

The Oshiwambonisation of Christian Names

Petrus A. Mbenzi *University of Namibia*
Kosmos Ngihisheenhapo *Mwadinomho Combined School*
Eliaser Joseph *Engela Secondary School*

Abstract. In this paper the term, Oshiwambisation is used to signify the process of phonologically-conforming names. Oshiwambo, a Bantu language predominantly spoken in Northern Namibia and Southern Angola, like other languages in contact, has adapted foreign words from other languages to meet the needs of its daily life, vocabularies, and activities. Oshiwambo consists of eleven mutually intelligible dialects namely, Oshindonga, Oshikwanyama, Oshikwambi, Oshingandjera, Oshikwaluudhi, Oshikolonkadhi, Oshimbalantu, Oshiunda, Oshimbadja, Oshinkwankwa and Oshindombodhola. Of these dialects only Oshindonga and Oshikwanyama have been developed for official purposes. Oshikwambi has only been graphized for religious purposes in the Catholic Church. The Oshiwambo dialects show slight variations in terms of semantics, phonology and morphology. This study is based on the hypothesis that words borrowed from other languages, especially European languages, into Oshiwambo, are phonologically and morphologically modified to fit the Oshiwambo speech system. The study adopts the *Natural Generative Phonology* (NGP) theory which was propagated by Hooper (1976) and the *Word Formation* theory as the theoretical framework. It investigates how Oshiwambo adapted Christian names to the phonological system of Oshiwambo. The study identifies and describes the phonological and morphological changes which the Christian names undergo to fit in Oshiwambo speech system. and further establishes the phonological rules that account for these changes. The Oshiwambonised names were taken from Saarlema-Maunamaa (2003), school registers of Oniipa school and Oniipa parish respectively. The findings of this study reveal that Aawambo use various strategies to oshiwambonise Christian names such as consonant replacement, lambdacism, nativisation, diminutisation, lenition, consonant addition, consonant deletion and prenasalisation.

Keywords: Christian Names, Oshiwambonise, Nativise, Pronunciation

Languages: Oshiwambo, English

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1.0 Introduction

During the German rule from 1884 to 1914, German was the sole official language and the medium of instruction especially in white schools. Black education was offered through mother tongue and some school taught German. The Finnish and Rhenish missionaries developed the first orthographies for the indigenous languages and wrote the primers and grammar books for schools.

German as medium of instruction had little impact on the black community (Harlech Jones 1990). However, The German colonial administration had to source migrant labour from either abroad (South Africa) or from northern Namibia. The source was mainly Ovambo communities. They were required to work on farms, mines and railway construction (Mbumba 1988, as cited in Ashikuti 2019). This contact created opportunity for the Aawambo labourers to borrow words from the language of their employers, the Germans. The other factor that led to the contact between Germans and Aawambo was the German Rhenish Missionary Society activities which were established in Oukwanyama in 1891 (Hayes 1998).

Under the South African rule from 1915 to 1959, subjects were taught in the mother tongue and Afrikaans and English were minimally taught to enable the black people to follow simple instructions in conversations with Europeans (Katjavivi 1988). The teaching in black schools was in the hands of the missionaries until 1960 when Education was taken over by the colonial rule and Afrikaans became the language of instruction in the upper grades and English and indigenous languages were taught as subjects from upper primary level onward. Mother tongue was used as language of instruction from Sub A to Standard One. But the Owambo administration implemented English as a language of Instruction from Standard Two to Standard Six in 1981 and by 1985 it was fully implemented at all school levels.

After independence, English was declared as the official language of Namibia. In education mother tongue was maintained as languages of instruction from Grade one to three and is taught as a subject from Grade four up to tertiary level. Nonetheless, indigenous languages are used in both electronic and print media as languages of communication. National radio stations and TV stations broadcast news in indigenous languages. However, English appears to be the most prestigious language of learning and communication. This study is an attempt to dissect the Oshiwambonisation of Christian names.

2.0 Literature Review

There are studies that have dealt with nativisation of foreign names across the globe. Saarlema-Maunumaa (2003) narrates that in Africa, European and Biblical names also have domesticated forms, as they were adapted phonologically to the local languages. Saarlema-Maunumaa provides several examples from various countries where European or Biblical names have been africanised, for example, the Zulu have made Alfred *Alufuledi* and Guenther in Botswana became *Ganda* and in Rwanda Perebalanc became *Terebura*. Saarlema-Maunumaa also shows how European or Biblical names have been Oshiwambonised and provides examples such as *Seelima* for Selma, *Peetulusa* for Petrus, *Ngapilieala* for Gabriel and so on.

Saarlema-Maunumaa further narrates that the Aawambo people also form nicknames from their European and Biblical baptismal names, most commonly by abbreviation. English name forms are often used today. Here are some examples: *Abraham* > *Abe*, *Benjamin* > *Ben*, *Filippus* > *Philip*, *Jeremia* > *Jerry*, *Joel* > *Joe*, *Johannes* > *Johnny*, *Kristof* > *Chris*, *Mateus* > *Matthew*, *Nikodemus* > *Nick*, *Paulus* > *Paul*, *Petrus* > *Peter*, *Robert* > *Rob*, *Sakeus* > *Saki*, *Samuel* > *Sam*, *Tomas* > *Tommy*, *Tom*; *Maria* > *Mary*.

