

TOWARDS A RECONSTRUCTION OF THE DEVIATIONS AND CHANGING PATTERNS IN IGBO PERSONAL AND PLACE NAME FORMS: AN ORTHOGRAPHIC PERSPECTIVE

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Abstract

Personal and place names (anthroponyms and toponyms) as an integral part of an identity, have been observed to have shifted from being meaning – oriented to being aesthetically given in the contemporary Igbo society. This study therefore, investigates the fundamental influence and ideology that informed this change in Igbo naming system and unearth the Anglicized twist given to Igbo spellings of our personal and place names. The descriptive analysis method relying on the Worfian linguistic relativity framework is adopted here to capture the differences in phonemic transcriptions between Igbo correct spellings and Anglicized version of some wrongly spelt Igbo anthroponyms and toponyms. Data for this study were gotten from the five eastern states in Nigeria. Findings of the study reveal that Anglicized versions of the Igbo personal and place names are marred with mispronunciation, semantic ambiguities and distortion/total loss of the intended meanings of the investigated personal and place names. Moreover, the changing phenomenon is motivated by religion, westernization, wrong education, ignorance and urbanization. This undoubtedly has encouraged identity reconstruction among the Igbo people which poses threats to Igbo language development and a possible extinction of a living race. In view of these, the study therefore, recommends legislations in each of the state house of assembly to reconstruct all the misspelt personal and place names to reflect the true identity of *ndi* Igbo.

Keywords: Reconstruction, Deviation, Changes, Names, Orthography, Igbo

1. Introduction

Names are spoken or written words that a person or an entity in the world is known and addressed with. Personal names usually are names which identify an individual in the society in which he or she lives and they reflect the culture, value, philosophy and ideas of the people and their society at large. According to Aceto (2002, P.578), personal names serve as means of communication because different naming systems and forms of address select different things about the self for communication and for emphasis. Thus, names given to children at birth signal the general believe and perception of the people, including their worldviews. Names of people remind them and the people around them of events and happening surrounding the construction of such names, the reason behind it and the social hierarchies characterizing them. Some people or societies are able to enact their embodied understanding through the names associated to that given society. Abdul (2014) posits that, “everyman carried his culture and much of his social reality about with him wherever he goes”. These realities are sometimes identified through the person’s personal name and his language. Personal names are usually historically constructed, socially maintained and are based on the shared assumptions and expectations of the members of a given community.

Naming is a specific sociolinguistic act, intimately linked with values, traditions, hopes, expectations, fear and events in people's lives. Names reveal the many preferences of their owners (or givers) in terms of real life objects, actions, features and beliefs (Rosenhouse, 2002). Personal and place naming practices offer important insights into the patterns of social and cultural organization of communities and can be a key to broader cultural changes. They tell us about the categorization of places or the new-born infant (e.g. sex, social group) and the name-giver, and often tell us what is seen as significant about the background and the circumstances at the time of birth. This is why Alford (1987) says that in naming a new baby, and consciously choosing a word to refer to a new person, that word has enormous symbolic power: it will identify the person, and at the same time the name can send a message, express a hope or prayer, and perpetuate a cultural or religious tradition.

Names are the foundation of one's identity. The topic of names has drawn the attention of philosophers of language, ethnographers, anthropologists and linguists, each with their own ideas and theories about names. In Africa, a name is viewed as a message that the name-giver conveys to society through the bearer of that name (Mutunda 2011). A personal name in Africa paves ways into understanding the culture of the people. On this note, Zawawi (1993:xii) comments, "personal names provide an important component of African cultural identities." African personal names have high cultural significance. The power of African personal names reflects cultural variables such as kinship, gender relations, class, cosmology, personal tastes and preferences, and indexes relationships that define socio-cultural functions and meaning. African personal names, therefore, are creative cultural symbols that represent experiences, conflicts or situations with deep historical resonances. These names are a body of knowledge that reflect a wide gamut of African culture; language, history, philosophy, spirituality and worldview. African names mirror the patterns of the society's cultural and social organization and are pointers to individuals' identities and collective belonging. Personal names in most African settings do not simply identify an individual; they are lexical items that designate in addition: circumstances of birth, sex, family hierarchy, physical features of the baby at the time of birth, day of delivery etc. A closer look at personal names in any African language reveals that these names are not just viewed as the personal property of the bearer; the lexical choices in preference for the composition of these names are good pointers to the socio-cultural leanings of the native speakers.

