

## A Phonological Comparison of Transliteration of Shona and Chinese Names

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**Abstract.** This research is a phonological comparison of Chinese and Shona names. The research shows that Chinese names are structurally different from Shona names because when calling Chinese names both the given names and surnames are normally combined. It was also noted that Chinese names are generally disyllabic or trisyllabic while Shona given names and surnames combined are at least quadrisyllabic or more. We also used PRAAT software to analyze Shona tone patterns and it was observed that Shona names follow a predictable high to low tone pattern which differs from tones in Chinese names which are not predictable. Since Chinese language has four tones while Shona language has two tones only it was predicted that name distortion is unavoidable when names from these two cultures are transliterated. We suggested that more researches should be done to explore the impact of name distortion to individuals in these two cultures.

**Keywords:** Shona, Chinese, comparison, names, transliteration.

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### 1.0 INTRODUCTION

Name is a sub branch of onomastics and it is defined as a word or set of words by which a person, animal, place, or thing is known, addressed, or referred to (The Pocket Oxford Dictionary of Current English, 2009). In this paper we will use the word name as it is used to identify human beings.

Though it is widely agreed that names hold significant meanings (Mawere 2010; Guma 2001), their structure however, vary enormously across cultures. This paper is an attempt to identify similarities and differences between Shona and Chinese names, the comparative analysis will be based mainly on the

phonological structure of names in these two cultures. According to Bentle (1996), from remote times to the present, cross-cultural interactions have had significant political, social, economic, and cultural ramifications for all peoples involved. Therefore, the main aim of this research is to show name distortion caused by intercultural interaction resulting from differences in name structure as well as name use in these two different cultures.

The term Shona refers to both the people and the language spoken in Zimbabwe with various linguistic dialectal groups who occupy the greater part of Zimbabwe, the main 5 dialects being the Korekore dialect, Zezuru dialect, the Manyika dialect, the Ndau dialect and the Karanga dialect (Gwaravanda and Masaka, 2008). On the other hand, the word Chinese in this paper is used to refer to both the culture and the language of the people who live in the mainland of China only.

### 1.1 Motivation and justification

The motivation to compare Chinese and Shona names emanated from some observations made by the researchers during their stay in China. We observed that a number of Zimbabweans and other foreign students staying in China would prefer to have a pure Chinese name than their real names being transliterated into Chinese mainly because they never liked the way their names were pronounced by the Chinese people. For instance, Herbert [heəbət] being turned into Haibota [xaibota], *Rumbidzai* [ʌ umʔidzɛ ai] being turned into Lubi [lubi], *Ruva* [ʌ uʋa] being turned into *Ruwa* [ʌ uwa] etcetera. The majority of students would feel like their names are being turned into something weird, for instance a name like *Ropafadzo* [ʌ opafadzɛ o], which means “blessings” in Shona language would be transliterated into 罗妃 (in Chinese pinyin: Luopa, phonetically written as: [luop ' a]) which sounds like the word “ropa” which in Shona language contrary means blood.

Researches that compare name structure and meaning distortion due to transliteration between different cultures are rare both in Zimbabwe and across

Africa. There is little if not none written about name distortion resulting from intercultural interaction and transliteration. It is therefore our hope that this research will help Chinese people and Zimbabwean people to understand similarities and differences between Shona and Chinese names as well as significance of the pronunciation when calling names in these cultures. In a nutshell, apart from expanding researches in the onomastic field and inviting more comparative researches of this nature, it is our hope that this research will help increase intercultural understanding and promote Africa and China's acculturation.

## 1.2 Literature review

There are many researches related to names both in Zimbabwe and across the world. In Zimbabwe researches about names are commonly centered on the significance of names. Mawere (2010) notes that; in the Shona culture, a name is always associated with a specific significance. Makondo (2007) also support this notion thus he argues that Shona personal names are loaded with evaluations of pre- and post- experiences surrounding death, thus death-related Shona personal names are multi-functional and are coined after careful considerations of the prevailing life experiences of the name givers and the named. Makondo's assertion is that names are not randomly given; rather name givers observe situations around them and express their feelings, wishes etcetera through names. Other relevant researches include Mashiri's 1999 research on terms of address in Shona, where he argued that;

“... Naming and addressing practices are dynamic and they reflect linguistic, political and cultural changes as well as the changes and continuities in the way human relationships and identities are perceived...” (Mashiri, 1999).

Mashiri (ibid) emphasized on the type of names that the Shona people utilize, the contexts in which they are applied, their semantics as well as the political and cultural circumstances that motivate creation or selection of these names.

Researches related to Chinese names which are mainly found in Chinese textbooks also reveal that names are given with special meanings or as prophetic

words for the future of a child. For instance, Jí Chánghóng (1997:2) asserts that;

“Chinese names are not merely icons of one’s identity but they embody parents’ aspirations, with socio-political significance”.

