

The Social and Linguistic Implications of Zulu Nicknames in the Industrial  
workplace:  
A Case Study of the Westmead Industrial Area in KwaZulu- Natal

By

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## Declaration

I Fikile Muriel Khuboni declare that this research article is my own work

Signed: .....

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# CHAPTER 1

## INTRODUCTION

### 1. Introduction

Chapter 1 is an introductory chapter comprised of a summary and the layout of the research article. It outlines the objectives of this study and also deals with the method used to collect data, the details of the data collected and how it was analysed. Chapter 2 deals with the definition of terms and how they relate to nicknames. This chapter also undertakes a literature review, revealing what other researchers have discovered in their research on nicknaming practices. Chapter 3 focuses on the analysis of data collected. In it I undertake a linguistic analysis of nicknames. As I analyse the nicknames, they are classified and categorised. Chapter 4 deals with the trends observed in the coining of nicknames. Chapter 5 offers concluding remarks where findings and interpretation with regard to naming will be presented.

In all societies different kinds of names are given to people. Koopman (1987:147) argues that Zulu society has three different basic categories of names. The first category is the home name (*igama lasekhaya*), which is the personal name of an individual person, the name given to a person at birth. Originally it was called the home name because its use was limited to home and it could not be used in the work place or at school.

The second category is the European name (*igama lesilungu*). This category refers to a Christian or Western name, which is usually an English name. Ngubane (2000) maintains that traditional naming systems show that early contact period between Africans and Europeans influenced the naming practice among most African societies. People were to be baptised and given English names. English names were mainly used in religious contexts or in the work place. Ngubane (2000) maintains that Christianity had been regarded as having strong influence on African naming. Indigenous or home names were found difficult to pronounce and people who entered school had to be given English names that could be easily pronounced by Europeans.

Ngubane (2000) goes on to say that to have a foreign name was seen as a sign of changing from the primitive to modern world or western civilization. When at home a person did not use the European name. Nowadays many people are rejecting their English names and with the younger generation English names have been dropped. Research by Ngubane has shown that with the advent of democracy, strong and positive attitude is growing among sectors of the Zulu population towards African culture in general and to isiZulu culture in particular.

The third category of name is the nickname, called *izidlaliso/ izifenggo*. The word *izidlaliso* is taken from the verb *-dlala* (play) The word *dlala* suggests that nicknames are used to lightheartedly, to joke or tease. Dent and Nyembezi (1980) define the term *dlalisa* as to play with, amuse. This suggests that are nicknames are coined for the sake of teasing a person. Though nicknames may have this function, research has shown that they can be used for other purposes besides playing with a person. The reasons for giving nicknames will be dealt with in Chapter 3,

Nicknames can be used for identifying a person without making people laugh. Doke and Nyembezi (1980) define *fengqa* as to give a nickname. Koopman (1987:154) in defining the nickname cited the equivalent IsiZulu terms as: “*Izidlaliso* (*-dlalisa*-amuse, play with) *Izifekethiso* (*-fekethisa*-play with, cause to sport, amuse, make a joke, say in fun) *Izifengqa* (*fengqa*-give nicknames) Koopman’s definition covers various functions of Zulu nicknames. All the definitions dealt with here concur in concluding that a nickname is an extra name over and above the given one.

This category may include pet names, which are baby names. In most part of Africa the common way of identifying and addressing a person is to call him father of so and so or mother of so and so. This category includes all additional or extra names given to a person other than his real name. This chapter aims at giving the background to Zulu nicknaming practice as it is reflected in the factories. I shall also try to highlight the aim of this study as well as methods used to collect data for this study.

## 1.1 Background

A large number of African semi-skilled males work in industry. Their colleagues do not refer to them, in most cases by their personal names but instead by nicknames. Zulu nicknames tend to be bestowed as a result of behaviour, attitudes, personality traits or physical features. Nicknames given in industry by workers to other fellow workers are long, full of humour, and at times derogatory. The nickname of the well-known Maskandi musician Phuzekhemisi is an example of the industry-related nickname: which means “ He who drinks at the chemist.” According to informants, the nickname *uPhuzekhemisi* was given to him when he was working in a shop where he was not allowed to drink cold water from the fridge. When it was very hot and he needed ice -cold water he would go to the nearby chemist where he would be given such water to drink. When his supervisor needed him, his colleagues would say ‘ *uyophuza ekhemisi*’: he has gone to drink water at the chemist, hence he was called *uPhuzekhemisi*. His proper name is Johnson Mnyandu.

The study was conducted in the Westmead Industrial Area. Even though some of the workers might be from rural areas they have been in the city for years and have been influenced by city life. Normally Zulu people carry two names, one given at birth by either the mother or the father and the second one given by the parent who did not give the first one.

I have undertaken a programme of research into the Zulu nicknames given amongst equal members of the workforce in the Westmead Industrial Area. Employees gave the nicknames collected and discussed below, to their co-workers of equal rank. In all instances respondents were aware of their nicknames.

In her study Turner (1977), deals with Zulu nicknames and concentrated on nicknames given to employers by Zulu-speaking employees. These nicknames given were not used in the superior’s presence, and therefore there was no question of acceptance by the bearers, since they were unknown to them. My study is focuses on Zulu nicknames given to employees by other co-workers of equal rank, and the degree of acceptance or rejection must therefore have occurred. .

Zulu nicknames are unlike personal names in that they are not given at birth. Zulu personal names are more stable, and may not be changed, even if the name commemorates a sad occasion or sad circumstance like *Bangizondani* (why do they hate me?) or *Bangifunani* (what do they want from me?). Zulu nicknames, on the other hand, are informally acquired and therefore may not be permanent. They are not usually given by family members, as is the case with proper names. Shortenings of personal names, given names and clan names are different from nicknames. In the family setting people may use shortenings: *Zandile* (they have increased) may become *MaZandi*, *MaZ*, *MaZZ*, *MaZee* or *Z*, all which are shortenings of the proper name. Within the family, family members may also use titles that refer to family status like *Mama kaThandi* (mother of Thandi) and *Baba ka Sipho* respectfully (father of Sipho). Zulu nicknames are different in that they are given outside of naming conventional practices. Nicknames of the kind I shall consider are not given by parents or other family members and are not necessarily permanent, though some of the nicknames amongst African people may become permanent. In funeral notices the phrase; *obekade aziwa ngokuthi*; is often used, meaning 'who was known as'. The nickname may continue to be used or disappear depending on the circumstances and the nature of the nickname. If such a nickname endures, it creates a dual identity; hence funeral announcements may include both the official name and the nickname of a deceased person. For instance, a nickname that is hated by the bearer sticks. This is the case, for example, in the case of my study, where nicknames were given and used amongst co-workers. Although these nicknames are in some cases jocular like *uJabulakuphakwa* (the one who is happy when food is served) they may have other purpose as in *uSomandla* (father of strength), is obviously complimentary; *uMadevu* (moustache). These obviously may be purely descriptive, may show admiration, or may be teasing or may derive from a particular incident.



## 1.2 Aim of study

This research has shown that very little has been done in the field of Zulu nicknames, where few scholars have ventured into this field. There is also a lack of adequate material regarding the early history of the Zulu nicknaming practices. Zulu nicknames have been in existence for a long time but little has been recorded about the ways in which people coined nicknames in the past and what impact the nicknames had on the lives of people. I therefore hope that my study will make a small but significant contribution to the discussion of informal naming practices. I shall look at the skill and creativity displayed by Zulus in creating and coining nicknames. These informal names have linguistic as well as social implications for the industrial workers who give and receive them. The study will also show how Zulus manipulate their language to express their feelings.

Scholars need to advance their knowledge of the sub-disciplines of onomastics such as nicknaming and spend their time doing research into such areas. My study differs from earlier research on nicknaming practices. Vivian de Klerk and Barbara Bosch (1996) did their research on Xhosa nickname usage among adolescents of mixed race and socio-economic backgrounds, later (1997) they worked on nicknaming among Xhosa children and adolescents. Children and the adolescents formed separate groups whose practices were examined separately. De Klerk (2002) studied nicknames given to whites by Xhosa-speaking employees and saw them as a double-edged sword. Van Langendock (2001) dealt with what he called 'bynames' and which my terms would be called nicknames, within the personal name system. Neethling (1994) analysed Xhosa nicknames and their categories. Turner (1997) as I have indicated earlier looked at Zulu nicknames given to employers by black employees. Molefe (1999) gave a comprehensive account of source and functionality of Zulu nicknames. He analysed the role played by a nickname in the life of a person, which he calls functionality, and he divided it into two sections, viz. primary functions and secondary functions. Molefe (1999) also analysed the manner in which bearers of nicknames respond when discovering their nicknames. My work differs from all of these studies in that it deals with Zulu nicknames collected in an industrial setting.