Although Igbo has been reduced to writing, it does not have a long written tradition, when compared to say Arabic, English and French. The earliest written form of the language began in 1861 (Oraka, 1983:25), when J.F. Schon, a Christian missionary adopted the Lepsius orthography of 1854 writing his *Oku Ibo: Grammatical Elements of the Ibo language*. The Church Mission Society (C.M.S) published an Ibo primer, written by a catechist, F.W. Smart in 1870. According to Oraka (1983), by 1883 about 50 books including the Bible has been published in Igbo, all of them based on the Lepsius orthography.

However, by 1929, the Lepsius orthography was abandoned for the Africa orthography designed by the International Institute of African Languages and Culture (IIALC). This was because of the enactment of a decree by the colonial authorities which adopted the Africa orthography. This led to the now famous great Igbo orthography controversy that lasted for 32 years. This period was a setback for the development of a standard Igbo orthography. The resolution of this controversy came about in 1961, when the then Eastern Nigerian Government adopted a standard orthography, popularly known as the Onwu orthography. The Onwu orthography is the accepted orthography for the writing of Igbo language and came with the opportunity of removing the odds between the spelling and sound system noticed in earlier versions of the orthography.

However, in today's Igbo names, one notices that there have been a lot of inconsistencies in the pronunciation and writing of Igbo names. In other words, certain phonological rules are no longer being obeyed in the writing and pronunciation of certain Igbo names. Similarly, personal names in the Igbo society and culture do not simply identify an individual; they are lexical items that designate in addition: circumstances of birth, sex, family hierarchy, physical features of the baby at the time of birth, day of delivery etc. A closer look at personal names in any African language reveals that these names are not just viewed as the personal property of the bearer; the lexical choices in preference for the composition of these names are good pointers to the socio-cultural leanings of the native speakers. However, most of the reasons for which Igbo naming culture is upheld had long been eroded. Thus, it is imperative to study the social change in Igbo traditional personal names and the factors responsible for such names. This current study, "a deviation and changes in Igbo personal form from orthographic perspective" becomes imperative.

2. Related Literature

Tyumbu (2017) studied "Etulo personal names as a mirror of culture", the study according to the researcher is based on the investigation in to Etulo personal names. She posits that personal names just like language and literature perform the function of mirroring the culture in which they are acquired and given especially in African communities. It is therefore; no doubt that names are vital in most African communities as they give a clear view of what is obtainable in the culture of a particular people. The paper thus, attempts to justify that names are not given and taken in Etulo culture only as labels of identity, but also as a means for the expression of thoughts, beliefs, daily practices and experiences which exists within the same culture. In Tyumbus' study, sixty (60) names were collected using personal interview as a tool for data collection. The names were classified into proverbial, circumstantial, animal, title, borrowed/socio-cultural, and religious /appreciation names.

Tyumbu's study addresses Etulo names within the linguistic relativity framework of sociolinguistic. The study observes that through naming, the Etulo worldview is uncovered, and therefore concludes that naming performs the functions of mirroring a particular culture since the act itself is language put to use. Language is thus a strong means through which we can view and understand the worldview of a particular people. Etulo personal naming practices serve as a mirror of the people's belief, culture, philosophy, thought and religious practices. An individual's name is of paramount importance to the whole community as it is not just a tag or label of identity but a revealer of the aspects of the cultural patterns and behavior of the Etulo culture. The researcher says that every Etulo individual bears at least one of religious/appreciation names, circumstantial names, Borrowed/socio-cultural names and proverbial names. She however notes that Etulo names are not limited to the classification stated here, as Christianity and civilization have also come to have some impact of the naming system of the Etulo culture.

Agboola, Oloruntola and Kunle (2017), studied "Names as Message Vector in Communication: Oduological Analysis of Traditional Yoruba Personal Names from Ifa". The researchers examined traditional Yoruba personal naming system within the context of Ifa divination system of the Yoruba. Their study specifically sought to answer questions regarding how traditional Yoruba personal names originate from Ifa and the messages that such Ifa based traditional Yoruba personal names conveyed. The researchers are of the view that among Africans, names are significant; thus Africans recognize the significant of personal names. While names means different things to different people, the Yoruba people of Nigeria carefully choose theirs, because they believe names mirror circumstances, reflect connections with households, generational trade, among others.

In the absence of a register of practicing Ifa priests, from which the researcher could draw a sample, they resorted to using a snowball sampling leading to in-depth interview with four Ifa divination experts (Babalowos). Analysis of their responses was done using the qualitative method of narrative analysis. Anchored on sociolinguistic theory, the study reveals that Ifa-based traditional Yoruba personal naming differs from general Yoruba personal naming, because the former involves divination processes known as ‘Esentaye’ and ‘Igbori’ – pathways to revealing deeper level messages and information conveyed to the person being named. Traditional Yoruba personal names of Ifa origin are on the decline as more people embrace foreign religions, now only adopted by adherents of Yoruba traditional faith.

