A Socio-Ethnolinguistic Analysis of Personal Names in the Fe'efe'e Community, West Cameroon

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and

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Abstract

This study accounts for anthroponyms in the Fe'efe'e community located in the West Region of Cameroon. It explores through the ethnography of communication, personal observation and bibliographic search how anthroponyms work in the community both through diachronic and synchronic lens. Socio-onomastics and the ethnography of SPEAKING that help in analysing all relevant names' giving surrounding factors and the participants involved lead to unveil that a person's name could unfold in a whole book. The naming process of a person could be influenced by several factors among which birth circumstances, social events, bravura, traditional impacts, progress, success or failure, the rank of the new-born in the family, group identity, social cohesion, disorder or disaster, etc. This justifies why Fe'efe'e anthroponyms bear a whole grammar-semantic interface, influenced by socio-cultural functions. The analysis ends on that synchronically, the naming process has undergone a slight change with regards to the past and influence of interethnic marriages.

Keywords: *Personal names, naming, Fe'efe'e, influence, socio-cultural, anthroponyms*

Introduction

Recent studies on onomastics and particularly on personal names known as anthroponyms through anthroponomastics in the world and particularly in Africa (Bakhshuevna, 2021; Zawawi, 1993; and Rashibat Edem, 2004) have so far demonstrated the factual correlation between names in general and anthroponyms in particular, the society itself and the language spoken in that society. In fact, any person's name depends on and portrays the cultural and linguistic society in which the individual originates from and which constitutes de facto where his/her traditional roots are enshrined. The Fe'efe'e traditional society has not derailed from the common practice of personal name giving in Africa in spite of the impact of modernity and foreign religions (Christianity and Islam). This study aims at analysing personal and precisely family names giving in the Fe'efe'e community through the

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lens of sociolinguistics and ethnolinguistics, and specially through anthroponomastics, with special focus on socio-onomatics and ethnography of SPEAKING, borrowing from native speaker's intuitive knowledge of the language and culture of the community and participant observation, accompanied by bibliographic search. It attempts to answer the following questions: What could be the practice of person's names giving in the Fe'efe'e community? What is the linguistic structure of the names? What beliefs and practices underpin naming conventions in this community? Could anthroponyms carry some sociocultural influences in the daily life of s/he who carries it? What grammar-semantics interface implication do Fe'efe'e anthroponyms exhibit? Provision of answers to these questions will be attempted through the following internal structuration of the paper. The discussion begins by locating the Fe'efe'e community and its language. Secondly, it examines the different names giving circumstances in the community before looking at the beliefs behind Fe'efe'e personal names. This will be followed by a synchronic look at Fe'efe'e anthroponyms. The analysis will end on the grammar-semantic interplay in person's names. All this will be preceded by some background information on the methodology underpinning the study.

Theoretical Background

Scholars such as Wheeler (2018) point out that names intermingle with the language and culture of the community from which they provide. This justifies why the study of anthroponyms moves between sociolinguitics and ethnolinguistics.

In sociolinguistics, we will borrow from socio-onomastics (Airiala and Östman n. d.; Bakhshulloevna, 2021) to explore the use and variation of names within the Fe'efe'e community. Socio-onomastics and more precisely anthroponomastics is a sociolinguistics theoretical approach applied to the study of names. It makes use of group discussion and interviews, which help to define names according to the following variables: male, female, job, social status, native, non-native, etc, depending on cultures and communities. This approach will help look at the anthroponyms within their social contexts in the present study. It means that this piece of research will essentially be backed by onomastics and more precisely socio-onomastics where focus will be on anthroponomastics as an attempt of anthropological linguistics to provide explanations on human names based on the assumption that there is a strong link between a people's language, their cultural practices and person names giving. It exhibits how language is used through names to expose a community's worldview and philosophy. Though naming is viewed as a universal cultural practice, anthroponomastics helps to explain each naming practice as per its societal context (Abdul Wahed Qasem Ghaled Al-Zumor, 2009). This is why the work also relies on the ethnography of communication and more precisely on the ethnography of SPEAKING (Hymes, 1979) to unveils some of the names features, examining for instance some events influencing names giving. In fact, socio-onomastics takes into account the social, cultural and situational field in which names are used.

Data Elicitation Methodology

Names analysed in this paper were picked up randomly through exposure and during social events and family meetings where individuals and their names co-occur. Our native speaker's knowledge of the language and culture driven by our past and present experience as members of the community were also used. We also made use of personal Fe'efe'e only names collected from schools, homes, churches, workplace, traditional ceremonial grounds, etc. This is completed by secondary sources such as books and the community newspaper known as Nufi-Nsienkenngwe'. The analysis will not request a quantitative method for the

names or their occurrences as it does not seem relevant as per its objectives. Persons names used in the study are transcribed orthographically and at times phonetically according to IPA to allow language specialists to easily access the data. The setting of the theoretical and methodological paths governing this study leads us to the presentation of the Fe'efe'e community. Only Fe'efe'e surnames that synonymously be termed family names will be addressed in this study.

Background Information on the Fe'efe'e Language and Community

This section exposes on the location of the Fe'efe'e people. Thereafter, it talks about the days of the week in the community. This is because later on in this study, we shall see how some of these days impact on persons' names giving in the community.