In the preceding examples, Saarlema-Maunumaa provides the anglicised forms of abbreviated nicknames. Aawambo spell these names as given by Saarlema-Maunumaa, but there seems to be arbitrariness between the pronunciation and written form in Oshiwambo. Aawambo do not pronounce these abbreviated names according to English pronunciation, but they ‘Oshiwambonise’ these names thus these names should be recorded in Oshiwambo as *Abraham* > *Apele*, *Benjamin* > *Mbenya*; *Filippus* > *Felepa*; *Jeremia* > *Lyeli*, *Joel* > *Lyou*, *Johannes* > *Lyoni*, *Chris* > *Kristof*; *Matthew* > *Matewu*; *Nikodemus* > *Niki*; *Paulus* > *Pawu*; *Petrus* > *Peetu*; *Robert* > *Robi*; *Sakeus* > *Saki*; *Samuel* > *Sami*; *Tomas* > *Tomi*; *Mary* > *Maria*.

From these examples it becomes evident that some sounds provided by Saarlema-Maunumaa do not appear in Oshiwambo such as /*ph*, *b*, *ch*, *j*/. Some of these sounds only appear in combinations with other sounds. /*ph*/ and /*ch*/ do not appear at all, whereas *b* and *j* appear in combinations with other sounds such as [^m*b*], [ⁿ*dʒ*]. When [*b*] appears in a name, it is either prenasalised or lenited. However, urbanised Aawambo or those exposed to European languages can pronounce /*b*/ without being accompanied by a prenasalised sound. Saarlema-Maunumaa pays no attention to the syllable system of Oshiwambo which is usually an open one, thus to write *Tomi* as *Tommy* for Oshiwambo violates the syllable pattern of Oshiwambo. The name *Tomi* became popular with the introduction of English as an official language after independence because of the way the name is said in English. Before independence, the name *Tooma* was used as the short form of *Toomasa*. Furthermore, Oshiwambo does not allow two identical consonants to co-exist as in *Matthew*.

While Saarlema-Maunuma reveals that existing church registers of Aawambo contain some names with Oshiwambonised forms, the orthographies of Oshindonga and Oshikwanyama (2004:31) argues against the Oshiwambonisation of names of foreign origin. In these orthographies it is emphasized that:

Proper names should be written in the same form as the person concerned wrote it originally. In such cases the symbols have the same value as they have in the language from which they originate. When names are kwanyamanised or ndonganised, the correct spelling should be adhered to.

The orthography is too prescriptive and provides little room for Oshiwambonisation of foreign names. However, foreign names are adapted to the phonology of any language across the globe. Saarlema–Maunumaa (2003:47-88) narrates that “in Germany names of Hebrew, Greek and Latin origin were adapted phonologically to the German language, and some were hypocoristicised, e.g. Johannes became Hans. Similarly in Finland foreign names received domesticated forms, for example, Katarina became *Katri*.” It is not clear why the Oshikwanyama and Oshindonga orthography prohibit the use of Kwanyamanised or Ndonganised names for official purposes. This paper contends that Oshiwambonised names be used for official purposes as it is a trend in other languages. Writing Sothoised names in South Africa, Nkabinde (1968:5) points out that:

Languages have their own individual patterns of permissible sound sequences, therefore foreign words like the names are subjected to the phonological rule in order to harmonise the foreign syllables which are not permissible in Sesotho with their Sesotho counterparts so that they fit into the structure of Sesotho.

This quotation shows that all foreign words including personal names should be adapted to the phonology of the recipient language thus the prescriptive rules applied in Oshindonga and Oshikwanyama orthography go against the linguistic principles. These rules, thus need to be relaxed to allow for the linguistic structures of Oshiwambo to operate normally as names are lexical items just like other nouns. Evans (2014:46) stresses that:

the NGP has various types of rules. One of such categories of rules is phonological rules which account for only phonetic information, including syllable boundaries of borrowed words in their environments. The rules include assimilation, strengthening and weakening. Morpheme deletion and insertion in borrowed words justify these rules. The morphological rules are determined by morphosyntactic or lexical conditioning, which consider morphological and syntactic information such as morpheme boundaries, morpheme classes and lexical categories.

The NGP theory is used in this paper to dissect the Oshiwambonised names, because it has tenets of how borrowed words are nativised through

strategies such as deletion, insertion of sounds, assimilation, fortition and lenition.

Likewise, Uushona (2019) concludes that words that are integrated into Oshiwambo from other languages are either nativised or imported into Oshiwambo with sound tolerance particularly by the literate speakers of Oshiwambo. Uushona appears to advocate for the Oshiwambonisation of foreign lexical items; thus, the common trend followed in other countries to indigenise foreign names should also apply to Oshiwambo in its entirety.

3.0 Methodology

Names in this paper have been sourced from the collection of Minna Saarlema-Maunumaa. The names were selected purposefully by picking out only names that suit certain morphophonological processes such as diminutisation, consonant deletion/addition, lenition, epenthesis and prenasalisation. Other linguistic features such as procope, syncope, apocope, and lambdacism have also been identified. Content analysis was used to dissect Oshiwambonised personal names to identify all linguistic processes that occur in the process of Oshiwambonising European/Biblical names. The bearers of certain names were also asked to say their names in Oshiwambo to identify the changes that occur. These names were recorded in the way they were pronounced by the native speakers of Oshiwambo. The Oshiwambo names were not analysed according to the Oshiwambo orthography because this orthography is very prescriptive and has a rule that prescribes that names of foreign origin should be written according to the orthography of the language of origin. The Word Formation Theory and Natural Generative Phonology were employed as the basis for dissecting the Oshiwambonised names.

