

Prologue

Nominal languages, such as the Greenlandish and the Nauhatt, represent the earliest stage in the development of linguistic structures. They consisted mostly of the object-words, which denoted the objects and also action and quality. In the nominal languages, object-words (names) emerged out of proper names. In the early stages of a language, the first words are names, and all names are primarily proper names. Generic names, like man, animal and tree, evolve later and abstractions, like courage, ferocity, and greenness, later still.¹ A proper name is a symbol pointing to one and only one person, or place. Primitive man felt that the relationship between name and thing was close and intimate. This fraction formed the basis for rituals pertaining to propitiation and incantation. The mishandling of a name in speech might imply insult or may result in injury to the bearer of the name.²

Even in regard to generic names we have to keep certain limitations in view. Yāska states that we find convenience in restricting the use of words otherwise they may bring about confusion.³

A personal name consists of a surname and that part of name which is variously called as the first name or the Christian name. Surname consists of the Caste-suffix or Gotra, Pravara and Śākhā. Sometimes it may consist of Gotra or family appellation alone. Many surnames are derived from the principal professions the people followed or the crafts they practised, and in the majority of cases, are still engaged in. Some surnames give clue to the original habitat of a people, even though they have migrated elsewhere. Others point to the ethnic groups a people belonged. Thus surnames are important from Historical, Cultural, and Ethnological point of view.

First names are primarily devised to denote⁴ and not to connote, though at times fortuitously denotation may be