

# Indigenous Knowledge in Acholi Nicknames

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## Abstract

*Rationale of Study* – Nicknames are a cultural experience. In some contexts, they are perceived as ‘little’ names that are different from ‘official’ names. Therefore, a nickname is a part of personal identity. Nicknames are often discreet and sometimes opaque. This article explains the meaning of a nickname in the African context and specifically discusses Acholi nicknames (*mwoch*) as an indigenous way of generating, sharing and preserving knowledge.

*Methodology* – Data for this paper was obtained through interviews. The author interviewed purposively selected respondents from Mucwini in Kitgum and other parts of Acholi sub-region in northern Uganda. It is the nicknames that were the subject of these interviews that are presented, analysed and discussed in this article. The author also tapped into his childhood experience and knowledge of Acholi culture.

*Findings* – Overall Acholi nicknames communicate indigenous knowledge but they must be unlocked, deconstructed and explained in detail in order to share their meanings with the wider world in time and space. It is writing and publication that holds a promise of conserving the knowledge so easily lost because it is considered casual, trivial and peripheral to the core of cultures.

*Implications* – The findings of this study may be used to demonstrate the power of cultural practices, such as nicknames, to generate, share and preserve indigenous knowledge. They may also be used by governments and cultural institutions to mainstream indigenous knowledge in the preservation of the universe of knowledge in communities.

*Originality* – There is limited literature on African nicknames. This article adds an East African tone to ongoing discourse on names and nicknames by non-onomastics scholars who view nicknames as a form of indigenous expression and communication that is deeply rooted in knowledge and philosophy. If not elucidated, the knowledge remains hidden from scholars, and thus unproductive to creativity and eventually lost to all.

## Keywords

Acholi, Uganda, East Africa, nicknames, indigenous knowledge

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### 1 Understanding the concept of nicknames

According to Mapako (2016), nicknames are a cultural experience. Other scholars refer to it as 'little' names (Alton, 1981; Blum, 1997), which are different from 'official' names (Kennedy and Zamuner, 2006). A nickname is a part of personal identity. It comes from *eacan*, an Old English word, which means nickname (Needling, 2005). To pronounce a nickname is a method of announcing a person's presence and making intellectual and cultural statements on various subjects (p'Bitek 1998). A person shouts his/her nickname when joy or sorrow strikes, because nicknames seem to marshal courage, and use it in managing extreme pleasure, threats or great despair. Nicknames are often discreet and sometimes opaque; a small sample of them is herewith deconstructed, interpreted and analysed.

### 2 Methodology

This article adds an East African tone to ongoing discourse on names and nicknames by non-onomastic scholars who view nicknames as a form of indigenous expression and communication that is deeply rooted in knowledge and philosophy. If not elucidated, the knowledge remains hidden from scholars, and thus unproductive to creativity and eventually lost to all. Childhood experience, vivid recollection and sizeable knowledge of Acholi culture, along with videotapes and

audiotapes support the choice of the nicknames in this article. In August 2016, the author interviewed relatives and acquaintances who answered questions regarding nicknames from Mucwini in Kitgum and other parts of Acholi sub-region in northern Uganda. It is the nicknames that were the subject of the interviews that now form the bulk of the examples used in this article. For confidentiality purposes, the nicknames are presented without identifying their owners.

### 3 Findings

The authors found the following categories of nicknames among the Acholi, which can be used to generate, share and preserve indigenous knowledge.

#### *3.1 Nicknames assigned to individuals by the general public*

Laroo location in Gulu District is referred to as "Bwana Gweno". It was initially the nickname the Acholi people gave to a British District Commissioner during Uganda Protectorate in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century. In order to force men to pay tax, the District Commissioner ordered administration police to confiscate chicken from defaulters. The police were nicknamed "*ogwang-gweno*"; *ogwang* is a wildcat. The nickname means chicken grabbers in wildcat-style. Literally speaking therefore, "Bwana Gweno" means lord of chicken grabbers. This nickname poked fun at the system of public

administration that amounted to political, physical and administrative coercion. It was also a form of protest against tax as a user-hostile system of fund-raising and cash-economy that works only by enslaving local labour.