4.0 Findings

4.1 Modern Trends

In modern trends there is a tendency for foreign sound structure tolerance. By tolerance the speaker of an African language tends to accept the consonant cluster of European languages, for example, English. Koopman (1994:164) observes this trend in Isizulu by stating that “the replacement of l by r has become a norm in modern adoptive processes.”

Both Koopman (1994:158) and Thipa (1989:75) indicate that this retention has to do with the high status of /r/, or as Thipa calls it “prestigious pronunciation.” Thipa found that variants pronounced with /r/ instead of /l/ were used more often by urban and literate people, e.g. isigareth (i) ‘cigarette’; ipetrol (I) ‘petrol.’ On the other hand, the variants with /l/ instead of /r/, e.g. isigaleth (i) ‘cigarette’; ipetlol (i) or ipetilol (i) ‘petrol,’ were more characteristically used by rural Xhosa speakers. Batibo (1996)

maintains that the level of consonant cluster tolerance would depend on the speaker's degree of bilingualism. Literate speakers tend to tolerate consonant clusters more often than less literate speakers because of exposure to source languages. Similarly, Mbenzi (2010:13) observes a similar trend in Oshiwambo:

The lateral sound [l] is pronounced as [r] by many Aawambo, thus *ila* (come) may be pronounced as *ira*. The use of [l] is going out of fashion at present. Many Aawambo now use [r]. The possible demise of [l] can be attributed to the fact that Aambuga (the Oshindonga speaking people who live in the east of Ondonga) who use a strong [l] are stereotyped as witches and wizards and are also considered primitive in their dealings. The stereotypical attitude stems from the praise of the *Aambuga* which runs: *Omumbuga ke na mushona ote ku teya nentolo*. (The Omumbuga no matter how young he/she is, he/she can break one with a loud fart, i.e. he/she can cause you harm through a loud fart). The present generation of the *Aambuga* therefore shies away from the use of [l]. The other contributing factor to the possible demise of [l], is that many speakers of Oshiwambo such as Aakwambi, Aangandjera, Aakwaluudhi, and Aakolonkadhi inherently use [r]. Speakers of Oshindonga and Oshikwanyama might have been influenced by the speakers of other dialects to drop [l] in favour of [r]. At present the use of [r] is associated with modernity and progress whereas the use of [l] is associated with primitive life and anachronism.

The *r* is mostly used by the elite, town dwellers: *oombwiti* (the cosmopolitans). Similar principle is also applied to borrowed personal names, for example, Lasarus is changed to Rasarus. In this case the initial sound [l] in the foreign names is changed to [r]. Furthermore, in *Oshimbwiti* (the language of the Aawambo cosmopolitans), one of the sociolects of Aawambo [r] is used in a place of [l]. The Aawambo cosmopolitans are seen as civilised people. It can, therefore, be assumed that the non-cosmopolitans Aawambo who do not have [r] in their alphabet, adopted [r] in their language so that they are considered civilized. At present the speakers of Oshindonga, Oshikwanyama, Oshimbadja, Oshimbaanhu who inherently do not have [r] in their speech tend to use /r/. because of its association with modernization and civilisation.

Furthermore, consonant clusters may be retained when names are Oshiwambonised. Consonant clusters do not exist in Oshiwambo, but the Aawambo cosmopolitans tend to retain them in borrowed names, for example, the name Kristof may be pronounced as *Kristofa* by the literate Aawambo. In this example, the consonant cluster /kr/ is kept in the modern Oshiwambo. This suggests that the urban or educated Aawambo tend to keep the structure of the foreign language to a greater extent, because if they stick to the structure of Oshiwambo they may be construed as being primitive and uncivilized. In other words, the consonant cluster is associated with modern civilization, because only Aawambo exposed to European languages retain consonant clusters in Oshiwambonised names. The

following examples illustrate the retention of consonant clusters in italics in Oshiwambonised names:

Table 1: Consonant Clusters and Names

European / Biblical Names	Oshiwambonised Consonant Clusters
Petrus	Peetrusa
Abraham	Abrahamu
Efraim	E <i>fr</i> aima
Epafra	Epaf <i>fr</i> asa
Sostenus	Sostenusa
Kleopas	Kleopasa
Blasius	Blasiusa

These Oshiwambonised names have demonstrated that:

the degree of bilingualism of speakers of Oshiwambo has a great influence in tolerating consonant clusters. The more a speaker is exposed to foreign languages, the higher the possibility of tolerating the consonant cluster. Those monolinguals that do not have foreign language exposure do not tolerate consonant clusters and therefore insert vowels to break up the clusters (Uushona 2018:113).

Uushona’s observation appears to be valid because the literate Aawambo tend to tolerate consonant clusters as well as urban Aawambo regardless of their level of literacy as urban people are exposed to either Afrikaans or English. It must be noted that there are some monolinguals that tend to copy the bilinguals resulting in some tolerance of consonant clusters to a lesser extent.