The researchers conclude by noting that, rendered in the language of the Yoruba, Ifa divination bears testimony to the linguistic fact that language influences people’s cultural expressions, an Ifa – based naming system being an integral part. Being a practice of strong reckoning among the Yoruba, naming evolves from their culture. And their culture one finds in the Ifa divination system a vast store-house of their values and norms, philosophies as well as history. The study therefore recommends that subsequent studies can either adopt larger sample, in addition to surveys or triangulated by mixing to or more research methods or combination of research designs, with a view to expanding the frontiers of knowledge.

Al-Zumor (2009), studied “A socio-cultural and linguistic Analysis of Yemeni Arabic personal Names”. The study is an investigation in anthroponomy of a Yemeni community which may reflect the naming practices followed in some tribal regions of Yemeni neighbouring Saudi Arabia. The study aims at investigating personal names, particularly female names, as they look very striking to a person who does not know much about the culture of those regions. In Al-Zumor’s study 300 personal female names were collected by the researcher using questionnaire as the tool for data collection. The names were then classified into different categories on the basis of their sources.

According to him, Saadah and the adjacent governorates (in Yemen) are famous for different weapons business, thus one can hear names like *tomateek*, *canadali*: types of gun or *qunbulah*. (grenade). Such selection of names is indicative of the attitudes of the parents of the family and at the way they are associated with the nature and the atmosphere around them as suggested by the responses to the questionnaire. However, the changing social, political and linguistic influences on the land and the people of Saadah and the neighboring places (in Yemen) have left their impact on naming patterns. As a result, naming practices are changing.

Al- Zumor’s study lists the following as findings of the study which ultimately serves as its conclusions. Naming systems belong to social and cultural systems in which they are embedded. Naming systems offer indication on the type of social and cultural ethos within which they are used. Naming systems reflect essential values and important traits in their respective social organization. The regional dialect is one of the essential sources of names. Therefore, how the word sounds is not a criteria for judging the beauty of the name. The signifier may sound unpleasant but the original meaning of the word in the dialectal dictionary is very attractive. The beauty of the name has to be judged within the community of origin. Names contain precious elements of information on the history of human groups. Names vary in their linguistic structure across generations which may lead to a conclusion that traditional Arabic names are at risk of extinction. The spread of foreign names especially in the developed areas may pose a threat to the cultural identity of Arabs.

Udoye (2018) studies senselessness of Awka place names. She discovers that history, etymology and semantics operate in Igbo place names and indeed African languages and place names in general. Udoye maintains that African place names as well as their personal names are meaningful (as against the English senseless proper names discussed in Udoye 2018). The most significant aspect of the study is the in-depth

analysis of commemorative, cultural, incident and calendar names to prove that Igbo names are connotative and not denotative as claimed by earlier western scholars. The present study focuses on the phonological deviations noticeable in Igbo personal names and not on how meaningful Igbo names are.

From the review so far, the lacuna seen is that researches on the reconstruction of the deviations and changing patterns in Igbo personal and place name forms from an orthographic perspective are lacking. This gap in literature is what this research intends to fill; thus, the justification.

3. Theoretical Framework

The study adopts the Whorfian framework of linguistic relativity. The hypothesis explores the relationship between language and culture. It asserts a systematic relationship between the grammatical categories of language a person speaks and how that person who both understands the world and behaves in it. This hypothesis is a proposition of the linguist and anthropologist Edward Sapir and his student Benjamin Lee Whorf. The hypothesis further explains that the nature of a particular language influence the habitual thought of the speakers of the same language and that their different patterns permits other thought patterns. This idea is an invitation that there is a possibility of portraying the world with language; because, it proves that the mechanism of any language conditions is the thought of its speaker's community.

The Whorfian Hypothesis further is presented in two forms; the strong and weak forms or versions. The weak form shows that the structure does not determine the worldview but is still extremely influential in predisposing speakers of a language towards adopting the worldview. An opposite claim would be that culture of people finds reflection in the language they employ due to the fact that they value certain things and do them in a certain manner. They therefore, come to see their language in ways that portray what they value and what they do. Sapir thus, acknowledges the relationship between language and culture and sums it up by stating that 'human beings do not live in the objective world alone, nor alone in the world of social activity as ordinarily understood, but are very much at the mercy of the particular language which has become the medium of expression for their society (Wardhaugh, 2002). The hypothesis acknowledges the idea that people see and understand the world through cultural lens of a language. It is on this basis that the hypothesis is adopted for this study since the practice of naming is language in use.

