



An Examination of Clan Names and Clan Praises as Anthroponymic Domains in Swati Culture

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Author's contribution

The sole author designed, analysed, interpreted and prepared the manuscript.

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ABSTRACT

The objectives of this study are to examine and interpret the meanings of the selected clan names and clan praises. Their sequences, laudatory and eulogic views highlight their significances and generic perspectives. In Swati culture, clan name is shared by a nuclear family and passed from father to sons. In patrilineal societies, clan names are vital for maintenance and sustenance of lineage hierarchy. Clan names are commonly called surnames. The prefix *sur*-in surname is derived from Latin, meaning super, above or beyond. The word, *tibongo* (clan names) is derived from the verb, *bonga* (thank; praise). The word, *tinatelo* (clan praises) is derived from the verb, *nanatela* (be genial towards; show courtesy to and praise). Their anthroponymic domains are evident when they are used as address form. Each Swati clan name has a primary or main clan praise which is widely known by the society and almost equivalent to the clan name, for example, *Matfonsi* (Droplets) –*Mjabulase* (Ever-related one), *Maphosa* (Thrower)-*Tsekwane* (An owl) and *Malindzisa* (One who keeps others waiting)-*Tfwala* (Carry). In addition to the main clan praise, a number of secondary clan praise names follow and make a series of praise phrases. It is evident that all types of praises have their poetic features that are highlighted by bards, onomasticians, folklorists and oral poetry specialists.

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1. INTRODUCTION

The Swati clan name is what translates to surname in English. It differs from the western surname in that it has a unique extension called clan praise. The use of the clan name and clan praise covers social interaction among people in both general and specific activities. In any performance, the order of the clan praise verses is interchangeable and varies. This is devoid from altering the meaning of its function and purpose.

Thwala [1] expresses the following views about the names and clan praises:

They have a number of functions in society, including the establishment of identity, address forms, thanking, flattering and congratulating, as well as maintaining contact with the ancestors in various rites.

In fact, they go further than simply establishing clan identity; they may be used to establish related clan identity. Many clans are sub-clans of some original 'founder' clan and will share many clan praises. The emphasis is on the functions of the clan names and clan praises as anthroponymic domains.

The Swati themselves distinguish between clan name and extension of the clan name. Clan names are personal names irrespective of their derivation. In contrived genealogies, only the names of selected ancestors are recorded. These ancestral names are those of individuals of notable deeds and contributions. They are the exemplary members and their deeds are emulated by their relatives. Their personalities represent values and ideals. When a lineage or sub-clan broke off from the parent lineage or sub-clan different ancestors are added by the new branches. An ancestral name which is shared serves as a point where they separated and merged. On the basis of such kinship relationship, no intermarriage is permitted. The clan praises are poetic in nature and those of the ancestors are stated in the contrived genealogy. In this study, it is however noted that there is a complex range of meaning and content of both the clan names and the clan praise. The themes range from social anthropology background, special skills, association with animate and inanimate phenomena. The major features of the

clan praises are that many of them do not seem to be developing further and serve as a record of history and culture, due to social environment and consequent values. Makhanya [2] explicitly gives this definition:

*Tinanatelo ngemagama abokhokho
lalandzela tibongo. Ngemagama lakhombisa
kotalana kwebantfu nekulandzelana
kwelusendvo (p. 37).*

(Clan praises are the sequential names of the ancestors that follow the clan names. They are the names that depict dynasty.)

Clan names persist to give an individual a strong sense of identity and belonging to family and social hierarchies. They identify an individual as member of a particular group, both alive and dead.

Currently, the *sibongo*, is a family name rather than the name of an individual. Patricks [3] gives this information on folk poetry aspects:

The clan names or surnames in the Swati language are sibongo and its extension is sinanatelo(p. 7).

As with the surname in most Euro-Western cultures, the *sibongo* is shared by all members of a nuclear family, that is, father, mother, sons, and unmarried daughters. For this reason, the *sibongo*, functions as a surname in the Western context, and the term is translated as 'surname'. On marriage, a woman may exchange her maiden clan name for that of her husband, but for all practical social endeavors she retains her maiden clan name, prefixed with La-. Thus a woman born to the *Mdluli* clan will be commonly addressed as *LaMdluli* after marriage, and a woman with the maiden clan name *Mtsetfwa* will be known to all her new in-laws as *LaMtsetfwa*. This is a form of address with a wide social interaction. There is no Swati clan that has no clan praises. They are a common form of address for males and females. They are used by peers, young and old at various occasions. It remains a mystery that why clan praises have long been neglected in African literature as they are rich in imagery, pungent in their humour, endowed in poetic resonance and filled with historical narrative. Clan praises can be heard in all social interactions. In ritual and ceremonial occasions, they are performed within the context

of other genres of oral literature such as music, dance and praise poems. The ritual functionary ends all performances by addressing and applauding the ancestral spirits as a collective group through clan praises. The subject matter of clan praises ranges from a history, geography and anthropology. In the origin of the group, physical characteristics of the founder, beliefs and traditions are marked emphasis on achievements and heroic deeds.

2. METHODOLOGY AND THEORETICAL UNDERPINNING

The interpretive approach gained prominence in the late 1980's among communication scholars. One interpretive approach, rooted in sociolinguistics, is the ethnography of communication [Hymes 4]. Ethnographers of communication are devoted to descriptive studies of communication patterns within specific cultural groups. Interpretive researchers assume not only that reality is external to humans but also that humans construct reality. They believe that human experience is subjective and human behavior is neither predetermined nor easily predicted.

The goal of interpretive research is to understand and describe human behavior. Whereas the social scientist tends to see communication as influenced by culture, the interpretivist sees culture as created and maintained through communication [Carbaugh 5]. This type of research uses qualitative methods derived from anthropology and linguistics. It is an approach to intercultural communication that aims to understand and describe human behavior within specific cultural groups based on the assumptions that (a) human experience is subjective, (b) human behavior is creative rather than to be easily predicted, and (c) culture is created and maintained through communication [Martin and Nakayama 6].