4.2 *Diminutisation*

During the dimunitisation process the actual name is being diminutised to represent something small by using a morpheme *ka* or to express endearment. *Ka* in Oshiwambo performs three functions, namely, to express diminution, negative form and future action. Selma is diminutised and pronounced as *Kaseli*. According to Word Formation Theory “the change that occurs in a word does not change the word class, but it modifies the meaning of the word. Such modification may express the constant diminutive, augmentative, approximative and collective” (Dietrich 1990). In Oshiwambo the morpheme *-ka* is not only used to represent something small but also in derogative sense. In linguistics this change is termed hypocorism, which is defined as a pet name, nickname, or term of endearment—often a shortened form of a word or name. The following table illustrates examples of foreign names in which *ka* has been used:

Table 2: Diminutisation of Names

Foreign	Oshiwambonised	Diminutised
Frieda	Filita [filita]	<i>Kafili</i> [kafi i]
Wilhelmina	Velemina [Vɛ ɛmina]	<i>Kavele</i> [kavɛ ɛ]
Mariana	Maliyana [ma i jana]	<i>Kamali</i> [kama i]
Josefina	Josofina [jɔsɔ fina]	<i>Kayoso</i> [kajɔsɔ]
Sesilia	Sesiliya [sesi i ja]	<i>Kasisi</i> [kasisi]
Elizabeth	Esapeta [ɛsapɛta]	<i>Kasape</i> [kasapɛ]
Victoria	Vikitoliya [viki tɔ ja]	<i>Kavik</i> [kaviki]
Otillie	Otiliye [ɔti i jɛ]	<i>Kahoti</i> [kahɔti]
Emilia	Emiliya [ɛmi i ja]	<i>Kamili</i> [kamili]
Tuulikki	Tuuliki [tu iki]	<i>Katuli</i> [katu i]
Olivia	Oliviya [ɔ i vi ja]	<i>Kahooli</i> [Kahɔ:li]

From this table one can observe that all these are female names. It can be assumed that the use of *ka-* in this context is linked to the expression of endearment. In Oshiwambo it is expected for a man to express endearment towards a woman especially in romantic relationships. But *ka* in Oshiwambo may be used to show respect and love to the young woman by his parents or peers. On the contrary the use of *ka* is prefixed to the stem of a noun to form a male name, for example, 1.*Kadhila, Kamati, Kalomo, Kapofi*, 2.*Kauluma, Kaudinge etc.* In this case *ka-* is either used as a negative marker or as a positive marker. In the preceding examples names such as *Kamati, Kadhila, ka-* is used as a positive marker. But in names such as *Kaundinge* and *Kauluma*, *ka-* in these names expresses negation.

It must be noted that *ka-* is the prefix in Class 12 in Oshiwambo. This suggests that the English borrowed nouns that have infiltrated the Oshiwambo noun class system is prefixed using an appropriate gender marker. Furthermore, Biblical or European names undergo morphological changes when they are Oshiwambonised thus when these names are Oshiwambonised through the diminutisation process, various changes occur. The initial sound is retained in some names but may be changed slightly to suit the phonological system of Oshiwambo, for example, *Wilhelmina* changes to *Kavele*. In other words, the stem of the name may commence with the initial sound of the original name. In this case, bilabial *w* becomes *v*. This can be attributed to Afrikaans or German pronunciation in which *w* is pronounced as *v* thus Aawambo who has been exposed to these languages might have given rise to this change. Some sounds in the original names have been elided as there are consonant clusters which cannot be permitted in Oshiwambo.

In some cases, the second syllable is shifted to the end of the Oshiwambonised names, for example, *Olivia* becomes *Kahooli*, *Otilie* becomes *Kahoti*. This shows that the final syllable is elided and an extra sound *-[h]-* is inserted. There are also cases in which the initial syllable or sound is retained in forming the Oshiwambonised names as illustrated in all examples with the exception of the third. In example 4 [ʒ] becomes [j] because *j* cannot act as an initial sound in Oshiwambo, but it must be

pointed out that in the archaic Oshiwambo [ʒ] was commonly used and [j] did not exist. This is evident in several Oshiwambo names, e.g. *Namuhuja* and *Joolokeni*. In the Oshiwambo old orthography of 1954 produced by the Finnish Missionaries, *y* does not appear because this sound was non-existent in Oshiwambo and it has had no impact on Oshikwanyama and Oshindonga written varieties until 1954 (Tirronen, 1977). The cause for the change from [ʒ] to /j/ is unknown. But it can be assumed that the exposure to European languages such as Afrikaans or English could be a contributing factor. However, [ʒ] is still retained in Oshingandjera and Oshikwaluudhi and Oshikolonkadhi in spoken form. But it can be assumed that language change has contributed to this change because in the ancient Oshindonga [ʒ] was predominantly used, but this sound has become obsolete in Oshindonga as a stand-alone sound, it can now only occur in combination with other sounds, for example, *ondjuhwa* (chicken) [ʰdʒ]. It is interesting to note that any initial vowel is replaced with *ka* in names, as in example 6, 8, 9, 11.

Apart from *ka-* the diminutive suffix *-gona* may also be added to a name as a distinguishing marker, for example, *Samwelegona*. In case a senior and junior bear the same name, the suffix *-gona* is suffixed to a name to signify juniority, e.g. *Seelimagona* which is equivalent to junior in the American context.

4.3 *Hypocorism*

Hypocorism can be defined as a pet-name, nickname, or term of endearment, often a shortened form of a word or name (Taylor 2015). In Oshiwambonisation of foreign names, they may be hypocoristicized. Robert Kennedy notes that many hypocorisms are “monosyllabic or disyllabic, with the second syllable bearing no stress” (Taylor 2015). Obeng (1997:26), commenting on hypocoristization in Akan, explains that:

During hypocoristization in Akan, such morphological processes as compounding and reduplication as well as (morpho) phonological processes as deletion, tonal change and vowel harmony take place. Hypocoristic forms may be used in a superior-to-subordinate communicative contexts. When used in a superior-to-subordinate interactive context, hypocoristic names express affections, tenderness, playfulness, warmth, and the idea of being loved and of being considered worth caring for. It may also denote smallness or diminutiveness of the referent. Among equals hypocoristic names may be used to show playfulness, oneness or ‘we’ness and sometimes, teasing.

