

The Social Use of Yorùbá Personal Names

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This study examines the principles and practice involved in the clipping of Yorùbá personal names based on the preference of either the addressee or the speaker. It also illustrates the pragmatics and discourse roles of Yorùbá names among the contemporary Yorùbá people. The study, which is descriptive, draws its data from the previous studies on Yorùbá personal names, some Yorùbá textbooks, recorded utterances, election posters and participant observation. The study shows that the social functions of Yorùbá personal names include, among others, caution, power, a play on words, nostalgia, love, echo, joy, disappointment, sorrow, encouragement, and invigorating remarks. It is also pointed out that Yorùbá personal names can be used in greetings or as greetings, and the use depicts that the Yorùbá are a loving, caring, and accommodating people who express their affection, affinity, intimacy, and friendliness even in their greetings.

KEYWORDS language use, culture, clipping, repetition, vowel lengthening

Introduction

Several studies have been carried out on the interaction between naming and culture (see Evans-Pritchard, 1948; Searle, 1958; Martins, 1959; Strawson, 1959; Goodenough, 1965; Geertz, 1973; Èkundayọ, 1977; Akinnaso, 1980; and Adeniyi, 2004). However, these scholars do not hold the same view on the socio-cultural factors that influence child naming. For instance, some scholars claim that in some cultures, names are mere labels that do not have elaborate linguistic structure and complex semantic contents (see Evans-Pritchard, 1948; and Geertz, 1973). In some other cultures, however, some scholars argue that names are reflections of events, values, and beliefs which have psychological and socio-cultural information (see Searle, 1958; Martins, 1959; Strawson, 1959; Goodenough, 1965; Èkundayọ, 1977; Akinnaso, 1980; and Adeniyi, 2004).

Writing on Yorùbá personal names, Sowande and Ajanaku (1969), Èkundayọ (1977), and Akinnaso (1980) claim that Yorùbá personal names are some of the media through which the Yorùbá sociocultural values and Yorùbá linguistic forms can be

learned. According to Akinnaso (1980), all human beings or groups use personal names as a system of individual identification and that the linguistic and cultural implications vary from one culture to another (see also Goodenough, 1965). It has been argued that the Yorùbá naming system is based on home contexts such as beliefs, lineage, individual social values, and expectations. But none of the research studies has discussed the social use of personal names, especially Yorùbá personal names. In this paper, we are interested in the social use of Yorùbá personal names. However, a study conducted by Oyetade (1995) shows how Yorùbá personal names are used in social interactions. For example, Oyetade (1995: 532–33) argues that any Yorùbá personal name may appear in a full form, a shortened form, an Anglicized form, or an initial form and that the use is based on education, intimacy, and age. In this paper, we want to continue the discussion on the social use of Yorùbá personal names. We will show, among others, in the following sections, that:

1. Yorùbá personal names are used with eulogies to express power, nostalgia, or as greetings for invigorating remarks, encouragement, quietening of anger, as well as an expression of hearty, cheering welcome from a long journey or absence.
2. All the syllables in all Yorùbá personal names, whether abbreviated or unabbreviated, can be stressed and used as expressions of joy and encouragement or disappointment and sorrow, depending on the social situation or context.
3. Depending on the social situation or context also, the vowel that occurs finally in any Yorùbá personal name, whether abbreviated or unabbreviated, and all the vowels of all bisyllabic Yorùbá personal names, can be lengthened for caution, condemnation, echo, disbelief, summons, happiness, surprise, acceptability, and love.
4. The syllable that occurs finally in an addressee's personal name can be wrongly pronounced as evidence of dislike for the addressee.

Yorùbá syllabic structures

Yorùbá has three syllable types, V = vowel, CV = consonant and a vowel, and N or M = a syllabic nasal (see also Bamgboṣe, 1967: 3). For example:

bẹ̀m̀bẹ̀	= bẹ̀-ṃ-bẹ̀	CV-N-CV
aké-ré	= a-ké-ré	V-CV-CV
ẹ̀dà	= ẹ̀-dà	V-CV

The language operates an open syllable, thus, syllable types such as CVC, VC found in the English language are not attested in the Yorùbá language. In normal speech, names that have three or more syllables may have their syllables reduced when some syllables are deleted. When such deletion or reduction is effected, the reduced forms are still acceptable as names. For example:

Adéwálé =	Adé	(The last two syllables are deleted)
	Wálé	(The first two syllables are deleted)
Oyègòkè =	Oyè	(The last two syllables are deleted)
	Gòkè	(The first two syllables are deleted)

However, according to Lewis (2004: 311), Yorubá nominal clips are in five classes. They are:

- (a) Subject only: Adé, Ayò
- (b) Exclusive predicate: Kúnmi, Dèjì
- (c) Elided first person pronoun: Sùmbò, Funlólá
- (d) Trisyllabic full sentence: Lámidé, Démólá
- (e) Exclusive preposition: Tinú

But it must be observed that clipping results in wrong spelling and wrong pronunciation of a number of Yorubá names. For instance, the names “Olúwáfúnmilólá” and “Ọlásúnmíbò” are written by Lewis (2004: 311) as:

Fúnlólá (The first three syllables and the mi which is a 1st person singular pronoun are deleted)

Súnbò (The first two syllables and the 1st person singular pronoun mi are deleted)

The correct form should be Fúnmilólá/Fúnnlólá; Sùnmíbò/Sùnnbò. The derivation of syllabic nasal from a Nasal Vowel structure is extensively discussed in Ajiboye (2005).

Some examples of other names in the category of wrongly spelled and wrongly pronounced though acceptable are “Akíntan,” “Fáşòlẹ,” “Adégbònmírè” and “Awóşikà.” These names have two representations and they are in most cases common to the Yorubá ethnic groups such as Ijẹsà, Onḡó, Àkúrẹ, and Èkìtì. In the underlying representations, the negative markers that have been omitted at the surface representations must be reflected. For example:

- 1. Akin kì í tán→2. Akiniítán→3. Akíntan
- 4. Ifá kò şe ọlẹ→5. Ifáòşòlẹ→6. Fáàşòlẹ→7. Fáşòlẹ,
- 8. Adé kò gbònmírè→9. Adéègbònmírè→10. Adégbònmírè
- 11. Awo kò şe ikà→12. Awoòşikà→13. Awóşikà

While examples 1, 2, 4, 5, 6, 8, 9, 11, and 12 are products of slow speech and are not in use, examples 3, 7, 10, and 13 are products of fast speech and are in use. But, at the surface representations, the negative markers are not considered. Therefore, the names that are pronounced are the opposite of what should be pronounced. For example, instead of “Adé kò gbònmírè” (A crown has not left me behind), what majority of the Yorubá language speakers pronounce is “Adé gbònmírè” (A crown has left me behind).

Similarly, there are some names in the category of wrongly spelled which belong to all the Yorubá ethnic groups. Some examples are shown under groups A and B below:

Group A	Group B
Ọládípò	Ọládípúpò/Ọládiípò
Ládípò	Ládípúpò/Ládiípò
Adéseké	Adéseékẹ
Ànú	Àánú
Ọláníkẹ	Ọláníkẹẹ
Adéníkẹ	Adéníkẹẹ
Olúşolá	Olúşolá
Ọládẹ̀ndé	Ọládẹ̀hindé

The spellings under group “A” are used, whereas the spellings under group “B” should be used.

New dimensions in Yorùbá personal names

As already shown in this paper, Yorùbá personal names can be either vowel initial or consonant initial, but always vowel final. But it is argued by Oyetade (1995: 532–33) that new dimensions are now being witnessed in Yorùbá personal names because the modern Yorùbá language speakers, especially the literate ones, allow the morphology of English to interfere with the morphology of the Yorùbá language. Examples given by Oyetade (1995: 532–33) are reproduced below:

Full form	Shortened form	Anglicized form
<i>Olúbùkólá</i>	<i>’Bùkólá</i>	<i>Bukky</i>
<i>Olúšégun</i>	<i>’Šégun</i>	<i>Shegee/Shegato</i>
<i>Olúṣọlá</i>	<i>’Ṣọlá</i>	<i>Sholly (boy)</i>
<i>Adébéyò</i>	<i>’Báyò</i>	<i>Bayus</i>
<i>Akíntúndé</i>	<i>’Akin</i>	<i>Akins/Akinson</i>
<i>Olúwọlé</i>	<i>’Wọlé</i>	<i>Wosco/Woleria</i>