“*Bwana*” means “lord” and is a word borrowed from the colonial India controlled by the British. When they brought Indians to East Africa to build the railway, the Indians introduced the term “*bwana*” to coastal Kenya and kiswahili spread it far and wide (Kapila 2009 and Nowrojee, 2004). At some point in history, *bwana* became a nickname with several interpretations including boss for ‘in charge’ and *mudosi* for ‘a cruel dictator’ who kicks people around. In master-servant relationship *bwana* is an economic benefactor; *bwana dogo* (‘little lord’) refers to *bwana*’s son, while *mem-saab* is *bwana*’s wife, the woman he sleeps-with or his ‘piece of arse’, to use the crude British term. When Kenyan politician Mark Too died in January 2017, his immense sense of humour had earned him the nickname *Bwana Dawa*, a tonic for bored souls or prescription to soften political opponents (Tanui, 2017). In 1910 Reginald Pearce managed a farm in Koru, Kenya, where he was known as *Bwana Viazi* because he brought the ‘Irish’ Potato. From this nickname, one learns the story of a Peruvian food plant that revolutionised Europe, caused major population migrations, and eventually

landed on an unsuspecting Luo community in Koru. A century or so later, many Kenyans no longer know that the potato was virtually forced upon their ancestors.

During Idi Amin’s time in Uganda, there was *Labalpiny*, ‘spoiler’ in reference to Amin as someone who wrecked Uganda. The nickname enabled Ugandans to confront Aminism without getting into trouble. According to Batoma (2009) discreet communication was safe during political conflicts. Apart from *Labalpiny* there was *Tycoon*, a nickname Kampala populace gave an Acholi man because he was seen as someone with too much money. Tycoon was also a form of lamentation at ways Ugandans were embracing Amin’s ‘economic war’ that translates as ‘cash at all cost’ including personal interest at the expense of common good and the power to spend money without reservations. In 1986, when Yoweri Museveni assumed Uganda Presidency, Tycoon gave himself the nickname *Byaruhanga*; meaning, only God is able. We might never know why Tycoon adopted this nickname. However, after several years of Museveni’s presidency, Ugandans are wondering whether or not only God can remove Museveni from power.

### 3.2 Nicknames that seem related to food

In Acholi culture invitation to dine with the family is extended to all, including strangers. The invitation happens because sharing food is

cherished as a means to surviving disaster. Though this is the case, there are exceptions when it comes to dishes as rare as meat. The nickname 'your eyelids are heavy on account of the carcass of a cow that died of dysentery' speaks of men whose eyes are bigger than their stomachs (p'Bitek, 1998). It pokes fun at, undermines, and attempts to correct unwillingness to share food. Though selfishness is not an Acholi social ideal, some people prefer to receive food from others instead of giving. The nickname, '*Ogitgit*', speaks against selfishness because it is about the individual at the expense of the community and not in the spirit of 'I am because we are'.

*Char mach*, 'shine light' is a nickname of a greedy woman who likes too much food. This is why she prefers to serve food at night as it serves her greedy trait. At night, when it is too dark for anyone to see clearly and complain about her biased serving of food, she serves a lot of food for women because that is where she will eat. When it is time to serve men, she asks an assistant, usually a little girl, to shine light so that she may keep an eye on the men's portion, to make sure men get only a little food. In general the nickname speaks against selective generosity or outright discrimination because both are antisocial behaviours.

The nickname *lupucu ngut ngwen*, 'friends enough to split the neck of a termite' means

bosom buddies who cannot be separated by the smallest or biggest of things. Closely related to this is the expression 'friends enough to split the abdomen of a termite' or friends who can share anything, from material to imaginary and bad to good. Almost in stark contradiction to 'friends enough to split the neck of a termite' is 'friendship makes blood rot'; meaning, even great friendship can wane enough to bring about mistrust and dishonesty. The translation in English would be 'familiarity breeds contempt.' Questions arising from the complex nature of friendship form a part of intellectual engagement leading to generation and conservation of knowledge. Overall, Acholis value friendship from distant and nearby places; it is the way to get news, remain up-to-date and survive hardship.

*Wang dek nen*, means eye of sauce is visible. Whenever people go hunting for game or fish, they say they are looking for *dek*; something to cook into sauce that is served with sweet potatoes, cassava or millet bread. *Dek* includes beans, peas and green vegetables. The sauce or gravy has eyes is disturbing except when it is a dish of *lacede* (minnows). Incidentally, fish eyes remain 'seemingly open' whether or not the fish is alive or part of a meal. When one reaches adulthood, the nickname assumes metaphorical meanings. Food that is not well prepared is a symbol of a wife whose housekeeping is poor.

Where food is a metaphor for sex, the nickname discreetly refers to bad moral sexual conduct and is a tool in sex education.

