

ANTHROPONYMS WE LIVE BY: AN ECOLINGUISTIC APPROACH ¹ TO NAMES IN CILUBA (L31)

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Abstract: This paper tries to revisit the issue of the meanings of names by studying ecological anthroponyms (zoonyms and dendronyms) in Ciluba (L31) (Guthrie 1948), one of the four national languages in the Democratic Republic of Congo. Contrary to the concerns voiced in Ecolinguistics that “The use of lexicons in a language is determined by the referents of the lexicon, then the loss of a referent will result in the loss of the lexicon as well.” (Almos et al.’s 2018, p.94), it is argued that for ecological anthroponyms, the natural referents may disappear but the lexicons will survive in anthroponyms. However, these will be simple etiquettes for identifying people, without any cultural meaning. The paper analyzes some enunciations to identify the cultural meanings which would go unnoticed if the natural referents happen to become extinct.

Keywords: Ecolinguistics, anthroponyms, praise names, appellatives, ethnography of communication.

DES ANTHROPONYMES QUI NOUS FONT VIVRE : UNE APPROCHE ÉCOLINGUISTIQUE DES NOMS EN CILUBA (L31)

Résumé: Cet article essaie de réexaminer le problème du sens des noms propres par une étude des anthroponymes écologiques (zoonymes et dendronymes) en ciluba (L31), l’une de quatre langues nationales de la République Démocratique du Congo. Contrairement aux préoccupations courantes en Ecolinguistique selon lesquelles « L’emploi des lexiques dans une langue est déterminé par les référents du lexique, alors la perte du référent entrainera aussi celle du lexique, » (Almos et al. 2018, p. 94) ; il est soutenu que pour les anthroponymes écologiques, les référents naturels pourraient disparaître, les lexiques survivront dans les anthroponymes. Cependant, ceux-ci seront de simples étiquettes pour identifier les personnes, sans aucun sens culturel. L’article analyse quelques énonciations afin d’identifier les sens culturels qui passeraient inaperçus si les référents naturels disparaissaient complètement.

Mots-clés: Ecolinguistique, anthroponymes, noms de louange, appellatifs, ethnographie de communication.

Introduction

What is in a name? Or, must a name mean something? This is one of the fundamental questions tackled in semantics. Lewis Carroll (1896/1970)

¹ Anthroponymes dans la vie quotidienne. Une étude des noms propres dans la langue Ciluba (l31) par une approche écolinguistique

fantasized on it in his novel *Through the Looking Glass* (TLG), a companion to the well-known novel *Alice in Wonderland*, by creating the following dialogue between Alice and Humpty Dumpty:

- **Alice:** "My name is Alice, but ..."
- **Humpty Dumpty:** "It's a stupid name enough!" Humpty Dumpty interrupted impatiently. "What does it mean?"
- **Alice:** "Must a name mean something?" Alice asked doubtfully.
- **Humpty Dumpty:** "Of course it must" Humpty Dumpty said with a short laugh: "my name means the shape I am - and a good handsome shape it is, too. With a name like yours, you might be any shape, almost."

TLG (1970, p.263)

Contrary to Humpty Dumpty's assumption, the shape is not the only meaning that a name can convey, if ever. Admittedly, as Alice asks in surprise, it is not obligatory for a name to mean anything else beyond its primary function of a code or an etiquette for identifying a person, even if that word has another referent in the real world (e.g. Leech, Quirk, Burn). The debate over the *sign*, the *signification* and the *referent* current in linguistics is far from ending. Suffice it to recall that although the novels *Alice in Wonderland* and its sequel *Through the Looking Glass* are primarily known as fairy tales reporting Alice's dreams of a fantastic world, Lewis Carroll's program is first of all linguistic (Yaguello 1981) ⁽²⁾. Critics have shown how he applies the principles of formal logic to language, like in the Hatter's response to Alice: "you might just as well say that 'I see what I eat' is the same thing as 'I eat what I see'" (AWL, 1970, p.95) to challenge 'inversion' ⁽³⁾. In his annotation of these novels, Martin Gardner had this to say about Carrollian inversion:

In real life proper names seldom have a meaning other than the fact that they denote an individual object, whereas other words have general, universal meanings. In Humpty Dumpty's realm, the reverse is true. Ordinary words mean whatever Humpty wants them to mean, whereas proper names like "Alice" and "Humpty Dumpty" are supposed to have general significance."

TLG (1970, p.263) ⁽⁴⁾

Hence, this paper investigates into ecological anthroponyms in Ciluba (L31), one of the four national languages in the Democratic Republic of Congo. They comprise zoonyms (animal names) and dendronyms (names of trees); the latter are often inclusive of phytonyms (names of plants). Both *zonym* and *dendronym* are neologisms created by scholars of African linguistics (Mutombo 2014a, 2014b). Contrary to the above consideration of names as mere etiquettes for identifying people, Africanist linguists hold that (ecological) names convey additional meanings which are at times made explicit through periphrases, postmodification etc. Such names are known as "noms amplifiés," (Nzuji-Faïk 1974, 1976; Kazadi 1985), that is, 'amplified names'. To paraphrase Nzuji-Faïk, amplification is a linguistic process through which a name is prolonged through postmodification with its bearers' characteristics that should be emphasized. In Ciluba, these names are called *meena a bukola* 'names of strength' or *meena a*

makumbu 'praise names'. As forces of the nature, zoonyms and dendronyms serve tremendously to magnify the subject. The name is no longer a simple etiquette of identification, but it is filled with the meanings of the amplifying items.