What Obeng states here is applicable to Oshiwambo, because hypocoristic forms are used in Oshiwambo in a superior to subordinate communication to show respect to the addressee. The following table illustrates Oshiwambo hypocoristic names.

Table 3: Hypocorism and Names

Official Names	Hypocoristic Names	Pronunciation
Petrus	<i>Peetu</i>	[pɛ:tu]
Gabriel	<i>Ngapi</i>	[ⁿ gapi]
Bartholomeus	<i>Mbatolo</i>	[mbatɔ]ɔ]
Daniel	<i>Ndani</i>	[ⁿ dani]
Joseph	<i>Yoose</i>	[jɔ:sɛ]
Eliaser	<i>Eliya</i>	[ɛlija]
Benhard	<i>Beni</i>	[bɛni]
Johannes	<i>Lyoni / Ndyoni</i>	[jɔni] / [ⁿ djɔni]
Festus	<i>Fesi</i>	[fɛsi]
Suama	<i>Suu</i>	[su:]
Selma	<i>See</i>	[sɛ:]

These names may be monosyllabic, disyllabic, or trisyllabic, as indicated in Table 3. They have undergone morphophonological processes such as sound elision in which the sounds are apocoped. In all above examples, the final part has been elided to pave the way for an open syllable system. But in example three both apocope and syncope have taken place, thus in the name Bartholomeus, apart from being prenasalised, the medial sound [r] has been deleted and dental [θ] has been converted into a voiceless alveolar stop [t]. In example eight, [j] is substituted with [j] because [j] is articulated with the influence of English pronunciation due to the exposure to this language. This suggests that people with the good command of English tend to pronounce this name with an English accent whereas the rural communities would say *Yaanesa* for Johannes. However, the use of *Yaanesa* has become obsolete to a greater extent, because even rural communities have abandoned the use of *Yaanesa* in favour of *Lyoni*. However, speakers of Oshikwambi, Oshingandjera, Oshikwaluudhi and Oshikolonkadhi would say *Ndyoni* for *Lyoni*. It can be assumed that this situation occurs because prenasalisation is prevalent in these dialects and also they do not pronounce [j] as [j] but pronounce it as [lj], which is not in close proximity with the sound [j] in the original name, Johannes. Similarly, due to the influence of English, the hypocoristic name, *Yoose* has been abandoned in favour of *Lyou*. This name has an approximate pronunciation to the name *Joe* in English.

It is important to note that in Oshiwambo, a name may be reduced to two or one syllable. This happens when someone calls upon a person to respond to a certain situation or when one calls out someone who is out of sight. In this case, the name is said three times and in the second call the syllables are reduced to two and in the last call the syllables are reduced to one, for example, *Nangula* becomes *Nanguu*, then it becomes *Na*. This principle applies to the Oshiwambonised names as well, as in example 10, and 11 in the Table 3 because the name *Seelima* (Selma) may produce three positions: 1. Seelima 2. *Seeli* 3. *See*. In most case, one syllable becomes the popular name of the name bearer.

4.4 Insertion of Semi-Vowels

In Oshiwambo no two different vowels co-exist in a word; therefore, a semi-vowel, such as *w* or *y*, is inserted between two different vowels. The GNP stresses that one of the strategies used to generate words is to insert a sound to make it plausible (Evans 2014). Most Oshiwambonised names and indigenous names appear with two different vowels placed side by side in the written form, but this is linguistically inaccurate as semi-vowel is articulated in a spoken form, thus a name such as *Auala* should be recorded as *Awala* and *Lusia* as *Lusiya*. The retention of two different vowels side by side in the written Oshiwambo is ascribed to Oshiwambo orthography (2004:15) which prescribes: “When two vowels of different phonic vowels are juxtaposed at the end of a stem each vowel is seen as a separate syllable. No glide is necessary between the two vowels, e.g. *epea*, *Isai*.” The same orthography also claims: When [j] and [w] appear between two vowels in the following examples, they do not represent glides or semi-vowels, but have definite phonemic status, e.g. *Omuyapuki* not *omuapuki*. The orthography provides contradictory information. On one hand it recommends the use of semi-vowel. On the other it does not allow the use of the semi-vowels. Linguistically, a semi-vowel is a part of the syllable in Oshiwambo and when the last syllable is said in the name *Lusia*, the tongue articulates against the roof of the mouth thereby producing -[j]-. Similarly, in saying the name *Rauha*, the lips are not rounded as in articulating *u*, the upper and lower lip come together thus producing a bilabial [w]. Thus [w] and [j] should always be epenthesised in Oshiwambonised names.