4. Methodology

Though many methods or techniques could be used in sampling, only the purposive sampling was used in this study. The technique of sampling used is often considered based on the nature and quality of the data, the guarantee for accuracy and details, and cost/operational concerns as well as proximity to the researcher. For the purpose of this study some of the names used here were collected from entries in primary and secondary school registers, churches while others belong to friends, family members and individuals from various communities in Igbo land. Names were also collected from television and radio broadcasts, the print media, social media and the internet. Interviews and unstructured questions were also used to elicit some reasons behind this changing dynamics. In order to adequately examine the deviation in Igbo personal name forms from a phonological perspective, being that the study is a qualitative one, the descriptive analytic method of analysis was adopted.

5. Data Presentation and Analysis

5.1. Anthroponyms and Identity Reconstruction in Contemporary Igbo

5.1.1 Names with 'mm' Sequence Reconstruction

Writing of many Igbo names which orthographically are supposed to be written with the ‘mm’ sequence has over the years been misspelled by a lot of persons as reflected in the names below:

Wrong Sequence

- a. Chidinma
- b. Mgbodichinma
- c. Chinma
- d. Chikanma

Right Sequence

Chidimma
Mgbodichimma
Chimma
Chikamm

In the Igbo language, both /m/ and /n/ are nasal consonants. Therefore, phonologically, they occur at the onset position in a syllable. However, they function beyond mere consonants, as they can also form the nucleus of a syllable. Hence, they are referred to as syllable nasals. What this means is that they can occupy a position where only vowels ordinarily are licensed, and they bear tones like vowels – they form TBU (Tone Bearing Units). Phonologically, Igbo does not permit consonant clustering hence whenever there is a sequence of two nasals (mm) or (nn), the first is a syllabic nasal and constitutes a syllable by itself. Thus, /nna/ has two syllables n – na. Again, it is phonologically impossible to have the bilabial and the alveolar in sequence. One must, by reason of assimilation, assimilate the feature of the others.

Igbo orthography is quite accurate and faithful in representing the sound of the language. This is to say that whatever is written must be pronounced. The sequence of (nm) seen in personal names of Igbo is a deviation because it violates Igbo phonotactics and runs a fowl of the one-to-one accuracy of the orthography. Ideally, the first nasal in the sequence is realized as a bilabial nasal just as the second, hence must be written the same way. For example, the name ‘Chidimma’ has four syllables Chi-di-m-ma, but if written with (nm) sequence, it becomes erroneously realized as Chi-din-ma which is un-Igbo. This explanation applies for all (nm) sequence in Igbo hence we note it as a deviation from the phonological-orthographical convention of the Igbo.

5.1.2 Names with Middle/Final ‘r’ Attachment Reconstruction

In numerous Igbo names also, there are many who spell the names with a final r as against the Igbo language orthography which does not in any way end with a consonant, except a syllabic consonant, as the following names show:

Wrong Sequence

- a. Ofor
- b. Chibuzor
- c. Chinazor
- d. Ogor
- e. Orji
- f. Ozor
- g. Okafor

Right Sequence

Ofo
Chibuzo
Chinazo
Ogo
Oji
Ozo
Okafo

As a result of the lack of agreement between the two main stakeholders in education (the Catholic mission and the Protestant mission), the government set up a Committee headed by Dr. S. E. Oñwụ to recommend a script which would be acceptable to the Catholic mission and the Protestant mission. On 28th November 1953, the committee came up with the following orthography: a b gb ch d e f g h gh i ih j k l m n gn o or p kp r s sh t u uh v w y z gw kw nw ny

The orthography introduced the letters ih, gn, or, uh to replace the diacritics. The orthography was neither accepted by the Catholic mission nor the Protestant mission. Consequently, a lot of Igbo scholars came up with their orthographies, and the number of orthographies increased instead of decreasing. The government was keen on establishing and maintaining order. So, the Ọnwụ Committee was reconvened. Whereas one of the goals of the first Ọnwụ committee was to remove the diacritics, one of the goals of the second Ọnwụ committee was to reintroduce the diacritics. In 1961, the Ọnwụ committee published the Official Igbo Orthography. It became known as the Ọnwụ Orthography and comprises the following 36 letters: a b gb ch d e f g gw gh h i j k kp kw l m n nw ny ñ o ọ p r s sh t u ụ v w y z

In 1973, the Standardization Committee of the Society for Promoting Igbo Language and Culture (SPILC) made additional recommendation for the alphabet to be re-arranged in this order: a b ch d e f g gb gh gw h i j k kp kw l m n ñ nw ny o ọ p r s sh t u ụ v w y z. This standard Igbo orthography (Onwu) as seen above had no provision for final r or the insertion of r in the middle of any Igbo word let alone Igbo names. There is no Igbo orthography that permits it. There are a lot of reasons given to why people choose to do this, some do it out of sincere ignorance, they see someone do it and they do it too. Some because of that is how their parents taught or told them to spell their names, and then some do it out of complex, they need their names to be as anglicized as possible.