But why an ecolinguistic approach to tackle this topic? Ecolinguistics is language on ecology which voices worries about ecological destructions and losses (Stibbe 2015). According to the International Ecolinguistics Association, it "explores the role of language in the life sustaining interactions of humans, other species and the physical environment." Among its basic assumptions, one can mention that the link between the sign (lexicon) and its referent (animals, plants and the environment) will become difficult to make since people will no longer have the opportunity to observe the behaviour of the referents in their natural environment. As Chen (2016, p.108) rightly observes, "If there is damage to the environment, the lexicon may be affected, even disappear." The same viewpoint is present in Almos et al.'s (2018, p.94) argument: "The use of lexicons in a language is determined by the referents of the lexicon, then the loss of a referent will result in the loss of the lexicon as well." Contrary to this prediction of the loss of flora and fauna due to pollution, anthroponyms are unlikely to disappear because they are located in humans, a species which causes the loss of the others without disappearing itself (at least not yet).

What would happen to ecological lexicons in case of the disappearance of their natural referents? Which impacts will that bring to anthroponyms in this language? These are the key questions leading this essay. Two arguments can be put forth: with anthroponyms, the lexicons are transferred from the ecology (animals, plants and trees, environment) to humans. Therefore, despite the disappearance of the environment, these names will survive in humans. However, even if the lexicon does not disappear, the language will all the same lose the cultural meaning implied in these anthroponyms; no one will again be able to relate these names to the behaviour of the animals and the plants themselves. There will be some cultural attrition.

As to the outline of this paper, after this introductory note comes the section detailing the methodology and the theoretical background sustaining this enterprise. It is followed by the interpretation of a set of anthroponyms from the fauna, the flora and the environment in search for the underlying cultural meanings. The conclusion will wind up the discussion.

2. Theoretical and methodological considerations

An investigation of the meanings of names is not a virgin field. Onomastic studies have been conducted from different perspectives either through morphological analysis in order to reveal the messages conveyed by these names. Anthropological analyses have tried to identify the cultural values associated with them. Ecological anthroponyms were interpreted with respect to the features associated with these natural elements: force, cunning, courage, malice, speed, fear, cruelty etc. (e.g. Kazadi 1985, Mutombo 2014a, 2014b). A related domain is the use of natural elements as totems, with some spiritual consideration that such a use implies. In the domain of sports, mascots representing natural elements are adopted by teams as if they would transfer

their power to them (Wikipedia 2021). Herein, the ecolinguistic approach is used in order to salvage the ecological as well as cultural knowledge embodied in anthroponyms. Among others, the aim of ecolinguistic investigation is to protect both cultural legacy and the linguistic repertoire that conveys it.

The database is primarily from a compilation of proverbs (Nzongola 1967) and a booklet of Luba epics (Bulanda 1999). The first source contains 1918 proverbs and proverbial expressions which provide items in context. Although Ciluba has two main varieties, viz. Luba-Kasayi (L31a) and Luba-Luluwa (L31b) (Guthrie 1948), the document draws on both varieties, and even on their additional dialects. Kazadi's (1985) dissertation and Mutombo's books on dendronymy (2014a) and zoonymy (2014b) provided additional data and their interpretation. However, only ecological items have been selected, as mentioned earlier. With regard to translation, the linguistic process of "composition" is used as the main word-formation strategy. Therefore, for typical Luba names for which there are no English equivalents available, Luba terms will be used but they will be postmodified with English nouns (e.g. *cifumba-tree*). The use of the English terms alone -- or even of Latin scientific ones -- leads to the loss of the lexicon of Ciluba, a permanent danger for this ecology. Concerning data analysis, this study draws on Ecolinguistics (Stibbe 2015). Ecolinguistics emerged in the 1990s as a new paradigm of linguistics research, widening sociolinguistics to take into account not only the social context in which language is embedded, but also the ecological context. It also studies linguistic diversity and how traditional ecological knowledge is ingrained in local languages. Since ecological anthroponyms get their meanings from ethnography of communication through the use of appellatives and praise names, the latter will be interpreted in their enunciations such as proverbs, riddles, proverbial expressions, etc. Dashes (---) are used to indicate pauses so as to separate the components of the interactions. Contextually, the first component can be a name and the second, its amplification; or it can be an enunciation and the second, its response.