4.5 Lenition

Lenition is a term in phonology that refers to “a weakening in the overall strength of a sound whether diachronically or synchronically. It involves the change from a stop to a fricative, a fricative to an approximant, a voiceless sound to a voiced sound” (Crystal 2008:274). Consonants can be arranged on scales of strength. The scales can be summed-up by saying that the more a consonant becomes stronger, the more it differs from vowels; the more a consonant becomes weaker the more it becomes to resemble a vowel (Honeybone 2008). In Oshiwambonising Christian names, the strong consonant [b] is being weakened and pronounced as [p] which is a weakened consonant. For example; Abner becomes *Apiniyeli*, Abraham becomes *Apeelamu* and Naboth is pronounced as *Naapota*. Some researchers have shown that the most common segmental interaction between consonants and vowels (or, sometimes, other sonorants) is lenition or weakening. Typical examples of lenition involve either the voicing of voiceless stops, or the voicing and aspiration of stops. As evident from the examples, lenition is employed to make it easy for the Aawambo to

pronounce a name. According to NGP lenitions is used to facilitate pronunciation, thus they make sounds easier to pronounce (Mayuuf 2013). Mayuuf (2017:9) argues that:

They [lenitions] are termed weak processes since they make segments and sequences of segments easier to pronounce by decreasing the articulatory 'distance' between features of the segment itself or its adjacent segment. Lenitions are generally context-sensitive or syntagmatic processes. For example, weakening a sound: making a stop into a fricative between vowels; decreasing the contrast of a sound with a neighboring sound: assimilation, harmony; adjusting the timing of movements so as to have the effect.

This suggests that lenition is required in the Oshiwambonising process and that in nativising foreign names, individual English phonemes are sought to be replaced by their nearest equivalents from the Oshiwambo phonemic system (Sirchel 2015).

4.6 Prenasalisation

According to Crystal (2008), nasalized consonants would refer to a consonant which is articulated in a nasal manner because of an adjacent nasal sound. Fivaz (1986) elaborates that in Oshindonga the voiced labial stop [b] and the voiced alveolar stop [d], occur only in the nasal compounds, namely [ᵐb], [ᵐbw], [ᵐby], [ᵐd] and [ᵐdj] respectively. Hence in this process the voiced alveolar stop [d] changes to a nasal sound [ᵐd] and voiced bilabial stop [b] changes to [ᵐb] as illustrated in the following examples:

Table 4: Prenasalisation in Names

David	Ndaafita	[ᵐda:fi:ta]
Dan	Ndaana	[ᵐda:na]
Dorte	Ndoloteya	[ᵐdɔ:ɔteja]
Bertha	Mbeelita	[ᵐbe:li:ta]
Benjamin	Mbenyameni	[ᵐbenyameni]
Bartholomeus	Mbatolomewusa	[ᵐbatɔ:ɔmewusa]
Blasius	Mbalasiyusa	[ᵐba[asijusa]
Brakias	Mbalakiyasa	[ᵐba[akijasa]

From these examples, it becomes evident that [ᵐ] combines only with [b] while [ᵐd] combines with *n*. It can thus be argued that the place of articulation determines the sound compounds in this case because both [ᵐ] and [b] have the same place of articulation and [ᵐ] and [d] are also homorganic consonants. It must be pointed out that prenasalisation does not occur in Oshinaanda, a subdialect of Oshikwambi. Speakers of Oshinaanda always delete a nasal in word that commences with [d],[ɲ]or [b]. In this case, all names in the above table cannot be prenasalised by the speakers of Oshinaanda thus they would say *daafita* and not *Ndaafita*.

4.7 Patronyms

A patronymic, or patronym, is a component of a personal name based on the given name of one's father, grandfather, or an earlier male ancestor. In the process of oshiwambonising, names of foreign origin, a genitive marker is used to show the sense of belonging to a certain ancestry or father. This seems to be a worldwide trend as many languages of the world affix a possessive marker to a name. This trend has been extended to Oshiwambonised names in which the genitive marker *-gwa-* is mostly prefixed to a female name to show seniority in terms of age, for example, *gweElia*, *gwaJohanesa*, but *-ya* may also be prefixed to a patronym although this is very rare, for example, *yaToivo*. It must be pointed out that Oshiwambo patronyms are never said without a genitive marker. The omission of the genitive marker appears to have been imposed on patronym by the colonial authorities, because the missionaries retained these genitive markers when they recorded Oshiwambo names in church registers. This is evident in the register of Oniipa parish of 1942 in which personal names have been recorded as follows:

Selma yUushona
Mateus gaJohannes
Andreas yaJosef
Kaarina kaStefanus
Marta gaJarius

Contrary to the entries in the church registers, in the school registers of Oniipa of 1972, the patronyms are entered without genitive markers, for example:

Immanuel Ngipandulwa
Josef Andreas
Leonard Onesmus
Petrus Ugwanga
Lahja Amaambo
Helena Albin

This shows that the authorities appear to have encouraged the teachers to drop the genitive markers from the names and seems to be a trend across the government sectors. The fact that some Aawambo have resolved to formalise the use of genitive markers shows that “the Ambos are not completely happy with the “foreign” surname system which they have, for various reasons, come to adopt” (Saarelma-Maunumaa 2003:180) thus in the pre-independence era, name such as *yaFrance*, *yaNangoloh*, etc. have cropped up.

4.8 *Consonant Deletion/Omission*

Evans (2014:48), describing consonant deletion in Lubukusu, describes sound deletion as “a linguistic process in which a consonant in a word is eliminated from its position, where the deleted sounds are especially those that do not occur in Lubukusu Consonant Inventory.” With consonant deletion, a consonant is eliminated from its position in a loanword. In a similar situation a consonant is deleted in Oshiwambo in certain European names, for example, in names such as *Helvi, Hendrina, Heralia*, etc, [h] may be deleted in the process of Oshiwambonising those names, thus these names would appear in Oshiwambo as *Elivi, Endelina, Elaliya*, but it appears in names such as *Hanna, Hannu, Hilja, Hilka, Hilma, Hulda*, [h] is retained in the Oshiwambonised forms. This suggests that when [h],[x] is followed by a low central or high vowel then [h] is kept in the initial position of a name, but when it is followed by a mid-vowel such as [ɛ], and [ɔ] then it is deleted from the name. This suggests that apheresis is only employed in certain instances.