The Fe'efe'e people are geographically found in the Southernmost part of the West Region, in the Bamileke area of Cameroon. This area is bordered with the beginning of the Mungo Division of the Littoral Region. The Kekem area and its vicinities mark the end of the Fe'efe'e area with a natural border separation, River Nkam. As part of the Bamileke people, the Fe'efe'e are deeply-rooted into their traditions in spite of some slight alterations observed nowadays under the impact of modernisation and globalisation. The naming tradition and conventions in this community go hand in hand with the cultures and traditions of the people. This is why at times, somebody's name could easily betray the geographical area to which s/he belongs in the community, or from which s/he comes.

The Fe'efe'e people speak the Fe'efe'e language, classified as a Bantoid-Bantu, East-Bamileke, Central-Grassfields. It is also known from its language committee as Nufi. Nufi has indeed contributed a lot to the building of a mother tongue multilingual literacy and mother tongue-based education environment in Cameroon and Africa. This is why in 1985, the Fe'efe'e language committee, Nufi, received a UNESCO prize known as NOMA award.

Language is the key channel through which culture spreads and moves across generations, time and ages. This justifies the move to the discussion on the days of the week in the Fe'efe'e community. The discussion undertaken in this section will help us to set a bridge leading to the understanding of the interconnectedness between some Fe'efe'e anthroponyms and the day where some children are born within a week. A Fe'efe'e week, just like most Grassfields weeks comprises eight (8) days contrary to most civilisations and tribes whose week has seven (7) days (see for instance the case of English or French). This justifies all the curiosities Grassfields' week triggers unto other people who come into contact with the people of the grasslands, and with the Fe'efe'e traditional cultures, mostly when their knowledge of the distribution of time is based on Western civilisation or their particular own culture only. The name of each day is said to have originated from a key activity or event taking place the said day. These days are presented below in table 1.

Table 1: Days of the Week in the Fe'efe'e Community

Day fo the Week	Rank in the Week
Líé'nkwe'	1st
Nkàántē	2nd
Ncwīe'ko	3rd
Ncômntē	4th
Nzĭnguˇ	5th

Nzĩsǒ	6th
Ntû'kwɑ	7th
Ntū'ntaɑ̄/Líé'ngaˉ	8th

Some of these days, depending on each village in the community, apart from the common day of interdict known as **Ntû'kwɑ**, are marked by the fact that some local activities are strictly forbidden, notably to women. For instance, women are not allowed to do farm works with hoes on *Ntû'kwa* in most Fe'efe'e villages. However, they can make use of machetes to work just like men. Some of the days correspond with those that some secret societies hold their meetings at the king's palace to discuss security and village matters. So many rituals and some traditional ceremonies are not also allowed to be performed on the 7th day of the week: it is the case of funerals (traditional festive ceremonies organised months or years after someone's burial) that cannot be celebrated in most villages on that day of the week.

The traditional and time organisation of these days is such that they are on a rotatory basis as compared to the organisation of a week in other communities or in foreign cultures like English and French: If the 7th day of the Fe'efe'e week occurs on a Sunday this week, the following week, it will be on a Monday. Fe'efe'e names could fall within a set of categories while name giving depends on a number of circumstances.

Examining Different Name Categories and Name Giving Circumstances in the Fe'efe'e Community

Some Fe'efe'e personal names depend on some circumstances. These circumstances depend on social and contextual factors that trigger different categories of names. In this section, focus is going to be on the circumstances surrounding the naming process and the categories of anthroponyms in the Fe'efe'e community. For convenience purpose, the phonetic form of each name will follow its orthographic representation while low tone will not be marked on the orthographic form of names to suit the principle of economy as prescribes the orthography of the language.

Personal names were given in the Fe'efe'e community based on the event preceding or happening before or right at the birth moment of the child. It must first be pointed out that only family names existed in the traditional Fe'efe'e society. Christian or Moslim names came into play in the community with imperialism and colonisation. This second category of names will not be addressed in this work. As earlier mentioned, a name could recall a remarkable event that happened in the family when the child was born. Table 2 below presents some Fe'efe'e family names for illustration purposes. Circumstances behind the names will be discussed later on in a subsequent section.

Table 2: Names Portraying what Happened in the Family before Childbirth

Derived Name	Word for Word Meaning	Meaning
Pěndūɑ̄ [pèēndūɑ̄]	*Pe* 'hatred' *ndūɑ̄* 'house'	hatred coming from within the house or from within the family
Pěnē [pèēnɛ̀hɛ̄]	pe 'hatred' nehē 'empty, for nothing'	hatred without reason
Ngūɑ̄simie[ŋgūɑ̄ʔsìmìɛ̀]	*ngūɑ̄* 'suffering', *si*	endless sufferings

	'negation', mie 'finish'	
Ngūɑ̄ʾlɑ̄ʾmie [ŋgūɑ̄ʔlɑ̄ʾmìɛ̀]	ngūɑ̄ʾ [ŋgūɑ̄ʔ] 'suffering', lɑ' 'negation', mie 'finish'	Sufferings will end (one day)
Cɔ̄mɑ̄nák [tʃɔ̄ɔ̄mɑ̄nnák]	cɔ̄ 'lament' mɑ̄ 'in', nák 'walk'	lamenting and moving forward. One cannot fold his arms because of the difficulties pr misfortune s/he is facing, s/he must always look forward.

From the table above, it could be noticed that the naming of a name could result from circumstances such as hatred '*pe*', sufferings '*ngūɑ̄* ', '*ngǎnga*', death '*wūakɔ*', notability '*kām*', etc. A child's name could result from a social event like appointment or coronation of a powerful social, local, national or community person. Hence, most children born in the community in any of the periods above are given the name of that day. Such people include king '*fʉ*', ministers '*nsɑ́ʾngwe*' priest or chief priest, '*nkâmsie*' president '*fʉngwe*', etc.