Similar sentiments are expressed by Zhū Chūn léi (2012), thus he notes that;

“When giving names Chinese people normally give full consideration of the Chinese characters’ pronunciation, form and meaning, so as to make one’s name pleasant to hear, easy to remember, nice to look at (when written in characters) and with a clear meaning”

This shows that in both Chinese and Shona culture when selecting a name, meaning is central; in other words names are not randomly given. However, what lacks in the above researches is a comparative analysis of name structure across cultures as well as how meanings of names are affected when pronounced with different accents or tones.

In 2006, the United Kingdom produced a document titled; A guide to names and naming to provide information on names and naming for different countries, where they attempted to show types of names in different cultures. However, their main aim was to show that names are a valuable source of information since they can indicate gender, marital status, birthplace, nationality, ethnicity, religion, and position within a family or even within a society. The name guide explored how to identify given names and surnames from different cultures such as Asian cultures, African cultures and other cultures where the naming systems differ from the Western naming systems. However, this name guide did not explore how names from foreign cultures are transliterated into other cultures and the possible distortions that may happen when a foreign name is transliterated into another language.

There are also some other researches related to African naming system which are relevant to this study, for instance, Guma (2001:265) argued that, “names are more than a ‘word’ or words by which a person, animal, place or thing is known, and does not fundamentally connote designation, reputation, or identification, separation of one individual from the other...”. In a way Guma believes that names carry one’s identity and they give information about an individual’s life experiences, social norms and values, status roles and authority,

as well as individual attributes. Guma's research explored the significance of names in the Basotho of Southern African tracing both the naming systems in African societies as well as how names reveal the socio-cultural historical events and the aspect of 'self', 'person' or 'individual' in a southern Sotho speaking African society.

There are also many other researches that explore the significance of naming such as Strawson (1974), who argues that the reason why we name people but not our cars, frying pans, or the rooms of our house is that, for any particular person, there is a wide circle of language users that have an interest in the continued identity of and in referring to that person, yet lack any unique, natural singular term with which to refer, thus we introduce names for people. Jeshion (2009) on the other hand questioned this notion and asked whether we name to single out an individual from all other individuals or we name to mark off an individual's individuality. Jeshion (ibid) though he acknowledges the importance of semantic utility as the basis for name-giving, but he denies that it is the sole fundamental reason, thus he argues that another fundamental function of proper names is to signal or mark an individual's individuality.

However, in this paper we are not trying to put forward any arguments as to whether names are given for identification or for individuality, rather we want to assess the phonological structure of proper names in Shona and Chinese culture. We agree to the notion that in both Chinese and Shona culture, people do not randomly give names, rather they inspect carefully and adopt those names that semantically represent their feelings, emotions, goals, aspirations etcetera, thus creating a unique name that identifies the individual(s) being named. This is the reason why there are websites that guide on how to choose best names, such as; <http://www.babynames.com/> and <http://www.babynamenameguide.com/>. In China there are websites such as <http://www.chinaname.cn/> and <http://www.qm.com.cn/ybs.html>, where parents pay money to have their babies get named by name specialists. In Shona culture naming a child can cause conflict between the father and the mother if the meaning of the child's name does not truthfully depicts the feelings and thoughts of one of the parents.

It is apparent that both cultures under discussion give importance to meanings of children's names thus in this paper we argue that distortion of somebody's name does not only show disrespect but is also a destruction of one's identity. In this paper we will attempt to show the possible name transliteration by Shona and Chinese people when calling names from the opposite culture as well as the impact of transliteration to meanings of names.

### 1.3. Theoretical framework and research questions

This paper is based on the hypothesis that name transliteration may be viewed as distortion of one's name or disrespect of one's identity, thus leading to possible cultural friction, misidentification, hatred and frustration. In a paper presented at the Rutgers DCS Light Seminar on Professional Development by Xiaolei Huang a Chinese author, it was revealed that Americans pronounce Chinese names in a weird way thus the presenter asked; "Should I change my name to make it easier for American people to pronounce?" The author argued that her name is given by her parents with such a good will yet when it's called out by foreigners it sounds weird. Similar complaints were raised by some Zimbabwean students studying in China; one student called *Ruwa* (meaning flower) found her name being transliterated to *Ruwa* (茹哇) by Chinese friends. *Ruwa* in Zimbabwe is a name of a place in the outskirts of Harare, thus this student preferred to change her name to something else. Another student called *Sarudzai* (to make a choice) also refused to be called by Chinese transliterated name because due to the nature of Chinese sound system and nature of Chinese names her name was transliterated into *Sharu* (莎茹) which sounds exactly the same with the word */sharu/* a word which means "old" in Shona.