5.1.3 Names with Final ‘h’ Deviation

As in the above names many Igbo names are written with by attaching the letter ‘h’ at the final sequence of the name. For instance:

Wrong Sequence

- a. Agah
- b. Udeh
- c. Uduh
- d. Awah
- e. Otah
- f. Ezeh
- g. Agha

Right Sequence

- Aga
- Ude
- Udu
- Awa
- Ota
- Eze
- Aga

The choice of using final ‘h’ to end an Igbo name is also as a result of western influence on the orthography of the Igbo language during the orthography war that was characterized by misappropriation and disorderliness. That was what obtained in the union Igbo, an orthography that was prior to Onwu orthography of 1961. The Onwu orthography is the only acceptable orthography used in writing the Igbo language and does not permit final ‘h’ nor words ending in consonants any of such occurrence becomes a deviation and therefore should be avoided.

5.1.4 Names with Consonant Doubling Deviation

Some of the Igbo names are misspelled by doubling some consonant letters in the names as against the Igbo orthography which does not accept consonant doubling. Examples:

Wrong Sequence

- a. Offor
- b. Otti
- c. Ottah
- d. Edda

Right Sequence

- Ofo
- Oti
- Ota
- Eda

Over the years, grammatical anomalies have been committed regarding ways to write some Igbo names or words. Many people opined that their dialect pronounce some of these names with the consonants being doubled. Many reasons adduced from some respondents who bear these names include the fact that as at the time of their fathers who gave them the name was due to the prevailing orthography before the introduction of the Onwu orthography. Another reason for this change in spelling is that some claim it is easily pronounced by non natives when undesired letters are added to these names. Moreover, they claim to be imitating the spelling rules of the missionaries in order to anglicize the names and make it sound better.

5.2 Toponyms and Identity Reconstruction in Contemporary Igbo

Data collated for this section were transcribed and grouped into eight groups. The last group, ‘H’ though is a collection of samples of uncommon errors and common diacritics omissions.

5.2.1 Group A: Introduction of ‘r’ after ‘o’ to substitute for the phoneme /ɔ/ in place of the letter ‘o’.

Table 5.1

S/N	Misspelt forms	Phonemic Transcription	Correctly spelt forms	Phonemic Transcription
1	Alor	/alɔ/	Àlọ	/alɔ/
2	Nkpor	/nkɔpɔ/	Mkpóò	/mkpɔɔ/
3	Amorka	/amɔka/	Ámòṛkā	/amɔka/
4	Ihiorji	/ihieɔdʒi/	Ihieorji	/ihieɔdʒi/
5	Umuafor	/umuaɔfɔ/	Umuafo	/UmUafo/
6	Amaorji	/amaɔdʒi/	Amaorji	/amaɔdʒi/
7	Orsumoghu	/ɔsumoɣu/	Ọshumogho	/ɔʃUmoyu/
8	Abubor	/abubɔ/	Ábúbò	/abUɔɔ/
9	Obollo-afor	/obolo-aɔfɔ/	Ubolo-afo	/ubolo-afo/
10	Amanator	/amanatɔ/	Ámánaātō	/amanaatɔ/

Above table has data that violates Igbo one-to-one correspondence of letter to phonemes in the wrongly spelt forms. Again consonants does not end words except in few cases of syllabic nasals and loan words. Consonant clusters observed here do not obtain in Igbo.

5.2.2 Group B: Introduction of ‘aw’ to substitute letter ‘o’ in place of perceived RP /ɔ/.

Table 5.2

S/N	Misspelt forms	Phonemic Transcription	Correctly Spelt forms	Phonemic Transcription
1	Awka	/ɔka/	Ọká	/ɔka/
2	Nawfia	/nɔfia/	Nóṛfíá	/nɔɔfia/
3	Awgbu	/ɔgbu/	Ọgbu	/ɔgbU/
4	Awhum	/ɔhum/	Ọhùm	/ɔhUm/
5	Awlaw	/ɔlw/	Ọlọ	/ɔlw/
6	Amawbia	/amɔbia/	Ámáòbìà	/amaɔbia/
7	Nawgu	/nɔgu/	Nọogu	/nɔɔgU/
8	Awkunawnaw	/ɔkUɔnɔɔ/	Ọkùnáánō	/ɔkUnaanɔ/
9	Awgu	/ɔgu/	Ọgwù	/ɔg ^w U/
10	Awkuzu	/ɔkuzu/	Ọkúzù	/ɔkUzU/

Consonant clusters observed in the misspelt column above violates Igbo syllabic structure and one –to-one correspondence of letter to speech sounds. There is no such things like two letters representing vowel sound in Igbo.