A personal name could indicate that all the children who were born before, simply died. Such names include those in table 3 below.

Table 3: Names Indicating that those Born before Died

Derived Name	Word for Word Meaning	Meaning
Yuʾmbíí [juʔmbíí]	yuʾ 'hear', mbí 'to', ī'him'	Human beings listen to him (to the Almighty God).
Cwe'lɑ'hīē [tʃwɛ̀ʔlɑ̀hīɛ̀ʔ]	cwe' 'news', lɑ' 'never' hīē 'be cool'	There is never good news.
Nshĭpeʾmvūɑ̄ [nʃĭpɛ̌ʾmvūɑ̄	nshi 'water', pe' 'house', mvūɑ̄ 'dog'	When a dog goes to the river, he cannot carry some water and bring back home. This is said of someone who is useless.
Ncɑɑcɑ̄ʾ [ntʃàɑ̀tʃɑ̄ʔ]	ncɑɑ 'food', cɑ̄ʾ 'ground, earth, soil'	Human beings are the food of the soil or of the ground. This means that as human beings, one cannot avoid death.
Cɑ̀'wūɑ̄ [tʃɑ̌ʔwūɑ̄]	cɑ̄ʾ 'soil, ground, earth', wūɑ̄ 'death'	This ground or world belongs to death. We are all passers-by in this world.
Ngofɑ̄tnkē [ŋgòfɑ̄tŋkē]	ngofɑ̄t 'maize' nkē 'monkey'	The maize is for monkey. In fact, when one cultivates, bush animals could make the plants their food and eat everything,. This is the case with a new-born who may live for long or not.
Ngɑ̌wáhwūɑ̄ [ŋgɑ̌wááwūɑ̄]	ngɑ 'I', wɑ̄h 'lack consideration, simplify', wūɑ̄ 'death',	I have no consideration for death. This name aims at challenging death, recognising that it cannot be feared again due to all the pains it has already caused to the

		family.

The first born of a family is named after the mother or the father of one of the parents. However s/he is often named after that of the husband depending on the sex of the new-born. Traditionally, the husband holds all the rights to take the first-born's name from his family and not from the wife's family though this is not always the case. However, it can happen that a male child is given the name of a female family member who is still alive or dead, and vice versa, depending on circumstances and family agreement.

Children born on the 7ᵗʰ day of the week, the *Ntû'kwa*, day where most Fe'efe'e women are not allowed to use a hoe for their farm works in most villages bear well-known names in the community as illustrated in table 4.

Table 4: Names Given to Children Born on the 7ᵗʰ Day in Some Villages

Name	Literal Meaning	Meaning
Mɑ̄líé'nzhi [mɑ̄líέʔnʒì] / Líé'nzhi [líέʔnʒì]	Mɑ̄ 'mother', līē 'day', nzhi 'interdict'	*Mɑ̄líé'nzhi* : name given to a female child; it literally means mother of the traditional day for interdicts. *Líé'nzhi* means on its part day of prohibitions. Name of a person, male or female born the day of interdicts. It can be born by male or female child.
Nzhwĭenzhi [nʒwĭɛ̄nʒì]	Nzhwīē 'spouse, wife', nzhi 'interdict'	Wife of the day of prohibitions/interdicts. This is also female only.
Nzhwĭesiē [nʒwĭɛ̄sìɛ̀]	Nzhwīē 'spouse, wife', Siē 'God'	God's wife. It is also female only

Fom table 4 above, it could be pointed out that *Nzhīē* stands for wife, spouse. Hence, it bears female only features. In this vein, any name bearing that word refers to a female person.

Just like in the Igbo community (Nwakaego Oweleke, 2011), Fe'efe'e names carry religious or better still spirituality meaning. The spirituality meaning referred to here is linked to tradition. Such names express concepts such as fate, deity, royalty, spirituality, faith, etc. Among them, the following in the table below could be examined.

Table 5: Religion Related Names

Name	Literal Meaning	Literary Meaning
Siēmɑ́níɑ́nu [Sìɛ̄mɑ́níɑ́ɑ́nù]	Siē 'God', mɑ́ 'be', níɑ́ 'arrange, fix' nu 'problems, issues' It is God who fixes issues	God is the one who solves problems.
Siēyɑɑ̄nzhi [Sìɛ̄jɑɑ̄nʒì]	Siē 'God', yɑɑ̄ 'lay' nzhi 'way, path' It is God who lays the way	God makes the way.
Nŭsīē [Nŭsìɛ̄]	Nu 'will, problem, affair' Siē 'God' Affair of God	God's will.
Siēlénnu/Siēlēnnu [Sìɛ̄lέnnù/[Sìɛ̄lɛ̄nnù]	Siē 'God', lēn 'speak', nu 'word'. 'God has spoken a word'.	God has spoken/ God speaks.

Sīewen [Sĩɛ̀wὲn]	Sīe 'God', wen 'person' God of someone	Someone's God or a person of God.
Sietāmmbhi [Sìɛ̄tāmmbʰì]	Siē 'God', tām 'move', mbhi 'front' May God moves in front'.	God should be ahead/God is (always) ahead (He always leads y̌ steps).
Ndɑ'sie̅ [ndɑ̀'sìɛ̌]	Ndɑ' 'only, solely', Sie̅'God' It is only God	Only God knows.
Pǒ'sīe [pǒʔsīě]	Po' 'offering', Sie̅'God' 'Offering from God'.	God's gift.
Ghə̌sīe̅ [ɣə̀ə̀sīɛ̌]	Ghə 'speech, word', Sie̅ 'God' 'word of God'	God has spoken.
Sīelɑ'dīe̅ [Sīelɑ'dīě]	Sie̅'God', lɑ' 'never', dīe̅'sleep' God never sleeps	God never sleeps.
Wěnsilǎhsīe̅ [wěnsìlǎhsīɛ̌]	Wen 'person', si 'no', lǎh'forget', Sie̅ 'God' 'Noone should forget God'	God should always be thanked.