### 3.3 Nicknames that related to sexuality and strength

This section begins with a female's nickname '*apii nget yoo*', which means 'I am a pool of water by the roadside'. The nickname suggests that the woman talks about herself as aimless. However, character assassination is not the essence of this nickname because the lady may probably be talking about her rival. This is likely to be the case because 'self-preservation', not 'self-destruction' is Acholi way of life. 'Self-denigration' is not part of Acholi culture. In order to understand the scene more clearly, one needs to know that Acholi women keep jostling for social position, outdoing a competitor and dominates a husband or lover's social space. Given this characteristic behaviour of typical traditional Acholi women, it is more likely that the nickname is a way of taking a swipe at 'the other woman' and doing so for personal victory; to feel good and for the sake of emotional health. By shouting her nicknames the woman says her rival is every man's woman. In Kalenjin (a Kenyan ethnic community), such type of a woman is referred to as *chemulaiyat* or *malaya* in Kiswahili.

Secondly, the nickname '*amalakwang*' means 'I am *malakwang* vegetable', a plant women love

to harvest. Though '*malakwang*' is a dark green vegetable, by this nickname, the bearer views himself as a Casanova while making statements on culture. Among the Kamba the nickname '*musunzuika*' which means ever sexually young is the closest one gets to being a Casanova. The Luo nickname for the same in DhoLuo is '*bodho*' which means a male or female sex maniac. While the Kalenjin refer to the same nickname as '*kiplambuiyo*' which means a male prostitute, the Kikuyu nickname for the same is '*githaria*' which means a sexually adulterous man. The meaning is close to '*amalakwang*', which refers to a 'hot stuff'. Among the Acholi, the green and sour vegetable is cooked in peanut butter and served with sweet potatoes. In general, married women usually serve their husbands a dish of *malakwang* because of its good taste. It is believed that the dish is a way to a man's heart. In addition the nickname '*idworo cwari ki malakwang*' among the Acholi means that pampering your husband with the *malakwang* dish helps validate the view of the vegetable as one way to a man's heart. Married women entice their husbands through food and they say in their traditional slung that '*coo ki laro ki agulu*' which means cooking pots win over husbands or good food can deliver the man you yearn to have. When a man refuses to eat his wife's food, the act is translated as a metaphor for refusing to make love to her, and that is a

way of making a point as serious as a suggestion of separation.

Whereas *'amalakwang'*, which stand for 'I am a Casanova' is a young man's view of himself as a 'winner' of women, the nickname *'omiyo wange pi mite'* means the woman has shut her eyes because of sweetness, in response to romance. African traditions prohibit discussing sex in public between members of opposite sex and between young and adults, but discussions on sex thrive in private, within same sex groups and among age mates. The nickname provides a path for breaking the taboo without retribution. Meanwhile, Okot (not p'Bitek) was popularly known by his nickname *'mon dagi'*, which means 'women don't like you', why? Culturally women do not like men who are physically ugly, lazy, weak, and without oratory competences and not equipped with crafting skills. A woman does not like a man whose head is 'dead'. The statement means, a man who is unable to figure out many things including improving on the quality of life in his family. *'Dako kati'* is a nickname for a tall woman who, it suggests, hates dating and marrying a shorter man. It is culturally believed that a woman should not be taller than her husband. Ideally, a wife should be shorter than her husband; with a height of between his shoulder and chin is seen as the right proportion.

The nickname *'Lyeto mac oywayo cun opuk'* stands for 'hot fire pulled-out the penis of a tortoise'. It is based on observing the tortoise burning in bush fire. In Acholi region the hottest part of the dry season ranges from January to March every year. During this period people set bushes on fire to facilitate hunting and easy killing of wild animals. Though tortoises are not hunted they are often caught in bush fires where they burn and die. The expression 'penises show whenever male tortoises die in fire' means even a tough personality can budge under pressure, just like the proof of the pudding is in eating it and when the going is tough, the tough get going. The expression also speaks on perception of manhood as driven by testosterone and a handful-of-balls mentality.

The nickname *'okoch emong'* is used when making a statement on a bull-of-a-man. It is also a nickname of a village elder. In the Turkana culture buffalo behaviour is scrutinised in order to unravel meanings in this nickname. It is generally known that junior buffaloes often fight, defeat and expel the most-senior male from the herd. The expelled senior male is nicknamed *'okoch'* which means 'solitary male'. Although expelled and on his own, the old bull remains cunning, skilled, experienced and in combat mood, viewed as a symbol of old age and of lost glory. *'Emong'* is a Turkana nickname for a favourite bull that the owner has

painstakingly shaped, through time and imagination until it is in line with his inner-self. It is a bull whose horn and character the owner has crafted and treats like a well-crafted jewel. This is the nickname of a man who is shaped by pains over time; he is resilient, witty no pushover and everything that makes a great man is *'okoc emong'*.