### 1.3 Methodology

I collected data over a period of six months in the Westmead industrial area. The data was collected in two phases, the first one being between August 2002 and October 2002. In the initial survey 30 respondents were interviewed in the following factories: Coca-Cola, Siemens, and LG, as the sample was very small in the initial survey, a second survey became desirable. The second survey was carried out between February 2003 and April 2003. Seventy respondents were interviewed in the following factories: Kaljan, Dawmant Snacks, Mainline Auto, KZN Armature Winders, Con Tech, Rentokil, Engen, Trentyre, KwaZulu Steel, Marxiprest, K.T.S, Maizey, Awn Master, Assembly Plant, and HIQ. The factories were randomly selected..

The process of collecting data from these factories was not an easy task. Firstly I went to factories to ask for permission to use the workers for my study. In almost all the factories I went to employers were not keen to allow me to speak to their workers whilst they were on duty, since they thought this might hinder their production. Another reason was because of the level of noise of the machines whilst workers were on duty. I then decided to secure appointments during their break times, which are very short (15-20 minutes).

Self-report questionnaires are the most typical means of eliciting information about nicknames (Neethling: 1994) and this is the method that I used in my study. Respondents are likely to know their own nicknames and to give fairly accurate information about the origins and the users of nicknames. At First, the respondents were reluctant to give their names to me since they were not sure how they would be used. I had to explain to them the purpose of my study. The workers however felt that they would not like to see their names written somewhere. Mouton (2003) maintains that confidential information provided by research participants must be treated as such by researchers, even when this information enjoys no legal protection or privilege. It is for this reason that this study will maintain confidentiality and will not mention the proper names of informants the respondents were not very keen to fill in questionnaires and so I filled in the questionnaires on their behalf. I designed the questionnaire in English and then translated it into isiZulu. The whole process was very slow. I was only able to interview three to four workers during a session depending on how

fast they gave information. The questionnaire had questions such as: Do your co-workers call you by your own name? If not, what do they call you? What does your nickname mean? Do you like this nickname? Do people outside work call you by this name? The language of the factory is isiZulu, and the majority of workers are Zulu-speaking, therefore most of the nicknames given are in isiZulu except in instances where a person belongs to another ethnic group and is then called by the term applied to his group, like *Mpondo*, *Bhaca*, *Xhosa*. In some cases workers used a person's surname like Chirh, especially if they had difficulty in pronouncing his first name. In the majority of cases, each worker was known by his/her nickname. 100 out of 130 workers interviewed amongst male co-workers had nicknames. All these workers were in factories that employed at least ten people.

It is interesting to note that in factories where there are fewer workers, the practice of nicknaming is not common. In a butchery that had five workers none of them had a nickname. There were two females who said they were called by shortened forms of their given names, for example *uSibongile* became *Sbo* or in the other case a more formal title was given like *Mama kaThuli* (Thuli's mother) In some cases females in the workplace are addressed by their maiden names e.g *MaNgcobo*, *MaMkbize*. In another factory there were only three males working there and none of them had a nickname. This suggests that Zulu nicknaming is mostly practised where there is a large group of males working together. This certainly applied at Westmead factories. It is worth noting that even in big factories where there are many workers, not all workers have nicknames.

The nicknames collected are known and accepted for the most part by their bearer. 90 out of 100 workers said they had accepted their nicknames. A number of respondents had nicknames that made them feel good about themselves like *uSomandla* (father of strength). These are usually nicknames that have to do with popularity, appearance, personality traits and abilities. Sometimes people give Zulu nicknames to make fun of the recipient of the nickname like *uGundane* (rat) though this may hurt him. It is nevertheless strange that even very unflattering nicknames may be accepted, the reason being that having a nickname signals membership of the group. More senior members give nicknames to the more junior.

## CHAPTER 2

### LOCATING NICKNAMES WITHIN ONOMASTICS

#### 2.1 Introduction

In this chapter I am going to give an overview of the study of onomastics. I will try to locate nicknames within the study of onomastics by first defining what onomastics is and giving various definitions by scholars of onomastics. The study of personal names is called anthroponym of which brief definition will be given. In trying to locate nicknames it is also important to look at nicknames as they are closely related to names. Various definitions by different scholars will also be looked into. The literature review will also be covered in this chapter

Naming practices are universal to all cultures and societies. All human beings have names. This is confirmed by Ngubane (2002) when he says that names are given to children at the time of birth or soon thereafter. Among Zulu people, naming, generally speaking is considered to be a significant and certainly an important activity. The naming process is linked to the culture, beliefs and customs of the people. Traditionally, the Zulu people have received names that reflect values and attitudes within a particular context. Naming practices among the Zulus were traditionally based on either event during the pregnancy or on societal activities. The practice of naming children according to conditions of birth are common amongst the African societies. For example , a second daughter may be named Phindile (we have got a second daughter

The naming of the child is always of historical importance in the family. A name given to a child is significant to that particular child. The study of naming practices brings enjoyment and understanding of where nicknames come from and how we use them. Names, therefore, constantly invoke the idea of continuing responsibility and a need for this responsibility to be activated at all times in order for the individual to fulfil their function on earth.

## 2.2 Defining Onomastics

The study of onomastics is about the study of names and naming practices. The new Encyclopaedia Britannica (1993 Vol. 24:733) defines onomastics as:

The science that studies names in all their aspects is called onomastics (or onomatology an obsolete word). The subject of this science is broad because almost everything can have a name and because the study of names theoretically encompasses all languages, all geographical and cultural regions, and all historical epochs.

Neethling (1994: 88) says: “ Onomastics is the study of proper names” Raper (1987: 78) has the following to say: “Onomastics has as its object the study of proper names.” In the light of all these definitions it is clear that onomastics is about naming and naming practices in all cultures.

Onomasticians further subdivide the study of names into the following sub-categories:

- Anthroponymy, which is a study of human personal names; this is further subdivided into personal names, surnames, clan names, patronyms, teknonyms and nicknames
- Ethnonymy, which is a study of names of ethnic groups.
- Toponymy, which concerns itself with the study of place names
- Literary onomastics which is the study of literary names

Raper (1987: 78) defines the name by saying: “A proper name, like any other linguistic sign, consists of a sound sequence, which may be represented graphically, and a ‘sense’ or ‘meaning’ It also has the function of referring to, or designating, an extra linguistic entity”. A name according to Neethling (1994: 88) is explained as:“ a prototypical term of address” Neethling’s definition of a name suggests that proper names play a special role in address systems. As a functional category of address, a name may constitute a set of all possible addresses.

### 2.3 Defining the term 'Nickname'

The Encyclopaedia Britannica (1978:330) defines the nickname as: “an informal name given to an individual in place of, or in addition to, his given name. Nicknames are usually descriptive of the individual or are familiar variations of his given names. This definition is straightforward in that it says clearly that a nickname is given in addition to a given name. In other words it is an added name.

The *Concise Oxford Dictionary* offers a short and concise definition of a nickname when it says: “A nickname is a familiar or humorous name given to a person or thing instead of or as well as the real name. Another definition which explains the derivation of a nickname from the term ‘eke’ is by Leslie Dunkling (1993: 136) when he says: “The word derives from the expression ‘an eke name’ which later became a *nekename*. This is the eke we use when we say that we must ‘eke out supplies.” Morgan (1979:16) defines a nickname as follows: “A nickname is an *eke*-name derived from the old English verb *ecan* meaning to add to or augment. Thus an eke-name was one given above the legal baptismal name.

The idea of an eke- addition is highlighted by the two definitions above. This endorses the fact that a person has to have a name first and added to his name is the nickname

I agree with the dictionary when it says that a nickname is used instead of a personal name. It is doubtful whether nicknames are all humorous. This study indicates that not all nicknames are humorous; some are derogatory and others are descriptive.

Leslie and Skipper (1990: 273) define a nickname as: “A term of familiarity which substitutes for a proper name. Fowler and Fowler (1938:764) also define the nickname as: “A name added to or substituted for a person’s, place’s, or thing’s proper name.” Skipper and Fowler believe that a nickname may be substituted for a proper name. I do not fully agree with their definition since the nickname does not normally substitute a person’s name completely. In some cases you will find that the nickname is only used by a small group of people. This does not mean that it is substituted for a name in the sense of being it, because people who do not know the nickname will still use the personal name.