But we can also add that, first, all Yorùbá personal names can be Anglicized. Second, some of the Anglicized names may sound like English adjectives or adverbs, although, they still remain as nouns in Yorùbá. For example, we have “Fẹmostic,” “Fẹmostically.” Note the tic of Fẹmostic and tically of Fẹmostically and compare these with:

idiot, idiotic, idiotically
 scholar, scholastic, scholastically

Third, when Anglicized, Yorùbá personal names can be consonant initial and consonant final or vowel initial and consonant final. For example:

Dàda → Dad
 Ìkòtún → Ikot
 Bánkólé → Bank

Fourth, apart from the Anglicized names like “Bukky” (Bùkólá), “Babs” (Babatún-dé), and “Toks” (Tòkunbò) which can be used in both formal and informal situations, all other Anglicized names are used in informal situations. Fifth, each of the first syllables in the full forms can be deleted and the shortened forms used in informal situations. For example:

Olúbùkólá *Lúbùkólá*
Olúšégun *Lúšégun*
Olúṣọlá *Lúṣọlá*

Similarly, Oyetade (1995: 532) says, particularly among teachers, that Yorùbá personal names can be reduced to initials and used as forms of address. For example,

Moses Ọláiyá	—	M.O
Claudius Adébayò	—	C.A.
David Ọládèjì	—	D.O.
Timothy Ọládélé	—	T.O.

We want to add also that, while the use of initials is a common practice among the literate class, new dimensions are again being witnessed. Before now, a Yorùbá personal name was normally reduced to either a consonant or a vowel sound, depending on the initial sound. But now, literate Yorùbá language speakers do reduce a Yorùbá personal name to either two sounds or three sounds, and this is used to replace the full name especially in informal situations. For example:

1. Ayò	→	AY
2. Akin	→	AK
3. Démólá	→	DL
4. Ọbásanjó	→	OBJ

The initials can be the first two letters or the letters randomly selected, depending on the speaker's or speakers' preference, as is the case in examples 3 and 4. The randomly selected initials, once popularized, become permanent forms of address just as "OBJ" is now a permanent form of address for "Ọlúşẹgùn Ọbásanjó," the former Nigerian Head of State.

Again, the use of initials is also another area where most Yorùbá names are either wrongly spelled, wrongly written, or wrongly pronounced. In other words, most Yorùbá personal names when reduced to initials are patterned on English phonology and not on Yorùbá phonology. For example, "Ọmọwùmí" "Ọmọlọlá" when reduced to initials should be written and pronounced as "ọ" as in "hot" or as the first letter of the word "odd," and not as "o" as in "boat" as is the case among the Yorùbá language speakers (for more on phonological interference between English and Yorùbá on Yorùbá personal names, see Ikọtun, 1999: 106–10).

Syllable or vowel lengthening in Yorùbá

Another area of interest to the present study is syllable or vowel lengthening in Yorùbá. According to the *Chambers Dictionary* (new edition, 2006), there is a difference between reduplication and lengthening. While reduplication shows that a sound is doubled, lengthening shows that a sound is prolonged. Owolabi (1993: 1–17), however, shows that vowel reduplication and lengthening are the same. Some of the examples cited by him are reproduced below:

1a gbé	e	(carry it)
1b t̀àn	án	(deceive him/her/it)
1c Mo ra bàtàa (Dayò)	(I actually bought shoes)	

But it can be argued that in examples (1a) and (1b) the vowels "e" and "an," in the monosyllabic verbs, are reproduced to serve as pronouns in the object position. For example:

gbé iṣu	→	gbé e
(carry yam)		(carry it)
tan Olú	→	tàn án
(deceive Olú)		(deceive him/her)

In example (1c) the vowel “a,” which occurs finally in “bàtà” (shoe), is reproduced or reduplicated, and Ajiboye (2005) argues that it expresses possession as in examples 2a and 2b below:

2a orí i Táyé	(Táyé’s head)
2b aṣọ ọ Ṣọlá	(Ṣọlá’s cloth)

We agree with the dictionary definition that while reduplication shows that a sound is doubled, as shown in Owolabi (1993: 1–17) and Ajiboye’s (2005) research studies, lengthening shows that a sound is prolonged. For example, the lengthening of the vowel “o” of the data taken from Ladipọ (1970: 32), which will later be considered in our analysis, is shown below to serve as evidence of the dictionary definition of lengthening (see lines 5 and 6 of the extract).