Steinberg [7] sees the interpretive approach in intercultural communication as one of the social sciences approaches that concentrates on the subjective experiences of individuals that use the qualitative research methods. Ethnography is a discipline that examines the patterned interactions and significant symbols of specific cultural norms that guide their behaviors (p. 299).

2.1 Implications of the Study

The study will add value to the wide body of knowledge on folk poetry aspects, namely: clan

names and clan praises. The aim is to examine the aspects in a broader manner by considering the following:

- To interpret the denotative and connotative meanings of selected clan names and clan praises.
- To analyze the structure and form of the folk poetry aspects.
- To reflect their socio-cultural and historic-philosophical trends of the Swati nation.

2.2 Limitations of the Study

Due to lack of secondary sources on folk poetry and academic researches on anthroponymic domains, the researcher selected twenty-five clan names for interpretation of the meanings, analysis of structure and the reflection of culture. The clan names and clan praises are extracted from various sources namely: Thwala [8] provides the following examples: Dlamini, Hlatjwako and Jele (p. 19-20). Nkosi [9] gives the following examples: Malindzisa and Mhlanga (p. 36-37). Makhanya [2] furnish the following: Madlopha, Masilela, Matfonsi, Mbingo and Metfule (p. 37-41). Mthethwa [10] gives the following examples: Khumalo, Maphosa, Masango, Mavimbela and Sibandze (p. 122-128). Patricks [3] tabulated the clan names in their alphabetic sequence: Ginindza, Hleta, Kunene, Lushaba, Makhubela, Malangwane, Mdluli, Nhlapho, Nyoni and Tfwala.

3. RESULTS

3.1 Clan Names and Clan Praises

3.1.1 Dlamini

The Swati kings come from the lineages of Dlamini clan founded by Dlamini I. He migrated from central Africa around the late fifteenth century to south eastern Africa with other groups and settled on the Mozambican coast. The Dlamini are addressed as Mlangeni (You of the sun). They belong to Embo-Nguni stock. The statement, *wena wekunene* (You of the right hand) is taken to mean that the Dlamini are the rightful ruling clan. Kunene is also a praise name of one of their ancestors. The Dlamini's history reveals their sub-clan Mavuso and Magudvulela were of left-hand domain. The Dlamini is described as, *wena umuhle kakhulu* (You are most beautiful.) It is an admiration that is done without mentioning any physical attributes. Dlamini's travels along the sandy

shore of the Indian ocean in search of new land gained him the praises, 'sidvwaba silutfuli' (The dust – encrusted leather kilt). Madlabane also refers to the red plumes of the red lourie, *ligwalagwala*, worn on the heard from ear to ear by Dlamini royalty, called *lidlabe*. It is assumed that the name Madlabane was bestowed to Dlamini at Tembe on the coastal region.

Dlamini!
Mlangeri!
Wena wekunene,
Wena weluhlanga lwakaNgwane
Wena wacedza Lubombo
ngekuhleletela.
Wena wabophela lokuhle emfuntini,
Samketi
Mangcwangu
Wena sidvwaba silutuli
Madlabane,
Nkhosi!

You of the sun!
You of the right hand,
You are most beautiful,
You of the original stock of Ngwane,
You who scourged the Lubombo range
in your flight
You who wrapped something precious in
a grass wrapper,
Samketi.
Mangcwangu,
You whose leather kilt is dusty encrusted
A non-conformist,
Hail, ruler!

The swati nation belongs to Embo-Nguni group that comes from Kenya and lead by the Dlamini (Eater at noon) leaders. Matsebula et al [11] gives this explanation about the Swati nation:

BakaDlamini led by Matalatala, being seasoned farmers decided that the rich valley between Lubombo Mountains and the fertile area at the foot of the Lubombo Hill... would be their resting place. He became iNkhosi Dlamini I(p. 15).

The sequence of the kings of Swati nation is logically tabulated by Mthethwa [12] from the first king Dlamini I to the current reigning king Mswati III. The language that is spoken by Swati nation is called, Siswati. It is spoken and read in South Africa and Eswatini. It is one of the official languages in both countries.

3.1.2 Ginindza

Nkhosi!
Ginindza!
Mamba!
Ludvonga LwaMavuso waNgwane,
Sigubudvu singumuntfu,
Siyinkhosi singuMswati,
Mamba lendze lesensokonsokweni,
Imamba lenkhulu lebuka ematje ahlokome,
Luphongolo lolungewelwa ngemantasane,
Wena lowaya eMbo wabuyelela,
Wakha elukhalweni,
Awakhi wena Ludvonga kwakha inciniseli,
Longasiyo uyoindza ngekutibalekela,
KaGinindza abavali ngesivalo,
Bavala ngetinhloko temadvodza,
KaGinindza abatsanyeli ngemtsanyelo,
Batsanyela ngesisila selisakabuli,
Emalunga aphelele kwepfulana,
Tinkhomo letadla eceleni ngokweswela
umelusi,
Ginindza!

King!
Ginindza!
Mamba
Wall of Mavuso of Ngwane,
Hill is a person,
Which is king, which is Mswati
Long Mamba of the thick forest,
Great Mamba that looks at the stones
And subsequently shaken,
Luphongolo which cannot be crossed by ordinary people
You who went to Embo repeatedly
You built on a hile,
It is not you who built Ludvonga but a courage
Anyone who's not brave rescues himself by running away
The Ginindza do not close by means of the door,
They close using heads of men,
They do not sweep with the tail of a finch,
The joints are finished breaking each other,
Cattle that pastured around home because
They did not have a shepherd,
Ginindza!

