subjected to analysis in one clearly defined domain, i.e. personal names. However, language shift is narrowly defined as a shift in the choice of the language of naming.

On the other hand, research into language planning in Zimbabwe focuses on analysing either the changes or the continuities in the nature of language planning choices which colonial and postcolonial African governments made regarding English and African languages and the role both languages play in education and their current national status (Chimhundu, 1993; Mkanganwi, 1992; Roy-Campbell & Gwete, 1997; Viriri, 2003). In this paper, we explore the effects of these policies on naming in Zimbabwe. We analyse what this shows in terms of ideologies of language as part of a general interest in how, from a local perspective, people relate to and discursively construct this choice in the ways they name others. We investigate the changes in naming between 1960 and 1990 as indicative of Africans' attempts to balance interest in African languages and English while constructing their own identities simultaneously: a phenomenon relevant to language planning.

The paper concentrates on the sociolinguistic aspects of personal names as well as their discursive construction. It situates them within the broader theoretical views on language planning and ideologies of language or what Fabian (1986) calls critical historiography, that is research into historical changes in reflections about language. Of particular concern are those names Africans created and derived from known English lexical items used as words or compounds and then converted into proper names within African contexts of English usage. This is a process of linguistic derivation consistent with studies into New Englishes (Kamwangamalu, 1998; Magura, 1985). Examples of these include names such as *Belief*, *Sinfree*, *Eventhough*, *Sweetbetter*, *Kissmore*, *Conermore* (sic) and *Donemore*.

Most of these names appear dialectal and sound humorous, idiosyncratic and sometimes nonsensical and weird to non-Zimbabweans and English native speakers, but are consistent with the social and linguistic formations of New Englishes (Kachru, 1985). This paper demonstrates that these names are significant not only for their morphology and lexical meaning, but for the indexical and symbolic functions and the meanings they carry. The names embody individual or family social experiences, encode a message, express a wish, feelings, hope or prayer, and record something about the past or simply the parent's desires for the future, desires which are articulated through English. The meanings of these names are tied to their contexts; hence in some cases it may be difficult to understand them without the necessary background information supplied by the one who did the naming. Insight into the nature of the macro-context in which English is learnt helps us enhance the analyst's understanding of the meaning of the name (Brutt-Griffler, 2003).

The names discussed in this paper reveal how people, who at times had limited exposure to and fleeting encounters with English, appropriate it, consequently leaving an indelible mark on their socio-cultural experiences and sense of self. The crucial issue is that some of these individuals elect to record their intimate experiences in some form of English when they have other options. At times they use African languages or standardise them to render the names consistent with codified African languages. The fact that even the illiterate feel they have a claim to English, and want to be identified through a variety of English which they speak, is a far cry from feelings of being dominated by English. This underscores the importance of bringing into the picture the views of those who are directly affected by language policies, something which has not always been the case [see the arguments by Swigart (2000) and Skutnabb-Kangas (2000); but see Canagarajah (2005) as an example of a bold move to incorporate local knowledge about language practices in non-Western contexts].

This paper is conceptualised as a contribution to language planning through an analysis of the study of ideologies of language in Africa (Blommaert, 2005; Makoni & Pennycook, 2007; Woolard & Schieffelin, 1994). Ideologies of language are contextual sets of beliefs about languages (Pennycook, 2007). The ways in which languages are constructed is never about language only, but also about how individuals are thought about in society and understandings about how 'languages are always definitions about human beings in the world' (Woolard & Schieffelin, 1994: 55). In this particular paper, ideologies of language are examined through naming in Zimbabwe from 1960 to 1990.

Analyses of the languages used in naming provide opportunities to explore the extent to which language policies have an impact on naming. An analysis of the naming practices is important as language planning shifts from top-down perspectives towards an understanding of how ordinary individuals react to language policies (Canagarajah, 2005; Mphande, 2006; Ramanathan, 2005; Summers, 2002).

Research into onomastics is not concerned with language planning. Similarly, language planning is not concerned with naming and identity (see Alexander, 1995; Ferguson, 2006; Kamwangamalu, 1998). By exploring the nature of language planning through naming, this article brings together three areas of scholarship typically kept distinct and separate in sociolinguistics: onomastics, the emergence of New Englishes, and language planning.

Background to the Language Situation in Zimbabwe

In order to situate the analysis of naming in Zimbabwe between 1960 and 1990 we begin with a brief description of the geography and history of Zimbabwe and a description of its linguistic profile. This is followed by a description of the history of language planning in Zimbabwe from the perspectives of a number of agents: Christian missionaries, colonial governments, and nationalist movements and contemporary Zimbabwean government, all of whom have been involved in language planning in Zimbabwe.

Zimbabwe is a landlocked country with an area of 390,757 km² (150,698 square miles), situated in the southern part of Africa between Victoria Falls and the Kariba dam to the north, and the Limpopo River to the south. It is surrounded by South Africa to the south, Botswana to the west, Zambia to the north, and

Mozambique to the east. The 2002 national census gives the Zimbabwean population as 11,631,657. This is made up of Shona 71%, Ndebele 16%, other African 11%, Asian 1% and European 1% (Makoni *et al.*, 2006).

From the 12th century, the land now referred to as Zimbabwe was under the control of the Shona although they did not call themselves by that name. In 1827 the Ndebele conquered part of Zimbabwe and formed the state of Matabeleland. After Cecil John Rhodes (who gave Zimbabwe its former name Rhodesia) obtained a series of lucrative mineral concessions, the land fell under the influence of the British. In 1923 the Whites voted against the option of being incorporated into the Union of South Africa. In 1965 the Prime Minister Ian Smith declared Unilateral Independence from the British, a declaration which was regarded as illegal and unconstitutional. The period 1965 to 1979 was characterised by a war led by the nationalists. In 1980 in the newly named Zimbabwe, the Zimbabwe African Nationalist Union under the leadership of Robert Mugabe won after the first elections which resulted from the British-mediated Lancaster House Constitution.

The first decade of Zimbabwe (1980–1990) was characterised by attempts on the part of Africans to reconcile themselves to Whites politically, but the Whites still retained considerable economic influence over land, mining, and the commercial sector. Due to a series of short-sighted economic policies, poor governance, and pressures from powerful institutions such as the World Bank, the Zimbabwean state has been faced by a series of crises. The emergence of the Movement for Democratic Change (MDC) in the 1990s from a combination of civic and labour organisations heralded a new phase in Zimbabwean politics. The MDC posed the first serious threat to the dominance of a government formed by African liberation fighters. The Mugabe regime, within Zimbabwe and internationally, has managed to successfully split Black opposition against it through a powerful and astute deployment of an anti-imperialistic ideological offensive, while at the same time carrying out a 'very specific, repressive class project' (Raftopolous, 2006: 214) which conceals elite black accumulation of wealth and the compromising of human rights.

The redistribution of land has been projected by the Mugabe regime as a key marker of anti-imperialism, while his opponents have interpreted it as a reflection of its authoritarian politics. Debates in Zimbabwe are not only over land, but also over representation of its past, who is a Zimbabwean and who is not, what is indigenous and what is not. The rhetoric of the Mugabe regime has projected an essentialised view of race as central to African politics. The effects of the discursive regimes of race, indigeneity, anti-imperialism on language policy and language practices is an issue which still needs to be explored.