It is noteworthy that the communicative competence of Ciluba speakers differs according to the respective cognition of the domain by every speaker. Country people with some experience of rural life may be more familiar with wild life and its lexicon than are urbanites. Likewise, people with interest in or initiation into traditional culture are more likely to interpret the data correctly, or to guess the enunciation in which the item will fit. For instance, a simple evocation of the name *Nshindi* (a squirrel) would trigger in their minds a series of proverbs and sayings which are based on it and would facilitate their contribution to the on-going conversation.

2.1 A word on onomastics as a scientific discipline

Onomastics has tackled names from different perspectives: linguistic, anthropological, lexical etc. The first perspective has been the familiar trend. Linguists interested in African names have proceeded to morphological analysis to find out their meanings. Basically, such analyses consider the names as deriving from verbs; they thus go from the verb root to identify the affixes

involved in word-formation and the ensuing meaning of the overall proper name as in the following example:

Mubenga: 'rejected'

° **mu-** AgrP (1) : agreement prefix, class 1.

-beng- verb root from the verb *kubenga* 'to reject'

-a: derivative suffix for the passive voice.

Such detailed analyses are peripheral to the present enterprise. The lists below show how names are related thanks to their common origins.

Verb	Kubenga	to reject, to refuse
Names	Mubenga	Rejected
	Mubengayi	Reject him or her (2 nd pers. Plural)
	Batubenga	(Let them) reject us
	Bakatubenga	They rejected us
	Kubenga	To reject

Verb	Kulowa	to bewitch
Names	Mulowa	Bewitched
	Mulowayi	Bewitch him or her (2 nd pers. Plural)
	Bakandowa	They bewitched me
	Baloji	Witches/wizards

Verb	Kukenga	To suffer
Names	Makenga	Sufferings
	Mukenge	Who suffers
	Dikenga	Suffering
	Mukengeshayi	Make him or her suffer
	Bakatukengesha	They made us suffer
	Bakenge	Who suffer

It can be noticed the following principles, some of which are predictable because of their regularity:

- The verb itself can also work as a name like in *Kubenga*;
- The suffix *-ayi*, the imperative marker for the second person plural, is prolific in this process (e.g. *Mulowayi*). It is mainly used for males;
- Free variation of the suffix *-a/-e* for the past participle like in *Bakenga/-e*;
- Sometimes both the singular and the plural forms are used, like in *Mukenga/Bakenga*;
- Some names are actually statements about past experiences and they usually begin with *bakatu-*, meaning 'they have ... us'. For the sake of linguistic economy, such names are often reduced to this chunk, with the main verb itself understood. A variant *baka-* 'they + past ...' is also attested like in *Bakandowa* 'they (have) bewitched me'. The names of this kind are commonly found in the L31b variant of Ciluba.

The second trend in the study of names focusses on lexicology. People have taken as anthroponyms the names of things and qualities; some of which carry negative connotations like in:

Nkita	: graves, cemetery
Nkitabungi	: So many graves!
Kalanda	: poor
Mujangi/Mujanyi	: ghost

Some of these names such as *Nkita* and *Nkitabungi* were given to children born after many deaths or miscarriages in the family. Nowadays, some bearers of such anthroponyms have changed them to adopt positive ones. We find *Munyoka* (hated) transformed into *Munanga* (loved); *Mashimabi* (bad luck) into *Diakalengela* (good luck) and the like. Suffice it to recall that local anthroponyms took a special dimension with the Cultural Revolution known as 'The Policy of Authenticity' initiated by President Mobutu in the 70s. By renouncing their Christian names, people had to take as postnames the names of their ancestors and other kins of the previous generations. Nowadays native postnames collocate with the family and the Christian names; and the amplification of names is activated with appellatives. Native names were strongly anchored in the Luba culture and worked most of the time as praise names. Therefore, the same term used as a name could go unnoticed or meaningless whereas it becomes full of metaphorical meaning when it is a postname and amplified. At times, the postname itself is replaced by its periphrasis to put into light its laudatory feature. For instance, one Minister was named *Tshibanda Ntunga-Mulongo*; and the postname *Ntunga-Mulongo* means "who leads the queue", that is, 'the guide'. It is the apposition of *dijinda*, a big black ant, a species which travels in a queue behind its guide (Kabasele 1986b). Normally, this Minister should be named *Tshibanda Dijinda*, with the praising periphrasis understood. The fact that the Minister has preferred the periphrasis to the name itself is an indication enough of his awareness of its laudatory meaning. In the religious domain, for instance, Kabasélé (1986a, 1986b) has studied the praise names used for Christ in Ciluba. In the first paper he shows how Christ's praise names derive from ecological items and their characteristics (power, solidity, bravery etc.) In the second, he focusses on those terms which reveal the role of Christ as the "guide". Such terms are used metaphorically to link their qualities with the attributes praised in Christ. Yet, there is no totemism because these terms are used according to the Catholic faith. Currently, most onomastic analyses are aimed at interpreting the meanings of words as registers of specific domains: kinship terms, terms for a woman, animal names, plant names etc. Besides, some anthropological studies have investigated into how babies are named. From this perspective, in some societies babies are observed for a week or more before an elderly kin identifies an outstanding event or sign in the baby's life to choose a consequent name. Such is the case, for instance, in the Shi society in the DRC (Barhacikubagira & Matabishi 2008). Another case is that of "special children" across Congolese cultures; their names depend on the contexts of their births. In the Luba society

under study (see Mutombo and Malemba 2013; Mutombo 2014a, 2014b; Tshimanga 2016), following are some terms for special children:

- *Mbuyi* or *Cibwabwa*: the first born of twins.
- *Kabanga* or *Kanku* (different sexes) or *Nsanza* (same sex): the second born of twins.
- *Katuma*: third born.
- *Ngalula* or *Cianda*: a child born after at least three or four children of the same sex.
- *Muswamba*: a child born after twins.
- *Ntumba*: a child conceived without the mother's control of her menstrual cycle.

These names are actually 'titles' which are held together with another name. In appellatives, the tendency is to use synonyms together for emphasis as in *Mbuyi Cibwabwa*, *Ngalula Cianda* or *Kabanga waba Mbuyi* (i.e. *Kabanga*, *Mbuyi*'s sibling). It is also worth mentioning that some other names, less considered as titles, are associated with circumstances surrounding their birth. Among them we have:

- *Mujinga*: a child born with the umbilical cord around the neck (the term literally means 'wound').
- *Ciela*: a child presenting first the feet or the buttocks at birth. The full term is *ciela makasa* and literally means 'presenting feet'.
- *Kabungama*: a child born of a mother who used to be sad during pregnancy.

However, parents sometimes name their offspring without all these considerations. That is how some people are paradoxically named *Kanku Mbuyi* (both twins) or *Ngalula* regardless of the rank among children. Such is particularly the case when the child is named after another person. Therefore, these special names are just indicative of the special status but do not necessarily mean that the bearer holds that status. Finally, some names are gender specific in the traditional Luba society. Hence, the masculine-feminine pairs like *Mulamba/Mulanga*, *Nshindi/Nshimba*, *Kabeya/Kabedi*, *Mutombo/Mutoba* etc. Parents who have adopted the European 'family name' system in which every member is named after the father or the husband, violate the convention and blur gender specification. Occasionally, when parents do not engender the child of the preferred sex, they can name him or her even after the person of the opposite sex. It can be concluded that names work as simple etiquettes or codes necessary to identify people. No one worries to find meanings in them. Only researchers, through philological analyses, can have interest in the meanings of names. Yet, sometimes when a name is not common as a proper name in a given milieu, or when it sounds bizarre or unfamiliar, it can attract people's attention to its meaning and so cause embarrassment or laughter. For instance, a gentleman named *Makayabu* (i.e. dried salted fish in Ciluba) had to avoid using it, whenever possible, among Ciluba speakers.

2.2 Anthroponyms and totemism

Many anthroponyms originate from animals, plants or other natural phenomena for a variety of reasons, a practice known as totemism, i.e. to be of the same parenthood. In the Luba culture we find both individual totem, i.e.

muvu, and clan totem *mujilanga* 'a person with whom you agreed on the interdicts.' The latter is also called *mwena-mayi* 'a person with whom you drank water in the same mug for reconciliation' (Mutombo 2014b). For Palmer et al. (2015: 287), "Clan totemism is typically said to be distinguished by the belief that a category of individuals are a member of, or are related to, a type of animal or plant, or some other aspect of nature (e.g., a rainbow)". Besides, the individuals sharing a given totem are often prohibited from eating their totem. In the Luba culture, villages having the same totem consider themselves as kins and their inhabitants cannot harm one another. Otherwise, a repair implying some rituals is needed. Such is the case for *Bena Lwanga* and *Bena Nshimba* (with the leopard as their common totem) who consider themselves as *bajilanga* (the plural of *mujilanga*). Mutombo (2014b, p.34) provides a rather comprehensive list of the clans and their totemic affiliations. By contrast, an individual or a personal totem is an assistant for people like clever men, healers, fishermen and hunters. In the sports domain, clubs and teams select their image or mascot for the assets -- strength, courage, aggression, and endurance -- that they attempt to display. Overall, humans have always found inspiration and assistance from other species to conduct their own activities. Let us now turn to the interpretation of some ecological anthroponyms.

3. Interpretation of anthroponyms

The illustrative sample of the corpus is limited to 7 zoonyms, 4 dendronyms and 4 ecological items. The interpretation will consist in presenting the ecological environment of the species and the cultural value associated with the latter. Each enunciation is translated into English as clearly and simply as possible. Finally, the moral lesson, if any, is provided.

3.1 Zoonyms as anthroponyms

1. NSHINDI: 'A squirrel.'

It is a small animal that lives in palm-trees and feeds on nuts basically. It is found in the following sayings:

Nshindi walekela ngaji ya kumenu --- wakeba ya mu mayi: 'The squirrel abandoned the nuts which were in its teeth in order to catch the one which was in the water.'