Ará Ọyọ:	Kò ni ṣíṣe, kò l’áṣe o, ọbaa wa! Ọlọla aiye o, olókíkí aiye! Bí a báá gbe sí ọ̀tún tí kò jẹ, À tún darii rẹ sí ọ̀sì, ọbaa wa! . . .
Ṣàngó:	Gbònkàà oooooooooo! 5
Gbònkàà:	Oooooooooooooò!
	(Gbònkàà wọlé.)

Therefore, we can say that Owolabi’s (1993: 1–17) paper only focuses on vowel reduplication and not on vowel lengthening, and that, in the Yorùbá language, vowel lengthening is not rule-governed. The number of times a vowel can be lengthened or reproduced depends on the speaker’s preference and the social situation or context. In this study, we are interested in vowel lengthening and not vowel reduplication. However, as earlier discussed in this paper and in line with the Yorùbá morphological system, a Yorùbá polysyllabic name like Ọládímẹ̀jì may be realized as:

Ọládímẹ̀jì → Ọlá → Ládímẹ̀jì → Ladi → Dimẹ̀jì

The names of the interlocutors in an extract taken from Adékúnlé (2003: 81) below are meant to confirm the truth of the observation made above.

Kẹ̀mì: (Ó dá ọ̀rọ̀ mọ̀ Kọ́lá lẹ̀nu). Mǎǎ wulẹ̀ fẹ̀nu pítóbó lásán. Sọ ohun tí o bá fẹ̀ sọ fún mi.

Kọ́lá: (Ó ọ̀ sọ ọ̀rọ̀ rẹ̀ lẹ̀) Ịjẹta ni mọ̀mọ̀ wá sí ọ̀dọ̀ mi ní Èsà-Òkẹ̀.

Translation

Kẹ̀mì: (She stopped Kọ́lá from speaking) Do not waste your time. Tell me whatever you want to say.

Kọ́lá: (He was still on with what he was saying) It was three days ago that my mother came to see me at Èsà-Òkẹ̀.

The names of the interlocutors were shortened. For example, “Kémi” is from the Yorùbá personal name “Olúwafólákémi.” Some other derivations from the name are “Fóláké,” “Fólá,” “Lákémi,” “Laké,” “Olákémi,” “Olá,” and “Fólákémi.” Therefore, four rules can be advanced for the social use of Yorùbá personal names in normal social interactions. The probability that the rules will hold in most cases is 1. The rules are:

- Rule 1:** Any Yorùbá personal name that has two syllables and which has not been reduced to initials should be retained as a name.
- Rule 2:** Any Yorùbá personal name that has three syllables and which has not been reduced to initials can be retained or reduced to the first two syllables or the last two syllables.
- Rule 3:** Any Yorùbá personal name that has four syllables and which has not been reduced to initials can be retained or reduced to either the first two syllables, the last three syllables or to the last two syllables.
- Rule 4:** Any Yorùbá personal name that has more than four syllables and which has not been reduced to initials can be retained or reduced to either the last two syllables, the last three syllables, two syllables that have semantic/cultural meaning(s) or have the first syllable deleted.

Data collection

This study, which is descriptive, drew its data from four major areas. First, it considered very useful some of the data used by Èkundayò (1977), Akinnaso (1980), and Oyetade (1995). Second, we considered information provided by praise-singers at political rallies between 1978 and 1983 and between 1999 and 2003 in the south-western part of Nigeria. The praise-singing was tape-recorded without the praise-singers’ knowledge. The party leaders that were praised in the songs included Chief Qbáfémi Awólówò of the Unity Party of Nigeria (UPN) and Alhaji Lamidi Adeşina of Alliance for Democracy (AD). Third, data from some Yorùbá drama books written by Adekunle (2003: 81), Èsò-Olubòròde (2003: 10), Işòla (1970: 5, 6, 65), and Ladipò (1970: 32), as well as a book written by Ègbé Akómólèdè Yorùbá (1990) (Yorùbá Teachers’ Association) were similarly considered. It must be observed that information from literature, drama, and grammar books shows how a particular language is used in a particular society. Fourth, we also made use of data drawn from participant observation as well as election posters where political office holders were advertised or commended for a job well done.