The official languages of Zimbabwe are English, chiShona and Ndebele, referred to in the Zimbabwean Education Act of 1987, amended in 2006, as 'main languages'. Black Zimbabweans are divided into two major language groups, namely Shona and Ndebele, but there are many other minority African languages – Lozi, Sena, Dombe, Nambya, Tonga, Kalanga, Sotho, Venda, Shangane, Hwesa, Chikunda, Doma, Tswana, Khoisan, Barwe, Fingo/isiXhosa – which are hardly ever written about (Hachipola, 1998; Mphande, 2006). The official languages are used as media of instruction even in situations in which these are not the first languages of the students. Teachers may also be deployed to schools in which

they do not necessarily share a common language with the students, thereby rendering English the 'first' among equals in the languages of the state.

Although English is widely used in Zimbabwe it retains a class dimension not adequately captured in paradigms of New Englishes (Kachru, 1985). The localisation and spread of English is tied to the emergence of new class distinctions reflecting the importance of combining ethnic and class factors when analysing the macro-contexts within which English is acquired (Brutt-Griffler, 2003). Students who have English as a first language and an African language as a second language have higher social status than those who have an African language as a first language and English as a second language (Makoni *et al.*, 2006). Those who have African languages as first languages and English as a second language disparagingly regard Black African students who have English as a first language as 'salads'.

Linguistic maps such as those produced by Ethnologue fail to capture the complexities of Zimbabwe's sociolinguistic situation in which a majority of Ndebele speakers also speak chiShona and English as additional languages. There is also considerable inter-ethnic marriage reflected in part in the use of names from different ethnic groups. For instance, names such as *Phumelele Makoni* and *Simangaliso Makoni* reflect interethnic origins in that *Phumelele* and *Simangaliso* are Nguni names whilst *Makoni* is chiShona. Similarly names such as *Tarisai Khumalo* and *Tendai Zondo* reflect the same phenomenon in that *Tarisai* and *Tendai* are Shona names whereas *Khumalo* and *Zondo* reflect Ndebele ethnicity. The relationship between naming and ethnicity is, however, complicated by the fact that in some cases people have names from an ethno-linguistic group which is not indicative of any intermarriage as both parents may be of the same ethnic group. For example, during data collection in 2006 in Victoria Falls, researchers encountered Rumbidzai who is ethnically Nambya and yet the name Rumbidzai is from chiShona.

Colonial and Post-Colonial Language Policy and Planning Practices

This section is a synopsis of language policies in Zimbabwe from the colonial era to the present. For an expanded analysis of language policies in Zimbabwe see Makoni *et al.* (2006). In colonial Zimbabwe, one of the major objectives of language policies was the development of a bilingual white colonial ruling class proficient in both English and at least one African language, as there were fears in many British colonies about Africans becoming fluent in English 'because this erased one of the important markers of difference between indigenous and white populations' (Jeater, 2006; see also Mazrui & Mazrui, 1998: 141, who raise a similar point about Kenya). Post-colonial policies were initially formulated as an integral part of a nation-building project whose ultimate objective, albeit unsuccessfully, was to override ethnic, linguistic, and social class differences.

In order to overcome the problem of acquiring African languages without enhancing the status of Africans, it was necessary for colonial authorities to appropriate African languages. One of the steps in the appropriation of African languages is through linguistic standardisation.

The codification of these languages was carried out within a structuralist framework of language in which the individual identities of the language users

are of secondary significance. This was done in order to establish an image of scientific objectivity in the construction of African languages (Errington, 2007; Irvine & Gal, 2001). Analysing naming practices is thus important for two reasons. It serves as a prism which has rarely been used in an analysis of the language of language planning in Africa because of the focus on cognitive and geopolitical issues. Theoretically, an analysis of naming is also important because it reintroduces into the analysis of the language of language planning a human dimension, thereby rendering language a human communicative activity and not only a cognitive *cum* neural entity.

When a human dimension is introduced into an analysis of the language of language planning, naming practices are consequently construed as 'acts of identity' (Haugen, 1971; Le Page & Tabouret-Keller, 1985). Language thus ceases to be a 'thing', an 'entity', but is transformed into a human communicative activity. The objectification of language leads policy makers to think in terms of who has languages, how many people can be persuaded to have them, or how people can be given these languages. Language is thus portrayed as if it is 'akin to having access to clean water, fuel, or food' so that accessing them would produce cognitive and material benefits (Pennycook, 2004: 149).

A perspective that regards naming as central has implications for how language planning is construed. In such a perspective the goal of language planning is not the promotion of languages, but changing the political and economic status of individuals by enhancing communication between them. The promotion of language does not necessarily improve the social welfare of the speakers, as the South African story amply demonstrates as reflected in the studies into poverty among Africans in South Africa (Buhlungu *et al.*, 2006). However, the converse may be true, i.e. improving the social welfare of people may indeed change the status of languages.

Theoretically treating naming practices either as 'acts of identity' (Le Page & Tabouret-Keller, 1985) or discursive practices may lead scholars to challenge the dichotomy between language structure and use (Joseph, 2006). It also prevents scholars from uncritically accepting the dichotomy between corpus planning (structure) and status planning (use) on the one hand, and on the other, encourages them to be sceptical of the tendency to endorse the view that corpus planning is technical, and status planning is political.

A large amount of the extant literature on language policy published during the colonial era in Zimbabwe emphasises the imposition of English on African languages (Mkanganwi, 1992; Viriri, 2003). And yet a more nuanced reading of the colonial language policies suggests that what was being imposed during the colonial era was not English on Africans, but European interlanguages of African languages on Europeans as reflected in the names of towns such as Umtali and Gwelo for Mutare and Gweru respectively. Linguistic description was therefore a political act. Through linguistic description, Europeans appropriated African languages as a prelude to the imposition of European variants of African languages on Africans under the guise of the promotion of indigenous language. Codification was a defensive act. African languages, even in their linguistic forms or structures, were political and discursive constructs although the orthodox view is to restrict the political dimensions of African languages to analysis

of status planning and to regard corpus planning as apolitical and a technical exercise. But as Joseph (2006: 20) points out 'Languages are political from top to bottom'. If languages are political, the metalanguages used to describe them are equally political (Bauman & Briggs, 2003; Errington, 2007; Makoni & Pennycook, 2007) including their linguistic forms. An analysis of the naming practices is therefore not only an analysis of linguistic form but also of the politics of language, and therefore helps in comprehending the nature and character of the daily political decisions Africans made about language.

The tendency to create and promote African interlanguages out of the mother tongues of conquered peoples was a strategy which was also followed by previous African ethnic groups when they conquered other Africans. Despite the power and influence of the colonial regime, Africans still retained a strong sense of agency. This sense of agency enabled them to select, albeit within restricted limits, the nature and type of education they received, the languages through which they were taught, and indeed even the materials which were used in teaching them languages, particularly English (Summers, 2002). In some cases enterprising Africans set up, managed, and administered their own schools. This is evident from the story of Gonye who set up his own school at which he was a teacher, preacher and administrator in Masvingo in Zimbabwe (oral family narrative, 13 July 2006).