This study deals with the modern Zulu naming practice, and does not concern itself with the traditional naming practices. In the Zulu society people have a tendency to:

- Shorten names

The name *uLangaletbu* (our day) may be shortened to a number of names, that is:

*ULanga* (*langa* means a day or sun). When a name is shortened it loses its original meaning. People who know a person as *Langa* will not know what the name means, and they may give their own meanings to the name, which are not necessarily, correct. Another shortened form could be *uLethu* (ours), and this name could also be interpreted differently. People may go on further to shorten this name by saying *Lango*, *Langs*, and *Langman*. From one name we could have five shortened names or even more. Normally the mother will use the full version of the proper name. Other members of the family, colleagues, classmates and friends may use the shortened forms.

- refer to individuals by relationship.

If a sister lives with her brother, her children would call him *Malume* (maternal uncle). It is common practice that we find almost everyone in this house, calling the uncle *Malume*. In most cases the term *Malume* will tend to replace his name. He will hardly ever be called by his real name when he is in his sister's house, and even his sister may call him *uMalume*. Some people might end up using relationship words from other languages like 'broer' (meaning brother in Afrikaans), 'bra' or 'bro' (which is a shortened form of brother). The other common relationship term that is commonly used is *uMakhekwane* (neighbour). When people are neighbours they may end up not using their names but calling each other *Makhekwane*, which may further be shortened to *uMakhi* or *Makhe*.

## 2.4 Literature review

Van Langendock (2001) deals with the criteria for classifying personal names. His classification led to a classification in which the traditional sub-categories will find their place. Van Langendock's main aim was to situate bynames, nicknames in the system of Dutch personal names. According to Van Langendock (2001) personal names constitute the most diversified category of proper names and they tend to display a rich derivational

structure. The majority of Zulu nicknames collected are also derivational, derived from other parts of speech. The derivational structure of nicknames is dealt with in Chapter 3 of this study where clear examples to illustrate this are given

For the semantic – pragmatic characterisation of personal names Van Langendock proposed to use the parameters “ primary” Vs “secondary” and “official” Vs unofficial. He referred to the first category as primary official personal names. According to Van Langendock (2001) this category could be further subdivided into two major sub-classes: first names and family names. Van Langendonck in this article limits himself to the nicknames of persons or groups of persons. His study drew its data from dialects spoken in small communities among people in villages or schools in South Dutch (Flemish) dialects. Van Langendock (2001) says that first names are bestowed by the baptismal act.

In traditional Zulu culture a child gets his/her first name from parents. One of the parents also bestows the second name. In most cases children are known by names given by their fathers. Van Langendock (2001) believes that the productive derivations (diminutives and augmentations) should also be treated as first names. Van Langendock (2001) says that only if the derived form looks irregular and is no longer recognised as a forename, is it to be analysed as a nicknames.

Van Langendock (2001) generalises when saying that first names are the source of ‘call names’, and that usually people are addressed by a first name in the daily situation. In Zulu culture nicknames do not necessarily originate from first names since Zulus are a multi-naming society and are very creative enjoying creating nicknames. People coin nicknames that will best suit a particular person. In formal situations, the family name will be used. The family name is looked on as a kind of collective name.

According to Van Langendock (2001), nicknames are considered added, unofficial, popular names for persons. They appear in all languages to a greater or lesser extent. They are meant to express some characteristics of the name bearer. Van Langendock (2001) says that nicknames do display some emotive, augmentative meaning. They may also show some associative or connotative meaning, due to transparency of their etymology.



According to Van Langendock (2001) there are two important approaches to the definition of bynames that can be envisaged. The first is morphosyntactic and the second is the pragmatic. It appears that nicknames can only be defined language specifically and even then, only a negative characterisation seems possible. Zulu nicknames however do not only show negative characterisation. Chapter 3 will clearly show how nicknames can be classified showing a number of possible categories that are not necessarily negative. Van Langendock (2001) further argues that the nicknames have a secondary status with regard to the first or given name. Such names are functionally secondary since they do not necessarily serve as a form of address but as a means for further identification. Furthermore he points out that nicknames are chronologically secondary; they come into use after the given name as an additional naming category. Though in other cultures nicknames are secondary, in Zulu culture they tend to play a prominent role in that in the case of some people the nickname has replaced the first names. Van Langendock also says that nicknames are unofficial personal names as well. This is true of some Zulu nicknames as well; since they are unofficial and may only be used in the work place or by people that know the nickname. Like official names and family names, nicknames are bestowed on people. Most nicknames are derivational and may be derived from forenames or from family names. Van Langendonck also referred to the formal characteristics of nicknames. He says that Flemish nicknames that originated in families are sometimes preceded by a possessive pronoun. He went on further to state that syntactically Flemish nicknames may appear as noun phrases. This is also the case with the Zulu nicknames I have collected for my study; a large number of Zulu nicknames collected for this study are phrases.

Neethling (1994) has made an analysis of Xhosa nicknames and their different categories. He (1994) defines the nickname as a form of address that obliterates the personal name. Amongst the Zulus the nickname is so important that the name assumes the secondary position. He concentrates on nicknames derived from first names through contractions. He starts by defining proper names in order to give background to the naming process. His interpretation of the word nickname shows that it can be widely interpreted to accommodate various kinds of nicknames. He looks at definitions by different scholars and says that some researchers have defined the nickname as name that is used in the place of a personal name.

Some scholars like Van Langendock uses the term byname and maintain that a byname is individual and is not a first name. Neethling (1994) say that the morphological structure of nicknames in Xhosa uses a noun Class1a prefix *u-* and a noun class2a prefix *oo-*. The morphological structure is very close that of Zulu nicknames the only difference being that in Class2a Zulu uses single *o-* not a double *oo-* as in Xhosa. He observed that dropping the female markers *no* and *ma* from the personal nouns form female nicknames. The passive formative *-w* is common in female nicknames and not in males ones. In his analysis it is clear that there are many similarities between the Zulu and the Xhosa nicknames.

Among those who have made studies of naming practices are Vivian de Klerk and Barbara Bosch (1995). Their article, "Naming in two cultures: English and Xhosa Practices" looks at cross cultural differences in naming. Their study reveals that among the differences are gender-based differences, evident both in who names the child and in the number and type of names given. English parents are found to be more patriarchal in their tendency to name boys after fathers and grandfathers; and in contrast, in Xhosa society, it was girls who were named after mothers and grandmothers. English parents tended to confer and agree on names whilst the Xhosa speaking people allow the mother and grandmother a more active role in name giving.

The other difference is related to meaning. Xhosa informants put more emphasis on the meaning of names. English parents name children after famous people or choose a name because it appeals to them or for aesthetic reasons, whilst the Xhosa parents would insist on the meaning attached to a given name. Names could be given for commemorative purposes but this is slowly declining with the decrease in broad social input into naming. There has now been an increase in names, which reflect the individuality of the child in the smaller family. Many Xhosa names related to the emotional state of the name giver, particularly that of the mother. This may be because of the decline of traditional family and the growth of a wider community, which has resulted in a new form of social cohesion. The study shows a trend away from the use of English names; more rapid among urban people than rural people. This trend has influenced all the naming practices among African people. In coining nicknames people have opted for Zulu nicknames rather than English nicknames. This shows a new and emerging trend: people are beginning to be proud of their languages.

De Klerk and Bosch (1996) look at nicknames as powerful indicators of attitudes toward gender categories. Nicknames, because of their transient and optional nature, are likely to show a closer relationship to ongoing trends in the culture and society than other more fixed parts of the language. This study revealed that conventions regarding nickname coinage and usage are closely connected to the gender of the bearers and users, and that more males have nicknames than females. It also showed important sex-linked differences in the linguistic sources and users of nicknames. This study also revealed a greater tendency for female nicknames to function as indicators of affection rather than for humorous or critical effect.