There are many clan names that are sharing the Ginindza clan praises. They are Dlamini, Nkhosi, Mamba, Mavuso and Ludvonga. The animals that are mentioned are mamba, cattle and the finch. The symbolic and figurative language are brought by the following diction: *ludvonga* (washed- out ravine or gully), *ematje* (stones), *lukhalo* (plateau), *tinhloko* (heads), *umtsanyelo* (broom) and *sigubudvu* (a strong man or

figuratively meaning a beast with horns that are curving downwards and forwards).

3.1.3 Hlatjwako

Hlatjwako!
Mhayise,
Ngwanya
Mabhengeta,
Matsintsane,
Wena watsintsa yakh' emfabeni,
Ngwanya lomuhle kuyalumela kamtsakatsi,
Ngelo wabo Gama,
Mashiyamahle njengenyamatane,
Ngwanya wondzile ungangelutsi
Iwemtsanyelo,
Akasahlali nasentsendzeni yesandla,
Gidz' elugogweni Khobongo,

Hlatjwako
Mhayise,
Ngwanya,
Mabhengeta,
You who touches,
You who touches the pumpkin plant that grew in
an awkward place,
Ngwanya who is beautiful, it is painful to a witch,
Ngelo of Gama,
Beautiful eyebrows like that of a wild animal,
He cannot sit in the hollow of a hand,
Khubongo dance on cattle hides.

The clan is found in Mkhondo, Msukaligwa and northern part of kwaZulu Natal. The clan languages are both Siswati and IsiZulu. Its descendants are Mhayise, Ngwanya, Mabhengeta and others. The other well-known descendants of this Nguni group clan are Cebisa, Sampekwane, Mhlaba I, Mgogodlana, Siyendane, Mleshe, Mhlaba II and Mhlangano. The clan comes from Eswatini and it adheres to the traditions and customs of Emaswati. The clan name, Hlatjwako means to be gored, stabbed or afflicted.

3.1.4 Hleta

Hleta!
Mntimandze,
Bhambolunye,
Maphalala,
Tingaba timbili tabuya nenina
Ekhaborina.
Alilunganga lelincele lakaHleta,
Laphosisa cedze lashisa indvuku,
Mboneni umkhokha uyongen' engutjeni,
Hleta!

Hleta!
Mntimandze,
Single-ribbed,
Maphalala,
If there are two they came from the mother
From the maternal home,
The left-handed Hleta is not to be trusted,
He made mistake after which he left a stick,
See him enter under a blanket,
Hleta!

Hleta clan praises are almost similar to those of Shongwe, Kunene, Ngwenya, Gamedze, Seyama, Sikhondze and Madvonsela. The clan diction is shared. This reflects that most of these clan names are coming from the same indigenous roots and traditions. *Lihleta* is a shelled maize-cob or a cartilaginous bone.

3.1.5 Khumalo

Khumalo!
Mtungwa!
Kuhlase!
Ndlangamandla
Mbulazi lomnyama
Mzilikazi waMashobane
Wena wadla umuntfu umyenga ngendzaba
Mabasa lowabasentsabeni
Nine baseNgome
Lwandle kaluwelwa
Luwelwa tinkhonjane
Tona letiphaph' etulu,
Machawe lamakhulu,
Mzilikazi waMashobane
Lobengula waMzilikazi,
Mthayiza waMyakayaka.

Khumalo! (Species of thorny tree)
Mntungwa
Kuhlase (Most pretty)
Ndlangamandla
Mbulazi, who is dark,
You ate a person while deceiving
Mabasa, who has been at the mountain
You of Engome
The sea that is not forded,
But forded by the swallows
That are flying high,
Great heroes
Mzilikazi of Mashobane
Lobengula of Mzilikazi,
Mthayiza of Myakayaka.

The clan praise, Khumalo reflects the descendants who are Mntungwa, Kuhlase, Ndlangamandla, Mbulazi, Mabasa (Kindler) and

others. It is one of the great Nguni group clan that is remarkable because of its history, heroic deeds and outstanding socio-cultural and socio-political activities. The poetic technique of negative-positive parallelism is illustrated by these words, *kaluwelwa* (It is not forded) and *luwelwa* (It is forded). The name, Mzilikazi displays a slanting linking technique. The kingship of the Northern Ndebele nation of Zimbabwe comes from the lineage of Khumalo clan. The chieftaincy of Khumalo clan in Mpumalanga Province in South Africa comes from the very same roots of Engome in KwaZulu Natal. The roles that were played by Mashobane and Myakayaka are remarkable and appreciated, especially in social and cultural involvements.

3.1.6 Kunene

Kunene!
Madvonsela!
Mtimandze lobhambolunye,
Tingaba timbili teta nenina ekhabonina,
Wena logeza ngelubisi emanti akhona,
Vusumuti lomhlophe.

Of the right hand
Madvonsela
Mtimandze who has one rib
If they are two, they came with the mother from
the maternal place
You who bathe with milk while water is there
Home reviver who is white.

The Kunene, Shongwe, Mdziniso and Madvonsela are considered to be brothers. They share the primary, secondary and phrasal phrases of clan praises that are commonly known, for example: Bhambolunye (single – ribbed), *Mageza ngelubisi emant' ahleti* (you bathe with milk while water is there.) and *watitsatsa ekhabonina* (You got them from the maternal place). A common ancestry between related lineages is established at the level of contrived genealogies. Marriage between such groups is prohibited. The kinship relationship is indicated by an ancestral name which is common in the clan praises of such clan names. For example, Kunene is the ancestral name common in the clan praises of the related clan names: Kunene, Gamedze, Madvonsela, Matse, Shongwe and Sikhondze. The Lukhele, Mngometulu and Nkhonyane who all claim kinship relationship with the Mdluli, have the ancestral name Mdluli, as a common denominator in their clan praises. Such common ancestral names are indicators of points of

fission and convergence in the history of lineages.