Naming Practices and Personal Names: A Literature Review

Naming is one area of study in both onomastic and ethnographic literature that has been extensively investigated (Lawson & Laimute, 1996; Lubisi, 2002; Moyo, 1996; Rapoo, 2002; Suzman, 1994). In Southern Africa research into naming is carried out in onomastics. It focuses on how places and people are named (de Klerk & Bosch, 1995; Mashiri, 2003; Moyo, 1996). The interest in naming geographical sites is stimulated by the ongoing changes in the naming of places and buildings in Zimbabwe. In fact, one of the most visible signs of political change is in the names of cities, roads and airports. For example, in 1980 the name Zimbabwe was officially used to refer to the country previously referred to as Rhodesia; there are a number of variants of Zimbabwe (*dzimba-bwe*, *dzimbahwe*). The term Zimbabwe is a generic term for a stone dwelling. The name change to Zimbabwe is significant in language policy. It is significant because it signals an effort to assert the importance and official status of African languages, which as policy were meant to filter to ordinary Africans. Since *Zimbabwe* is a Shona term it reflects the extent to which Shona was *de facto* being made the 'superior' language by some Zimbabwean nationalists because it was the language being used in the name of the country, and the one through which the country was being imagined. It is therefore interesting from a language planning perspective that in spite of the superior status which Shona was being awarded, individuals still tended to use personal names, such as *Moreangels*, *Nevermore* and *Sweetbetter*, drawn from non-Standard English.

Recognition of African language names in preference to non-African names is also evident in the change of place names, especially names of towns soon after Zimbabwe attained its independence. For example, in Zimbabwe, the following name changes have occurred since 1980.

(1)   Salisbury to Harare
(2)   Gatooma to Kadoma
(3)   Fort Victoria to Masvingo
(4)   Wankie to Hwange

Similarly, in South Africa the name of the town Pietersburg changed to Polokwane while Naboomspruit changed to BelaBela after South Africa attained its independence in 1994. A number of other towns will also be affected, as their names will also be changed. The shifts in the above examples are characterised by a change to African languages, where a place name was in English. When the name was in an African language the shift is from a Europeanised version of African languages to an indigenised version of the name as shown by the shift from Umtali to Mutare, Wankie to Hwange and Tjolotjo to Tsholotsho.

Evidence of the use of Europeanised versions of African languages is critical because it demonstrates that it is simplistic to argue that British colonial rulers were always imposing English on Africans. In fact, what they were imposing were their own versions of African languages, as illustrated in the opening section of this paper. How Africans responded to European variants of African languages and their own Africanised versions of English through the naming practices which they adopted is the subject of this paper. The fact that there were European variants of African languages and these were perceived as such by Africans means that African languages were rarely regarded as single entities, but *each* language was regarded as variable, multiple, and conflictual. The unitary language is 'not something given (dan) but is always posited (zadan) – and at every moment of its life it is opposed to the realities of heteroglossia' (Bakhtin, 1934/1981: 270). Thus, heteroglossia was always the norm (Bakhtin, 1934/1981).

Place names provide an important framework for language planning. The shift from European place names or Europeanised versions of place names to indigenised names of African languages reflects a shift in terms of policy towards African languages. Although the place names were officially in English or Europeanised versions of African languages, the Africans typically referred to the places using their African names. So Salisbury was always Harare amongst Africans, and Umtali was always Mutare as well. This suggests that the policy shift in naming was consistent with the language practices of ordinary Africans. Policy and practice were in sync after the changes as far as place names are concerned.

Discursive Construction of the Languages of Personal Names

There are two different strands of naming in African sociolinguistics, i.e. first, the linguistics of naming of languages and, secondly, the naming of individuals. The main focus of this paper is the latter, the naming of individuals. We will only comment briefly on the former, i.e. the naming of languages, to point to its relevance to language planning. The naming of languages is part of a project of 'governmentality' (Foucault, 1977) in which colonial governments develop encyclopaedic inventories (Fabian, 1986; Makoni & Mashiri, 2007). Some of these linguistic forms which were subsequently called 'languages' were not necessarily labelled prior to colonialism as 'naming languages is an artifact

embedded in the consciousness of Western formal education' (Makoni *et al.*, 2003: 3). The names given to African languages were not new, but had completely different meanings. For example, the terms *Korekore* and *Zezuru* were nicknames for highlanders and northerners that were subsequently used as ethnic labels. Naming contributed to a conflation of ethnicity and language proficiency, leading to circularity in definition: a Zulu spoke Zulu, a Yoruba spoke Yoruba (see Blommaert, 2005; Rampton, 1997). The study of the discursive construction of naming practices in Africa has enjoyed a lot of attention because of the interest in how 'names and naming practices vary and reflect patterns of social organisation' (Herbert & Bogatsu, 2001: 2). In Zimbabwe, Pongweni's (1983) research into names is an important, groundbreaking study on the discursive construction of naming practices. However, while Pongweni's research is insightful, it has serious limitations. One of its limitations is that it is impressionistic. It does not address whether the language ideologies of African language speakers changed towards New Englishes over a historical period. From a methodological point of view Pongweni's study is also flawed. The analysis of the meanings of names is based on what the researcher thinks they mean without taking into consideration the voices of those who assigned the names. The data were also not collected systematically. The researcher randomly analysed names he came across and thought were interesting to him. In spite of the weaknesses of Pongweni's research this article is a continuation of his work.

Renewed interest in naming has focused on the ways in which naming interacts with aspects related to cultural change. As urbanisation and other colonial developments took their toll on African communities, many cultural practices were under pressure to survive in an environment often not conducive to their preservation.

Much has been written on the development of a Christian and colonial naming tradition in Africa. Consequently, the adoption of English names among Africans is attributed to the coercive power of Christianity and colonialism (Guma, 2001; Mathangwane & Gardener, 1998; Neethling, 2003; Saarelma-Maunumaa, 1996). Writing on perceptions of English names of Xhosa speakers, Neethling writes:

> With the introduction of Christianity and education as practised by the mission schools to Xhosa speakers in the early 19th century, came a new development. English names were bestowed upon Xhosa children by the missionaries (at baptism) and by teachers (at school). These were often referred to as 'church' and 'school' names. (Neethling, 2003: 47)

Whilst Neethling (2003) identifies teachers and missionaries as name-givers, there are indications that community members act as name-givers as well. Suzman (1994) suggests that the identity of name-givers is 'varied and extensive'. In Zimbabwe white native affairs administrators and employers also re-named black Africans indiscriminately with certain English names. These names 'served to tag black people as an imposition' (Bangeni & Coetser, 2000: 61). Because whites found African names difficult to pronounce, these tags facilitated communication between whites and blacks.

Discussions with different members of the communities in Zimbabwe indicate that naming is not confined to parents and guardians only. Anyone in the

community can assign a name to any individual in the language of the name-giver's preference irrespective of its sociolinguistic status. This seems to be in sharp contrast with other Southern African ethnic groups. For example, Herbert and Bogatsu (2001) report that in South Africa, Northern Sotho and Tswana naming is confined to family members rather than extended to community members at large.

Naming may not only take place at early stages of the life course, but may occur at any stage across the lifespan. There are instances of individuals changing their names and naming themselves at later stages in their lives. This phenomenon seems widespread in most African and African American communities. Mphande (2006: 108) points out that 'changing a personal name to suit the prevailing socio-cultural or political environment is nothing new in African history. Because they are a social commentary, names can be changed to indicate contemporary socio-political situations'. In fact, a number of former combatants in Zimbabwe's war of liberation changed their names after independence. Thus, one former combatant who was assigned the name Hitler at birth changed his name to Chenjerai in 1980, shortly after independence.