In this research we emphasize that names are not only an integral part of human beings but significant part of his/her identity. Therefore, it is necessary to analyze phonological structures of names in these two cultures, so as to show the possible name distortion. The major questions we attempt to answer in this research are;

1. What are the structural similarities and differences between Shona and Chinese language?
2. What could be the name distortions caused by transliteration?

## **2.0 METHODOLOGY**

Data used in this research was collected from different sources; some samples were collected from list of Zimbabwean students at the University of Zimbabwe, list of Chinese students at Renmin University and Hebei University, Facebook, Renren Chinese social network and other social networks using random selection sampling method. Initially 50 Chinese names and 50 Shona names were collected; however for the purposes of data presentation a smaller sample size was used. For Shona names all other names derived from English or borrowed from other languages were removed, while for Chinese names 10 popular names were selected.

PRAAT software was also used as a major tool in analyzing the pattern of Shona tones on Shona names. This was done mainly because in Shona language tone marks are rarely used in written texts, hence in most cases we do not know the types of tones on Shona proper names. Ten randomly selected names were recorded and a simple acoustic analysis was done to produce PRAAT grid pictures showing tone marks. This was used to predict how native speakers of Shona language are likely to produce Chinese names.

Desktop research and library research methods were used mainly for the theoretical framework and definition of various names. The Chinese Modern Dictionary (6<sup>th</sup> edition) was used as the basic reference book for the meanings of different Chinese names while for Shona names Dale's Duramanzwi Shona-English Dictionary was used as the basic source of data. Since the researchers are both native speakers of Shona and are qualified Chinese language teachers, data analysis was done based on researchers' linguistics knowledge and personal knowledge of these two languages.

### **2.1. Brief comparison of the Shona-Chinese sound system**

In order to understand the differences between Shona and Chinese names there is need to understand both the morphological and phonological structure of these two languages. However, in this paper we are not going to discuss the morphological and phonological structure of these languages in depth, both Chinese and Shona names depend on the sound system of these languages.

Both Chinese and Shona language use Latin letters for the purposes of representing various sounds. Chinese language consists of 23 consonants and more than seven vowels while Shona has about 60 consonants and 5 vowels (Mushangwe, 2011). Figure 1 below is a list of vowels and consonants in these 2 languages written both in Latin letters and International Phonetic transcription;

*Figure 1: Shona and Chinese vowels and consonant list*

Shona vowels [a, e, i, o, u].	Chinese simple vowels [a, e, ɤ, y, i, o, u]
<b>Shona Consonants</b>	
b[b], bh[b̥], bv[bv̥], bw[b̥ʷ], ch[tʃ], chw[tʃʷ], d[d̥], dh[d̥̥], dz[dz̥], dy[d̥ʒg], dzv[d̥z̥], dzw[d̥z̥ʷ], f[f̥], g[g̥], gw[g̥ʷ], h[h̥], hw[h̥ʷ], j[d̥ʒ], k[k̥], kw[k̥ʷ], m[m̥], mb[m̥b̥], mbw[m̥b̥ʷ], mh[m̥], mv[m̥v̥], mw[m̥ʷ], n[n̥], nd[n̥d̥], n'[n̥], ng[n̥g̥], ngw[n̥g̥ʷ], nh[n̥], nw[n̥ʷ], ny[n̥], nz[n̥z̥], nzv[n̥z̥], zw[n̥z̥ʷ], p[p̥], pf[p̥f̥], pw[p̥ʷ], r[r̥], rw[r̥ʷ], s[s̥], sh[s̥], sv[s̥v̥], sw[s̥ʷ], t[t̥], ts[ts̥], tsv[t̥s̥], tsw[t̥s̥ʷ], tw[t̥ʷ], ty[t̥j̥], v[v̥], vh[v̥h̥], w[w̥], y[j̥], z[z̥], zh[z̥ʒ], zv[z̥v̥], w[z̥ʷ]	
<b>Chinese Consonants</b>	
b[p], c[ts̥], ch[ts̥ʰ], d[t̥], f[f̥], g[k], h[x], j[tɕ], k[k̥q̥[tɕ̥]], r[ʒ], s[s̥], sh[s̥], t[t̥ʰ], m[m], n[n], ng[n̥], p[p̥], x[c], w[w], y[j̥], z[ts̥], zh[t̥ʂ]	
(Mushangwe 2011:18).	

As shown above there are more vowels in Chinese than in Shona, while there are more consonants in Shona than in Chinese. This entails that some transliteration of either Shona to Chinese or Chinese to Shona which are based on the sound system of the transliterating person's language might not be direct equivalents of the original sounds.