3.1.7 Lushaba

Lushaba!
Gumedze!
Longavali ngetivalo
Lovala ngetinhloko temadvodza,
Longashanyeli ngemshanyelo,
Loshanyela ngesisila selisakabuli.

Lushaba!
Gumedze!
Who does not close with doors,
Who closed with men's heads,
Who does not sweep with a broom,
Who sweeps with black tailed finch.

Contrast as a figure of speech is evident in this clan name as it is brought about by the words, *vala* (close) – *ngavali* (do not close), *shanyela* (sweep) – *ngashanyeli* (do not sweep). The highlighted words are depicting negative-positive parallelism. The other names that are attached to this clan are the following: *Sikhundlakhulu* (Occupier of high position) and *Nkhomonyenti* (A person who has many cattle)

3.1.8 Jele

Jele!
Luvuno!
Nkhabanhle,
Khokhotela njengenyamatane,
Wena wamdakudze,
Ngubo yengwe,
Ngubo yesilwane.

Jele!
Luvuno,
Beautiful navel,
You who crawls like a buck,
You of the one who eats from afar,
Blanket of the leopard,
Blanket of an animal.

Lijele is a stage of growth of the boys. Here, it is a clan name that is followed by primary and secondary clan praises Luvuno and Nkhabanhle respectively. The initial vertical linking is brought about by the words, *wena* (you) and *ingubo* (blanket).

3.1.9 Madlopha

Madlopha!
Nkhominane,

*Mhlanti wendlunkhulu,
Nabonkhosi,
NaboNgcina lidla ligucile,
NaboSesulekiso sebfati nemadvodza
Madlopha!*

Madlopha!
Nkhominane,
Cleaner of the Great Hut
Mother of the chief,
Mother of Ngcina who eats while kneeling,
Mother of Sesulekiso of women and men,
Madlopha.

The clan do not eat a cow that died of a fatal cattle disease known as *umdllopha*. The primary clan praise is Nkhominane. The feminine status dominates from the praises *NaboNkhosi* (Mother of the chief), *naboNgcina* (mother of Ngcina) and *NaboSesulekiso* (mother of Sesulekiso). The clan name Madlopha shares the praise, Mhlanti, wendlunkhulu (one who cleans the great hut) with Lukhele and Mdluli.

3.1.10 Makhubela

*Makhubela!
Masengula,
Mphunga,
Wena longagezi ngemanti
Logeza ngelubisi,
Malindzambaba sitsi
Ngemabele kantsi kute,
Masengula.*

Makhubela!
Masengula
Mphunga
You who do not bathe with water
You bathe with milk
You who have been looking after
Sorghum
Masengula.

They avoid sorghum because they were once fooled and made to look for sorghum fields where the grain had long been eaten by birds. The clan is found in the eastern part of Mpumalanga Province. The clan praises of Makhubela are Masengula (Cuddled-mild of calabash) and Mphunga. The first clan praise on milk vessel reflects their farming activity on cattle. The clan name comes from the verb, *khuba* (cause to stumble or come in one's way). The water and milk are imagery and comparatively looked at in the clan praise to validate their functions. They both symbolize life

and healthiness. There are various names that are used for this clan, namely: *Nyoni lemhophe* (white bird), *silindzamlanga* (reed looker) and *silindzamoya* (air looker). The totem of the clan is *lilandza* (an egret).

3.1.11 Malangwane

*Malangwane!
Mlotjwa!
Matsikati,
Mhlanti wendlunkhulu,
Nhlanti lencane,
Letalela emfuleni,
Mntungwa,
Enhla kwendlela,
Malangwane.*

Malangwane!
Mlotjwa!
Matsikati,
Cleaner of the big house,
Small fish,
Which breeds in the river,
Mntungwa,
On the upper side of the road,
Malangwane.

They do not intermarry with the Mlotjwa clan for they are said to originate from the same family. Matsikati is their ancestor. The clan name, Malangwane is of Sotho origin. The clan is found in the Hhohho District, north of Eswatini. The fish is an imagery that is used in the clan praise to depict efficacy and proficiency of the clan. The river symbolizes conducive spatial setting and healthiness.

3.1.12 Malindzisa

*Malindzisa!
Tfwala!
Mnyamandze!
Wena loluhlata,
Lonjengencoshana,
Wena wakaLaSiwela,
NaboLangwaca,
Khandzelekati,
Wena wadla,
Watsi akananyongo,
Akanamhleho,
Akanamhleho.*

One who keeps others waiting!
Carry!
Dark one,
You who are as green as the cyprus,
You of LaSiwela,

Mother of Langwaca,
Big head
You who ate saying,
She has no bile,
She has no suet.

Malindzisa, the founder of the clan. Thus people who bear these surnames do not intermarry. The name Malindzisa is derived from *Ma – lindz – isa*:

1. *ma* - a prefix used with names
2. *lindz* - a verb stem which means 'wait for something'
3. *isa* - a causative verbal extension which means 'to cause someone to do something'. or it may mean 'to help someone do something'

Malindzisa, therefore means 'one who made someone wait'. There are other clan names that share these clan praises and reflect that they are coming from one source. Those clan names are Nyembe (slander or defamer) and Motsa (one who reports against). They all share the primary clan praise, Mnyamandze (an ever darkness individual).

3.1.13 Maphosa

Maphosa!
Tsekwane!
Mnguni weLitela,
Matsanyela tibi utibeke emnyango,
Kutsats' indvodza iyocitsa etaleni,
Kubuta nine beLangeni,
Wena wekunene.

Thrower!
An owl!
Mnguni of Litela,
You who sweeps dirt and leaves it at the door,
The husband throws it to the rubbish heap,
You of Langeni are questioning,
You of the right hand.