The process of re-naming and self-identification suggests that Africans were and are not passive recipients of names imposed on them by a dominant system or by any other person. That Africans had a sense of agency in determining how they were named or gave themselves names is not to deny that this took place in a context in which they did not necessarily have full control of the socio-economic contexts in which they lived. The act of naming oneself therefore reveals that naming and, in particular, names serve 'as an indicator of broader social change and as devices for explaining and classifying patterns of domination and submission' (Alia, 1984: 34).

Although naming is a private act, its effects have public significance since, in a situation like Zimbabwe and possibly other African countries, it reflects the reactions to English. These responses to English have always been and continue to be an issue of major language planning concern since parents constitute one of the biggest constituencies directly affected by changes in language status. As a rule, their reactions are not taken into account in language planning decisions as these are based on impersonal macro political, economic and cognitive factors. These factors rarely take into account onomastic factors because of a prioritisation of the arguments of the language activists rather than of those affected by the language planning decisions (Alexander, 1995). The continuation of an English onomastic tradition even among the illiterate reflects the tenacity of African parents' reactions to English. It also reflects the tenuous nature of the link between the discourses of the academy on language planning and the subaltern views about language. It is this widening gulf which needs to be reduced, in order to enable non-language experts to effectively take part in important decisions affecting their lives.

Discursive Construction of Personal Names and Surnames

Mphande (2006: 109), in drawing a distinction between personal names and surnames, sums up this distinction as follows:

> While surnames may refer to collective and more historical experiences, first, or given, names comment on more temporary social issues and are thus more relevant in deciphering the social atmosphere at a given time. Apart from indicating an individual's relationship with a physical and social environment, names are also statements about religion and the beliefs of the speakers and their relationship with the supernatural. Personal names thus provide a barometer for measuring changes in attitudes and moral codes at specific historical epochs.

This distinction between personal names and surnames is a postcolonial phenomenon. For example, most of the heroines of colonial rule in Zimbabwe are referred to by personal names only, for example Kaguvi, Nehanda (Pongweni, 1983). Because people belonging to the same clan share a surname, personal names are important for purposes of identity marking. However, while personal names are variable, in that the same individual may have different names, there may indeed be some limited variation in their use. For example, in some instances a totem may be used instead of a surname; thus, a *Makoni*, which is a surname, may be called *Nyati*, a totem; while a *Dube* would be known as *Mthembo*. Although totems or clan names can be used instead of surnames, their use is generally very restricted.

The extent to which surnames provide insight into language planning is limited, although in some cases surnames provide insight into differences in terms of the status of the languages in Zimbabwe. Mumpande (2006) enumerates a number of instances in which Tonga speakers had their surnames spelt wrongly on their national registration cards because of the limited proficiency in Tonga by either Ndebele or Shona government officials. The Tonga people construe this to be a violation of section 22 of the Zimbabwean Constitution which forbids discrimination on the grounds of race, ethnicity or language. The argument put forward by the Tonga is that if the Zimbabwean government seriously took into account the importance of minority languages such as Tonga then it would, at least, appoint government officials proficient in Tonga in the national registration offices. Interestingly, there are also instances in which Tonga surnames are changed to Ndebele voluntarily in order for Tonga speakers to pass for Ndebele as shown in the examples below (Mumpande, 2006: 25).

Tonga	Ndebele
Mudenda	*Dube*
Munsaka	*Ndlovu*
Muleya	*Tshuma*

That Tonga surnames are being changed to Ndebele reflects Ndebele hegemony because of the linguistic inequality between languages in Zimbabwean languages.

Africans use English names as personal names and yet rarely are English surnames used in Zimbabwe amongst blacks. However, among first generation Malawian Zimbabweans, the use of English personal names or common names as surnames is popular. These were either the names that were given to them by their white employers or, in some cases, they may have picked the names as a result of interaction with their employers or members of their employer's family.

The names then became surnames for their children. As a result, there are ethnic differences in the propensity to use English non-standard names as surnames between, Shona and Ndebele and Malawian Zimbabweans.

Because of the consistency with which surnames have been used across generations among Zimbabweans, these will be excluded from the analysis of names in this paper.

In African languages personal names provide details about what the namers felt was important and the circumstances surrounding the child's birth (de Klerk & Bosch, 1995). They also describe the nature of the prevailing political and social contexts in which an individual is born. Drawing on examples from famous figures may best illustrate this point. Shaka, a famous Zulu King, was born out of wedlock and his mother had to hide the pregnancy. As the pregnancy advanced, it was rumoured that she had an incurable disease that made her stomach grow abnormally big. This disease was referred to as *isiShaka* ('an unknown incurable disease').[1]

Since naming in African societies plays a significant role in identity marking, analysing how the name is discursively constructed as a text and the language of the name is crucial. It provides insight into the namer's attitude towards the language of the name. Attitudes towards the language of the name are critical in understanding the possible effects of language planning. This is important, as namers are not limited to members of the immediate family. For example, Nelson Mandela's other personal name is *Rolihlahla* and yet the world calls him *Nelson*. He was given the name on entering school, as he reports in his autobiography:

> On the first day of school my teacher, Miss Mdingane, gave each of us an English name ... Miss Mdingane told me that my new name was Nelson. Why she bestowed this particular name on me I have no idea. Perhaps, it had something to do with ... Lord Nelson, but that would only be a guess. (Mandela, 1994: 13)

That students are given school names different from those they have at home widens the gap between home and school. The student subsequently has an identity at school which is different from that at home. Thus the difference between the home and school is not limited to the fact that the language used at school is different from that used at home, but that the child carried with them different identities at home and school, rendering it difficult for the child to utilise what they have learnt at home and in school, and vice versa. This means that trying to make the language at school approximate that at home, however desirable it is, is not a panacea for the problems which children confront at school and does not overcome the home/school divide.

While some people seem to use a number of names interchangeably, others reflect a shift towards a radical orientation in which they explicitly state their preference for the use of names with a clear African language etymology. For example, in South Africa, the Eastern Cape Premier, Arnold Stofile, changed his name to *Makhenkesi Stofile*. The South African Minister of Defense, Patrick Terror Lekota, changed his name to *Mosiou*a *Lekota*, thus dropping the two English names. In Zimbabwe a famous literary scholar changed his name from *European* to *Tafadzwa*, a name drawn from chiShona. Since 'naming practices provide an

important window on the construction of ethnic identities' (Harrison, 2000: 11), in the above examples the change of name reflects self-identification as an affirmation of ethnic identity. Even though there is a tendency among public officials to shift towards the use of African names as the above examples illustrate, it is not clear how widely pervasive the phenomenon is among ordinary citizens.

Naming Practices and the Development of New Englishes

The literature originating in Africa on new Englishes in Africa is inspired by the work of Kachru (1985) and others (Arua, 2001; Dako, 2001; Gough, 1996; Igboanusi, 2003; Letsholo, 2000; Magura, 1985). Most of these studies analyse ways in which new Englishes are used phonologically, semantically and pragmatically. They also investigate how English is adapted to local contexts. It therefore enhances our understanding of the status of Englishes in Africa.

However, there are three key problems that arise from research into New Englishes. First, the use of the nation state as the prism through which New Englishes are analysed is problematic. It overlooks massive migration across African states and the interaction amongst individuals originally from different countries. The concept of the nation state is not useful in language planning because it renders it unnecessarily difficult for interstate programmes to be developed even though a large number of African languages are deployed across borders (Makoni *et al.*, 2006).