Consonant deletion does not only occur in the initial position of a name, it also occurs in the middle of the words because Oshiwambo does not allow two identical consonants to co- exist in a name thus in names such as *Hannu, Hanna, Hilka, Otilie* one of the sounds such as [n] or [k] is omitted in the Oshiwambonising process; thus, these names may be recorded as *Hanu, Hana, Hilika* and *Otiliye*.

4.9 *Consonant Addition*

Addition or epenthesis refers to a type of intrusion, where an extra sound has been inserted in a word (cf. Crystal 2008). In this regard, a consonant is inserted in a word for some phonetic reasons. There are cases in which an extra consonant may be added to a name to suit the phonological system of Oshiwambo. For ease of pronunciation, for example, in European or Biblical names that have [s] at the beginning, in the middle or at the end, [h] is inserted so that [s] can become [ʃ]. This means an alveolar [s] changes to a palato-alveolar /ʃ/. This occurs because [s] does not occur in Oshikwanyama alphabet. The following names illustrate this phenomenon:

Table 5: Consonant Addition in Names

European/Biblical Names	Oshiwambonised	Pronunciation
Silvanus	<i>Shilivanusha</i>	[ʃi ivanuʃa]
Filippus	<i>Filipusha</i>	[fi ipuʃa]
Samwel	<i>Shamwele</i>	[ʃamwε ε]
Salomo	<i>Shaalomo</i>	[ʃa: ɔ:mɔ]
Selma	<i>Sheelima</i>	[ʃε: ima]
Sylvia	<i>Shuluviya</i>	[ʃu uvijja]
Sakeus	<i>Shakeusha</i>	[ʃakεus]

From these examples it becomes evident that [ʃ] is palato-alveolarised in Oshikwanyama when it occurs in a name.

4.10 Consonant Substitution

Ibdoil (as cited in Zivenge 2009:233) describes sound substitution as “the replacement of one linguistic item by another at a particular place in structure.” In this paper, consonant substitution refers to the replacement of foreign consonants with Oshiwambo consonants. It is observed that, in some European languages, single consonants may be adopted as they are, while others undergo phonological changes to suit the Oshiwambo phonemic system. This implies that “phonological processes represent subconscious mental substitutions of one sound or class of sounds for another that are the natural response to the relative difficulties of sound production” (Mayuuf 2017:9). The examples below illustrate such consonant substitution:

Table 6: Consonant Substitution in Names

Foreign Names	Oshiwambo Substitutes	Pronunciation
Willem	Velema	[vε εma]
Wilhelmina	Velemina	[vε εma]
Walter	Vaateri / Valiteri/ Vaateli	[va:teri] [va iteri] [va:te i]
Willma	Vilima	[vi ima]
Werner	Veenela / Velinela	[vε:nε a] / [vε ine a]
Gideon	Ngitiyona	[ʔgiti ɔna]
Lucia	Luusiya	[u:sija]

In this case [w] at the beginning of each name is replaced by [v] although [w] occurs in Oshiwambo language. The substitution of [w] by [v] is attributed to the pronunciation of the original name because [w] is pronounced as [v] in Afrikaans and German respectively thus some literate Aawambo pronounce *w* as *v*. Both Afrikaans and German had been ‘bread-and-butter’ languages for many years. Despite the popularisation of English as an official language, Afrikaans is still a *lingua franca* among various communities, especially in urban centres; thus, the popular use of Afrikaans may have contributed to the use of [v] in names that commence with [w]. There is, however, a change in pronunciation of [w] as it is no longer

pronounced as [v] by several literate people, because it is kept intact in names such as *Wili* (Willie) and *Wiliyama* (William). The influence of English pronunciation might be a contributing factor in this case, because in English *w* is pronounced as [w]. English has become a dominant language among the literate people in Namibia, but in the past Afrikaans enjoyed this privilege.

In Table 6, example 6 [d] is replaced by [t] because [d] and [t] are homorganic. The replacement of [d] by [t] takes place in many Oshiwambo dialects except for Oshikwanyama, because [d] occurs in Oshikwanyama thus the Oshikwanyama speakers can pronounce [d] in a name. In example 7 *c* is replaced by [s] as [c] does not exist in Oshiwambo alphabet. Nonetheless, the Oshindonga orthography argues that there is only one word in which [c] occurs in a nasal compound, e.g. *okancuuncuu*.

4.11 Augumentation

Oshiwambo names may also be augmented through suffixing the morpheme *-nene* to a foreign name. This morpheme is suffixed to a name to express old or mature age. Any elderly person qualifies to be addressed by an augmented Oshiwambonised name, for example, *Ester* becomes *Estelanene*, but it must be noted that Oshiwambo names are also treated in this manner, for example, *Angula* becomes *Angulanene*.