These anthroponyms in table 5 are traditional Fe'efe'e names that were used even before the arrival of the missionaries. All the anthroponyms in the table above are referring to God 'Sie̅', the Almighty who created everything. This is another proof that before the arrival of the missionaries, our forefathers believed in one God. In fact, Christian religious discourse also borrows from these traditional Fe'efe'e names nowadays.

A name could express what happened (the problem) among people before the birth of a child as illustrated in table 6 below.

Table 6: Name Expressing what Happened among People before Childbirth

Name	Literal Meaning or Word for Word Meaning	Literary Meaning and Context
Nté'mênndam [ntɛ́'mênndàm]	Ntē̌ 'throat', mēn 'child', ndam 'witch, wizard' 'the throat of wizard/witch's son'	Heart/mind of the wizard/witch's child Name given to someone born after an accusation of witchcraft or sorcellery that happened among the parents and a third person of just between the parents or a parent and a family member.
Ghəlɑ'hīe̅ [ɣə̀ēlɑ̀ʔhīɛ̌]	ghə 'speech, verb, speech', lɑ' 'never', hīe̅' be cool' 'there is never a cool speech'	There is never a cool word. There is never good news. Name given to a child who is born in a family that records a high rate of newborn death. The name underlyingly means that though childbirth is good news, no one knows if the child will survive death as newborn.
Wenlɑ'kwé'nga'pe [wὲnlɑ̀ʔkwέʔŋgà̀ʔpèὲ]	Wen 'person', lɑ' 'never', kwé' 'like, love', nga' 'individual,	One never loves his enemy. Name given following hate speech or action perpetrated on parents or one of the

	person', pe 'hatred' 'a person does never like his enemy'	parents by somebody, a family member or not, anyway, an ennemy.
Nca'mênsī [ntʃà?mênnsī]	Nca' 'problem, trial' mēn'child', sī 'without' 'the trials of a child without parents'	Trial of an orphan or God has judged the affair of a non-socially powerful person. The name is often given to a child by his parents following an injustice caused against one of them by a more powerful person. The birth of the child is seen as a response from the most High, a victory proclaimed by God, to show how merciful he is even to poor people.
Nuyátnjam [Nùjátndʒàm]	Nu 'problems' yát'again still', njam 'behind' 'problems are still to come'	Problems are still to come. At times, a child can be born following a succession of misfortune in the family. The name is given to the child to mean that problems will still come and no one knows if the child will survive them.
Lȧ'ngūɑ̄ [lȧ?ŋgūɑ̄?]	Lɑ̄ 'country, village', ngūɑ̄ 'suffering' ' 'country or village of sufferings'	World/village or country of sufferings Name given when the parents have been going through a lot of difficulties to show that the child is also coming to a troublesome world.
Ngūɑ̄simie [ŋgūɑ̀?sìmìɛ̀]	Ngūɑ̄ 'sufferings', si 'not', mie 'finish' 'Sufferings that do never finish'	Endless sufferings. Just like the name above, this one is given to a new-born who comes to the world in a family where sufferings and despair is constant, with the parents permanently facing challenges.

Table 6 above portrays some of the names given to children according to what happened before their birth. Because the names are mostly compounds, each component is broken down and glossed with its literal meaning while the whole word follows. Afterwards, the table exhibits the literary meaning of the name along the naming context. Somebody's name may portray the death of the mother during childbirth or right after birth, or that of the father before or right after birth as exemplified in table 7.

Table 7: Names Showing the Death of a Parent before or after Birth

Name	Literal Meaning	Literary Meaning
Nto'wuɑ̄ [ntò?wùɑ̄]	Ntó' 'to discuss, wūɑ̄ 'death' 'to discuss death'	S/he who discusses death./ A child who comes to a world where everybody are passers-by
Mɑ̀'ngwɑ̄ [mȧ?ŋgwɑ̄?]	Mɑ'ngwɑ̄	Pick and throw away. The new-born is just like a seed thrown away in the bush, maybe it will die or will sprout.

Name giving in the Fe'efe'e society can also depend on the tradition and culture of the people. For instance, the first child conceived by the king's wife when he is still in the Secret forest known as *lá'kām*, where he is endowed with all powers useful to govern the village is called *Ntúꞌkām* 'bowl of notability' when a girl, or *Poꞌkām* 'gift of notability' when a boy. Some other notability names include *Poꞌsiē* 'giving from/to God'. Apart from all these circumstances, a new-born child could be named after his/her father's family, or even father's friend's family. However, it should be noted that none of the names with a negative connotation should be looked at as if the parents wanted to curse their child. It should be seen as a word portraying the social circumstance (s) that influenced its giving to the child. This justifies why the name should not be handled out of the naming context. The names provided according to the different circumstances discussed above could also be categorised according to some semantic features.

Semantic Categorisation of Fe'efe'e Anthroponyms
Fe'efe'e anthroponyms can be grouped into simple people's names, chief priest's names, honorific and kinship names, etc.