The second problem is the lack of clarity regarding the criteria upon which the features that form the basis of the descriptions are based. Third, the exclusion of names as sources of data for analysing New Englishes (Dasgupta, 1993; Makoni & Meinhof, 2004) constitutes a shortcoming as English-like names are a common feature, particularly in Southern Africa. Even when the criteria for determining the linguistic features that characterise New Englishes are touched upon, the extent to which the use of New Englishes reflects the users' own appropriation of the language is not addressed. Further, there are no systematic studies that analyse the naming practices used by the speakers of New Englishes and the extent to which the names reflect their experience of English. The naming practices of the speakers of New Englishes provide important insights into how these speakers relate to English. This is indicative of the adoption of English in Zimbabwean language policy.

A Study of the Discursive Construction of Personal Names
Aims of the study

This paper investigates the discursive construction of personal names. We explore whether, historically, one pattern of naming is characterised by a shift from European names to names drawn from African languages. Naming a child is an important rite of passage in many African cultures (Lubisi, 2002). We hypothesise that if naming is so important so is the language used in the naming. Therefore an analysis of the language used in the naming enhances an understanding of the practice of language planning in African settings (Lubisi, 2002). This will, furthermore, enable us to explore whether there is any shift in the language of naming in Zimbabwe from African languages to English or from

African languages to urban vernaculars and the implications this has on language planning.

In drawing a distinction between Western and African names, Herbert and Bogatsu state that:

> The criterion ... often employed in distinguishing African and Western names is that of name meaningfulness. It is well known that African names 'have meaning' and that speakers readily identify that meaning. Western names, on the other hand, are very largely devoid of meaning for modern speakers (e.g. Jonathan, Barbara).

Suzman (1994) cites the criterion of meaningfulness as a distinguishing factor between African names and their Western counterparts, which she describes as mere 'labels' (Suzman, 1994: 253). In view of the above, this paper seeks to establish whether the names that are not in African languages are indeed 'English' names. It investigates whether there are modifications of naming under the impact of Anglicisation. The following are the research topics:

(1) The language used in personal names.
(2) The meaning of the name.
(3) The reasons or explanations offered by namers for selecting that particular name.
(4) The identity of the name-givers, that is whether the person had been named by the father or by the mother or some other person in the family or community.
(5) Attitudes of the name-bearers towards the names assigned to them.

Research methodology

Names were randomly selected from a graduation list of students who graduated from the University of Zimbabwe in 1983, and then compared with those who graduated in 1993 and in 2005. The students who graduated in 1983 were born in the early 1960s. Those who graduated in 1993 were born in the 1970s and the 2005, graduates in the 1980s. One of the limitations in the analysis of names from the graduation list is that the data did not provide insight into the 'real' meaning behind the names and the attitudes of the name-bearers to their names. In order to supplement these data, a much more systematic survey was carried out.

The survey was conducted with a total of 60 people[2] randomly selected from people from different regions in Zimbabwe born 1960–1990. A questionnaire was used to elicit data on naming. The survey was necessary to establish the meaning of the names and the attitudes of the name-holders towards their names. Participants were randomly selected from the different languages. The interviews were conducted mainly in the homes of the informants. The assistant researchers were drawn from the areas where the interviews took place and were known to the participants. As participants were drawn randomly, there were differences in the sample in terms of the gender divide. There were more females in the sample than males (ratio 3 : 2), perhaps since the survey took place during working hours when most males were at work.

The information elicited included the background of name-holders (name/s, identity of name-giver/s, date and place of birth). Considering the fact that naming

is a linguistic act that is linked to values and traditions, the questionnaires had specific questions to both name-holders and those that had assigned names to the informants to elicit their attitudes towards the names, and the language used in the names. The following questions were posed to the name-holders:

(1)   What are the names that you are called by?
(2)   Who gave you these/this name/s?
(3)   Why do you think you were given these names and not any other names?
(4)   Do you like your names and if so why is this so and if not why don't you like your names?
(5)   Given the chance, would you change your name/s, and if so what would you want to be called and why?

The five questions above were posed because of an interest in ascertaining the range of names which the individuals had. The questions were also posed in order to ascertain the languages in which the names have their origin. There was also an interest in finding out the reactions of the named towards their names. An analysis of the attitudes of name-bearers towards their names, particularly the language of the names, sheds light on the local ideologies towards language, and is thus relevant to language planning. It is also possible that since ideologies about language are much more than attitudes towards language, an analysis of the local ideologies about language would further enhance understanding of the various ways in which the individuals reacted to Zimbabwean language policies.

In addition to administering the questionnaire to name-holders, a second questionnaire was administered to name-givers. Name-givers were asked to explain the reasons for assigning particular name/s and not others. They were also asked for the meaning behind the name. They were also asked for the general uses to which each name was put and their attitudes towards the names they had assigned. It is primarily this information that was used in investigating shifts in the language of naming (if any) towards English or urban vernaculars. This enables us to examine whether there is any justification in claims of endangerment of African languages in Zimbabwe. Theoretically, the analysis contributes towards scholarship in language policy in those issues in which the main argument for promoting 'indigenous' languages is to protect them from the 'bigger' languages such as English (Nettle & Romaine, 2000; Phillipson, 2003; Skutnabb-Kangas, 2000).

The following questions were posed to the name-givers.

(1)   Why did you give xxx these names?
(2)   What do these names mean?
(3)   Are all the names used all the time?
(4)   If not when is each name used and why?
(5)   Would you consider changing these names and if so why?
(6)   If you were to give xxx names again, what would these names be?

The questions were posed to enable the researchers to ascertain how those who do the naming respond to naming, and whether over time they might have wished to change the names they gave. Such questions enable us to explore the potential for language shift, and to ascertain its direction.

Data were elicited from a total of 10 people within each age group. The rationale was to establish whether there was a change in naming practices as a result of the attainment of independence from white rule in 1980 (Ranger, 2003). It was reasoned that the 1960s group were born in the midst of the liberation struggle, while those born in the 1990s belonged to the post-white rule and may adopt different names. The following are the periods:

(1)   1960–1969
(2)   1970–1980
(3)   1990–1995

Analysis of results: Data from the graduation list

In analysing the data, the first question posed was asked in order to examine whether naming has changed over the three decades. The following is a summary of some of the striking names in the period under investigation.

1983 graduation list (1960–1969 category): *Nevermore, Analyn, Africa, Letwina, Macleod, Johnfisher, Exaverlo*;

1993 graduation list (1970–1979 category): *Courage, Paris, Goodwill, Clever, Gift, Blessed, Last*;

2005 graduation list (1980–1989 category): *Moreangels, Nomore, Goodlucky, Census, Polite, Handsome, Overt*.

What is clear from the graduation lists is that there is a continued use of non-Standard English over the three decades. The list of names compiled from the names of students who graduated in 1993 is not significantly different from the first list, i.e. the list of individuals who were born in the 1960s and graduated in 1983. Although most of the students who graduated in 2005 were born in the 1980s, most of them have names consistent with those found on the 1983 and 1993 list. Comparatively, the three lists suggest that there is a continuation of non-Standard English names within Zimbabwe. Thus, there has been no change in the language of naming that is used when assigning a name.

Notably, a majority of the names taken from the graduation list are not native English names. These names consist of lexical items which are drawn from English but which may not be frequently used as names from a native English speaker's perspective. For example, names such as *Lookon*, *Luckymore* (Neethling, 2005: 99) and *Sinfree* sound strange in the English-speaking world. From the viewpoint of a standard language ideology (Milroy & Milroy, 1985) the names are unusual because they deviate from conventional standard native English spelling. For example: *Exavier* (Xavier); *Funwell* (Fanuel); *Jerald* (Gerald); *Indirance* (Endurance); *Bigg* (Big); *Happinos* (Happiness).