In their article entitled '*Nicknaming among Xhosa-speaking Children and Adolescents*' de Klerk and Bosch (1997) take Xhosa as a case in point. Their study looks at two separate sets of urban Xhosa speaking informants. The first set is composed of children and the second of adolescents. In analysing nicknames they determined patterns evident in coining nicknames. Their findings revealed interesting differences in the nature and functions of nicknames in each group. All the nicknames showed evidence of linguistic creativity and playfulness. De Klerk and Bosch make a distinction between nicknames and pet names referring to Morgan (1976) who labels as pet names those names invented by parents for their very young children. They maintain those nicknames. On the other hand there are names invented by companions and classmates, or by members of the peer group. De Klerk and Bosch discovered that nicknames could be used to mark non-members. Most of the nicknames they examined were derived from internal features of the first names, many of them being direct manipulation of the first name based on alliteration, assonance and rhyme. De Klerk and Bosch's findings were very different from my own, in which nicknames were not found to be derived from internal features of the first names but new coinages. Most of the nicknames I collected were derived from external features mostly linked to contextual events, physical appearance, and social, personal and cultural characteristics.

De Klerk and Bosch (1996) studied nickname usage amongst adolescents of different races and socio-economic backgrounds. They attempted to explicate gender-linked trends in frequency of occurrence, usage and attitudes towards such special names. In their research

they discovered that more males have nicknames. This is also evident in my study in the Westmead Industrial Area; where males are more often coiners of nicknames than females.,

De Klerk (2002) sees nicknames as at times a symbol of disapproval or a criticism of the bearer. She divides the nicknames into two categories i.e. those that are unambiguous, positive and neutral and those that are ambiguous and can be interpreted as negative and used with critical intent. De Klerk (2002) discovers that most of the nicknames fell into the ambiguous category. She further says that the context in which many of the nicknames of this study were coined, matters were further complicated by the fact that, while some whites were fluent in isiXhosa, a significant number were not, and had to accept their Xhosa nicknames at face value hoping it was not derogatory. De Klerk (2002) also has a category of nicknames with a positive or neutral message. Nicknames as de Klerk (2002) says could be regarded as barometers of the social importance of a bearer. De Klerk (2002) maintains that in most cases nicknames are directly related to the level of social interest in that person. She discovered that in giving nicknames to Whites, Xhosa people used names of famous people, linked to events that occurred within that particular community. Nicknames with an ambiguous message were mostly based on the first name that which underwent phonological and morphological changes. De Klerk (2002) also mentioned the category based on physical features and character traits, which is very common. Many studies indicate clearly that people are noticed and named after any interesting features they have.

There is a wide range of useful sources that analyse names and nicknames. Koopman is one of the most prominent scholars that have done a study on Zulu naming practices. Koopman (1987) in his article “Zulu Names and other Modes of address” analysed the Zulu terms that refers to nicknames. He refers to *izidlaliso*, *izifekethiso* and *izifengo*. In his analysis it became clear that whatever name is used, it has an element of amusement or makes a joke. Koopman (1979) is relevant to my study because in this article linguistic features, which distinguish names from other nouns, are described. Koopman (1979) analysed names like:

<i>uBonginkosi</i>	praise the Lord
<i>uVusumuzi</i>	wake up the homestead
<i>uMzqwandile</i>	the family has increased
<i>uKhobhwayezakhe.</i>	Be forgotten by his own things

Koopman (1979) also showed the difference in the surface structure of these names. Nicknames like names are forms of address and could be analysed in the same way as names. The surface structure of nicknames is no different to that of names. Nicknames are also derived from other parts of speech and others are compounds

According to Koopman (2002) nicknames are unofficial names that are seldom recorded on the individual's official documents such as birth certificates, school certificates, driver's licences even though a person might be known by his or her nickname from an early age until death. He sees the terms praise name and nickname as synonymous because when praise names are single words it is easy to regard them as nicknames. In some cases the nickname does not even appear in the person's praises but just a summary of praises or can even be the core idea.

In his analysis of praises of young Zulu men Koopman (2002) came out with six categories according to the activities they are associated with. The first category is the courting praises. He believes that the courting praises refer to ones love of girls or vice versa. The second category is the dancing praises which he sees as referring to any special mannerism during the high kicking individual performance. The third category is the fighting category which he assumes to be referring to the skill and ability in formal stick fighting competition and the will to fight or defend oneself. The fourth category is the descriptive praises, which describe the appearance of the bearer. The fifth category is the football praises which usually refer to the ability and general performance. He sees them as similar to *gija* praises. The sixth category is the boxing praises, which is similar to football praises. Koopman maintains that praises perform the similar function to that of the nicknames

Turner (1997) in her study of names given to employers by black employees discovers that in most cases the person given a nickname was not aware of the meaning of the name, or any other connotation attached to it, mainly because he/she is not a speaker of Zulu. Turner (1997) observes that nicknames are labels that function at three: levels for example the lexical, associative and onomastic level. Turner (1997) maintains that the lexical level denotes

the semantic meaning of the word that has been chosen to make up a nickname. The associative on the other hand gives a reason for the choice of that particular word. The onomastic level is where the nickname becomes independent and tends to lose the original meaning of words. She mentions different functions of nicknames claiming that nicknames in South African Society go beyond expressing the individual character of a person, and may be used to work out tension amongst people. Nicknames can also be used to express dislikes of another person's attitude or behaviour. My own findings are different and oppositional to Turner's findings. Workers may be given nicknames not only because they show dislike of a person's attitude or behaviour but because they recognise or admire that person's behaviour or attitude. Turner's article deals with nicknames not known to their bearers, the question of acceptance is not there since these nicknames are used behind the bearer's back. This is contrary to the nicknames found in this study that were clearly known by their bearers. The difference may relate to the fact that Turner's work was on names unknown to their bearers, whereas the nicknames, which I studied, had been accepted.

Turner (1997) also discovers that men are more likely to coin and use nicknames. De Klerk & Bosch (1996) and Phillips (1990) all conclude that nicknames are usually given to men. This is also true in my study; the majority of nicknames that appear in the appendix are male nicknames.

Molefe (1999) gives a comprehensive account of source and function of Zulu nicknames. He (1999) maintains that when nicknames are composed any word may be used. Furthermore he regards the process of naming as art, which calls for a composing talent with motivation and reason. The composer has to be very creative. He also looks at the components making up a Zulu nickname. He also believes that nicknames could be coined by using purely Zulu names or by borrowing from other languages like English and Afrikaans and any other language. Some nicknames combine one or two languages in one coining.

Molefe (1999) by considering givers and bearers, also looks at how nicknames are given. He says there is a wide range of categories of givers and bearers. Molefe (1999) lists categories which include the following: young men and women, families, individuals with idiosyncrasies, media works, musicians, authors, teachers and pupils, soccer fans,

professional people, tavern owners and customers. He says there must be an individual to be nicknamed. This victim must possess some striking characteristics that make another person have an impulse to nickname him or her.

Molefe (1999) maintains that the giver does necessarily know his or her nickname. People might start using the nickname privately and once it is known it may be used publicly. He discusses the source of nicknames and says it seems logical to start with the whole body and see if there are any nicknames which relate to size, structure or abnormalities observed in a person. The parts of the body are seen as easy target in the habit of nickname coining. People who coin nicknames do not use euphemisms but just tell the naked truth.

In his analysis Molefe looks at the role played by a nickname in the life of a person and the manner in which the bearers respond when they discover their nicknames. He maintains that the primary function of nicknames is to identify and label an individual as a member of a group. They have the same function that names offer. He claims that nicknames are rich in poetic allusions and may have a hidden meaning. Nicknames are taken from all parts of speech, even sentences being regarded as a rich source.

## 2.5 Theory of nicknames

Naming is so important that there is nothing known in this world without a name regardless of whether it is concrete or abstract. Practically all individuals may name an entity. The possibility of linguistic creativity is thus large. Turner (1997) says “undoubtedly, the practice of assigning names to people, things and animals, and places is an important aspect among all nationalities for one reason or another, but in African societies, has assumed an extremely significant role. This study will apply the following theories:

Raper (1987) looks at the different ways in which people can study onomastics. He brings forth strong points as well as weaknesses that onomastic analysts encounter when researching names. He adopts a rather general approach not specific to nicknames. Raper (1987) in his article “*Aspects of Onomastic Theory*”, refers to Sørensen who proposes three aspects of a name, the first one is the designator, which refers to where a name is used as a

speech sound that is designed to refer to a human being. The second aspect is the designatum, which refers to the interpretation of what the word used as a name refers to. The third aspect is the denotatum where the name becomes a referral. Raper's theory has been very helpful to this study. In Chapter 3 nicknames have been analysed morphologically in order to determine the lexical items that make up a nickname. The nicknames do depend on the second aspect as well. (I.e. the designatum, which refers to the interpretation of the nicknames in order to fulfill their primary function). The last one (denotatum) also applies to nicknames because they are also referrals that are used to identify the individual. Cassidy (1984) states that a name is not the same as a word. Words designate classes; names designate individuals, persons or things.