According to Li Dong (2005) there are 419 Chinese syllables however Shona syllables are unlimited, since they support an unlimited consonant-vowel (CV) construction pattern (Mudzingwa, 2010). What makes Chinese syllables unique is the fact that despite their limited number, the 419 syllables can be inflected by 4 different tones to produce a maximum of 1676 different meanings (calculated by multiplying 419 syllables by 4 tones). For Shona language only two types of tones which are High and Low are normally used to differentiate meanings for some few syllables. For Chinese language, apart from tones there are characters



which play a vital role in differentiating meanings between syllables with same tones.

According to Zhao and Zhang (2007) it is estimated that there are over 80 thousand Chinese characters, thus this makes the Chinese sound system more complex than any other languages. Chinese characters are symbols that represent meaning, thus every symbol either represents a word or a minimal unit of meaning and each character represents a single syllable with a specific tone (Ning and Montanaro, 2012:5). For example the character 石 is a single syllable /shi/ which represents the sound [ʃi] and at the same time represents the meaning equivalent to /stone/. For Shona language the majority of words require a combination of syllables to produce distinct meaningful syllables. These differences between Shona and Chinese language's sound system are also the major sources of the structural differences between Shona names and Chinese names as will be shown in the following section.

## 2.2. DATA ANALYSIS

Below are 10 Shona names and 10 Chinese names which were used as the base for comparison in this paper. These names were analyzed in terms of their syllabic structure;

*Table 1: Shona names and their meanings*

Given Names	Surnames
<i>Chipo</i> (Gift)	<i>Chikwadze</i> (He who beats)
<i>Simbarashe</i> (God's power)	<i>Ruzvidzo</i> (looked down upon)
<i>Takura</i> (We are now mature)	<i>Badza</i> (plough or hoe)
<i>Tsitsi</i> (mercy)	<i>Damba</i> (African fruit klapper apple)
<i>Vimbai</i> (trust)	<i>Timire</i> (standing or waiting)
<i>Tendai</i> (being grateful)	<i>Madzokere</i> (he who goes back)
<i>Tinashe</i> (The Lord is with us)	<i>Mushangwe</i> (bright home)
<i>Kumbirai</i> (ask for something)	<i>Maisiri</i> ( where it's not there)
<i>Nyengerai</i> (pray)	<i>Chitekedza</i> (He who walks stiffly)
<i>Rudo</i> (love)	<i>Mushangazhike</i> (he who works hard for his things to go well in his life)

*Table 2: Chinese names and their meanings*

Surname	Given names
樊 Fán (to Fence or to protect)	麾 Huī (to command)
丰 Fēng (abundant or good looking)	云 Yún (Clouds)
古 Gǔ (Ancient)	灵益 Líng yì (Clever and profit)
郭 Guō (Outer city wall)	田农 Tián nóng (Farming fields)
龚 Gōng (Supply or respect)	世运 shì yùn (life time fortune)
姜 Jiāng (Ginger)	国严 guó yán (strict country)
景 Jǐng (Scenery)	石 Shí (stone, strong)
金 Jīn (Gold or money)	渭斌 Sèi bīn (ornament)
李 Lǐ (plum)	晨硕 chén shuò (morning and big)
秦 Qín (A state in Zhou dynasty )	悦欣 Yuè xīn (pleasant and joyful)
施 Shī (execute an action)	敏 Mǐn (alert and resourceful or clever)

Though it is not the main objective of this paper to analyze meanings of names in these two cultures, however for the purposes of providing reference for future researches all the names used in this research were defined according to the meanings of the morphemes used to construct these names.

It is important to note that the word order used above for each language is the same order normally followed when calling out these names. For instance, the Chinese surnames always come first as in the name 丰云 Fēngyún, the first syllable /feng/ is the surname while /yun/ is the given name. According to Zhū Chūnléi (2012) in a 2 syllabic name like this it is totally impossible to call the given name alone without another syllable before it. In some parts of China the syllable/ 啊 a/ is added before such names when calling the person without the surname so for the name 丰云 Fēngyún one can say /啊云 ayun/, for 施敏 Shīmǐn one can say /阿敏 amin/.

In Shona language given names normally come first when calling individuals as in the name, *Tsitsi Damba*, *Tsitsi* is the given name while *Damba* is the surname. While for Chinese names the surname + given name word order is fixed, for Shona names the given name + surname word order is not fixed, under formal circumstance it is also possible to call the surname first before the

given name. This means that for names like */Kumbirai Maisiri/* and */Simbarashe Ruzvidzo/* can be also called out as */Maisiri Kumbirai/* and */Ruzvidzo Simbarashe/* respectively. As already discussed above that Chinese syllables are limited, it is impossible to rearrange the order of the words in the name because that will bring a totally new name thus causing confusion. For instance; if we change the order of words in the following names */金石 Jīnshí/* and */姜国严 Jiāng Guóyán/* to be */石金 ShíJīn /* and */国严姜 Guóyán Jiāng/* respectively, that will make a new name since the first syllables of the names in the new order 石 Shí and 国 Guó can be also surnames. Sun Xiao-Ling and Zhou Jing (2002) once noted that the way Chinese authors' names are presented in English in journals cause confusion in distinguishing surnames from given names and thus making it difficult to cite names properly in reference lists. This is one major difference between Chinese names and Shona names.