The clan name, Maphosa (Thrower / Hurler) is derived from the verb, throw or hurl. Tsekwane (an owl) is the primary clan praise. To sweep the dirt and leave it at the door depicts laziness, indolence and sluggishness. A person who is associated with such practice is slothful and lethargic.

3.1.14 Masango

Masango!

Ndzinisa!
Mashayinkhomo,
Mtusi lemhlophe,
Masisa alibale njengenkhosi,
Mvila uphambene njengencangosi,
Wena wemahlabandlovu.

Masango!
Ndzinisa! (make tired)
Beater of the cow,
Mtusi which is white,
You who give and count like the chief,
Paths that pass each like the paths of ants,
You of the spears of the elephant.

Masango (gates) is a plural noun, which is *lisango* (gate) in singular. The primary clan praise is Ndzinisa and the secondary clan praise is *Mashayinkhomo*. The latter is formed from the words, *shaya* (beat) and *inkhomo* (cow). They are verb and a noun respectively. The compound word, *Mashayinkhomo* (cow beater) is an endocentric word which is semantically transparent for inferences. The names, Masisa (Loan-giver) and Mvila (Path) are used as part of the clan praises. The figure of speech, simile is evident when comparing: ...*njengenkhosi* (like a chief) and ... *njengetincangosi* (like ants). The pronoun, *wena* (you) reflect vertical and initial linking in the clan praises.

3.1.15 Masilela

Masilela!
Wena wekunene,
Vungandze,
Malingela,
Msekelane,
Wena wemvudlana lencane,
Emikhemetelweni,
Sibuyabuyane,
Sabuya nemahlaha Ebulandzeni,
Entsabeni kuMananga,
Bhudla tiboya njengentsenasha,
Emehlo abovu njengeligwalagwala,
Wena wesikaba.

Masilela!
You of the right hand,
Vungandze,
Malingela, (A tester for)
Msekelane, (An anchor)
You of the little rain
at a drizzling spree
You who keep on coming back,
You who came with branches from

Bulandzeni at the Mananga mountains,
You who are full of hairs like a red hare,
Red eyes resembling the red plumes of
the red lourie,
You of the navel.

Masilela is a surname which comes from the verb, *silela* (left out). The following clan praises: Vungandze, Malingela and Msekelane are interchangeably used for primary and secondary positions depending on the descendants. The figure of speech, simile is depicted in the following words; ... *njengentsenesha* (like a red hare) and ... *njengeligwalagwala* (like a red lourie). The possessive word, *wesikaba* / *wenkhamba* (of the navel) sounds dialectical and archaic, while the latter is a standardized word. It should be noted that clan praises, in common with all forms of oral poetry, have no 'fixed form'. That is to say, the various praise phrases and praise name which constitute the praises of a clan many occur in any order.

3.1.16 Matfonsi

Matfonsi!
Mjabulase!
Badlabendlula batintsandzane,
Mvudlana mkhemetelwane,
Lingatsi khemekheme selenele
Msutfu,
Mswati.

Matfonsi! (Droplets)
Ever-elated one!
You eat while passing orphans
Across the drizzles,
Once it drizzles then it is enough
You of the Sothos,
You of Mswati.

The words that are significant in this clan are *ematfonsi* (droplets) and *imikhemetelo* (drizzles). Water symbolizes life, health and nature. The situation at which the nation finds the clan in, bestowed them the clan name. The Matfonsi clan lived in an area of scarce rainfall but the soil had a high capacity for retaining moisture. People passing by their fields marveled at the harvest in a land that did not receive much rain, but only drizzles. They did not know the secret of the type and texture of the soil but thought the clan depended only on the few drops of rain that fell on their land. They call themselves 'people of rain drops'. The primary clan praise, Mjabulase (one who is ever-elated) is used for the clan which is assumed to be a combination of Emaswati and the Sothos.

3.1.17 Mavimbela

Mavimbela!
Mkholo!
Lonsundu netinyawo tawo,
Mahle emakholo ngoba
Anjengemacaca ngekunukelana
NaboDladla Tsikati,
Nabosilo sensele,
NaboNselendvuna,
NaboGala lenkhokhobeti,
Ungayi, gogo bete nengingila yendvodza.

Mavimbela!
Mkholo!
Who is dark with his feet,
You are beautiful because
You are like a smelling skunks
Mother of Dladla Tsikati,
Mother of the king of Nsele,
Mother of the branch of a tree,
Grandmother, they have come with a man's
gizzard.

The clan name, Mavimbela is derived from the verb, *vimba* (prevent, block up or close). It means one who closes. It shares the primary clan praise with Matsebula (one who hypnotizes). Feminine plays a significant role in the Mavimbela clan name by using mothers and grandmother. The clan is related to Matsebula, Masina, Makhubu and Tsabetse.

3.1.18 Mbingo

Mbingo!
Wena lowachamuka
Enhla neNgwavuma,
Uta ngesilulu,
Babuta batsi,
Sitfweleni?
Kwatsiwa beSuthu
Mswati!

Mbingo!
You who came from the upper
Reaches of Ngwavuma River,
Rolling in the grain basket,
People asked
What is inside the grain basket?
They replied,
It carries Sothos.
Mswati!

The direction from where the clan came from is pointed out. Ngwavuma River is the permanent and physical landmark of the history of the clan. They are known as *silulu* (grain basket clan)

because they arrived in the country carrying it. They belong to the group called *Emafikamuva* (Late comers) with more influence from the Sotho group. The clan is related to Nkhambule, Matse, Mncube, Maphalala and Ngcamphalala. The clan respects *inkhatsa* (grass heading) and it is often called, *Mtilankhatsa* (Abstainer of grass heading) and *Mlandzelalanga* (A sun's follower). The surname, Mbingo is derived from the verb, *binga* (clear or lighten) which becomes a euphemistic word, *libinga/umbingo/lizulu* (sky).