Nicolaisen (1976) in Nyembe (1994) concerns himself particularly with the semantic and associative aspect of naming. Nicolaisen points out that names reflect three level of meaning namely:

- Lexical level: semantics of the word, the dictionary meaning. In this study the dictionary meaning of the word or words comprising the nickname will be looked at.
- Associative level: The reason why the particular lexical items were chosen in the naming process. This involves determining the reason why that person was given his nickname
- Onomastic level (denotative): The meaning of a denotative name as a name. Its application based on the lexical and associative semantic elements, but is usually no longer dependent on them.

Nicknaming may be glossed as the process by which words become nicknames by association. Indeed it is now apparent that words cannot become names without passing through an associative level of meaning, which is an essential bridge without which words would, at most, be particularising lexical labels. Without this intermediate semantic level, there would be no systematic contrast between names and nicknames. This study will rely heavily on Nicolaisen's theory in that nicknames will be analysed according to his level. I shall go on to look at the social impact of these nicknames.



## 2.6 Conclusion

I hope that this study will attempt to show a particular trend that is followed in coining nicknames amongst the peri urban Zulu workers in the factories. Nicknames show the interaction of individuals within their communities. They are thus more likely to reveal the trends within a particular culture.

## CHAPTER 3 ANALYSIS OF DATA

### 3.1 Introduction

Any person can receive a nickname whether he or she is a prominent or undistinguished. A person will look for something worth remembering about the person or is noticeable to others and coin a nickname based on his observations. Some people enjoy coining nicknames; they nickname people for very slight reasons. Ashley (1989:49) has this to say about nicknaming people:” No one is safe from nicknaming; the more public a person is the more susceptible and inviting is the target

This study shows that all people can get nicknames whether they are famous or not. When people work together they tend to know each other better. As they work together they observe each other and coin nicknames. In this chapter I aim to analyse the data that I have collected by classifying and categorising the nicknames collected.

### 3.2 Classification of nicknames

The nicknames collected for this study have been classified into the following categories:

#### 3.2.1 *Relationship*

A relationship may be a reason for a particular nickname. Some of the workers acquired their nicknames because of the relationship they have with other workers. The following nicknames clearly illustrate this:

*uMzala* (cousin) - The worker was a cousin to one of the workers and they all ended up calling him *uMzala* though he was not related to them.

*uSbali* (brother-in-law) the same thing applied to this worker. He was a brother - in -law to one of the workers and they all ended up calling him *uSbali*.

*uGaxi* (blood) This nickname is used to refer to a cousin.

*uMaGaxi* (blood) Some people will use the nickname *uMagaxi* to refer to a cousin as well.

### 3.2.2 *Age*

The other source of nicknames could be age. People may look at a person's features that are related to age and coin a nickname. One worker was called *uMadala* (the old one) because he was the eldest in the factory. Some people would use *uMatopana* (refers to an old person). There was one worker called *uMatopana*. He was given this name not because he was very old, but because he looked and behaved like an old man. *UKheblamfana* (boyish old man) is another nickname that was given to an old man whom his fellow workers said behaved like a young boy.

### 3.2.3 *Physical characteristics*

Molefe (1999: 69) maintains that most nicknames are based on certain tangible features of some of the parts of the body. Alford (1988:82) says that pertaining to factors that lead to the development of nicknames there are: "Those that describe appearance or physical abnormalities." However Madubuike (1976:20) mentions a few of the motivating trends stemming from the human body. He says, "Nicknames are spontaneous names given to an individual and relate to an aspect of his character, physique or quality

Molefe (1999: 64) says that:

based on the manner in which nicknames originate from the human body and its parts. It is logic to start with the whole body and see if there are any nicknames encouraged by size, structure and abnormalities observed

The meanings of nicknames are often easily accessible, and such names may comment on physical features and personal characteristics of the bearer, either positively or negatively. (Raper 1987:3)

De Klerk (20002) claims that such nicknames tend to over emphasise one particular aspect of a person making it age the more noticeable to the name user. Some of these nicknames take liberties, and reduce the dignity of the bearer to some extent

A nickname like *uNdebenkulu* (big lips) suggests that the person given this nickname has big lips. A person who is extra large could be *uNkuxa* (overweight person); this nickname suggests that his weight is giving him problems wherever he is. The only way that people are able to distinguish him is by his weight.

*UMadevu* (moustache) is a nickname that was given to a foreman who was very fond of his moustache. He would now and again comb it; hence he was called *uMadevu*. The behaviour of a person may also play a big role in the coining of a nickname. Through the behaviour people can notice features that were not prominent. If *uMadevu* did not comb his moustaches now and again perhaps his co-workers they would probably not have noticed them.

*UMaqakala* (ankles) is a nickname that was given to a worker because of his thick ankles. Molefe (1999) maintains that most nicknames come from images of certain tangible features of some of the parts of the body. He goes on to say that nicknames can allude indirectly to the parts of the body that have striking features while others point directly at the deformed parts whether by disease or by any other cause. For instance calling a person *uMeblo* (eyes) means that the person's eyes have striking features. The majority of the nicknames refer to the head.

### ***3.2.4 Humour***

Some of the nicknames are given for the sake of making a joke. The nickname *uGundane* (mouse) shows that his co-workers are making a joke though it may hurt the recipient. The nickname *uJabulakuphakwa* (the one who is happy when food is served) is a nickname given to a supervisor who was very officious but when it was almost lunchtime he was the happiest and friendliest person. He really liked food. The other nickname that could be used to show humour is *uSkigi* (night commode).

### 3.2.5 *Admiration*

One young man is nicknamed *uBhebbetho* (named after the international Brazilian soccer star). This nickname shows that they admire his talent in soccer; and to show their admiration by naming him after this prominent soccer star.

A tough man was nicknamed *uSomkuqu*. There is no direct translation of this name, but it means a tough person. To show that they appreciate his toughness they gave him this nickname.

A certain man was called *uSthunzi* (dignity). He was feared and respected by most people in the factory; not only the workers feared him but even the employers respected him.

A nickname *uSomandla* (father of strength) means that the person is very strong. In one factory they used hysters to pick up heavy boxes but this man did not use them. He but would pick up the boxes himself.

USiphalaphala (the beautiful one) is a nickname that was given to a worker because he was very handsome, to admire him his co-workers gave him this nickname.

### 3.3 **Metaphoric Nicknames**

The pocket oxford dictionary (1991) defines the metaphor as: "application of name or descriptive term or phrase to object or action when it is not literally applicable a nickname may be chosen for its metaphorical significance. Turner (1997) points out that *izifekethiso* given to employers or co-workers are often colourful metaphoric descriptions, which are succinct allusions either to a person's character, physical appearance, behaviour or even idiosyncrasies.

The nickname *uSigonyela* is taken from *uSigonyela* who was one of the most feared Zulu chiefs, because of his power and strength. This nickname was given to a foreman whom the co-workers thought he was the owner of the company. The co-workers said he acted like a manager and wanted people to fear him. He had Sigonyela's qualities; hence he was given

this nickname. One worker was called uKabila. He was named after Kabila who was the DRC ruler. This worker was ruthless and authoritative and his word was final. He was regarded as having Kabila's qualities.

Another worker was called *uSathane* (Satan) because he enjoyed tempting people to do the wrong things at work so as to get them into trouble with the management. He would make sure that he did not get into trouble himself.

*UGoliyathi* (Goliath) is another example of a metaphoric nickname. His qualities were like Those of Goliath found in the Bible so they nicknamed him *uGoliyathi*. The nickname *UGwinyitshe* (swallow a stone) is metaphorical. This nickname does not mean that this Person was actually swallowing stones. To swallow a stone in Zulu means to persevere. He was nicknamed *uGwinyitshe* because he did not like to complain to his employer. He would do things that other workers felt he should not have done.

### 3.4 Behaviour

People working in factories are very quick to observe a person's behaviour and then coining a nickname based on that behaviour. *UMaqanda* (eggs) is a nickname that was given to worker who liked eating eggs. Another worker who was always in a hurry was called *uMasbesha* (the quick one). The nickname *uMakhothama* (bow) was given to a worker who liked to bow down to his superiors. *UMajikanelanga* (turns with the sun) is the nickname that was given to a worker who liked to be in the sun. When it was break time he would always sit where there was sun. Another nickname, *uMakhamisa* (one with mouth always open), was given to a worker who always had his mouth open.