The saying reports the case of mirage which has misled many animals in tales. In fact, the nut that the squirrel sees in the water is not a real one, but the shadow of the one it catches in its teeth. As an advice, the saying refers to greed and its consequences: the complete loss. It is often uttered as a warning to the person who is about to take a difficult decision.

Nshindi wa nzala --- wakabula bibidi: 'A hungry squirrel missed both.'

This saying seems to be an elaboration or a reformulation of the preceding one. By trying to catch the nut which was mirrored in the water with its mouth already full of nuts, the squirrel also released its catch in the water. In the end it

could not recover any. Both sayings warn against greed, particularly against how people leave safe situations to embark on adventures of which success is not guaranteed. As the English saying goes, “Grasp all, lose all.”

Kuiminyi nshindi ngaji --- neumusangane muinshi mua dibue: *‘Don’t refuse nuts to a squirrel, you will find him under a palm-tree.’*

The squirrel lives on palm-trees and has an easy access to the nuts; it can get the nuts of the best quality. Therefore, it is unwise not to befriend such a potential provider of nuts. This wisdom is usually addressed to young children who refuse to share (their foods) with adults, forgetting that the latter can provide them with even more and better foods. The speaker will thus choose a saying according to the context of the speech event: a warning against greed, selfishness, avarice or stinginess.

Nshindi wendenda pa monji: *‘the squirrel walks on the creeper, or the squirrel attends the meetings where there is a skipping rope game.’*

This saying is used in a dialogic word game as the first part of the interaction. The listener has to respond by adding the second part which makes the meaning explicit. There are three possible formulas of responses:

- | | |
|---|--|
| 1. Muntu wendenda pa wabu | : a person goes only where there are kins. |
| 2. Kabalu katoka katukenda anu pa mala | : a clean calabash cup is found only where there is (palm-) wine |
| 3. Alameta utuwenda anu pamfuanka | : matches are found only where there is a cigarette. |

The saying focusses on collocation of items. Taking suite from the squirrel which lives in places where it can easily play by climbing on the creeps, other collocations are revealed: people frequent their relatives, wherever people have palm-wine (or others) to drink, they need a calabash cup, and smokers need a box of matches to light their cigarettes. This saying is evoked each time that people decry loneliness and praise friendship, collaboration and community. It can also be a criticism against someone who visits some categories of people (well-off people) but not others (poor people).

2. **NKASHAMA:** ‘A leopard’.

It is an emblematic animal which is associated with many events and meanings in African cultures. It is a symbol of traditional power, authoritarianism, and strength as shown by its use as a mascot of football teams etc.

It is found in the following enunciations:

Nkashama mujilanga: *‘leopard, the community’s totem’.*

As argued above in the discussion of totemism, some people believe in spiritualism and friendship between human beings and some protective animals. In the Luba culture, some villages have that community relationship and consider this animal as a friend. They can’t attack it or eat its meat, and vice-versa (expectedly). *Mujilanga* or *mwenamayi* is thus a special friend with some mystical

background. Villages sharing the same totem consider themselves as friends and adopt the same rules of friendship as they do with the leopard.

Nkashama mudibuikila ciseba cia mukoko: *'a leopard which has covered itself with a sheep's hide'.*

A comment aimed to reveal hypocrisy when a person behaves contrary to their natural inclination. The leopard symbolizes ferocity whereas the sheep evokes peace. This saying can work as a warning or just as an irony to mean that people are not fooled.

Nkashama mulengele tshiseba --- munda muende muikale mvita: *'a leopard with a beautiful hide, but full of hostility inside.'*

Like the preceding saying, this one also alludes to hypocrisy. Good external appearance does not always mean good intention.

Nkashama --- mmusokoka nzadi mu makama: *'A leopard which has hidden its claws in the paws.'*

Another saying which alludes to hypocrisy. Claws represent the formidable weapons that this animal uses to hunt. By hiding them, it gives a false message that it is not going to attack; which is never sure. It is a warning to beware of danger, even if there is no sign of it.

Nkashama --- mukonya nzadi wa Cibamba: *'The leopard which has retracted its claws; the child of Cibamba'.*

This periphrasis is a variant of the sayings above; all of them to allude to hypocrisy. When the claws are retracted, they cannot be seen; yet they are there and can be used whenever necessary. There is even personification to make it a child of a human being called Cibamba. Overall, apart from its positive meaning as a community totem, thus a full trusty friend, the remaining meanings always stress hypocrisy, better understood as hidden hostility.

3. NYUNYI: 'A bird'. It is found in the following sayings:

Nyunyi kafu disu --- nansha mubwela mu meba: *'a bird which can't damage its eye even if it gets into thorns.'*

Thorns represent a danger for any animal which ventures to get into their area. If a bird can be safe from such a danger, then it has extra qualities that most other animals lack. This saying is a praise name to evoke a long experience in avoiding dangers.