5.2.3 Group C: Letter Doubling:

Table 5.3

S/N	Misspelt forms	Phonemic Transcription	Correctly spelt forms	Phonemic Transcription
1	Nsukka	/nsuka/	Ñsùkã	/nsũka/
2	Abba	/aba/	Àbà	/aba/
3	Izzi	/izii/	Izii	/izii/
4	Ajalli	/adʒaII/	Ajali	/adʒaII/
5	Ozalla	/ɔzala/	Òzàlà	/ɔzala/
6	Nkwerri-Inyi	/nk ^w eri-ɪni/	Ñkwere-ìnyì	/nk ^w ere -ɪni/
7	Achalla	/aɸala/	Àchàlà	/aɸala/
8	Obollo-afor	/obolo-afɔ/	Úbóló-àfò	/ubolo-afɔ/
9	Uratta	/urata/	Urata	/urata/
10	Akatta	/akata/	Akata	/akata/

Letter doubling violates Igbo syllabic rule and a letter to a phoneme correspondence. Only digraphs can be two letters representing a consonant sound.

5.2.4 Group D: The use of ‘g’ in place of ‘gw’

Table 5.4

S/N	Misspelt forms	Phonemic Transcription	Correctly spelt form	Phonemic Transcription
1	Enugu	/enugu/	Enúgwú	/enug ^w u/
2	Enugu-Agidi	/enugu-agidi/	Ēnúgwú-ágìdì	/enug ^w u-agIdI/
3	Awgu	/ɔgu/	Ọgwù	/ɔg ^w ɔ/

The digraph ‘gw’ with distinctive sound it represents obviously does not exist in English phonology, thus the anglicized twist is adopted as letter ‘g’.

5.2.5 Group E: Introduction of letter ‘h’ after ‘o’ at word final position.

Table 5.5

S/N	Misspelt forms	Phonemic Transcription	Correctly spelt forms	Phonemic Transcription
1	Okoh	/oko/	Ókó	/oko/
2	Agbor-Edoh	/agbɔ-edo/	Ágbò-Èdò	/agbɔ-edo/
3	Ndeaboh	/ndeabɔ/	Ndíábó	/ndIabɔ/

‘oh’ does not represent an Igbo vowel sound. ‘h’ at word final position violates syllabic rules.

5.2.6 Group F: Omission of letters**Table 5.6**

S/N	Misspelt form	Phonemic Transcription	Correctly spelt form	Phonemic Transcription
1	Ibo	/ibo/	Ìgbò	/igbo/
2	Anambra	/anambra/	Anambara	/anambara/
3	Amansea	Amansi/	Ámánéésii	/amaneesii/
4	Neni	/neni/	Ñnèni	/nneni/

Igbo phonotactics are violated which obviously affects intended meaning.

5.2.7 Group G: Use of letter ‘n’ in place of ‘m’**Table 5.7**

S/N	Misspelt forms	Phonemic Transcription	Correctly spelt forms	Phonemic Transcription
1	Nkpor	/nkɔ̃pɔ̃/	mkpɔ̃ɔ̃	/mkpɔ̃ɔ̃/
2	Nkpologwu	/nkɔ̃pɔ̃lɔ̃gwu/	Mkpólógwù	/mkpɔ̃lɔ̃gwù/
3	Nkpota	/nkɔ̃pɔ̃ta/	mkpɔ̃ɔ̃ta	/mkpɔ̃ɔ̃ta/
4	Nkpikpa	/nkɔ̃pɔ̃kpa/	Mkpikpa	/mkpɔ̃kpa/

Syllabic nasals phonotactics are violated here.