### 3.4 Nicknames that are related to thought systems

*'Apura pa kono'* is an elderly man's nickname that means 'the black and white feathers. In Acholi and other Nilotic-speakers' aesthetics wearing feathers is a way of dressing-up to look right, proper and beautiful. East African Nilotes use black and white ostrich feathers to symbolise alternating opposites like day and night. Among the Turkana, who are believed to be distant cousins of the Acholi, black and white feathers distinguish the mountain and leopard moieties. The Luo of Kenya considers a lady beautiful when she is black in complexion and has white teeth and white eyes. This dominance with a little contrast as punctuation and accentuation adds up a sense of beauty (Pido, 2015). In addition, feathers are embedded in sexuality. The expression *'Chii kono waa ni'* means the female spirit of our own feather. It is a way Acholi clan members fondly refer to their wives and in *'myel moko'*, which means 'get-stuck dance'. It is a style of dance in which boys

wear white feathers on their heads to symbolise or display sexual potency.

The nickname *'apura pa kono'* means black and white feathers, brings into focus the naming of colours in East Africa. It seems only black, white and red have names while other colours are likened to something else. In Acholi language black is called *'chol'*, while white is *'lachar'*, and red is *'kwar'* and blue is *'otir'* just like the blue of *otir* bird. Among the Luo, who are cousins of the Acholi, black is *'rateng'*, white is *'rachar'* and red is *'rakwar'*. Other colours are given names according to common objects representing the colours. In Kiswahili, the lingua franca of East Africa, black is *'nyeusi'*, white is *'nyeupe'*, red is *'nyekundu'*, green is *'kijani kibichi'* like that of a sprouting or shooting leaf, and yellow is *'majano'* like the sun or turmeric root. In Luhya, black is *'imali'*, white is *'indafu'*, red is *'inzakhanyu'*, while yellow is *'mayayi'* as derived from egg yolk and green is *'obulimo'* which is the name for grass. It is not clear why black, white and red do not to take their names from things around the environment.

The expression *'wilobo aye ladit'* means 'only the universe is boss' is a nickname of an old lady who lived at Akara Mucwini. It relates to the unopposed powers of the supernatural and refers to the universe as boss or God alone is able and everything happens according to His wish and direction. This system of thought

leaves every good or bad thing to the universe and absolves man of any part in doing anything. The expression '*wilobo aye ladit*' suggests that there is the planet earth with two parts to it; the solid part and the space above it. The literal translation of that expression is that the space above is the all-powerful; and refers to the sun, moon and stars that make all things happen and affects man in all directions and all the time. The word '*ladit*' also implies seniority, wisdom, maturity and objective judgment. The nickname refers to humans; what they can and cannot achieve. It makes humans behave with humility since there is something more powerful than them. The nickname also provides a safe way of discussing the supernatural without getting into trouble. Generally the Acholi respect the supernatural and prefer to approach it cautiously and discreetly although they sometimes openly accuse God for doing bad things or blaming death for taking their loved ones. They say '*too wiye tek*' which means death is arrogant.

An old lady's nickname is '*anaiyingook*' which means 'I am a dog' that makes a statement on spiritual nature of dogs. The Turkana may be a likely origin of the nickname because '*ingook*' is a Turkana word for a dog. In a typical Turkana homestead, there is very little water and no soft leaves to clean up spills. From time to time a domestic dog is called upon to clean people's

messes. When a baby passes their stool in unwanted places, a dog is invited to lick clean the faeces, including the little baby's anus. When milk or other foods spill, a dog is called upon to clean the mess. The nickname '*ingook*' suggests that the old lady is the one who cleans messes of her family and makes the household secure. Among the Acholis, a dog is a partner in hunting and in the provision of food and an overnight watchman providing security when people are asleep. In the Acholi spiritual world, a dog is said to possess a punitive human spirit in similar ways as the Kabre in Togo (Batoma, 2008). A person who kills a dog without a good reason it is believed will have hell dealing with the spirit. The nickname means a subservient widow. It also refers to a lowly social position in the society and even a casual onlooker may want to know what makes an individual feel like a dog. The urge to know the truth, including similar questions encourage conversation and sharing of knowledge on social relationships.

