

Abstract

IsiXhosa is a dialect of the Nguni language. It is primarily spoken in South Africa's Eastern and Western Capes. The Xhosa people employ language symbols to build their culture and communicate highly valued social principles such as *ubuntu* (humanity). Their oral traditions have been handed down through the meanings of names, histories, proverbs, idioms, puzzles, songs, and praise poems. Elders name their children with phrases borrowed from oral idioms and assist them in adhering to societal norms and beliefs.

During South Africa's colonialism, the entrance of European settlers with a different culture and values quickly affected Xhosa society and customs. Since certain, if not all, oral traditions, including the previous naming system, did not meet the approval of the new masters, the population was obliged to adopt a new naming system. On the other side, the end of apartheid in the 1990s ushered in a new age of indigenous cultural resurgence and a trend toward reverting to traditional isiXhosa naming customs.

The study investigates the influence of linguistic and descriptive meaning of personal names on an individual's identity in Xhosa society. Additionally, it investigates the genesis and conceptualisation of isiXhosa names about isiXhosa oral literature. An interview with IsiXhosa-speaking individuals was undertaken to determine whether the meanings of Xhosa names influence the individual's identity. Additionally, the study demonstrates how naming traditions played a significant and defining role in the Xhosa people's oral history. Additionally, it served as a mechanism for recording occurrences occurring around the time of birth. The study discovered that an individual's surroundings affect their identity.