Nyunyi wa muinu mule --- mudishadisha bana bishi: *'a bird with a long beak, which has fed generations of chicks with worms.'*

A saying which is used to claim a long experience in a domain so as to deserve some trust. In a debate, one can praise oneself with this saying as an argument of authority, particularly when the opponent is relatively young. Seniority is equated to wisdom. The bird is thus associated with long experience and subsequent knowledge.

4. KATENDE: 'A robin.'

This bird is considered in many folktales as the king of birds because of its intelligence. Its praise names abound, among which the following:

Katende --- mukulw'a nyunyi: *'robin, the elder of the birds.'*

A statement often made when talking of elders who are not taller or bigger than their young siblings. It reminds people that the size is not the necessary measure of age.

Katende kupopoka nsala --- kambwana bua nyunyi: *'a robin which has lost its feathers is not a chick.'*

This saying is a common irony used to draw people's attention on the fact that there is not a direct link between the size and the age; some young people are tall and big whereas some adults are short and thin. Therefore, people should not trust the physical appearance.

Katende wa bakalaja --- ukadi wenda nkayenda kayi bakwenda: *'robin, the brother of the 'kalaja-bird'; he walks alone without friends.'*

Both the robin and the 'kalaja-bird' are small birds but with different behaviours. The robin is a solitary bird, except when in a couple; contrary to the 'kalaja-bird' which lives in a colony. A lonely person is thus ironically compared to a robin. This saying is a common ironic statement made to tease naughty children who are reduced to play alone because they have caused trouble and have been excluded from the group as a punishment.

Katende kateya --- kakena kuteyilula: *'a robin which has been trapped cannot be trapped again.'*

It is not easy to catch a robin either with a slingshot, a net, or by any other means because of its smallness. A robin which has escaped a danger becomes more cautious towards any trap. This wisdom recalls the English proverb "Once bitten, twice shy." This saying is often uttered as a warning against marrying again a divorced woman. She is perceived as being prepared against life in a couple.

Katende wasankila muenu --- mwa benda udiogola nshingu: *'robin, be happy at your own home, but sad away.'*

This is a comment often made for young children who are usually happy and undertaking in their own homes, but who usually become shy and silent when they are away. Such a behaviour gives a wrong picture of the child. As long as a child does not feel at home in the new environment, he or she will not behave naturally.

Katende wadia tshiakane ne muminu: *'robin, eat what can get through your throat.'*

Being very small, the robin should swallow small pieces of food. This advice invites anyone to modesty so as to despise greed. Overall, the robin

symbolizes seniority, intelligence and cunning. It illustrates how the intellect wins over the physical appearance.

5. **KABULUKU**: 'A dwarf antelope', a small animal often associated with cunning in folktales. At times, it is substituted by *kabundi* (a tarsier).

Kabuluku --- katu katumbisha yaku nsengu: '*the dwarf antelope always praises its own horns*'.

Being of small size, this animal cannot have the biggest horns in the world. Yet, the saying emphasizes such a self-praise as a way of warning that the ego induces people to act against all possible logic, including unwise boastfulness. It reminds the addressee that self-evaluation is never objective.

Kabuluku --- kakafuila mesu a mishikankunde: '*the dwarf antelope died because of the presence of young girls*'.

The ego leads to boastfulness and irrational acts. In the Luba culture, the competition to seduce women has led men to deadly challenges and costly commitments. Hence, this wisdom for people not to overdo anything beyond one's means just to be noticed as a hero. It is a call for modesty and honesty: remain yourself and do not care for the presence of the potential fans and admirers.

Kabuluku --- nkafwa kambila: '*the dwarf antelope died after it had been warned*'.

In the Luba society, this saying is currently heard whenever people want to warn others about a potential danger. In the media, particularly on TV and the radio, research notices (for lost or stolen properties) often end with it in order to voice the owner's willingness and determination to recover the property. Conversely, it promises to punish by supernatural means the culprits (Mbaya 2018). It thus means that any misdeed will be punished in retaliation. In short, this animal symbolizes exaggerated self-esteem and boastfulness which are both dangerous for life in a community. Instead of being associated with modesty in tune with its small size, this animal is known for its attempts to achieve great performances.

6. **KABUNDI**: 'A tarsier'.

A small animal often substituted with *nshindi* (the squirrel) and *kabuluku* 'the dwarf antelope' in tales and other literary genres because they all symbolize cunning, malice, smallness etc.

Kabundi --- kakafuila mesu a mishikankunde: '*the tarsier died because of the presence of young girls*'.

It is a variant of the saying already treated under *kabuluku* to decry the bad consequences of boastfulness.

Kabundi pandila masele --- mukenge pandila lubilu: '*tarsier, be saved by reeds; fox, be saved by speed*'.

The saying contrasts the behaviour of two quite similar animals. It alludes to the fact that the tarsier lives near the reeds where it retires for safety in case of

a danger. By contrast, the fox relies on speed. It is said of someone who has just escaped a danger. As a moral lesson, it warns anyone to know better one's strength when it comes to safety and how to escape from a danger.