Some of the spellings of the names reflect forms of writing conventions by second language users of English in which English names are inserted into a first language, that is the chiShona or Ndebele writing systems. The fact that these spellings are retained even in official documents reflects the extent to which New Englishes have permeated Zimbabwe. The spread of English does not seem to have endangered African languages as 'dystopic' theories (Jacquemet, 2005) of language spread focusing on English might lead us to believe. From the perspective of those who name their children using non-Standard English spelling, the spelling is not considered incorrect, just as *Umtali*,

Gatooma, *Tjolotjo* and *Amatoli* are not incorrect from a European perspective on African languages. What these names reflect are efforts on the part of both Europeans and Africans to appropriate second languages (Fabian, 1986).

It is, however, striking that the non-Standard English spelling forms are retained even when the name-holders are formally educated and able to spell in a manner consistent with Standard English. The continued use of non-standard spelling forms as names by the educated reflects the limitations of standard language ideology in the discursive construction of naming (Milroy & Milroy, 1985).

In some cases the names reflect the namers' language learning experience of English as demonstrated by the use of contracted forms of fuller English idiomatic expressions that are used within Zimbabwean. For example: *Lordwin* (The Lord wins over the devil); *Shameon* (Shame on you); *Learnfirst* (Learn first before acting); *Eventhough* (God blessed me even though I was rejected); *Withus* (God is with us).

Most of the names in the above examples are derived from words combined in a manner inconsistent with Standard English word division, but provide important insights into how non-Standard English is acquired in African contexts. The resultant compounds are not the kind that one learns from a formal educational setting. These are names the namers acquired from their interaction with family members in informal settings. Perhaps the desire to speak English motivates them to pick expressions, which they give permanence by using as names for their children. And yet structurally, the construction processes involved in names like *Withus*, *Lordwin* and *Learnfirst* resemble the linguistic processes involved in the formation of such names as *Bonangani* ('How do you see?') (Mphande, 2006), *Isheanesu* ('The Lord is with us') and *Mukundindishe* ('The Lord wins') in African languages, suggesting that even though the names were English in form, the structure and model on which they are based is African. In terms of the rhetorical and phonological structure, these names are closer to African languages than Standard English. Non-Standard English provides Africans with opportunities to appropriate English because it blurs boundaries between English and African languages. The distinction between English and African languages is seen as a seamless continuum.

Some other English names are derived from translations from chiShona proverbs. For example, *Shout* and *Talkmore* are translated from chiShona proverbs: *mwana asingacheme anofira mumbereko* ('a child who does not cry will die on their mother's back') which means speak out loudly or shout so that you can get help. In some cases, Africans use African sounding names that reflect European Christian concepts. In fact, the use of names such as *Lordwin* ('The Lord wins over the devil'), *Isheanesu* ('The lord is with us'), *Thembinkosi* ('Believe in the Lord') or *Vusolwenkosi* ('The Lord's resurrection') reflects the language effects of Christianity (Pennycook & Makoni, 2005). In other words, the use of African names within a Christian purview reflects the extent to which Christianity is being articulated through African languages (Fabian, 1986; Mashiri, 2003). The converse applies equally as Africans' continued use of names drawn from non-Standard English is indicative of the degree to which Africans have also appropriated English for their own purposes. The promotion of English in terms of language policy has therefore resulted in the emergence of non-Standard English, which is increasingly becoming the target for most names.

Analysis of the results: Survey data

There is a total of 60 informants with at least 10 in each category and random samples of 10 people are chosen within each category. For the purposes of this article we confine ourselves to 43 informants born from 1960 to 1965, and those born from 1985 to 1990 (20 in the category of those born after 1980).

A total of 17 informants' names of people born between 1960 and 1964 were used; although 20 informants had taken part in the project, three were difficult to decipher hence these were discarded. The following are the five categories used in the classification the data.

(1)   African language (AF): has one name only and the name is from an African language.
(2)   African language + African language (AF + AF); has two names both of which are drawn from African languages.
(3)   English + African Language (ENG + AF): has two names, one from English or a variety of English and the other from an African language.
(4)   English (ENG): has one name only which is drawn from a variety of English.
(5)   English + English (ENG + ENG): has two names both of which are drawn from varieties of English.

However, what needs to be pointed out is that due to the size of the sample, the survey is only indicative of a trend in patterns of naming and does not, in itself, provide conclusive findings.

For the 1960s group (see Table 1), a majority of the informants have names from both English and African languages (52.9%). Only 29.4% have one or both personal names which are English. Some 17.7% have one or both names in African languages. There is clearly a trend among those born in the early 1960s is to have names from both English and an African language.

After analysing the naming pattern for those born in the 1960s we now turn to those born in the 1980s, to examine the extent to which the same pattern of

Table 1   Summary of names of people born in the 1960s

Language/s	No. of informants	Percentages
AF	1	5.9%
AF + AF	2	11.8%
Sub-total	3	17.7%
ENG + AF	9	52.9%
ENG	4	23.5%
ENG + ENG	1	5.9%
Sub-total	5	29.4%
Total	17	100.0%

Table 2 Summary of names for those born 1980–1985

Language/s	No. of informants	Percentages
AF	7	30.4%
AF + AF	1	4.3%
Sub-total	8	34.7%
ENG + AF	6	26.2%
ENG	8	34.8%
ENG + ENG	1	4.3%
Sub-total	9	39.1%
Total	23	100.0%

using names drawn from both English and an African language continues into the 1980s.

In the data of those born in 1980–1985 there are 23 informants (see Table 2). In the 1960s the dominant naming pattern was to have two names, one English and another drawn from an African language. By the 1980s the dominant pattern, by contrast, is to have English names (39.1%), followed by African names (34.7%). Having both an English and an African language (26.2%) was down from 52.9% in the 1960s. The dominant naming pattern has, therefore, changed between 1960 and 1980, from having an English name plus an African name, to having either English name/s only or African name/s only. Of the 15 English names used, only three were Standard English, suggesting the pervasive nature of non-Standard English. This might be construed as one of the consequences of the promotion of English in language planning. Notably the use of African names has also risen significantly from 17.7% in the 1960s group to 34.7% suggesting, perhaps, that the promotion of indigenous African languages in post independent Zimbabwe has been partially successful.

While a number of studies have reported on the continued dominance of English in education, our study supports the continued use of a variety of non-Standard English but in a separate domain: naming practices. What is important to note is that the type of English in circulation is the non-standard variety, which linguistically approximates African languages structurally as well as through cultural patterns. This suggests that the vitality of African languages and cultures are retained through non-Standard English.

A total of 17 informants took part in the section of the study on name-givers (see Table 3). Fathers named a majority of the children born in the 1960s (65%). The rest are named either by mothers (18%), teachers (12%), or others such as doctors (1%). That their fathers gave the names is important from a gender perspective. It suggests that naming practices reflect the role which gender plays in shaping their children's identities. This is not surprising considering the fact that most ethnic groups in Zimbabwe are patriarchal except the Nambyaians.