3.1.19 Metfula

Metfula!
Mvakali!
Ndzabalula,
Wena wengongoni emavaneni
Kuhlase
Wena watsa umzaca wakhomba
umfokatane,
Umfati longesheya lomabelemadze.

Metfula!
 You who are heard
 Free story

You of Ngongoni at Mavaneni
 Kuhlase
 You, who pointed at an ordinary man
 with a stick,
 A woman across the river with big
 breasts.

Metfula's primary clan praise is Mvakali. Its secondary praise is Ndzabalula. The clan is found between Mpuluzi and Metfula Rivers in Gert Sibande region, west of Eswatini.

3.1.20 Mdluli

The Mdluli clan was incorporated by the Dlamini, during their migration from kaTembe. The Mdluli had settled in area known as kaMbikiza (place of Mbikiza) and had their own powerful chieftaincy. He persuaded them to join him because of their admired behavior. He assigned them the task of assisting in the *indlunkhulu* (great hut). The name Mdluli means, "go ahead" and comes from *dlula*, (pass, go ahead) and was given the leader and founder of the clan. The Dlamini leader selected a small section from among the Mdluli to go ahead and spy out the land. They found good land, liked it and settled down, but did not come back to report.

-
- | | |
|---|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mdluli! • Bhekiswako! • Wena wabhekis' inkhos' elusaseni, • Sukuta, • Luvuno, • Luvuno alunamahloni, • BakaMdluli abayidli
inyama yembuti badla yenkonkoni • Phika sinamandla • Mlimi wensindze, bantfu balim' emafus'
aboGembe • Mlisana, • Ndzindzindzi, • Mdluli! | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mdluli! • Bhekiswako • You who guided the king to lusasa • Sukuta • Luvuno • Luvuno knows no shame. • The Mdluli do not eat goat's meat, they
eat that of the brindled gnu • Powerful shoulder • Tiller of virgin land when people till
their old fields. • Mlisana • Thunderous one • Mdluli! |
|---|---|
-

After a period of waiting, the Dlamini leader sent out the remainder of the Mdluli in search of the first party. On finding their kinsmen comfortably settled, the leader remarked, Sinikhandzile! (We have found you!). They then reported back to the Dlamini leader. The first party was distinguished as Mdluli Sikhhandzisa and the other, as Mdluli Bhekiswako, from *-bhekisa* (direct, guide) for they had directed the king to the new settlement. Bhekiswako also became the name of one of their ancestors. Other ancestors mentioned in the sinanatelo of the Mdluli are Sukuta, Luvuno and Gembe. The primary clan praise Sikhhandzisa or Bhekiswako is distinguishing the Mdluli clan and categorized them into sub-clans. Goat meat is a taboo to the Mdluli clan who prefer a wild animal, brindled gnu. The Mdluli Sikhhandzisa and Bhekiswako consider themselves as related sub-clans but merely in terms of their senior house, the Sikhhandzisa; and the junior house, Bhekiswako.

Borman [13] expresses this idea about the clan:

The Mdluli entered the Pongolo valley in the camp of the Ngwane (p. 12).

It is further explained that Matsafeni Mdluli, son of Nyati Mdluli and brother of Gwamile Mdluli (Labotsibeni) and mother of Bhunu (Ngwane V). The prominence of the clan is associated with the great fighting general and national council member and leader of iNyatsi regiment.

There are two sub-clans of the Mdluli clan; the Mdluli Sikhhandzisa from which comes the king's right hand, Matsafeni and the Mdluli Bhekiswako from which came the Queen Mother Labotsibeni, mother of King Mahlokhla.

3.1.21 Mhlanga

*Mhlanga!
Khabako!
Wena lowacedza Lubombo
ngekuhlehetela,
Mdlakanye,
Ngabe kusasa utawudlani?
Sidvwaba silutfuli silutfutfuva
Nyoni yaseMevaneni
Zulu kalibongwa
Lobongwa bolomalima
Mhlanga!
Khabako waboLanga
Wena waseMevaneni
Wena wadlala kanye
Ngabe kusasa utawudlalani?*

Reed!
One who kicks!
You who scourged the Lubombo range,
You eat once
What will you eat tomorrow?
Dusty apron,
Bird of small countries
Rain which is not praised,
Praised by farmers
Reed!
Khabako of the Langa,
You who belongs to small countries,
You who played once,
What kind of game will you play tomorrow?

It is one of the surnames that is related to the Dlamini (Eater at noon). It is alleged that they crossed a huge river using the reed. Khabako (one who kicks) is the bestowed name which reveals their personalities and characters. Their totems are reed, bird and rain. Their deverbative

eulogy, Khabako is derived from the verb *khaba* (to kick). They scourged the Lubombo range together with the Dlamini clan. Their eulogical names are *lizulu* (rain), *umhlanga* (reed), *inyoni* (bird) and *sidvwaba* (apron). In Mhlanga praises, the poetic devices that are depicted are the following: vertical linking:

*Wena waseMevaneni
Wena wadlala kanye...*

(You who belongs to small countries,
You who played once...

*Spatial setting: Nyoni yaseMevaneni
(Bird of small countries)
Temporal setting: Ngabe kusasa
utawudlalani?
(What kind of game will
you play tomorrow?)*

Slanting repetitional pattern

The words, *kalibongwa* (not praised) and *libongwa* ((being praise) reflect a slanting linking of negative-positive pattern. Zulu *kalibongwa*, *libongwa* bolomalima (Rain which is not praised, praised by farmers.)

Possessive appositional eulogical name

Khabako waboLanga
(Khabako of the Langa)

The diction that is used in these clan praises reflect the metaphorical use of words such as *lilanga* (sun), *lizulu* (rain) and *umhlanga* (reed). It is a clan that belongs to the Embo-Nguni stock that migrated from central Africa around the late fifteenth century to Southern Africa and settled on the coastal area.