Mukaji nkaseba ka kabundi --- badi bakasomba amu kudi muntu umwa: *'a wife is the hide of a tarsier --- only one person can sit on it.'*

In the traditional Luba culture, chairs and decent seats were a rare asset. When an animal was butchered, its hide was dried so as to serve as a seat. Given the small size of the tarsier's hide, it was not possible for two persons to sit on it. Metaphorically, this saying emphasizes the wife's faithfulness to her husband; the smallness of the tarsier's hide is used as an excuse for not sharing. The response makes clear that there is not enough space for more than one person to sit down.

7. **DIJINDA:** 'A big black ant'.

Dijinda --- ntunga mulongo: *'the dijinda-ant, the leader of the queue of ants'.*

It is a big black ant which lives in large colonies. They travel in a queue following the guide. As said earlier, the Catholic Church attributes this praise name to Christ for its feature of a guide (Kabasele 1986b, Mulamba 2008). Some people prefer to take the periphrasis straightaway instead of the name of the species itself. Such has been the case for a Congolese minister postnamed 'Ntunga Mulongo' (the leader of the queue, i.e. the guide). Only people with some cultural knowledge could find that the real postname should be *Dijinda* and not its amplification.

3.2. *Dendronyms as anthroponyms*

Following is a set of anthroponyms which are at the same time dendronyms.

8. **LUENYI:** 'Wild mint'

A plant which is used as spices, a medical plant particularly for children's diseases, and in divination ceremonies.

Luenyi --- kapumbu mumbuku: *'the wild mint --- which does not miss in a divination ceremony.'*

This statement negatively alludes to someone who is almost always talked about, whether in a good or a bad way. Ubiquity is not always a good quality.

Nzujji wa luenyi: *'the judge of the wild mint.'*

In the Luba culture, people talk of some judges who are not meticulous in their investigation of the breach of law but are inclined to accept any charge. They resort to the utterance "*luenyi kaluena mwa kukununka pawudi kuyi mululenga*" to mean, 'you can't exhale the scent of the wild mint if you had not touched it.' With such a hypothesis, they use shortcuts and pronounce verdicts easily. This saying is an irony for an incompetent and corrupted judge.

9. **NSANGA:** 'An oak.'

It is a tree which takes many years to grow. It symbolizes force, endurance, perseverance, patience etc.

Nsanga mweyemena: *'the oak against which to lean'*.

This saying is used to mean that the person is the last resort in case of hardship, difficulty or despair.

Kashingu kakunyi nsanga --- bua nsanga ashala cimwenu: *'A nobody has planted an oak so that it remains a landmark.'*

Poverty-stricken people used to place all their hopes in their children. They invested in them through education. Children were thus expected to compensate for their parents' inability to create better conditions of life. That is why people aimed to have many children to maximize the opportunities to get a family's saviour. A single successful child was better than a large number of nobodies. This saying is often heard from a proud father who considers his child's success as his own to quieten the gossips of jealous neighbours and rivals.

Nsanga --- walukidi mu cikuku: *'a new oak has sprung in the roots of the dead oak'*. This saying is used to mean that an honour is paid again to a community, that is, it is returned to the original owner. For instance, a village which enjoyed the prestige of having provided the first priest to the territory would use this saying in praise when another priest is ordained after the death of the first.

Cibanda nsanga --- ukulukila ku lujilu: *'the climber to the oak fell from an aubergine plant.'*

The oak is taller than an aubergine plant, so it should represent much difficulty of climbing. Someone used to climbing tall trees cannot expect difficulties with short ones. The statement is a hyperbole aimed to warn people that the danger can come from the unexpected source.

10. KABWA: *'A young palm-tree' or 'a dog'*. Only the first meaning is concerned herein.

A palm-tree takes many years to grow. Therefore, only patient people can grow it.

Kabwa ka katende: *'A young palm-tree'*.

A reply is a sequence of the benefits which can be reaped from growing a palm-tree, viz.

- | | |
|-----------------------------------|--|
| -kadya kukola | - one day it will grow |
| -kadya kukwama | - one day it will bear nuts |
| - badya kukenza mpungu ya lukombo | - one day they will use it to make the broom |
| - badya kukadja dikambi | - one day they will eat its crushed cooked nuts. |

The palm-tree is a real source of wealth in the Luba society. It provides the materials to build a house, to make brooms and salt; it helps to make palm-oil and palm-wine, and it bears nuts which are eaten in different recipes. Given all these benefits, it is worth taking patience to grow such a useful tree. Metaphorically, the saying invites people to a long patience when the awaited

result is invaluable; like in the preceding saying (9) about the oak and the parents investing in their children's education.

11. CINKUNKU: 'A cinkunku-tree.'

Cinkunku --- nsanga bilembi: '*cinkunku-tree, gatherer of the hunters*'.