Simple people's names are those that could be given to anybody, notably those whose birth is not characterised by any special event or circumstance. As already discussed above, they could find roots into the child's father or mother's family or possibly comes from a friend to the family who might not even belong to the same tribe or ethnic group. In general, it is observed that nowadays, people are gradually getting rid of names with negative connotations because it is believed in the Fe'efe'e community that a name can influence somebody's life in all aspects. For instance, if a family member was called **Nusimie** /**Numǐe**, 'problem without end', and if the name must be given to a new-born baby, it could be transformed as **Numíe/Nuǔmie** 'problems should end, problems have ended". This is to avoid that the name negatively impacts the child's life. This change could be motivated by the fact that some people in the community do reject such names argueing that they are bringing them badluck. Others even go to court to change such names for a positive one. Reportedly, there is a third class King in the Fe'efe'e community who had two community names, the first one, *Ngaǔwáhwuā̄ 'I have no consideration for death'* led him to file a court case to change it on the ground that no human being can dare death. At the same time, some names bearing a negation morpheme instead portray positive ideas and wishes. In this vein, names such as *Sipōksiēka'* literally, 'he who does never miss an appointement' rather express something positive to be praised, with *si* 'negation morpheme', *pōk* 'lack, miss' and *kɑ'* 'appointment, rendez-vous'.

Chief priest's names are not given at birth. Yet, they are acquired after receiving a call from God to attend to one's people or during coronation by peers who assume priests' roles in the community. This role is said to be God given, though today, some fake chief priests or fraudulent priests who buy their priesthood title and powers from some evil spirits or obscured forces (that is said to be catered for with human blood) do exist. In fact, with the growing of corruption even in traditional milieus, some people who are not endowed with the healing powers fake their capacities to see beyond the visible, talk with spirits and heal people suffering from spiritual diseases. Such practitionners are fake and fraudulent. At the same time, others are believed to buy their healing powers from diabolic sources. Within this category of priests, we find: traditional healers whose honorific names end with *Siē* 'God' such as *Nkâmsiē* 'notable of God', a generic term for men and women, *Mānisiē* 'twin's mother of God' for women, *Táánisiē* 'twin's father of God' for men. Their role is to perform

some rituals and to heal people, mostly from supernatural diseases. They are endowed with supernatural powers from God and are known to have '*four eyes*', i.e., they are able to see beyond human understanding. In normal circumstances, traditional healers or doctors of the Fe'efe'e community, known as *Nkâmsiē* 'notable God', *Mānisiē and Táánisiē ' twin mother of God and twin father of God'* are known to have healing powers from God. They see beyond human understanding though still humans and communicate with spirits, part of the invisible universe. At times, since their power seems to be transmitted intergenrationally, even children or youngsters could be chosen by their ancestors to play this role. In this case, they also go through initiation and coronation and could be called by such names followed by a specific or titled name granted to them during their coronation. These generic chief priests' names are generally followed by another honorific name that often depends on the historical background of the priesthood in the family of the individual concerned. Priesthood is a transgenerational gift that could be passed on to somebody in the family after the death of the chief priest or to an immediate child.

Mother and father of twins have honorific names. Such names (see example 1 below), could also be born by chief priests. The example is provided in the left followed by its literal meaning in the right.

(1)
Ndɨmbʉ́ɑ́	[ndʉ̀ʉ̀mbʉ́ɑ́]	'two vaginas'
Mbatndūɑ̄	[mbàtndùɑ̄]	'he who confused the house'
Ngʉɑ'ndʉɑ̄	[ŋgʉ̀ɑ'ndùɑ̄]	'admirer of the house'
Sênnkām	[sênŋkām]	'friend to the notability'

As stated earlier, these honorifics are repectively given to a woman or a man who gave birth to twins. Such people are considered to be endowed with natural power from God. At the same time, they can either get close to any person bearing a notability title or any person with traditional power in the community. Any of the names could be used alternatively without context specifics. However, while *Ndɨmbʉ́ɑ́ is women specific, mbatndʉɑ̄ is men specific.* An attempt to unveil the relationship between kinship and honorific anthroponyms is provided below.

Focus in this sub-section is on Kinship and honorific anthroponyms in the Fe'efe'e community. Twin babies are special babies in the whole Grassland. This is why they are considered as beings endowed with some supernatural powers. They are easily identified by their names, which always end with the two syllabic word **mɑ̄ni** 'pair, mother of twins', made up of *mɑ̄* 'mother' and *ni* 'twin' as illustrated in example (2) below.

(2) Ngǎˀmɑ̄ni [ŋgaˀmɑ̄nì], Tīēmɑ̄ni [tīēmɑ̄nì], Nzhʉɑˀmɑ̄ni [nʒùɑˀmɑ̄nì], Ntuˇmɑ̄ni [Ntuˇmɑ̄nì].

The meaning of each of these names will depend on the original name from which it derives. For instance, for Ngaˇmɑ̄ni, it might have come from names such as *Nga'ndə* 'root of gossiping', *Nga'pe* 'hater, enemy', *Ngaˇnkām* 'root of notability or person of notability' , etc. A person born from the same mother after twins in a household is automatically called Nkǎkmɑ̄ni [ŋkǎkmɑ̄nì], literally meaming 'someone who was at the threshold of becoming a twin'. At times, it happens that twins are the last born of a household. In such a case, any

family member who gives birth to a baby after the twins could name him/her *Nkǎkmāni*. Twins are associated with honorific names such as those in example (3).