3.1.22 Nhlapho

*Nhlapho!
Sigegede!
Matfole,
Mwelase,
Nongombili.
Ingaba yinye yeta nenina,
Mabulal' umuntfu amhleka,
Matfuntimadze kwensimu yelilala
Mlambo! Mwelase
Lowel' iMpofana neLuthukela,
Mwelase longaweli ngelitubuko
Lowela ngetihlengela temfula.*

Nhlapho!
Sigegede!

Calves,
River-crosser
You who have two navels.
Once it is alone, it comes from maternal place,
You kill a person while laughing
Long shades like that of
Palm field,
Mlambo! A river crosser,
You crossed Mpfana and Thukela,
Mwelase who do not cross by the ford,
Who crosses through the raft.

The Nhlapho clan is now settled at the place called Dundonald, west of Eswatini. Most descendants are found in Mkhondo, Msukaligwa and Ligwa area.

3.1.23 Nyoni

Nyoni!
Gwalagwala!
Nyoni yemkhosi Lusiba,
Awuhlonywa bafokati,
Uhlonywa emakhosi,
Gwalagwala!

Nyoni! (bird)
Gwalagwala! (lourie feather)
Bird of the ceremony,
You are not used by anyone,
You are used by kings,
Gwalagwala!

The two clan names, *Gwalagwala* (Lourie) and *Lusiba* (feather) are used interchangeably. The feather of a lourie are worn by the royal family members to most indigenous people, with the exception of king Shaka, who was using the feathers of a blue crane.

3.1.24 Sibandze

Goje!
Mdlanyoka!
NaboNgwane,
Hlahla ekhaya litsi lingavala,
Libe livalile,
Wena lowabitwa wavuma
Watsi wota utewukudla umuti,
Wagidzagidza
Mdzenge loncama netitfo takho
Sibandze!

Long feather!
Goje
Snake eater

Mother of Ngwane when
Branch of a tree which closes,
It will be really closed,
Mother of Zwangendaba,
You who responded positively when summoned
And said "Come for queenship position".
You danced
Mdzenge who is ever slim on the legs,
Sibandze!

The Sibandze people are said to be 'eaters of snakes, because when they arrived in Eswatini. They fished in the rivers and caught eels which other people thought were snakes. One of their ancestors was Magalela whose dancing movements were likened to a centipede's wriggling movements. This action endorsed to the people that these were snake-eaters. The Sibandze are said to be the beautiful and proud of their dark complexion. This clan is generous and helpful. Their physical structure is characterized by a slim waist. The Sibandze's clan praises are specifically known as Goje and Mdlanyoka.

3.1.25 Tfwala

The following personal names: Tfwala, Mnyamandze, Lukhambule, Mkhonto, Nyembe, Motsa, Malindzisa, Mafuyankhabi and Mshiva allude the dynasty of the clan. The poetic diction that makes this clan praises rich in imagery and symbolism are the following: *inkhomo* (cattle), *umkhonto* (spear), *umnyango* (door), *bubendze* (spleen), *timphondvo* (horns) and *emanceba* (wounds).

Tfwala clan belongs to Embo-Nguni stock. Its ethnic background is traced from East of Lubombo range. Its historical order of incorporation to Emaswati rulers from Nkayaneni which was near Magudu Hills to the northern side of Pongolo river is around 1750's to 1800's. The meaning of the clan name Tfwala is alluded to their national roles *kutfwala* (to carry) to perform national services for the royal household, to control special medicines and occupy national offices. Tfwala clan belongs to the first category Bemdzabuko (original Swati) from time immemorial. It is noted that the clan played a major role when carrying and controlling luggage for the whole nation during migrations. The totems of the clan are that they do not eat the meat of the hornless cow and spleen. They are known as *ematalankhosi* (king-bearers) because they gave birth to King Mswati III.

<p><i>Tfwala</i> <i>Mnyamandze,</i> <i>Nshivakati lengenatimphondvo,</i> <i>Lonetimphondvo watitsatsa ekhabonina,</i></p> <p><i>Nkhomo lehlaba ite timphondvo,</i> <i>Sikhandzisa semakhosi,</i> <i>Mkhonto lodvume njengelitulu,</i></p> <p><i>Litsala lemikhonto laseManyamandzeni,</i></p> <p><i>Nhlangotsi timancebanceba,</i> <i>Wena weMlamulankunzi ungatiyekeli</i> <i>tibulalane,</i> <i>Wena laSiwela owawel' umfula</i> <i>ngesilulu,</i> <i>Mnyango kawuvalwa uvalwa ngetinhloko</i> <i>temadvodza,</i> <i>Mtilangati longadli bubendze.</i></p> <p><i>Lukhambule! Mafuyankhabi!</i></p>	<p><i>Carry</i> <i>An ever-darkened individual,</i> <i>A big hornless bull,</i> <i>If it has horns, it comes from maternal</i> <i>family,</i> <i>A cattle that hurls without horns,</i> <i>Founder of the kings,</i> <i>The spear that thundered like a</i> <i>thunderstorm,</i> <i>A volley of spears are found</i> <i>Emanyamandzeni,</i> <i>You are wounded side by side,</i> <i>You of Mlamulankunzi do not leave</i> <i>them to kill each other,</i> <i>You of Siwela who ford the river</i> <i>through the grain basket.</i> <i>The door is not closed, but closed with</i> <i>the heads of men,</i> <i>Blood-abstainer who does not eat a</i> <i>spleen.</i> <i>Lukhambule! Oxen farmer!</i></p>
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4. FINDINGS

What is evident about the clan names and clan praise are that they reflect a broader history of clan from time immemorial to date. The spatial and temporal settings of the clan are highlighted. a series of personal names that serve as heroes and descendants of the clan are orally recited to identify the clan during rites, formal and informal addresses. It is also noted that some of the clan names are sharing the secondary or phrasal clan praises like Hleta, Shongwe, Gamedze, Kunene, Seyama, Sikhondze and Madvonsela. There are clan names that have different clan praises attached to them for example: Shongwe-Mntimandze and Shongwe-Mabhengeza; Mdluli-Skhandzisa and Mdluli-Bhekiswako. Only the clan name is shared but not the secondary clan praise. It is further noted that clan names are static but clan praises are syntactically and morphologically dynamic.