### 3.5 Use of prefix 'ma'

Koopman (1987) has this category in his classification of personal names. He maintains that when women move from her parents' home to that of her husband's she is commonly addressed as 'ma' plus her maiden clan name. Koopman (1987) gives the examples of

nicknames that take 'ma', for example, *Mkbiye* becomes *MaMkbiye*, *MaNdwandwe*. In the coining of nicknames the use of 'ma' is also common. This 'ma' that is used in coining nicknames is not the same 'ma' that Koopman (1987) refers to, which seems to be gendered. It is not only used to coin women's name but is mostly used to coin male names. When 'ma' is used it is followed by a noun or a verb as in the following examples:

- Ma + blafuna* (chew) *uMahlafuna* (the one who likes to chew)
- Ma+kbala* (cry) *uMakbala* (the one who likes to cry).
- Ma+dlebe* (ears) *uMadlebe* (The one who has big ears)
- Ma+qakala* (ankle) *uMaqakala* (The one who has big ankles)
- Ma+ blalableka* (always laughing) *uMahlaleleka* (the one who is always laughing)

'Ma' as used in the examples above can mean the one who likes to do something repeatedly or the one who likes something or the one who is always doing something. In these study 26 nicknames out of 124 names use the prefix 'ma'.

### 3.6 Linguistic features of Zulu nicknames.

#### 3.6.1 Derivational nicknames

Zulu nicknames may be derived from inflected or uninflected nouns, characterised by the occurrence of the Class 1a prefix as a secondary prefix. Nicknames may be derived from Other noun classes, the Class 1a prefix *-u* is prefixed to the noun with initial elision. The following are examples:

<u>Nickname</u>	<u>noun</u>
<i>uKhekebe</i>	<i>ikekebe</i> (cake)
<i>uSibani</i>	<i>isibani</i> (lamp)
<i>uSihlibhi</i>	<i>isihlibhi</i> (sledge)
<i>uPhoyisa</i>	<i>iphoyisa</i> (policeman)
<i>uBhubesi</i>	<i>ibhubesi</i> (lion)

### 3.6.2 Nicknames derived from inflected nouns

Certain Zulu nicknames are derived from nouns inflected with Class 1a Formatives 'so' and 'ma'. Clement Doke (1986) in his book says that the formative 'so' indicates male and 'ma' indicates a female name. It is interesting to note that in coining nicknames this is not the case. These formatives are not gender related. They could therefore be used for male or female. Hence we find the following nicknames use either.

USomandla (father of strength)

UMadala (the old one)

UMaqhawe (the hero)

USomkuqu (the tough one)

UManblanbleni (the lucky one)

Other nicknames are derived from nouns inflected locatively. The nickname UGodini (deep hole) is taken from the noun *igodi* (deep hole). The locative suffix *-ini* has been added with the elision of the final vowel of the noun to make it a locative.

The nickname *uMpisendlini* is another example of a nickname derived from noun and inflected locatively. This is a compound nickname derived from the noun *impi* (war) and *indlu* (house). The inflected part is the second lexical morpheme *indlu*. The locative prefix *e-* has been used and the locative suffix *-ini* added to the noun with the elision of the final vowel.

The nickname *uNdleleni* (always on the road) is another example of a noun that is inflected locatively. This nickname is formed from the noun *indlela* (way) to which a locative suffix *-ini* has been added, and vowel coalescence has taken place.

## 3.7 Compound Nicknames

A large number of the Zulu nicknames collected for this study are compounds.

Koopman (1984) defines the compound nouns as “those words whose stem contains at least two lexical items, which can stand on their own as separate words”. In following



Koopman's definition a nickname like *uGwinyitshe* (swallow a stone) is a compound nickname because it is made up of *gwinya* (to swallow) which is a verb and *itshe* (stone) which is a noun. Both *gwinya* and *itshe* are two lexical items that can stand on their own.

Compounds themselves can be categorised in various ways. Doke (1986) classified compound nouns according to parts of speech, which are compounded; in other words with an emphasis on grammatical content to give the following subdivisions:

- Noun + substantive
- Noun + qualificative
- Noun + predicative
- Noun + descriptive
- Verb + substantive
- Verb + descriptive
- Miscellaneous compounds

The following examples illustrate the compounding process as found in the Zulu nicknames that were collected for this study:

- Noun + possessive

*USakalamazeze* (bag of fleas)

A flea has a painful bite. When a bag is full of fleas they are very dangerous as they could bite a person to death. This nickname was given to a worker who was very dangerous and feared by most people. His behaviour was associated with fleas in bag.

*USakalezipikili* (bag of nails)

Nails are sharp objects and can be dangerous, and when a person is referred to as a bag of nails he is deemed to be very dangerous. This nickname was given to a worker who was regarded as very dangerous by his colleagues.

*UHawulemfene* (shield of a baboon)

Normally a shield is made from cow skin because it is regarded as strong enough to make a shield last for a long time. A shield is used for protection but if it is made of baboon skin, it is of very poor quality and is likely to wear out easily. A worker who was given this nickname was regarded by colleagues as of little value.

*Inkosi yaseTopiya* (king of Ethiopia)

People living in Ethiopia are known for their thinness. This nickname was given to a worker who was very thin. The other workers said that he was the king of thinness and was even thinner than people living in Ethiopia.

*Inkosi yokuthula* (king of peace)

This nickname was given to a worker who wanted people to always be at peace with one another. He would try by all means to help people to be reconciled if they happened to quarrel with one another.

- Noun + relative

*uJamlud'obomvu* (red Jamludi-cow)

Jamludi is the name of a cow. In most cases this name is given to a red cow. The nickname uJamludobomvu was given to an employee who had a light complexion.

*uSkhunesimnyama* (burnt black wood)

This nickname was given to a worker who is very dark skinned. It implied that he was as dark as the wood from the fire.

*uMbhobhomnyama* (the black tube)

In another factory a worker who was very dark was given this nickname because of his colour.

- Noun + adjective

*uKhandakhulu* (big head)

This nickname was given to a worker who had a big head.

*uKhalelidi* (long nose)

The worker was given this nickname because he had a big nose.

*uNdebenkulu* (big lips)

The worker was given this nickname because of his big lips.

*uMfanomdala* (old boy)

This nickname was given to an old man whom they referred to as an old boy.

- Noun + locative

*uMpisendlini* (the war is in the house)

This nickname was given to a man who was very quiet at work, but at home he was aggressive. The moment he got home he started fighting with his wife and children. He was never at peace with his family.

- Noun + noun

*uKheblamfana* (boyish old man)

This nickname was given to an old man whose behaviour was like that of a small boy.

- Verb + locative

*uKhalembhedeni* (cries in the bed)

- Verb + noun

*uGwinyitshe* (swallow a stone)

To swallow a stone is a metaphorical expression, which means to be subservient. This nickname was given to a worker who did not like to complain and was always obeying instructions without questioning or complaint. Even if he saw that his rights were being violated he would keep quiet. Other workers then named him uGwinyitshe.

- Verb + verb

*uMablalebleka* (he laughs endlessly)

This nickname was given to a worker who was always laughing.

*uMagayazidlele* (he brews and drinks it)

The worker who was given this nickname was very fond of beer. He could not live without beer. When coming to work he would bring some and hide it and would never share his beer.

*uDedangendlale* (huge land)

The worker given this nickname was originally from a rural area. In conversation he would always remind others that he was from a place where there was plenty of land, hence he was called uDedangendlale.

*uGedleyiblekisa* (pretend to laugh)

This nickname was given to a supervisor. During breaks he would talk kindly to people but when he needed work to be done his demeanour was serious.

A large number of compound nicknames are derived from sentences or phrases:

- *UJabulakuphakwa* is a nickname derived from the sentence '*Uyjabula uma kuphakwa*. (He is happy when food is served)

The two lexical items are:

<i>Jabula</i> (be happy)	+	<i>kuphakwa</i> (food is being served)
Verb	+	passive verb

- *UMsobhuyakapaka* is a nickname derived from the sentence *Umsobho uyakapaka* (The soup is getting spilled)

<i>Umsobho</i> (soup)	+	<i>kapaka</i> (spiled)
Noun	+	verb

When nicknames are coined from sentences or phrases, the sentence or phrase is shortened. In most cases when shortening takes place two vowels are juxtaposed which is not allowed in *isiZulu*. When two vowels are juxtaposed a phonological process takes place, in which vowel deletion occurs in compounding and either the final vowel of the first element, or the initial vowel of the second element is deleted. Koopman (1984) has called these processes

- phonological deletion: the deletion of the final vowel of the first element
- morphological deletion: the deletion of the first vowel of the second element.