Table 3 The identity of name-givers in the 1960s

Namers	No. of informants	Percentages
Fathers	11	65%
Mothers	3	18%
Teachers	2	12%
Others	1	5%
Total	17	100%

Further analysis, however, needs to examine whether fathers are more likely to give a child an African name rather than an English name; or both are equally possible. Such an analysis would be illuminating because it would demonstrate whether there are gender-specific orientations towards English and non-Standard English. In other words, are women more English-inclined than men, and what variety of English would they opt for? For instance, Cook (2002) demonstrates gender differences in the use of language with males more likely to use Afrikaans while women are more likely to English. We, however, do not have systematically collected data on whether there would be a difference between women and men in Zimbabwe in terms of language preferences between English and African languages. Such data would be useful for the burgeoning literature on language and gender in Africa.

Even in the 1980s the fathers were still the dominant name-givers (see Table 4), though they were down from 65% to 48%. Mothers as name givers had risen from 18% to 26%. At the same time the category of 'other' name-givers had risen from only 5% in the 1960s to 26%, making them equal with mothers as name-givers. It is difficult to give specific reasons for the significant increase in the category 'other'. However, during this period it seems single-parenting was on the increase and grandparents, uncles and siblings were prominent namers in this category. In some cases mothers left their children before assigning them a name, as shown in the case of Never below. Another difference that emerges is that while teachers did some naming (12%) in the 1960s, by the 1980s they

Table 4 The identity of name-givers in the 1980s

Namers	Number of informants	Percentages
Fathers	13	48%
Mothers	7	26%
Teachers	0	0%
Other	7	26%
Total	27	100%

were no longer visible as name-givers. It is possible that the ENG + AF category in the 1960s was enhanced by teachers, priests and government administrators. These groups of people assigned an English name leading to an individual having a school name and a home name, in which case the school name was, in most cases, English (see Mandela, 1994) and the home name in an African language.

Discussion

In order to analyse the language ideologies of the name-bearers, we collected some qualitative data on whether the name-bearers liked their names or the language of their names. The intention in analysing the attitudes of the name-bearers was to explore the name-bearers' orientation towards the language their names derived from. The hypothesis was that if naming a child is so important then so is the language, or the variety of language, used in the naming process. An analysis of the language used in the naming will therefore enable us to further understand the nature of ideologies of language and the implication this has for language planning in African settings. The assumption is that people's personal liking of the language of their names is an important aspect in our understanding of how people may relate to language planning.

In analysing the name-bearers' orientation towards the language of their names, we found complex and varied responses. In some instances the name-bearers professed to like their names irrespective of whether the name was in Standard or non-Standard English, suggesting that the variety of language their name is in does not affect their attitudes towards their names. That the name-bearers are likely to endorse names from non-Standard English raises a number of issues. One possibility is that the name-bearers do not distinguish between Standard and non-Standard English.

The complexity of the responses to the individual names highlights the problematic nature of making generalisations about language ideologies even for people living in the same community and same historical period. The individuals may entertain ideologies of language influenced by individual experiences with the specific language. It is this element of individual experiences with language which is frequently overlooked in the analysis of ideologies of language when locally grounded perspectives (Canagarajah, 2005) on language are explored. Locally grounded perspectives of language, although contributing to a radical shift away from top-down perspectives, tend to overlook the fact that even people living within the same communities have different experiences of the same language and therefore by overlooking the diversity in the individuals' experiences they conjure an inaccurate image of a uniformity that does not exist.

The informants who had English names like their non-Standard English names, for example *Cornermore* and *Happymore*. Of the 26 informants with African names only, 20% did not like them particularly. Notably, those who did not like their names attributed this to the meaning and not the language the name was derived from, for example *Mabenzi* who did not like his name because, although his name means 'problem' in Tonga, in chiShona it means 'fools' or 'mad people', and everyone construes his name from a chiShona perspective. Interestingly, those who had two names considered themselves

'bi-cultural' and thought that their names were a significant marker of their identity as 'distinctively Zimbabwean'.

The empirical study shows that the period 1960–1990 involved an onomastic shift in Zimbabwe. It demonstrates that contrary to our expectations there is a radical shift away from the combined use of English and African language names to names in African languages only or English only. The combined use of ENG + AF fell by half, from 52.9% in 1960s to 26.2% in 1980s, that is there was a strong trend away from ENG + AF. Counterbalancing this trend there was a trend towards using more AF or AF + AF and ENG or ENG + ENG. The use of African-only names almost doubled from 17.7% in the1960s to 34.7% in the 1980s, while the use of English-only names also rose, though less markedly, from 29.4% in the 1960s to 39.1% in the 1980s. While the rise in the use of African-only names is more marked, they are still marginally below the use of English-only names. This pattern indicates that although the Zimbabwe national language policy promotes the use of African languages, there is still strong adherence to the use of English in naming. Africans continued using non-Standard English to articulate their culture. In the light of some theories of language change such as linguistic imperialism (Brutt-Griffler, 2005; Canagarajah, 2005; Swigart, 2000), one might be compelled to believe that the emergence of a new onomastic tradition is an imposition, and yet the evidence suggests that the emergence of such a tradition was not one imposed upon Africans, but one which Africans actively sought and maintained (Makoni, 1993).

The use of names from English reflects a complex attitude towards English in that when discussing language policy issues one is typically referring to Standard English, while in discussions about names reference is made to non-Standard Zimbabwean English. The use of English names also reflects a racialised orientation towards language. For example, Mike (born December 1984) claims he was given an English name because:

> *Ngazalwa ngibomvu, ngimuhle. Ubaba wami wathi ngifanana lekhiwa. Ubaba nguye owanginika ibizo leli ngoba efisa ukuthi ngondliwe ngamakhiwa.* [I was born light in complexion and handsome, and my father likened me to a white man. My father gave me an English name because he wished that I be adopted and raised by whites.]

This should not be construed to mean that when parents feel that their children are light in complexion they are always given English names. In other cases, for example, light complexioned children are given names using African language words that are typically used to refer to whites such as *Khiwa* (Ndebele 'European' or 'white person').

English or European sounding names are drawn from various sources. In some instances, the names come from the Bible and other literature which the name-givers had encountered. For example, Miriam (born 1984) suggests that she was given that name from the Bible because her mother admired the biblical Miriam. The ideologies towards English are complex because they also entail the use of words as names which the name-givers do not understand. This suggests that comprehensibility is not an important criterion in naming. For example, *Never* (born 1984) explains why he was given such a name by stating that:

> *Mina ibizo elithi Never ngaliphiwa ngumalume. Umalume wayengazi lokuthi litshoni. Wayeswele ibizo wase dobha nje ibizo elafika masinya enqgondweni yakhe. Umama wangitshiya ngisanda kuzalwa. Wasuka engakanginiki lebizo.* [My uncle who did not know the meaning of the word 'never' named me. He just settled for that name after failing to come up with any name because my mother had left me before giving me a name.]

The use of names from English which the name-givers did not understand suggests that there was a considerable aesthetic element in naming involving the sounds of words. It is this element of aesthetics which is frequently not considered in discussions about naming in spite of its significance in language planning. Naming children while drawing on a language which one does not understand leads to the use of names that are inappropriate. For example, among the Tonga researchers in this study encountered names such as *Lizadi* ('lizard'), *Misisi* ('Mrs') and *Anasi* ('anus'). The name-givers had heard the words used and thought they would be nice as names for their children although they did not know what they meant.

In some cases the continued use of English names has less to do with linguistic aesthetics and thus does not reflect a form of linguistic consciousness. It is a continuation of an African naming tradition. For example, Joseph (born 1964) claims he was named after his maternal uncle and explains this as follows:

> *Ngathiwa ngumfowabo kababa. Kithi sethiwa ngebizo likababa omncane.*[My father's brother (uncle) named me. It is a family trend to pass one's name to a nephew. I too have already passed this name to my nephew.]