However, in both Shona and Chinese language it is possible to attach somebody's title on the surname to show respect or job position. What differs is the position where title words are attached, in Shona title words come before the surname while in Chinese they come after the surname, for instance in Shona one will say *VaTimire* or *VaRuzvidzo* for Mr or Mrs *Timire* and Mr or Mrs *Ruzvidzo* while in Chinese it is 李 Lǐ xiānshēng (Mr) or 李 fūrén (Mrs) and 金 Jīn xiānshēng (Mr) or 金 fūrén (Mrs). Chinese title words can never come before the surname or else the meaning conveyed will be totally different. For example, if one says furen Li, (instead of Li furen) that will sound exactly the same as the word 夫人里 (furenli) which means inside Mrs. Below is a detailed analysis of Shona and Chinese structure.

### 3.0. SHONA AND CHINESE NAMES' SYLLABIC DIFFERENCES

From the names we collected all Chinese names have the following two syllabic structures; the first structure is a single syllabic surname + a Single syllabic given name, as in the name 樊麾 FánHuī. The second most common structure is the single syllabic surname + a disyllabic given name, as in the

following names; 古灵益 Gǔ Líng yì, 龚世运 Gōng shì yùn and 郭田农 Guō Tián nóng

The shortest Shona name has 2 syllables on the first name and 2 syllables on the surname as can be seen on the following example; *Tsitsi Dombo* — /tsi- + -tsi, do- + -mbo/, this implies that the majority of Shona full names are at least quadrisyllabic. In Shona there is no maximum limit of syllables, in the examples selected above /Nye- + -nge- + -te- + -ra- + -i + Chi- + -te- + -ke- + -dza/ is the longest name with a total of 9 syllables. For Chinese language the longest name has 3 syllables such as in the name 古灵益/Gu + Líng + yì/. Pronunciation of Shona names can therefore be a challenge for Chinese people mainly because Shona syllables are too many; this partly explains why Chinese people would transliterate foreign names into some weird sounds.

### 3.1. TONAL DIFFERENCES BETWEEN SHONA AND CHINESE NAMES

Chinese language is a tonal language (Ding 2009), and Shona language is also a tonal language (Myers 1997). Zhū Chūnléi (2012) warned that when selecting a name in Chinese one has to pay attention to tones since there are many homophones in Chinese language. This implies that when comparing Shona and Chinese names there is need to compare this tonal aspect, however the challenge is that; though it is known that Shona language has 2 level tones, Shona words are rarely marked to indicate these tones. In Chinese all characters can be transcribed using Latin letters and four tone marks are normally used to indicate the type of tone on each syllable, therefore for the purpose of showing the pattern of Shona tones which can be compared with those in Chinese names PRAAT software was used for acoustic analysis. For this paper in order to analyze the Shona tone patterns we recorded 5 native speakers of Shona producing various Shona names and then we analyzed these names using PRAAT software and the following PRAAT picture samples were produced;

Figure 1: Tone pattern for the surname *Chikwadze* (High High Low tone pattern)