Koopman (1976,1979a, 1984) has shown that compound personal names characteristically show phonological deletion whereas non-personal compounds show morphological deletion.

### 3.6 CONCLUSION

In this chapter I have analysed of Zulu nicknames that have been categorised according to linguistic features. Nicknames offer an interesting topic of study, as they are diverse in composition. The sub-categories used in this chapter are a few of a number of ways in which nicknames could be grouped and analysed. Nicknames like names are mostly found in Class 1a with the plural in Class 2a. The formative 'so' and 'ma' indicate the sex of a person in personal names but this is not the case with nicknames.

## CHAPTER 4

### DISCUSSION ON FINDINGS

Nicknames are unofficial names, and possess a secondary status. They play a secondary role since they do not necessarily serve as forms of address, but as means of communication. Nicknames are secondary because they come into use as additional names after the given names. Data collected for this study show a different trend in the use of nicknames by people working in factories. In such contexts nicknames seem to have occupied a primary role and have often taken the place of proper names. People prefer to be called by their nicknames rather than called by their proper names. A licence to use the nickname in front of a bearer is a signal of social solidarity and it also signals a close relationship with the bearer. It shows the strength of friendships, relationships and thereby integrates the members of a community. Having a nickname is often regarded as having a membership badge, a sign of belonging to a particular sub-culture; this is one reason why people accept their nicknames easily. Having a nickname means you are accepted as a member of the group. Therefore nicknames act as a unifying device.

Generally the data collected suggests a greater degree of freedom for Zulu nicknames especially in conjunction with trends regarding originality and creativity in nickname choice. Coining a nickname could be regarded as art. Nickname givers are artistic people like poets and writers. They use any language that they know to create extra names for people. The sounds used in coining a nickname may play a major role and make it more pleasing for people to pronounce that nickname. The person composing the nickname needs to be talented, motivated as well as creative. Nicknames are crafted with Zulu linguistic construction that is mostly understood by the speakers of the language. In recent years Zulus have shifted away from the tendency to have English names. In this study the responses from respondents show that almost all nicknames given are Zulu nicknames with referential meaning. The current trend is that African nicknames have become more predominant and English names have become less fashionable. This has had an impact on the coining of nicknames as well.

A nickname may stick for the rest of a person's life or it can be dormant. If the nickname is pleasing the bearer gets attached to it that he even calls himself by his nickname. This shows that he accepts the nickname. For example a certain man was called *uSakalamazeze* (bag of fleas); he really loved the nickname. He would introduce himself by his nickname because it made him feel good about himself. If a nickname refers to unpleasant incidents then it does not usually stick because the person will not promote its use. The nickname could also be regarded as dormant when it is not used in the presence of the bearer. A nickname *uMakhamisa* (one with mouth always open) is a good example of a dormant nickname. The bearer indicated that he did not like the nickname. People who used the nickname would use it only in his absence because they were aware that he did not like it. In this study it has been noted that the degree of nickname acceptance was high. Most people realised that if they rejected the nicknames they would stick to them like glue, so the best thing was to accept the nickname even if it did not make one feel good about oneself. Some of the workers accepted their nicknames because it was the norm to have one, and not to have a nickname meant you did not belong to the group

Nicknames have the power to indicate the personality of a person. They may describe the behaviour of a person and sometimes use the body features to indicate the size of the body part. Zulu nicknames tend to emphasize a particular aspect of a person making it more noticeable to the user. The following nicknames clearly illustrate this:

*uKhalelide*- (long nose)

*uZinqe* (buttocks)

*uNtshebe* (beard)

*uNdebenkulu* (big lips)

*uMehlo* (eyes)

Even if a person does not initially notice the body part once it is used as a nickname it then draws attention to the body part, which is being singled out.

The behaviour of a person also plays a major role in coining nicknames. The common trend that workers follow is to observe the common behaviour pattern of an individual and then coin a nickname around that behaviour. Another worker who always bothered people was nicknamed *uHluphile* (the troublesome one). The following nicknames also confirm this:

*uMcahama* (the one who walks slowly)

*uMakhamisa* (one with mouth always open)

*uMawiliza* (speak incoherently)

*uQhaqhaqela* (the trembling one)

*uMakhala* (the one who cries)

The tendency to use animal names in coining nicknames is a clear indication that people are named because their behaviour and personality resemble that of specific animals. A person nicknamed *ibhubesi* (lion) behaved like a lion. The lion is known to be the king of the jungle because other animals fear it. It was obvious that most people in the factory feared the person nicknamed *ibhubesi*. The other worker was called *uChakide*. *Chakide*, an animal known for being clever and wanting to fool people, so the worker given this nickname had *Chakide*'s qualities. The other nicknames that fall into this category are:

*uXamu* (iguana)

*uBhejane* (rhino)

*iMpisi* (hyena)

*uNogwaja* (rabbit)

*uGundane* (mouse)

One major observation is that a number of nicknames are phrases or sentences. Twenty five out of one hundred and twenty four nicknames collected are phrases or sentences with inherent meaning. The data gathered here shows greater freedom for Zulu nicknames reflecting originality and creativity in nickname coining. Workers enjoy coining phrasal nicknames because they get an opportunity to express their feelings in full. A phrasal nickname gives the person coining the nickname an opportunity to use language freely without worrying about language rules. It seems that they also enjoy calling out a long nickname; and it is like they are telling the whole story.

One common trend that I have noticed is that some of the nicknames are derived from nouns. When nouns are used to form nicknames the final vowel of the class prefix is elided for easy pronunciation. The nickname *uShlibbi* is taken from the noun *isihlibhi* (sledge). The following nicknames are clear examples:



Noun	nickname
<i>Isithunzi</i> (dignity)	<i>uSthunzi</i>
<i>Isidudla</i> (the fat one)	<i>uSdudla</i>
<i>Isiponono</i> (the lovely one)	<i>uSponono</i>
<i>Isigwebedla</i> (the tough one)	<i>uSgwebedla</i>
<i>Isikigi</i> (night commode)	<i>uSkigi</i>

It is common to find the same nickname being used somewhere else for another person. This duplication of nicknames is common where the physical features or the behaviour has been used to coin a nickname. It is easy to find another person with the same physical features somewhere. A person nicknamed *uNtshebe* (beard) was given this nickname because he had a noticeable beard. It is very likely that in different places you find people with long noticeable beard and nicknamed *uNtshebe*. The other nicknames that were found to be common are:

*uJamlud'obomvu*: This nickname is normally given to a person who is very light in complexion.

*uMehlo*- (eyes) : The nickname is given to a person who has big eyes

*uMakhaleni* (taken from *ikhala*- nose) This nickname was given to a worker who had a big nose. A nickname with similar meaning was noted in another factory (*uMakhala*) . Another variant is *uKhale* which is a shortened form of the nickname *uMakhaleni*.

I have noticed that some body parts are more noticeable than others. This result in people with these noticeable features being given different names with similar meaning. In one factory a person with big eyes was called *uMehlo*, meaning eyes, and in another factory a person was nicknamed *uMangqumuza* (big eyes). Another body feature that is noticeable is the nose. If a person has a big nose people are very quick to pick it up and then coin a nickname

This study has revealed that Zulu speaking workers enjoy calling each other by nicknames. This has led to workers accepting whatever nickname is given to them. There are nicknames that are offensive in their nature when a person is very short he may be called *uShoti* (the short one), or when a person is very dark he may be called *uMnyamana* (the dark one). It is interesting to note that even the nicknames that may be thought to be offensive, were

accepted by their bearers. To be called by a nickname seems to make workers feel good and accepted by colleagues.

This study has also revealed that nicknames tend to be restricted to the work place and are not used elsewhere since they are only known by people working in that particular place. All respondents agreed that their family members and other friends did not know their nicknames. When workers leave work in the afternoon or for the weekend they also leave their nicknames behind.