5.2.8 Group H: Insertion of letter ‘t’ before ‘sh’ in place of ‘ch’, use of letter ‘y’ in place of ‘i’, omission of diacritics and others.**Table 5.8**

S/N	Misspelt forms	Phonemic Transcription	Correctly spelt forms	Phonetic Transcription
1	Onitsha	/onɪʃa/	Ọnịcha	/ɔ̃nɪʃa/
2	Umuleri	/umuleri/	Ụmụleri	/ɔ̃mɔ̃leri/
3	Umunya	/umunya/	Ụmụnnya	/ɔ̃mɔ̃nnya/
4	Umuagu	/umuagu/	Ụmụagu	/ɔ̃mɔ̃ago/
5	Umudinya	/umudinya/	Ụmụdinnya	inpa/
6	Ehaamufu	/ehamufu/	Ẹhaamụfu	/ɛhaamɔ̃fu/
7	Ndi-Torty	/ndɪtɔ̃tɪ/	Ndị- tọtị	/ndɪtɔ̃tɪ/

Omission of diacritics obviously alter the actual pronunciation as well as meanings of the forms. For an instance, ‘umu’ literally has no meaning, at least in most, if not all dialects of Igbo.

6. Summary of Findings and Conclusion

This research has analyzed naming system and identity reconstruction in contemporary Igbo with focus on anthroponyms and toponyms by adopting linguistic relativity framework. The analyses were patterned in line with the stated objectives, which are to: examine anthroponyms and identity reconstruction in contemporary Igbo and to examine toponyms and identity reconstruction in contemporary Igbo. The above groups of misspelt anthroponyms and toponyms are not exhaustive of all the misspelt/anglicized forms found in entire South East of Nigeria. The selected few were chosen to represent identified errors in anthroponyms and toponyms which the researcher could access the indigenes and/or source their detailed information. In the course of this study, the researcher was able to deduce that anglicisation has become a normalcy for long existing anthroponyms and toponyms as well as the new emerging personal names and

communities. Above data garnered from responses to some introspective questions and questionnaires suggests most people are oblivious of the fact that Anglicized anthroponyms and toponyms is an indication of language endangerment and identity crisis. On realization of this error, respondents gave various reasons for the trend.

They include; about 90% of respondents agreed it initially began with colonial influence. Initiated by Britain in Colonial era, when Igbo orthography was not fully developed, so many Igbo phonemes were written as was pronounced or realized by the white men. For example, 'Igbo' was spelt or pronounced 'Ibo', representing the bilabial implosive 'gb' /g̃b/ with bilabial stop 'b' /b/. Since after independence till date, Nigeria is seemingly still dependent intellectually, economically and other-wise, which fuels appreciation of alien culture more than our own heritage, language too not excluded. Thus, English being treated as 'superior' or 'exalted' language is being preferred more than Igbo language perceived as 'inferior' or 'savage' language.

Westernization (or what could be best described as inferiority complex) is another factor fueling this mindset. Some new community leaders admit having to face such challenges trying to register their names in official gazettes. For an example, the phoneme /ɔ/ is realized in such English words as 'law' /lɔ/, jaw /dʒɔ/, Hence, the 2 letters are adopted to represent the sound segment represented by the letter 'o' in Igbo as in 'Awkunanaw' instead of 'Okūnaanō. All the respondents admitted having to face such complex on different occasions, not just with foreigners but with 'the learned' Igbos. This can rightly be called extension of British imperialism by Africans, in this case Igbos.

Mispronunciation of anthroponyms and toponymns is more common with non-indigenes of a speech community than with indigenes. Most respondent could correctly pronounce their indigenous town names but could not do same for others that they are not familiar with because of the misspellings. For example, a respondent couldn't pronounce "Awlaw" and "Awgbu" correctly in the pattern of indigenes, but when written as 'Olo' and 'Ogbu' it became much easier for her. This signals danger because there was total loss of Igbo flavor in spelling of the names. Semantic ambiguity and/ or total loss of meaning of anthroponyms and toponymns cannot be over emphasized from sampled toponymns. For an instance, the English spelt toponym 'Abba' a town in Anambra State, was erroneously pronounced with HL tone 'Ábbà' by a non-indigene and interpreted it to mean 'father' as in Greek language, whereas the correct spelling 'Abà' is a name connected to their ancestry. This ambiguity makes meaning difficult to grasp.

There is also total loss of meaning of most of the toponymns. According to a respondent, an Awka indigene, Amansea for an instance correctly spells 'Amanesii' which means 'a six clan Community' where 'ama' means 'clan' and 'esii' means 'six' in the Awka variant of Igbo language. But Amansea has literally no meaning.

Proper use of diacritics (both tonal and alphabetical) in spellings of toponymns is cumbersome for most respondents especially tone marking. Greater percentage however could infer meaning and actual pronunciation without the tone marking and they advocate that sub dots and super dots are enough and still achievable as obtainable in other languages. 80% of respondents strongly believe this will help to avert impending endangerment of Igbo Language. This study also reveals that non-use of diacritic letters especially the 'i o u' for /I ɔ u/ respectively in place names as well as other usages is an indication of potential attrition of Igbo orthography, language endangerment and ultimately death of Igbo language as greater percentage of respondents agreed.