(3) a) Nguaʼnduā [ŋgùaʼndùā] 'admirer, envier of the house (It is believed that twins' birth is announced by a huge cloud overshadowing the sky.)'

b) Koʼmandua [koʔmàndùàà] 's/he who comes with fog'

Any of these honorific names for twins can be used in any context to praise them.

At the same time, while keeping their birth names, mother and father of twins respectively bear the honorifics illustrated in table 8.

Table 8: Honorifics for Mother and Father of Twins

Honorifics for Women	Māni [māni]	mother of twins
	Ndumbúá [ndùùmbúá]	two vaginas
	Mānǐnkoʼ [mānǐŋkòʔ]	The mother of twins is on the table (in the house).
Hnorifics for Men	Mbatnduā [mbàtndùā]	A person who has repeated the house.
	Táani/Táanǐnkoʼ [táànì/táànǐŋkòʔ]	Father of twins, the father of twins is in the house.

These honorifics for mother and father of twins are used interchangeably in any social context to greet them, to praise them and to honour them. For honorifics related to notability names in the community, once somebody succeeds his late father who was a notable, s/he automatically bears the notability title of his/her father who also inherited it from his own father. Such kind of honorific is known as intergenerational and depends on one's lineage. If, for instance, somebody succeeds his father whose notability title was *Nzā Moōmkām*, he will also be called *Nzā Moōnkām* though he will keep his birth name in official documents and his birth certificate. He will be known and called in the community with his title. The notability title and name is known to have originated from the ancestor, i.e., he who created the lineage and is traditionally transmitted intergenerationally. It is used by community members to address the person. In general, for women, *Māfu*, literally 'mother of the king' is often used as a notability title. It is conferred by the kind himself based on an exceptional accomplishment of the women in the community. The mother of the king automatically bears this honorific title once her son is designated and enthroned as the community king tough. Fe'efe'e honorifics also include the use of the morpheme *wā*. This morpheme expresses respect to an elder person. In this case, the name or surname of the elder person will be shortened by the addresser. This will end on an ablation of part of the surmane in oral speech. Usually, the first syllable is maintained and associated with the elderness marker. This morpheme occurs in the right of the name to which it expresses elderness as exemplified in table 9 below.

Table 9: Expression of Elderness with the Morpheme *wā*

Name	Elderness Morpheme	Form Uttered by Speakers when Whowing Elderness
Tīēncā		Tīē wā
Ngaʼmāni	wā	Ngaʼ wā
Ndǒntu		Ndə wā

Siānga'		Sī̄ wɑ̄
Moōmɑ̄ni		Mo wɑ̄
Cwe'lɑ'hĭē̄		Cwe' wɑ̄

Table 9 helps to capture how the honorific *wɑ̄* expresses elderness in Fe'efe'e. Furthermore, in some circumstances, the free morpheme *na* is used to express respect or mockery or affection depending on the context of use. If somebody misbehaves, s/he could be referred to using the latter word or morpheme. In such a case, it preceeds the surname while only the first syllable of the surname is articulated as illustrated in (4).

(4) a) *Tŏh ma sê le na **Lā** bô !* 'Come this way Mr Lemale' (with face expression of dissatisfaction). Here, the personal name *Lámɑ̄lūɑ̄'* undergoes ablation (Lā in bold in the example) and only that first syllable is articulated. Through the use of exclamation, the construction shows that the speaker is actually minimising the person to whom s/he is talking. This is reinforced by the referential *bô*.

b) *O ngén ma hā na Nga' ?* 'Where are you going to Dear **Ngande**?'. The personal name ***Ngǎ'ndə*** has undergone suppression of its second syllable as seen in the example in (d) with *Nga',* while its first syllable is articulated and preceded by **na,** hence **na Nga'**. Here, **na** is used to express deference. Personal names seem to carry some geographical identities through which individuals could be identified as members of the community. Such names are discussed below.

Person names could be used as geographical identifier in the Fe'efe'e community. In addition to the fact that there is a general tendency for those who are familiar with the Fe'efe'e culture to identify the person who is from the community, those who are well-acquainted with the area know exactly from which geographical part of the locality a Fe'efe'e personal name refers to or comes from. Some personal names may betray the village an individual comes from in the community. This is only possible when one has a cultural knowledge of the community. Most often, such names refer to earlier kings of the villages of such areas. However, it should be pointed out that with modernity, at times, a name from a different tribe or community could be given to a Fe'efe'e child depending on the type of relationship the child's family has with the friends from that tribe or community. For instance, a parent could give their child the name of their friend from a different tribe. Furthermore, name changing could result from interethnic or intertribal marriages. Very common with modernity, interethnic or intertribal marriages comes from the union of a person from the Fe'efe'e community and another from a different one or different tribe. It can be the neighbouring tribe or ethnic group or someone from afar. Anyway, personal names or anthroponyms should be the expression of an individual's construction of identity. The relationship between name and identity has already been pointed out by Alford (1987). Table (10) below provides some illustrations with regard to geographical pertainance of an individual through his/her name.

Table 10: Fe'efe'e Names as per Geographic Origin in the Community

Central-East and South	West
Púani [púànì]	Laˇko [laˇkò]
Púálū̄ɑ̄' [púálū̄ɑ̄ʔ]	Láápii [láápìì]
Cokŏmɑ̄ni [tʃokŏmɑ̄ni]	

Sú'yām [sɨ́jām]	

Based on table 10 above, we must point out that each of the names, except in rare cases, helps to identify the area where an individual comes from. To have this knowledge, one must be acquainted with the geographical distribution of names and the culture of the Fe'efe'e people. The personal names in general, carry along some grammar-semantic interfaces that we have successively tried to raise above. The following section further explores the issue.