## CHAPTER 5

### CONCLUSION

Nicknames play an important role in the lives of people working in industry. To workers a nickname is not just an added name, it is a tag by which a person is known and identified. Workers attach value to their nicknames especially if a nickname makes a person feel good about himself/herself. What is interesting is that the nickname does not have to reflect positively things about a person, as long as a person feels good about what is being said about him the nickname is accepted. One would not expect that a person would appreciate being called *uSkigi* (night commode), but this is infact the case. It is the denotative meaning attached to the nickname that is important while how the nickname was given to a person is also important.

Koopman's study (1979) analysed the linguistic difference between nouns and names. My current study finds similarities between names and nicknames especially in their linguistic formation. Nicknames like names can be derived from other parts of speech. Though nicknames are similar to names in their formation, coiners of nicknames have more freedom in their formulation of nicknames and do not have to adhere to the rules of grammar. This research has shown how creative and talented workers are in coining nicknames. My linguistic analysis has shown how people manipulate language in their daily lives. Even people who are not accomplished linguists, use language to satisfy their needs and desires. Nicknames are used as a communication tool to express their feelings.

This study has found that male workers tend to nickname more freely than women. Males enjoy coining nicknames more than females do. The study confirms Turner's findings about the dearth of nicknames given to females. Turner sees nicknames as praises that are given to males. According to Zulu culture it is mainly men who are given praises not women. De Klerk & Bosch (1996) published similar findings that males are more likely, not only to have nicknames, but also to coin them. This study also confirms findings by Phillips (1990: 288) who conducted research in America and concludes that nicknames are assigned predominantly to males.

My study has found that nicknames are not only used to label, but have a hidden message that challenges the users. People coin nicknames to send a message to a particular person. Nicknames do lose meaning when they are used as labels to identify or to refer to people. When the nickname is scrutinised it is seen to retain the original meaning. In the analysis done in this study it became clear that nicknames are intended to unite people and create harmonious relationship amongst the workers.

Some nicknames are very common in the factories. Mostly nicknames that refer to physical features. There will always be people big eyes, big noses, big heads in factories. This can result in similar nicknames found in different factories. The use of behaviour in coining nicknames could also result in similar nicknames such as a person who walks slowly and who could be called *uNwabu* (chameleon) or *uMcatbama* (the one who walks slowly) A person who is a bully and is brave could be called *ibhubesi* (lion). The following is a list of nicknames that were found to be common:

*uBhanana* (banana)

*uChakide* (mongoose)

*uGoliyathi* (Goliath)

*uHluphile* (the naughty one)

*uKbandakhulu* (big head)

*uMadevu* (moustache)

*uMadlebe* (ears)

*uMahlalebleka* ( the one who laughs endlessly)

*uMadala* (the old one)

*uMagazi* (cousin)

*uMcatbama* (the one who walks slowly)

*uMehlo* (eyes)

*uNdebenkulu* (big lips)

*uNtshebe* (beared)

*uNwabu* (chameleon)

*uSbali* (brother in-law)

*uSnqamu* (a piece cut off)

*uSokalexintombi* (the girl's boyfriend)

Research has shown that nicknaming is a common practice in all societies. People may use any language to coin a nickname but the mother tongue will always dominate. People feel free to express themselves when they use their own language. This study has shown that little has been done in researching Zulu nicknames. It is, however, alarming that the speakers of African languages have done very little to study their own languages. In Xhosa it is scholars like de Klerk & Bosch, de Klerk and Neethling who have done extensive work on nicknames but not the speakers of the language. In Zulu we have scholars like Turner and Molefe who have made a contribution to the study of nicknames. More is still to be done on nicknames. The findings thus, suggests that research should be undertaken on nicknames coined by females, their function and how women react to nicknames.

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## APPENDIX 1

NICKNAME	ENGLISH TRANSLATION
UBhanana	banana
uBhubesi	lion
uBhebetho	named after soccer star-
uBhejane	rhino
uBhotela	butter
uBhukuda kwesinengwenya	he swims where there are crocodiles
uChakide	mongoose
uDlavedwa	he eat alone
uDedangendlale	huge land
uGedleyihlekisa	pretend as if laughing
uGezumsele	wash furrows
uGazi	blood
uGazilami	my blood
uGandaganda	tractor
uGodini	deep hole
uGundane	mouse
uGoliyathi	Goliath
uGwinyitshe	swallow a stone
uHawulemfene	shield of a baboon
uHluphile	the naughty one
uJabulakuphakwa	he is happy when food is served
uJamludobomvu	red cow
uJikanelanga	he turns with the sun
uKabila	Kabila
uKhalelide	long nose
uKhalebhedeni	cries in the bed
uKhandakhulu	big head
uKhehlamfana	boyish old man
uKhombaliyakhithika	point and it snows
uKhulumile	the talkative one
uMadala	the old one
uMadevu	moustache
uMajikanelanga	he who turns with the sun
uMagayazidlele	he brews and drinks it
uMagazi	my blood
uMagibelimbebhedle	he rides the fat ones
uMakhala	nose
uMakhaleni	mr nose
uMakhamisa	one with mouth always open
uMakhothama	the one who bends
uMakapisi	Mr cap

uMadlebe	Mr ears
uMadlisa	big spender
uMahlafuna	constant chewer
uMahlalehleka	the one who laughs endlessly
uMalandela	follower
uMangqumuza	one with big eyes
uManhlanhleni	the lucky one
uMaqakala	ankles
uMaqanda	eggs
uMatopana	the old man
uMatshikiza	fast walker
uMashesha	the one who walks fast
uMaqhawe	the hero
uMayaluza	the one who always moves around
uMawiliza	speak incoherently
uMbhobhuyatsheka	the tube that slants
uMbhobhomnyama	the black tube
uMbungculu	shaven head
uMcathama	the one who walks slowly
uMdlodlombiya	the tall one
uMehlo	eyes
uMehlembuzi	goat eyes
uMfanomdala	the old boy
uMnandekugcineni	nice at last
uMnyamana	the black one
uMntonenkosi	the person with god
uMpisendlini	the war is in the house
uMpisi	hyena
uMsobhuyakapaka	the soup is getting spilled
uMuziwempi	house of war
uMzala	cousin
Molo mhlobo wami	good morning my friend
uNdebenkulu	big lips
uNdleleni	always on the road
uNgcede	warbler
inkom' inamatele	the cow has
INkosi yaseTopiya	the king of Ethiopia
INkosi yokuthula	the king of peace
INkuxa	overweight one
UNngangabasemehlweni	like ones in the eyes
uNogwaja	rabbit
uNtshebe	beard
uNquge	one legged
uNyakanyaka	the big thing
uNwabu	chameleon
uNweleziyahlehla	receding hair

uPelepele	hot chillies
uPhoyisa	policeman
uQhaqhaveyana	tiny one
uQhaqhazela	the trembling one
uQhude	rooster
uSagila	knobkierie
uSakalazeze	bag of fleas
uSakalezipikili	bag of nails
uSathane	satan
uSbani	lamp
uSbali	brother in-law
uSbhombolozu	the big thing
uSdudla	the fat one
uSkigi	commode
uSkhunesimnyama	black wood
uSelesele	frog
uSkhova	owl
uShlibhi	sledge
uShoti	the short one
uSigonyela	Sigonyela- name of a Zulu king
uSnqamu	a piece cut off
uSgwebedla	the tough one
uSphalaphala	the beautiful one
uSponono	the lovely thing
uSthunzi	dignity
uStimela	train
uSobholiyakapaka	the soup is getting spilled
uSobholiyabila	the soup is boiling
uSomandla	father of strength
uSokalezintombi	the girl's boyfriend
uSomkuqu	the tough one
uSinyaka	the fat one
uSinqamu	short one
uThunjana	last born
uZimbizinto	things are bad
uZinqe	buttocks
uZiqhoma	cheeks
uXamu	iguana

## APPENDIX 2

### QUESTIONNAIRE-INDUSTRY RELATED NICKNAMES

1. Company's name.....
2. How many employees work there?.....Men .....Women.....;
3. What is your name?.....

15-20	20-30	30-40	40-50	50-60
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4. Sex: F/M
5. Ethnic group.....
6. Do your co-workers call you by your name?.....
  - If not what do they call you?.....
  - If yes, is there another name that some of them call you? .....
7. What does your nickname mean? .....
8. When was this name first given to you? .....
9. By whom was it given? .....
10. Do people outside of work call you by this name ? .....
11. Do you like this name? .....
12. Are you married Yes/no
13. Do your family members use this name? Yes/No
14. Have you ever nicknamed a person? Yes/no
15. If yes, What was the nickname? .....
16. Did he /she know of the nickname?