4.12 Influence of English on Oshiwambonisation

English is the official language of Namibia and serves a medium of instruction from grade four up to the tertiary institution. Due to its popular use, many Aawambo tend to pronounce their names in the English way while oshiwambonising them. The following table illustrates the English-cum-Oshiwambonised names:

Table 7: English-Influenced Names

Foreign Names	Oshiwambonised Names	English-cum-Oshiwambo names
Titus	Tiitusa	[ti:tusa]
Rachel	Raakela	[ra:ke[a]
Carolina	Kalolina	[kaɔ[ina]
David	Ndaafita	[ˈda:fitə]
Jeremiah	Yelemiya	[je[emija]
Steven	Shitefa	[ʃitefa/]

This table shows that several Aawambo particularly the literate and the urbanised people tend to oshiwambonise foreign names based on the English pronunciation. In other words when two languages come in contact, phonemes may change. Mayuuf (2017:12) notes that “phonemes are very rarely pronounced as stored, but instead are modified either to fit their environments (lenitions) or in contrast to their environments (fortitions).”

However, the open syllable system is retained because all the names in the table end in a vowel. Nonetheless, there are some Aawambo who try hard to apococate these names. In fact, rural people still say the Oshiwambonised names according to the phonology of Oshiwambo. This means that literate people would, for example, say *Reityela* for Rachel while the non-literate people would say *Raakela* for Rachel. It is important to note that the forms that the non-literate use is based on either German or Afrikaans because German was the official language during the German rule in the German South West Africa (now Namibia) (1884-1914) and Afrikaans became the official language and a lingua franca of South West Africa during the South African rule (1915-1990) and English became only the official language in 1990 (Pütz 1995, as cited in Ashikuti 2019).

4.13 Translation of European Names & Use of Nicknames

One of the ways of Oshiwambonising European names is through translations. Aawambo with European names that are difficult to pronounce are given nicknames and sometimes European names are also translated into Oshiwambo (Saarlema-Maunumaa 2003). Maunumaa gives an example of the name Aino which Bishop Leonard Auala translated into Oshiwambo and used to address his wife as *Aluhe*, which has the same meaning as Aino in Finnish.

In addition, European with difficult names to pronounce were given nicknames based on their behavior and hobbies. The Aawambo bestowed names upon the Missionaries, commissioners and officials who operated among them. The other motive behind those nicknames in Oshiwambo were to express admiration, gratitude and honour or to describe or reflect the historical events which occurred in named person's life. Nicknames also portrayed the owner's favourite way of expression or moral behaviour, no matter good or bad. An element of derision is often found in the attribution of such names (Mweshida 1996). The examples of the nicknames of the missionaries include the following:

Martti Rautanen	= Nakambale ('the one with the hat')
Toivo Tirronen	= Esamane ('the big ugly man')
Lahja Lehtonen	= Kanyeku ('one who swings around as she walks')
Augustus Pettinen	= Nandago ('one who is very fond of <i>Oondago</i> ')
Martha Ellonheim	= Kanamwenyo ('a small animal')
Erkki Lehto	= Amutse ('the one with the big head')
Liina Olga Inkeri Lindström	= Nakalekiinyolwa ('the tall one who loves writing')
Walde Kurviven	= Many lyaNangula ('The stone of Nangula')
Johanna Rautanen	= Gwaanakambale ('the one who belongs to Nakambale')

Selma Rainio	= Gwanandjokwe (‘the person who belongs to Onandjokwe Lutheran Hospital, i.e. she was a medical doctor in this hospital’)
Heikki Saari	= Iikonyena yoompadhi (‘the one whose feet make dust as he walks’)
Kurt Schletter	= Kalumbu koombuku (‘the white man for mice’)
Alcye Hahn	= Nakatalala (‘the cool one’)
Peter Paul Webber	= Gwepa (‘thrash’)

Nambala (2021) provides a long list of most missionaries who served in Owambo from 1870 to 2000. This suggests that Aawambo attempted to nickname every missionary mainly for ease of pronunciation as most of Finnish names were hard to spell and pronounce.

6.0 Conclusion

This paper reveals that the foreign names are adapted to phonological system of Oshiwambo. In this case sounds that do not appear in Oshiwambo are replaced with Oshiwambo sounds. In the process of Oshiwambonisation various phonological processes take place namely, Consonant and vowel deletion, consonant addition, lambdacism, diminutisation, augmentation, prenasalisation, prefixation and suffixation. Through these processes the Christian names were adapted to the phonological system of Oshiwambo.

Furthermore, the English pronunciation of names has an impact on the pronunciation of Oshiwambonised names as Aawambo adapt the pronunciation of Oshiwambonised names to English pronunciation thus giving a rise to the new forms of Oshiwambonised names. In other words, literate and non-literate people produce two different forms of the same name. The Aawambo have also devised the strategy of giving nicknames to Europeans to avoid difficult pronunciation of European names. The Finnish missionaries, commissioners and officials received nicknames. These nicknames were based on their behaviours and physical appearances of the bearers.

It must be pointed out that Aawambo with exposure to European languages such as Afrikaans, German and English tend to retain the consonant clusters in Oshiwambonising European or Biblical names while Aawambo with no exposure to European languages stick to the phonology of Oshiwambo thus they do not tolerate consonant clusters. In addition, the literate Aawambo tend to Anglicise and Oshiwambonise names simultaneously. What sets Oshiwambonised names apart from ordinary anglicisms is their ‘resistance’ to certain aspects of adaptation: the original spelling is sometimes preserved, and sometimes the phonetic adaptation is only partial. However, there are cases in which Oshiwambonised names are totally Oshiwambonised to the extent that they lose their foreignness.

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