Other important nicknames include '*ibolo toto*', '*olorolor*', '*awoto mot*', '*awoto wang ma aoo*' which all mean 'you toss it again'. Olorolor is a plant, and it means 'I move slowly, but I get to my destination'. The expression is about resilience, perseverance and determination, which are values that make a true person. The expression '*ibolo toto*', which means you toss it again, stands for incessant or repeated steps

one takes in physical walking to a place or mental walking towards achieving a goal. Either way, physical or mental walking, a reward is said to come only with insistence. The Acholi saying '*kitikiti oweko Adore otucu bul*' means 'insistence helped Adore to succeed'. The expression reminds the Acholi to insist on what they value. '*Olorolor*' is a difficult weed to kill whether by digging up, cutting or burning because it survives severe drought and direct fire. As soon as the weed comes to contact with water, the roots, stem or leaves grow into a full plant and its regeneration starts. It is also a known pest to food crops. When one is described as '*olorolor*', it is suggested that the person is awfully stubborn and behaves like a pest. The nicknames '*Awoto mot*' and '*awoto wang ma aoo*' means someone who moves slowly but gets where they ought to reach. The expression makes a metaphorical statement on a life journey where even late starters reach their desired destinations; either at the same time or even earlier than those who start before them. Given that traditional Acholi women are subservient, the expression is a lady's nickname that indicates goals and determinations that women often keep hidden from men. This happens because men take women unawares and undermine their plans with an aim of failing the plans. It is not known why this happens; perhaps the reason is

because of constant rivalry between men and women.

While there are good historical reasons for polygamy in pre-cash economies, its slow demise has not eliminated rivalry among wives in polygamous homes. Notwithstanding, bad or good reasons, women who share a husband vigorously compete for his attention with various outcomes, among them are nicknames such as '*lakony manono*', '*ikonyo dano ki gwoko*', '*kun wegi ne tye*', with each statement meaning 'a mere assistant wife', 'you assist others to take care of husbands, yet those husbands have owners'. In general these nicknames carry messages regarding displeasure in sharing a spouse, beginning from the angle of Christianity. Beyond Christianity there is the sense of 'mine every time' that underlines and tends to set unwritten rules in love relationships. It is this sense of direction that generates jealous desires to own an individual and say 'my husband,' and why women find it difficult to occupy positions of second wives and assistant wives.

Other nicknames for men include '*yutu piny onguku adani loka*' which means 'nightfall caught your grandma on the opposite side of the stream'. The nickname is discussed through the lens of position in time and place. An Acholi does not like night because he believes that evil moves under the cover of darkness. Moving

around at night depicts looking for trouble. They say moving at night is a sure way of '*nyono man wor ki ingom*' which is the equivalent to 'stepping on the testicles of night' which means getting into deep trouble because the supernatural is believed to awake at night. The phrase '*yutu piny*' means the onset of night and it is when villagers are chasing evils from their homesteads into night. A grandmother or any elderly woman is expected to be at her home to chase out evils from the homestead and to protect her own children from dangers presented by evils. Evil is said to reside in water and gets mischievous at night. One can imagine the dilemma members of the family experience when their grandma is stranded on the opposite side of a body of water. So, '*yutu piny onguku adani loka*' represents a picture of life in perpetual danger, worrisome, helpless and pitiful.

Another simple nickname with a complex background is '*can wat*', which means 'poverty of relatives'. This is one kind of poverty that contemporary economics is unable to see. It is also a nickname of a lady in her nineties. The Acholis say lack of relatives makes one foolish. In this context 'foolish' means the woman is emotionally weak, worried and uncertain about her continued survival. Having relatives is desirable because numbers tend to give hope, making one feel comfortable and spiritually

strong. In summary, having relatives makes one contented with life. The sense of contentment explains why a person who has children stands greater chances of continuity, and is said to be rich. Of course, more children also means 'a source of labour', to produce more food that required to ward-off death through sickness and hunger or even famine. Some people worry about what will happens to them when they die; who will bury them and where they will be buried. Children are often seen as undertakers of parents after death. This is a peace of mind brought about by knowing where and who takes care of one after death and is the reason why sometimes one feels rich with children. Having many children suggests a wider extended family, a big sphere of influence and a sense of happiness that comes with ability to influence. Perhaps it is now clear why '*can wat*'; meaning 'lack of relatives' is a form of poverty as far as Acholis are concerned.