In other cases the names reflect more mundane matters such as attempts to navigate the complexities of educational systems in Zimbabwe. Zimbabwean education requires that before writing the national examinations for qualifying for high school, one needs to have a birth certificate. Often one has to go through a lot of bureaucratic processes to obtain one. In such cases, siblings who have birth certificates often lend them to those who do not. The process of lending a birth certificate means that the individual subsequently assumes the name of the person named on the certificate. The name on the birth certificate is typically an English and African language one in the 1960s. English names are associated with official documents. For example, in some cases the child adopts the name of a sibling in order to get permission to write primary school leaving examinations as is the case of Vuso Andrew Doctor (born 1962) who explains this as follows:

> *Uvuso umele uVusolwenkosi okutsho ukuvuka kwenkosi njengebhayibhilini. Eish, ummh, angazi ukuthi uAndrew utshoni. Ibizo lami lami lokuzalwa ngu Effort. Ibizo elithi Doctor ngaliphiwa nges'khathi ngisesibhedlela. Ngatsha ngisemncane. Ngahlala esibhedlela isikhathi eside kakhulu onesi baze bathi yimi udokotela. Lelibizo laliyi nickname kodwa ngacina sengilisebenzisa sengisiya esikolo. Ibizo elithi Effort abantu bacina sebelikhohlwa. Ngaqala eprimary ngingu Doctor manje kwasekufuneka ibirth certificate. Mina ngangingelayo.* My mother then gave me my brother's birth certificate *ngasengisiba yimi uVuso Andrew.*[Vuso is short form of Vusolwenkosi meaning the Lord's resurrection like in the Bible. I don't know the meaning of Andrew. A medical

practitioner assigned me the name Doctor. Initially my name was Effort. I then fell into a fire at an early age getting serious burns. Owing to my long stay in hospital I was given a nickname Doctor. The nickname then stuck and slowly the name Effort was forgotten. I started primary school as Doctor but when I needed a birth certificate I was given my brother's name Vuso Andrew. These became my official names.]

The adoption of a sibling's name is not a cause for identity confusion because the sibling did not go as far as the end of primary school, and in any case his home name is different. By taking another individual's name Vuso is assuming another individual's identity in school contexts.

Directions for Future Research

This article has sought to address a number of questions. It explores whether there is indeed a language shift manifested in the naming patterns by specifically focusing on personal names in Zimbabwe over three historical periods. The survey looked at two historical periods while the graduation list provided a glimpse of the 1990s. The results suggest that there is a continued use of non-Standard English over the three historical periods although African languages significantly emerge as languages of naming in the 1980s. In other words there is indeed a form of language shift in the area of naming. The trend in using English names is to use non-Standard English names with a non-Standard variety of English that seems to closely approximate African languages as the use of names such as *Lookon* and *Lordwin* closely approximates African languages both syntactically and morphologically (see page 19 for an analysis of how these names approximate African languages). The use of non-Standard English names is construed as a continuing process in the maintenance of tradition, particularly in those families where the name was used in previous generations. In such a case non-Standard English was used to retain African tradition, and African languages and culture are not under threat. This challenges what Jacquemet (2005) refers to as a 'dystopic' vision in which the spread of English is 'indelibly linked to Americanization and homogenisation of world culture and to media imperialism' (Nettle & Romaine, 2000; Pennycook, 2007; see Phillipson, 1992, 2003, for an elaboration of such a position).

In spite of the fact that the spread of non-Standard English is not threatening African cultures (if anything it is enhancing it by facilitating change) as reflected in the continued use of a tradition of using names from previous generations, it is bizarre to name a child using a language one has limited control of. Even if English is not dominating African languages and poses no significant threat to African cultures, a serious discussion of the issue is complicated by a number of conceptual issues: the notion of domination has not been adequately conceptually analysed (see, however, Janks (2000) postulating that domination, access and diversity may be useful in further clarification of the concept). If the concept of domination is not framed rigorously, it becomes a non-testable and possibly un-testable hypothesis. It is important for the hypothesis to be testable if it is to be meaningful in Zimbabwe.

In an African context, it might be worth reiterating that the notion of domination is a metaphor and languages do not dominate people, people dominate

each other. Paradoxically, even though the metaphor of languages dominating people is meant to be a clarion call to political action, framing the discussion in such an apolitical manner renders it more difficult rather than easier for political intervention to take place, exactly in those contexts in which active social intervention is warranted. Furthermore, the discussions about the spread of English need to go beyond what Pennycook (2007) refers to as the 'homogemy' and 'heterogemy' debates. It is necessary to conceptualise research into naming which takes into account the transcultural and translocal cultural flows arising in part as a consequence of globalisation and migration in how naming practices occur. In turn, this suggests that language planning in Africa has to be founded on an analysis of transitional and transnational networks. An analysis of naming and its impact on language planning has to be designed as part of a comprehensive identity package, which has implications for 'how you talk or how you walk, ... how you do yo thang, how you let it hang – how you let it swang' (Alim, 2004: 61). State-centric approaches, which have been the norm in African sociolinguistics, blind us to the diversities within nation states and the similarities across different states.

By and large, future research has to analyse ways in which migrants may adopt new names to assimilate into their new environments or as responses to xenophobia, and racism directed at, for example, Black Zimbabweans in South Africa (Sisulu *et al.*, 2007). If research into naming is to retain a state-centric/ nation perspective it needs to work with a more vigorous analytical template in which the state/nation is conceptualised broadly enough to incorporate aspects that deal with its diaspora.

Correspondence

Any correspondence should be directed to Dr Sinfree Makoni, Department of Applied Linguistics and African and African American Studies, The College of Liberal Arts, Pennsylvania State University, State College, PA 16801, USA (sbm12@psu.edu).

Notes

1. In Shaka's praise names this information is captured when the praise singer refers to him as *isiShaka kasishayeki* ('the disease cannot be cured').
2. Although we analysed a total of 60 informants, we had more that 60 people who participated in the survey. We discarded some of the data in instances where the name-giver was dead, or those named could not remember when they were born and could only refer to the year when they were born as the 'year of the locust' when it was not clear what year this referred to.

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The Authors

Busi Makoni holds a PhD in Applied Linguistics from the University of Edinburgh. Her research interests are in theoretical aspects of second language acquisition, the learning of African languages as third languages, and sociolinguistics, language planning and language rights. Some of her research has been published in the *Journal of Second Language Research*, *Southern African Journal of African Languages*, *Per Linguam*, *Current Issues in Language Planning* and the *International Multilingual Research Journal*.

Sinfree Makoni holds a PhD in Applied Linguistics from Edinburgh University. His research interests are in language and health, creolisation of African languages in urban settings, and language in popular culture. Some of his research in the last two years has been published in the *International Multilingual Research Journal*, *Language in Society*, *Current Issues in Language Planning*, the *Journal of Intercultural Communication Research*, the *Journal of Cross-Cultural Gerontology* and the *Journal of Language, Identity, and Education*.

Pedzisai Mashiri holds a PhD in African Languages from the University of Zimbabwe. His research interests are in the writing of grammars of African languages, language use in urban settings, popular culture, and language and religion. His research has been published in *Current Issues in Language Planning*, *AILA Review* and *Zambezia*.