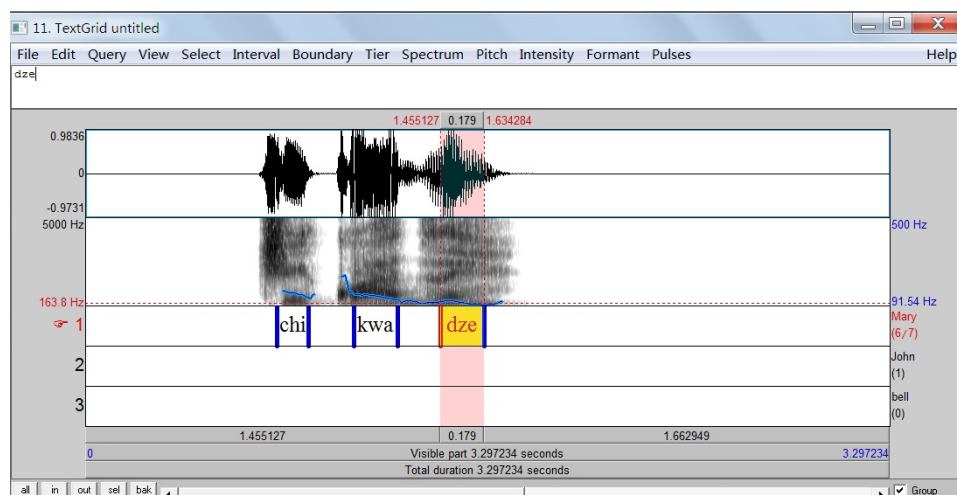
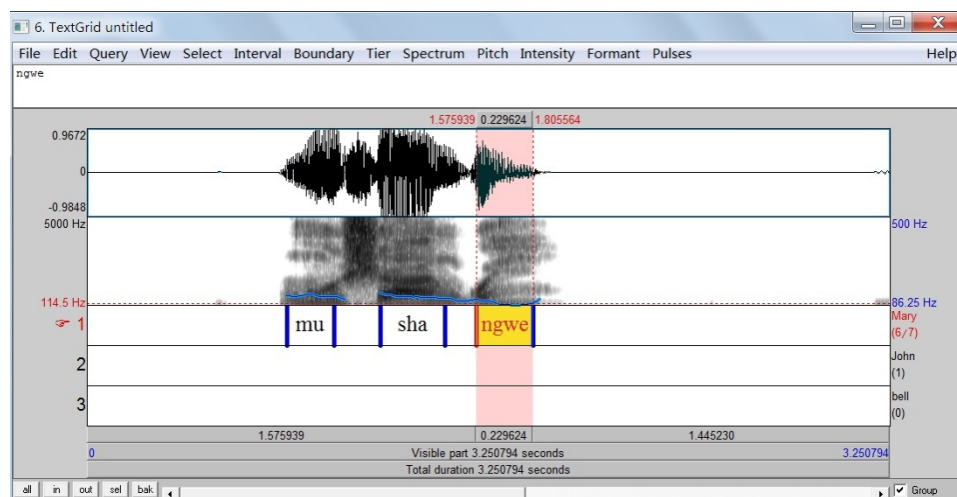


Figure 2: Tone pattern for the name *Mushangwe* (High High Low tone pattern)



For names with more than 3 syllables, the tone pattern observed also follows almost a similar rule as those observed on trisyllabic names, for instance the names *Simbarashe* and *Madzokere* showed a HHHL tone pattern as shown below;

Figure 3: Tone pattern for the name *Simbarashe* (HHHL tone pattern)

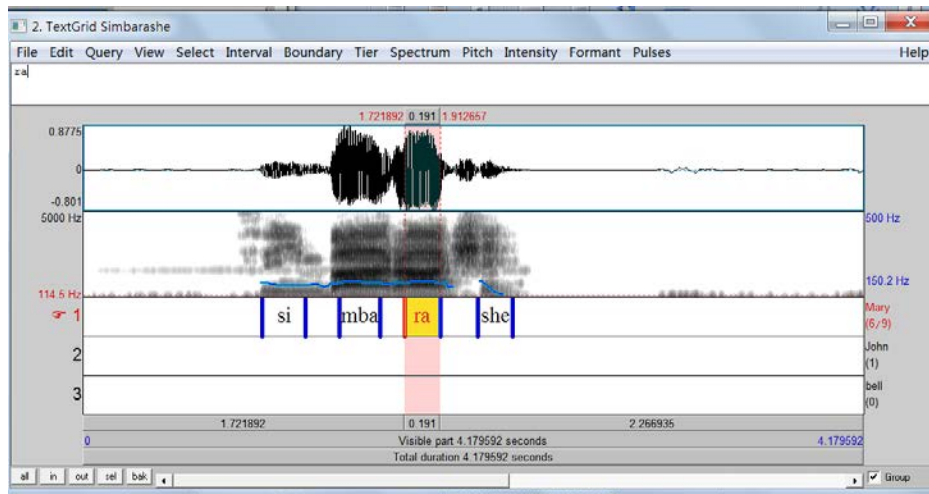
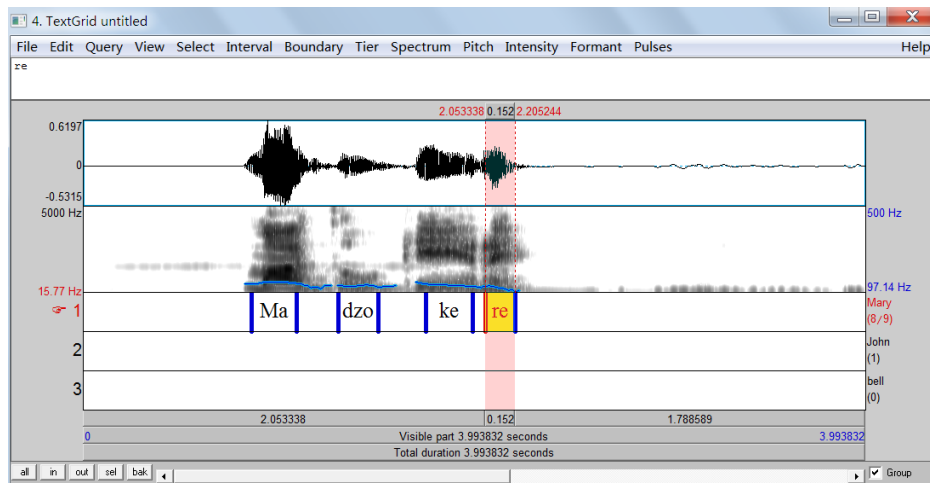
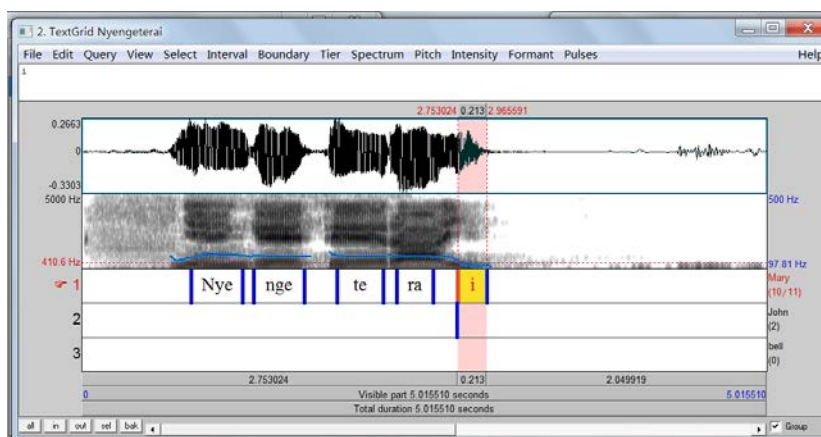