Cinkunku is a tree under which hunters happened to gather before starting their work in order to perform the necessary hunting rituals, or for a break in order to assess the day's performance. It is considered as the appropriate place for an important meeting. As a metonymy, it means a unifier of the contending parties. This name pertains to someone with the ability to lead tough negotiation and reconciliation, a neutral person.

3.3. Names of ecological items as anthroponyms

The environment is also subject to destruction and the names of its ecological items are candidates to disappearance. The mining industry, for instance, modifies the landscape and causes the loss of the names for these items.

12. MUKUNA: 'A mountain.'

It represents difficulties.

Mukuna mule --- ubandabanda nsenji ne nkala, nyama wa mikono ubanda upungila: '*the high mountain, which is usually climbed by hares and mongooses; if a hoofed animal tries to climb it, it gets tired.*'

A statement which is made to mean that success is not guaranteed for all. It is thus a warning to anyone to expect difficulties but not to anticipate an easy victory.

13. CIBANDABANDA: 'A valley.'

Cibandabanda mpata mualabala --- wowa bianza nshima ikamuanyi: '*Valley, the widespread field; you wash your hands without seeing cassava bread!*'

It is an ironical statement commonly used for children who are too confident to start an act without checking first the prerequisites.

14. LUNTEKA: 'A marsh.'

The muddy area of a river which cannot be dried up completely because internal springs provide water continuously. It is the ideal environment for eels and other types of fish.

Dijiba dia lunteka --- dimanyina batuwu mpata: '*the marshy pool, which defeated the fishers.*'

A praise name which implies resistance and endurance – whenever you think of a victory, the difficulty comes back so that you have to start all over again. This saying refers to a person who never accepts defeat; such as a plaintiff who never accepts the verdict but files the case again and again at the higher levels.

15. CILUNDU: 'A termitarium.'

Cilundu --- musaka mwasa bantu pamoyi: '*termitarium, the roof which has blocked people's throats.*'

It is a statement which alludes to hate: the simple evocation of the name of the candidate arouses hostility and hate. Therefore, it is said of someone whose presence is a subject of concern for others, someone who is not liked by others. A person who takes such a postname is determined not to worry about gossip because there is nothing to do to please people who are just looking for what is negative and do not recognize achievements.

Discussion and conclusion

This study tried to show the impacts of ecological damages on language, particularly on the use of anthroponyms in Ciluba. Along the assumption that the loss of ecology leads to the loss of lexicons, it has been argued that in the case of anthroponyms, ecological ones can survive in the language, but they will be deprived of their cultural meanings inherent in amplification of the postnames. They will become mere etiquettes aimed at identifying people and serving as appellatives. This process has already started in this language. Many animals which lived in the Luba territory just some decades ago (at the beginning of the 20th century) have been wiped out, but their names are still known to the people who lived in the rural areas before the 30's. These names are fossilized in folktales, riddles, fables, folk songs and anthroponyms. Zoonyms like *mubwabwa* 'wolf', *ngombangole* 'zebra', *ntengu* 'giraffe', *cimungu* 'hyena', *cisumpantambwa* 'tiger' fill stories although they can no longer be seen in the fauna of this area. The dictionaries compiled by the White Fathers (e.g. De Clercq and Willems 1914) and other colonial authorities have become the only sources to have recorded the disappearing world of fauna and flora. Fortunately, with the modern technology such as television which projects in French or English the pictures of the wild life elsewhere, people can translate the names back into Ciluba. They can also see how those animals and plants that their own ancestors had brought to extinction look like and how they behave in nature. Furthermore, it was pointed out that the policy of cultural revival initiated in the 70's by the late Congolese President Mobutu has been a blessing for the survival of Congolese languages. By renouncing their Christian names, most people resorted to those of their namesake ancestors, which happened to be amplified zoonyms and dendronyms. This gave a large audience to the anthroponyms which were only occasionally used in the family inner circles as praise names or appellatives when mothers were flattering their children. Metaphorically, these anthroponyms are often ambivalent and their meanings can be positive, pejorative or both depending on the context of the enunciation. Even if the Luba culture belongs to the disappearing world -- through the damages to ecology as well as via the neglect of folkloric activities -- zoonyms and dendronyms would survive in anthroponyms. Nevertheless, they would be devoid of any cultural meaning inherent in amplification of names and performance of praising dramatic genres; a fate which would not meet Humpty Dumpty's conviction.

Notes

- (1) Ciluba is a Bantu language spoken in the Democratic Republic of Congo. It is classified as L31 and has two main varieties: L31a (Luba-Kasaayi) and L31b (Luba-Luluwa) according to Guthrie (1948).
- (2) Yaguello (1981) has made these novels the corpus of his book on the study of language.
- (3) *Through the Looking Glass* depicts an inversed world, a world full of nonsenses where Alice has to run very fast in order to stay in the same place, and where the White Queen can remember the future.
- (4) Lewis Carroll relies extensively on formal logic in his creation of humour. Humpty Dumpty's assertions are most of time linguistic games based on homophony, synonymy, polysemy and the like.

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