5. DISCUSSION

Clans are graded according to their relationship with the kingship and the position their members hold in the nation. At the apex is the lineage of the king that is pre-eminent. The close the blood ties with the king the higher the status of individuals. The clans that are described as the "Bearers of Kings," that is, clans that have

provided queen mothers who were as a rule chosen because they were the daughters of powerful chiefs. The clans with their own areas and hereditary chiefs, are considered third. Lastly, are clans from which officials are selected for special ritual, administrative and management functions of coordinating clan ceremonies, local centers, and national representations. The grading of clans is neither as precise nor as a caste system. Grading depends on differences of customs or occupations and maintained by endogamy (in-group marriage). The differences of customs are tolerated, clan specialization of occupation and inter-clan contact are free and intimate. The upper limits of promotion are set by the royal Dlamini clan. Subdivision of clans is a widespread process, dating from the early period of migration when brothers hived off, each with his own small group of followers who identified themselves through the name of their new leader or with an incident in their more recent history. The link between them and the parent, clan is retained in additional praise and intermarriage is prohibited.

Each clan contains a number of lineages in which direct descent can be genealogically traced over three to eight generations. Swati lineage defines legal rights claims to various state positions, but do not provide the framework for the political structure as they do in certain

segmentary lineage societies, which have no centralized rulers. This is the case with the Swati who stress the physiological link between father and offspring and state emphatically that a child is 'one blood with its father and its mother'. The king in particular must have in his body 'the blood' of kingship through the male line. The biological tie between father and child must be confirmed by law and ritual, for the physiological father (genitor) is not automatically the sociological father (pater). Clan praises are significantly reflecting kinship and kinsfolk in society. The unvarying nature of clan names and clan praises are evident up to primary level. From secondary level onwards they are characterized by Mthethwa [10] when she describes clan praises as follows:

*Tinanatelo tiluhlobo lolutsite lwetibongo
lolunemlandvo lomdzala. Tikhombisa
buhlobo lobukhona ekhatsi kwebantfu.
Tinanatelo tigidna tingematekelo (p. 129).*

(Clan praises are the certain types of praises which have a real history. They reflect kinship amongst people. Clan praises are ultimately becoming legends.)

Clan praises are both oral skills and communication competence as it is advocated by Spitzberg [14] as follows:

It is the impression that communicative behavior as both appropriate and effective in a given situation (p. 375).

The diction that is used in clan praises uses the figures of speech that reflect comparisons, exaggerations, contradictions and transference of ideas. Metonymic transfer plays a major role in this genre as it involves the naming of a referent as a whole after one of its characteristic features of component parts. Waldron [15] points out that metonymy is encountered when:

We use a word not in its established sense but to name a category in contextual association with the category usually named by the word (p. 186).

Ullman [16] observes the metaphoric transfer by giving this explanation:

The basic structure of metaphor is very simple. There are always two terms present: the thing we are talking about and that to which we are comparing it (p. 213)

The analogical transfer is evident in all clan praises and they reflect the richness of the language, the poetic stance and oratory skills. The fundamental functions of the clan names and clan praises are to provide cultural identity.

Similarity, it is evident in the praises of Nhlapho, Shoba, Mnguni, Khoza, Mkhwanazi, Mazibuko and Sangweni clans because they share the following clan praise phrases:

*Mwelase longaweli ngelitubuko,
(River-crosser who do not cross by the ford)
Lowela ngetihlengela temfula.
(You cross by means of river raft.)*

The clan names that are cited are Mazibuko (Sithole[17]:56), Nhlapho (Sithole[17]:89), Mnguni (Sithole[17]:70), Khoza (Sithole[17]:35), Mkhwanazi (Sithole[17]:67), Shoba (Sithole[17]:104). The words, *wela* (cross), *litubuko* (ford), *tihlengela* (rafts) are not restricted to evocative images that appeal to the senses only, but to the use of figurative language. They create meanings that are different from the literal interpretation of the words. Imagery plays a fundamental role to signify the objects and sense perceptions.

6. CONCLUSION

The richness of the language is evident in clan praises. The figures of speech that predominate are simile, metaphor, metonymy, irony and hyperbole. The symbolic elements in this work are two-fold in that they are applied to the living and non-living phenomena. The imagery that revolves around phenomena like weapons and thunderstorms. Clan praises are characterized by wide use of different animals, harmful and harmless, big and small, wild and domestic. These animals are used to symbolize human nature and human relationships. Their relevance lies largely in their moral implication and in the fact that they run through the clan praises with subtle implication and image. Ancestral names in the clan praise serve as a constant link between the ancestral world and the living. These illustrious ancestors' names represent ideal social personalities, define values and standards to be striven for by living members of their groups. Descendants of a hero in battle field, boasted of their heroic exploits and would attempt to emulate them that they too could be remembered in the family hierarchies. The functions of the clan names and clan praises are for identity establishment, the special address form in various ceremonies and rites.

7. RECOMMENDATIONS

Clan names and clan praises must be formally taught at schools to uphold humanness, history and respect. Their significances need to be highlighted at various institutions and ceremonies. The explicit definition of clan name, clan praise, praise phrases and extensions need to be emphasized.

COMPETING INTERESTS

Author has declared that no competing interests exist.

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