Figure 4: Tone pattern for the name *Madzokere* (HHHL tone pattern)



A similar pattern can be also observed in other names other than trisyllabic names and quadrisyllabic names, for instance a 5 syllabic name /Nyengeterai/ starts with 4 high toned syllables and last syllable ends with a low tone as shown on the following PRAAT picture;

Figure 5: Tone pattern for the Shona name *Nyengerai* (HHHHL Tone pattern)



As shown in the above PRAAT pictures where the blue lines show tone pattern and levels, Shona names seem to follow a fixed and predictable tonal pattern. While a High and Low (HL) tonal pattern or vice versa predominates disyllabic names (Dale 1981), for trisyllabic and quadrisyllabic names; High-High-Low (HHL) tone patterns and High-High-High-Low (HHHL) tone patterns respectively are prevalent. As can be seen from the samples above, in Shona it is common that a name should have a “resting” tone at the end, which might be described by other linguists as a low tone. This makes Shona names easy to read or call out for native speakers of Shona. If we give a native speaker any name to read or call out they are likely to follow this pattern.

However, this therefore implies that Shona native speakers are likely to produce the Chinese monosyllabic surnames and monosyllabic given names with either a high tone on the first syllable and a low tone on the second syllable or with a low tone on the first syllable and a high tone on the second syllable. The impact of such tonal changes will be discussed below.

#### 4. DISCUSSIONS

Based on the above results we concluded that when Shona people are calling out names they generally follow a HL, HHL, HHHHL tone pattern thus it is logical to argue that when they produce foreign names they will follow the same tone pattern. Since in Chinese language any change in tone will mean a change in meaning, we therefore conclude that meanings for Chinese names are likely to be distorted when they are being called out by native speakers of Shona

language. Chinese people are sensitive to tones, thus this is likely to be irritating or frustrating for some Chinese people especially when their names are called out with wrong tones and end up sounding like certain words in their language which they do not like. Below is a table showing some few examples transliterated into Shona;

*Table 3: Possible pronunciation of Chinese names by native speakers of Shona*

Chinese name and transcription	Shona alternative pronunciation and resulting meaning
丰云 Yún Fēng	Shona language does not have vowel equivalent to the Chinese /e/ thus /a/ will be the alternative and the rising tone on Yún will be either flat high or flat low, thus changing the meaning of this name to 晕 yūn which means dizziness. The last syllable has a level tone so the native Shona speaker will produce it as it is in Chinese.
秦悦欣 Qín Yuè xīn	Shona language does not have these two sounds for syllable /q/ and /x/ so the alternatives which are nearest sounds will be /ch/ and /sh/ respectively, this will not only affect the meaning but will also make the name sound completely different. If the Shona High-high-low tone pattern principle is applied to this Chinese trisyllabic name the resulting name will be totally unusual for a native speaker of Chinese since the resulting meaning for the first two syllables will be 亲约 qīnyuē which means kiss, and to make an appointment. The last syllable in this name has a level tone so the native Shona speaker will produce the tone as it is supposed to be produced in Chinese.
施敏 ShīMǐn	Though the pronunciation will be similar when this name is transliterated into Shona, but the curving tone on /Mǐn/ is likely to be produced as a low level tone by a native Shona speaker since it appears at the end of the name thus instead of the original meaning which is “clever” it will change to mean something else. Since the Chinese syllable /min/ does not have an equivalent character with level tone, thus the sound produced with a level tone will be meaningless to a native speaker of Chinese language.