From the data analysis, the followings findings are made:

- i. Igbo phonemes are misrepresented in anthroponyms and toponymns through various forms of anglicisation which include; Omission of diacritics, introduction of letter 'r' and 'h' after o, introduction of 'aw', letter doubling, use of 'n' in place of 'm', insertion of 't' to form consonant cluster with 'sh' omission of letters and use of 'e' for the phoneme /ɛ/.
- ii. A lot of Igbo language phonotactic rules are violated, resulting in many adverse effects on language and identity of the Igbo people.
- iii. There is inconsistency in phonemic representation, instance of phoneme /ɔ/ by use of both 'aw' and 'or' which violates the rule of Igbo phonology that allows for only one-to-one correspondence between every letter of alphabet and speech sound they represent. Some dialectal distinctive sounds yet to be included in standard Igbo orthography poses problems in correct use of letter of alphabet for the actual sounds it represent.
- iv. Mispronunciation and semantic ambiguity of wrongly spelt anthroponyms and toponyms are quite obvious. This distorts intended meanings and mars identity. Proper use of diacritics (both tonal and alphabetical) in spellings of anthroponyms and toponymns tends to be cumbersome, an indication of potential attrition of Igbo orthography.

Anglicization of Igbo anthroponyms and toponymns is almost an age long practice that adversely affects the development of Igbo language. For this ugly trend to be corrected, all hands must be on deck. This research recommends the following approaches to this end:

- i. Political Approach: Igbo political leaders should be in the fore of this crusade. Just like we see many political party slogans often written correctly in Igbo with all the diacritics E.g.: 'Ñké à bù ñké ãnyị, etc. they can as well make policies to change all wrongly spelt Igbo personal and place names in official gazettes, documents, bill boards, maps, etc to correct versions. Measures too should be taken to ensure compliance to this in formal sectors. Funds should be provided for Academia to further research in developing an all-inclusive Igbo orthography.
- ii. Technological Approach: ICT experts, especially NLP developers as well as computational linguists should be encouraged fund wise to lead in innovations that promote correct representation of Igbo phonemes especially with diacriticked letters. Use of such tools as ADRS (Automatic Diacritic Restoration Systems) should be encouraged for Igbo language texts. Igbo diacritic letters (including tones) should be encoded in evolving software. Google maps and other software bearing wrong spellings of Igbo place names should be corrected following official directive from government.
- iii. Pedagogical Approach: Teachers and academics should encourage students in the correct use of Igbo letters when filling their profiles and writing other academic exercise. E.G; 'We met in Enugwu' instead of 'We met in Enugu' should be encouraged. Linguists too should be funded to brainstorm and revise/update Standard Igbo orthography to accommodate all the distinct speech sounds of Igbo.
- iv. Commercial Approach: Toponymic commodification of our indigenous product can also boost morale in being proud to write our place names correctly. Enterprises like sports (e.g Ényímbà FC of Ābá), Agro products (Ádààni rice), etc when upgraded to international standard can promote our indigenous place names. Recently, we observe in numbers breweries adverts proudly done in the Igbo language. Attaching slogans like 'proudly Ọnicha-ado' will be a good one.
- v. Entertainment Approach: This platform may prove more effective than aforementioned approaches especially in conscientizing the younger generation against westernization. Popular Igbo

comedians and musicians can be engaged to use anthroponyms and toponymic sloganism. Example: ‘This is Óká. Ébé ñkà nà úzū bídòrò. Such would undoubtedly motivate the youths to correctly write place names.

- vi. Media: International media houses like BBC Igbo can also weigh in more on correct use of the Igbo orthography in their programs since they have a wider global outreach than some of our local broadcasting firms.
- vii. Tourism/ Innovative approach; We can also do well and desist from giving our naturally endowed beautiful scenery, tourism sites/ edifices, indigenous innovations, etc foreign names. Such labels like Himalayas estate, Dubai estate, Sapientia radio is not what we should be proud of. We should at least reduce to barest minimum where we can help it the use of foreign names in designating places and firms. E.g; Ikenga brand of Innoson autos, Odenigbo radio, Akonauche radio, etc

The above is not exhaustive of possible solutions to orthographic misrepresentation of Igbo phonemes in our contemporary toponymic styles but if these few measures would be adopted, we may just be a click away in nailing this ugly trend and restore our prestigious identity.

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