Grammar-Semantic Interface of Fe'efe'e Person Names

In the discussion on personal name giving circumstances above, we have already addressed to an extent some semantic properties of Fe'efe'e anthroponyms. In this section, we will focus more on how grammar interplays with semantics in personal names in the language community.

It must be mentioned that Fe'efe'e is fundamentally a monosyllabic language, i.e., the greatest majority of its words have a single syllable. How does this influence our discussion on this topic? If we are curious enough, we will observe that most of the nouns if not all of them mentioned in this study for illustration purposes are made up of more than one syllable. Consequently, they are compound words. Most Fe'efe'e person names are therefore obtained through compounding. A few examples are presented below for illustration.

(5)
a) noun+negation particle+noun
Nusinga' [Nùsìŋgàʔ]:   Nu + si + nga'
                     'problem without person'
                     'Problem without owner'

Pekα'pē' [pèèkὰʔpéʔ]:   pe +   kα' +pē'
                   hatred negation good
                   'Hatred is not good.'

 b) verb+negation particle+noun
Zᾱsicᾱk [zᾱsìtʃᾱk] : zᾱ +   si   + cᾱk'
                eat   negation search
           'S/he who eats without working/ A lazy person is a criminal or a bandit'
Ngō'simbak [ŋgōʔsìmbàk]: ngō   +   si   +mbak
                     'termite negation rain
                     'Termites that appear when it has not rain (announce misfortune)'

 c) Noun+negation+verb:
Wenlα'kwé' [Wɛ̀nlὰʔkwɛ́ʔ]: wen +   lα'   + kwé'
                     person negation   like, love'
                       'No one likes his/her enemy.'
d) Noun+noun:
       Sīewen [Sīɛ̀wɛ̀n]: Siē + wen
                 'God   person'
               'Someone's God'

> Njĩinu [Ndʒíìnù]: njĩī + nu
> 'see   problem'
> 'He/she who faces too much misfortune.'

The sample above (5), is just for illustration as there are many other compounding structures that exist in the language. As observed from the nouns in (5), Fe'efe'e family names are often made up of more than one syllable. In addition, tonal change (on which we shall not comment in this work) on the names, when the syllables are put together to form a single lexical entity or single personal name, must be pointed out as it constitutes another important grammatical issue worth addressing in the Fe'efe'e language.

The grammar-semantic correlation of personal names work hand in hand with their vocative function (Anderson, n.d.). Twins and the immediate cadet of twins' names are predictable as already mentioned. They are formed with a predictable two-syllable morpheme made up of two distinct words, namely **mãni** *'mother of twins'*. It is composed of **mã** 'mother' and **ni** 'twin'. At times, the Fe'efe'e class 2 plural marker |pɑ-|, could be preposed to some personal names in discourse to show that an action was undertaken by a group, led by an individual who is well-known to the speaker like the example in (6) illustrates.

(6) **Pasĩewen**: 'Sĩewen and company, that is, Sĩewen and the other people he is leading':

Among the people, the person speaking knew **Sĩewen** very well. This will go alike with: **PaMŭmãni, PaNtŭko.** This morpheme |pɑ-|, in this case, plays an anaphoric role as it assists the speaker to refer back to a group led by a well-known individual, here **Sĩewen, Mŭmãni and Ntŭko**, the personal names that take the class noun 2 prefix in the example. Personal names are often thought to be able to influence the bearer's future life.

Personal Names and Traditional or Cultural Beliefs in the Fe'efe'e Community

Personal names are linked to a referent, bound to the traditional and cultural milieu to which the individual naturally belongs. In fact, as Zawawi (1993:6) puts, 'A name constructs a person because the name one bears may create an attitude in those who bear it before they meet the name bearer'. They may play or carry some of the following: a) communicate b) bring success, power and generosity and c) Express love.

As already mentioned above, personal names play a communicative role (See Mensah and Mekangoum, 2017 for further details on the communicative functions of names). It is seen as a message conveyed by the name giver to the community and society as a whole, to tell about family history or background to some extents. It connects the name bearer with his/her ancestors and natural environment wherever s/he is. This justifies why the names are of great cultural and traditional importance and might set to highly influence somebody's life, negatively or positively though there is no initial intention of the name giver to bring ill luck to the bearers in their life.

In the Fe'efe'e community, it is believed that some personal names are the origin of name bearers ill luck or good luck. Here, people think that personal names could **carry bad luck**. Such names may include the following in table 11 below.

Table 11: Names Bearing Bad Luck

Name	Literal Meaning or Word for Word	Literary Meaning
Pesimie [pèèsìmìɛ̀]	Pe 'hatred', si 'without', mie 'end', finish' 'Hatred that does not end'	Hatred without end.
Pěnehē [pèènē]	pe 'hatred', nehē 'nothing' 'hatred for nothing'	Hatred without origin.
Cwe'lɑ'hīē [tʃwɛ̀ʔlɑ̀hīē]	cwe' 'history, news', lɑ' 'never', hīē 'be cool'	There is never good news.
Mbemɑ̄nehē [mbèèmɑ̄nèhɛ̄]	mbe 'house', mɑ̄ 'be', nehē 'empty'	Empty house, house without content. This can also mean that the child is coming to a poor family or a family that does not easily procreate.