As can be seen from the few examples above, the tonal changes will lead to new meanings thus distorting the meanings of names.

Based on the above data analysis it is also possible to predict how native speakers of Chinese language are likely to transliterate Shona names into Chinese. The first possibility is that; the transliteration will maintain the disyllabic and trisyllabic structures of Chinese names but tones will be added depending on the speaker's choice of characters used to substitute the Shona syllables. The second possibility is that, since Shona names are multisyllabic therefore a native speaker of Chinese language is likely to adopt one of the following transliteration strategies;

- a. The given name only will be transliterated,
- b. The surname only will be transliterated or
- c. Attempts will be made to combine some syllables from both the given name and the surname as shown on the following table;

*Table 4: Possible Chinese transliteration of Shona names*

Shona name	Possible transliteration	Comments
<i>Chipo Chikwadze</i>	a. 魑魄 chī pò b. 哧夸泽 chī kuà zé c. It is impossible to combine the given name and the surname. Such as 哧哧 /chichi/	/Chi / becomes the surname and the tone changes too, for instance on the second option last syllable will be produced with a rising tone because of the character 泽 used.
<i>Simbarashe Ruzvidzo</i>	a. 思慕吧 sī mù ba b. 褥子走 rù zǐ zǒu b. 茹斯穆 rú sī mù	The Shona sound /mb/ does not exist in Chinese thus in such cases, it is separated into individual syllables /mu/ and /ba/ thus making the name sound unusual and weird.
<i>Takura Badza</i>	a. 塔库拉 tǎ kù lā b. 巴泽 bā zé c. 巴塔酷 bā tǎ kù	Since there is no sound /ra/ in Chinese it is possible that the /ra / on Takura will be replaced by [la]. Addition of curving tones and rising tones in this word will make this name sound unusual for a native speaker of Shona.
<i>Rudo Mushangazhike</i>	a. 茹都 rú dōu b. 穆赏智 mù shǎng zhì c. 母乳都 mǔ rǔ dōu	Here it is important to note that a long surname is reduced to be represented by a single syllable /mu/ and the syllable / z h i / will be replaced by different Chinese syllables.

As can be seen from the few selected examples above, Chinese transliteration of Shona names depends on the availability of appropriate character and a sound equivalent or a near to Chinese sound. Due to the different tones associated with different characters, the resulting names normally differ enormously from the original names both in terms of pronunciation and meaning. This is the reason why many foreign students in China would feel like native speakers of Chinese language pronounce foreign names in a weird way.

Apart from the above the Chinese trisyllabic naming system implies that the first syllable is the surname, so for a name like */Rudo Mushangazhikel*, where */Mushangazhikel* is the surname; when it is transliterated to 穆赏智 or 穆茹都 it means that */穆 mu-/* becomes the substitute of the whole surname. The question now is; will the person being called accept it if he or she knows that his or her surname has been changed? Will this not lead to cultural-friction or make the ones being called feel like their names are being distorted? These are questions which might need further research.

## 5. CONCLUSIONS

This research shows that Chinese name structure differs enormously from Shona names. The main difference between Shona and Chinese names is that the syllabic structure and the tone patterns in these languages are completely different. While Chinese names which are normally called out with both the given name and the surname combined have a maximum of 3 syllables, Shona names on the other hand do have unlimited number of syllables. At the same time Chinese names can be inflected by four tones to produce different syllables and different meanings; contrary Shona names can be inflected by only two types of tones. Due to the fact that Chinese names are either disyllabic or trisyllabic, thus when Chinese people are transliterating foreign names they normally change the whole name into at most a trisyllabic name. This explains why some foreign students in China would complain that their names sound weird when they are being called out by native speakers of Chinese language.

On the other hand it was noted that Shona tones in any given name are predictable thus when a native speaker of Shona language is calling out a Chinese name either a high tone for the first syllable and a low tone for the second syllable pronunciation strategy is adopted or high-high-low for trisyllabic names. Since Chinese language is a tonal language, therefore if the Shona High-Low tone pattern is used in transliterating Chinese names this will certainly affect the meanings of Chinese names, so the question is; how do the Chinese people feel when their names are being called out with wrong tones? As noted in the literature review; both Shona and China cultures put more emphasis on the meaning of names, thus there is need for a more detailed research to find out how individuals concerned respond to wrong pronunciation of their names. It is strongly advised that one has to pay attention to tone pronunciation when calling Chinese names while for the Chinese people there is need to avoid a disyllabic or trisyllabic name structure when calling Shona names in order to avoid name distortion.

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