Finally, a brief discussion on the nickname '*otwong wile ki otwong*', which means one good deed deserves another or good is done unto one who does good unto others'. In addition to reciprocity, the nickname teaches 'tit for tat'. If someone hurts your relative you seek to hurt his/her relative too. 'An eye for an eye', as way of dealing with offenses has changed to payment of '*kwor*,' which means 'compensation' in cows especially when the

offense results in death. The tradition places emphasis on female cattle because they multiply to become a herd and contribute to the enrichment and continued benefit of the affected family. Should one not have cattle, he can give a female who may be his daughter as a wife or a female servant because females are expected to fetch bride wealth that is often paid in cattle. The nickname *'otwong wile ki otwong'* means 'shortage of millet', especially when food is in short supply and there is starvation that forces women to share the little available food, which is one of the Acholi virtues. A woman with surplus grain lends a basket of grain to the other woman who does not have in order to avoid starvation and possible death. Another nickname *'otwong'* or *'egetonga'* in Ekegusii, *'atonga'* in Dholuo is a basket of moderate size neither too big nor too small. Anything between two extremes, just like with the Ancient Greeks, to be beautiful such as one who is neither too short nor too tall or neither too thin nor too fat. In other words, the basket is not overbearingly big because borrowing is proper when moderate and, therefore, easy to pay back.

#### 4 Summary and conclusion

This discussion on Acholi nicknames dealt with cultural views of food, personality, personhood, sexuality and worldview. There were nicknames such as *'ibino malyet'*, *'akweyi woko'*, which

meant 'you come hot, I cool you down'. These nicknames dwelt on aesthetics of the cool, humanisation of the non-human and taming the wild. Nicknames are often discreet because they are a way to speak on subjects that can be categorised as 'for-age-mates-only'. *'Pece'* which describes wetness, is a nickname that age mates use to speak of orgasm and discuss sexual intercourse but the discussion and knowledge generated is locked into the cohort of age mates, as done or practised by youth everywhere. Outsiders are not allowed to break the lock and, if they tried, they surely get lost because wet means so many different things. The concerned age mates protect such a nickname to ensure it remains the terminology that unites them. In many cases nicknames are opaque to non-Acholi speakers. A good example is *'latwo telo'* which means 'even a sick man gets an erection'. It is very easy to mistake this nickname for a statement on unusual sex behaviour although the nickname concerns recovery from sickness. Whenever a sick person gets an erection, it is a signal that he is recovering and will be healthy soon for hardly anybody gets an erection when he is still very sick.

Overall Acholi nicknames communicate indigenous knowledge but they must be unlocked, deconstructed and explained in detail in writing in order to share their meanings with

the wider world in time and space. It is writing and publication that holds a promise of conserving the knowledge so easily lost because it is considered casual, trivial and peripheral to the core of cultures. This is true because authors of nicknames and their relatives are dying at a fast rate. In the late 20<sup>th</sup> century disease took a heavy toll on the generators of culture in Uganda, and elsewhere in sub-Saharan Africa, causing great loss of indigenous knowledge. Besides, exotic language and technology are changing the world so fast that nicknames will be forgotten at the same speed. It will not be long before all is gone if the study of this important genre is neglected.

Nicknames such as *'akamu kori'*, *'lupyeli icobo nali'*; *'lupeityang'* and many more need further research to describe, explain and unravel their meanings. This study depended on relatives and people known to the author. A study covering more people may produce more data and fodder for future scholars. Comprehensive studies are necessary to fully understand the roles nicknames play in national politics. For example the nickname *'Agwambo'* refers to Raila Odinga; *'Nyayo'* refers to the former President Daniel Arap Moi, and many more good examples. Finally, the author suggests that studies be conducted in community nicknames such as *'Otigo manok otyeko kwon'*, which means 'a little okra dish finishes a mountain of

millet bread'. This nickname is for the people of Chua in Northern Uganda. Okot p'Bitek mentioned the nickname in his book *'White Teeth'* but it is yet to receive adequate analytical attention. Chua comprises clans of which each clan has a characteristic nickname such as Panyum has *'Bira yee'*, *'Kabedo rac'*, *'Kayi Tebo rac'*, *'Lunyili'*, *'Katibong'*; Pajong has *'Labwor yee'*, *'Oryo yee'*, *'Otira'*, *'Kilong'*; and finally Bura has *'Moro yee'*, *'Arem yee'*, *'Adwala yee'*. None of these clan nicknames have been studied though it seems each of them tells the history of and stand for values that are central to the clan. There is need to interrogate community members to find out if such values have a place in today's Africa, before the values are forgotten.

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