Today, some people carrying names such as those in table 11 above fear endless hate and misfortune in their entire life. It is believed in the community that people who bear any of the names mentioned above could face constant hatred in their lifetime, could always be bereaved, be in misfortune or sad mood, never bear or have a child. In fact, **pe** means hatred. Because of such beliefs, some name bearers do go to court to ask for deletion of the negative syllable of their names. All this explains why synchronically, such names, taken from family members or an ancestor, are transformed when they are given to new-born babies in order to avoid the ill luck that they may cause to the bearers. For instance, the names above in table 11, could be transformed like the following reads:

(7)   **Original name**   **Transformed name**
        Pesimie   Sipe [sìpè]   'without hatred'
        Cwe'lɑ'hīē   Cwe̚'hīē [tʃwɛ̌ʔhīɛ̄]   'Good news'
        Mbemɑ̄nē ⟶   Mbemɑzū [mbèmɑ̀zū] 'house with things, furnished house, house full with children'
        Ngo̚'simbak   Ngó'mbak [ŋgóʔmbàk] 'termites from rain'

In example (7) above, each transformed noun has undergone the ablation of its negative particle from the orignal to the transformed version as ealier stated. Some of the personal names from the community are directly linked with success and generosity. These names are believed to bring good luck to the carrier. Such names include notability names, king's names and names calling for wealth and heavenly benediction. Through these names, name givers express their desire or wish to see their offspring as a rich person who will bestow them with riches and wellbeing. The following names in (8) can fall into this category:

(8) Fʉ'simie   [fʉ̀ʔsìmìɛ̀]   'wealth without end, unlimited wealth'
    Yapii   [jàpìì]   'my benefits'
    Ghoongɑ́ɑ́   [ɣùùŋgɑ́ɑ́]   'catch and share/, s/he who should catch and share with other family members in life'.
Names such as those in (9) express love.
    (9) Nkwe'ni [ŋkwɛ̀ʔnì]   'love'
        Mbe'nthū [mbɛ̀ʔnthū]   'good heart'

Still in the vein of names carrying love and success features, names such as *Fʉ'simie, Yapii and Ghoongáá, Nkwe'ni and Mbe'nthʉ̄* are specifically given in contexts of joy, accompanied by the wishes of the givers to see the child grow up, become a goodhearted person with incommesurable wealth. In the following, we will proceed with a synchronic appraisal of the Fe'efe'e pernonal names.

A Synchronic Glance at Fe'efe'e Anthroponyms

Fe'efe'e person names have also undergone deep transformation in face of globalisation and other previous international painful events (such as slavery, imperialism, colonisation, etc) that have struck Africa. Imperialism, and particularly religious imperialism had imposed Bible characters' names also known as Saints' names on the Fe'efe'e people just like in some other parts of the world. From this point, the Fe'efe'e had started bearing surnames, notably Christian names which became compulsory for those who wanted to be baptised. In the long run, the practice became normal with the spread of Christianity and evangelisation and christianisation. This proves that Fe'efe'e natives had only their family names in the past, before the arrival of the colonisers. That is also why in many families today, when a baby is born, people mostly fight over which christian name to be given to him/her. This is because most of the times, for family names, except in case of conflictual attitudes among family members from both parts (the mother and the father), it is already known before or right after birth and does not often trigger conflicts.

The influence of Western civilisation has imposed on the Fe'efe'e the practice of misspelling their family names. This is due to the fact that the administration, manned by individuals who received Western education only, do implicitly not allow the use of the special characters and fonts of the Alphabet of Cameroonian languages in birth certificates. This has been leading to a wrong transcription of the names, betraying the meaning behind them. However, unlike yesterday, where it was not possible to write the name correctly and formally, the introduction of Cameroonian languages in formal education will gradually pave the way to the right orthography of Cameroon personal names and Fe'efe'e ones in particular in administrative documents, commencing probably with the birth certificate. This can only occur if the government issue a law text authorising the practice.

In spite of the influence of globalisation, the Fe'efe'e people continue to transmit their family names to their offspring wherever they are in the world, whether home or in the diaspora.

Conclusion

A socio-ethnolinguistic analysis of Fe'efe'e person's names in the Fe'efe'e community has led to depict through socio-onomastics and more precisely anthroponomastics that Fe'efe'e personal names could be a whole book. Some personal names are given depending on the day of the week during which childbirth occurs. The circumstances influencing person names giving in this community are of different natures: what happened before or right after childbirth, those who were born before the new-born almost died all, what happened among people before childbirth, the death of a parent before or after childbirth, etc. Semantically, Fe'efe'e anthroponyms could be classified as simple persons' names, chief priests' names, kinship and honorific names, among others. An observation of the syllabic structure of the language at the intersection of grammar-semantics shows that it is essentially a monosyllabic language. However, Fe'efe'e personal names are made up of more than one syllable in their greatest majority. This means that since each of the syllable

constituting a name is a full word form, Fe'efe'e personal names are mostly compound words of different syllable structures. The analysis futher shows that personal names are bound to world view (Ogie, 2002). Fe'efe'e anthroponyms could also unveil the geographic pertainance of an individual within the Fe'efe'e linguistic and cultural area. This is another argument justifying why anthroponyms are directly bound to cultural and traditional beliefs such as bad luck, good luck, success, power and generosity, love and metaphysical connections. In spite of modernity, the Fe'efe'e people, either home or abroad, continue to keep, in their greatest majority, their tribe names. Interethnic marriages have brought names from outside to the Fe'efe'e community. This is a sign of openness and acceptance, open-mindedness and togetherness of the Fe'efe'e people. In sum, Fe'efe'e personal names and namely family names are strong communicative tools that can attract on the bearer, blessings, curse, praises, etc. They connect the individual to his ancestral land and his ancestors and is part of his/her identity.

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