This research study is based on the theoretical frameworks of both the sociology of language approach and the ethnography of communication approach. While the sociology of language approach is expected to account for the variations in the use of Yorùbá personal names in relation to sociological factors, the ethnography of communication approach is expected to help in recognizing the intentions of the Yorùbá language speakers *vis-à-vis* the use of Yorùbá personal names. The results of the research study are divided into two sections. In the next section, we show how some Yorùbá personal names are used with eulogies and, in the subsequent sections, we show how Yorùbá nominal clips and Yorùbá personal name sentences are used in social interactions.

Yorùbá personal names with eulogies

In some cases, in social interactions, when Yorùbá personal names are used, they are used with eulogies. Some Yorùbá personal names such as Ọ̀kẹ́, Dàda, Ọ̀jó, and Àjàyí have their eulogies (see Ẹgbẹ́ Akómọ̀lédè Yorùbá, 1990). For example:

Àjàyí
 Ọ̀gídíolú
 Oníkànga-àjípọ̀n
 Èni Àjàyí gbà gbà gbà
 Tí kò le gbà tán
 Gúnnugún ní gba olúwarẹ . . .

Translation

Àjàyí
 Ọ̀gídíolú
 The owner of a well that is fetched early in the morning
 Whoever Àjàyí tries repeatedly to save
 That he could not completely save
 The person will fall into the hand of the vulture . . .

Other names could be used with the family, town, area, and sub-ethnic eulogies. For example, if one is from Ifẹ́ and his or her name is “Omíyẹ́fá” (Water fits Ifá oracle) or any other name, one can be addressed with Ifẹ́ eulogy (see Ẹgbẹ́ Akómọ̀lédè Yorùbá, 1990). For example:

Omíyẹ́fá
 A kì í dúró kí wọ̀n n’Ífẹ́ Ọ̀ọ̀ni
 A kì í bèrẹ́ kí wọ̀n n’Ífẹ́ Oòrẹ́
 Tí a bá dúró kí wọ̀n n’Ífẹ́ Ọ̀ọ̀ni
 Tí a bá bèrẹ́ kí wọ̀n n’Ífẹ́ Oòrẹ́ . . .

Translation

Omíyẹ́fá
 We do not stand to greet them at Ifẹ́ Ọ̀ọ̀ni
 We do not bend to greet them at Ifẹ́ Oòrẹ́
 If we should stand to greet them at Ifẹ́ Ọ̀ọ̀ni
 If we should bend to greet them at Ifẹ́ Oòrẹ́ . . .

There are also instances where Yorùbá personal names are used with some other eulogies that are different from the ones mentioned above. Any Yorùbá personal name can be used with this type of eulogy. For example, Àgbéké, a Yorùbá personal name, can be used with an eulogy as shown below.

Àgbéké
 Omọ́ ọ̀lọ̀kọ̀ tó lòkun
 Àgbéké
 Omọ́ ọ̀lọ̀kọ̀ tó lẹ̀sà
 Omọ́ ọ̀lọ̀kọ̀ tó lòkè Àgádán gbó

Translation*Àgbéké**The child of ọlọkò who owns the sea**Àgbéké**The child of ọlọkò who owns the Lagoon**The child of ọlọkò who owns the Àgádán gbó highland.*

The relevance of eulogies to this paper will become apparent in the section on the use of Yorùbá personal names with eulogies.

The socio-cultural factors that can influence the social use of Yorùbá personal names

Various socio-cultural factors can be responsible for the social use of Yorùbá personal names. They include emphasis, suspicion, surprise, summons, echo, power, nostalgic feeling, joy, encouragement, disappointment, sorrow, love, happiness, acceptability, caution, dislike, condemnation, intimacy, invigorating remarks, affinity, and a play on words. However, for easy analysis, the findings and the discussion under this section are handled under sub-sections and they are as follows:

The repetitions of Yorùbá personal names in social interactions

The repetition of names, particularly, three times, is a common phenomenon in Yorùbá literary texts, films, and everyday speech, invariably, to express emphasis. In an extract from Adékúnlé (2003: 81), the context shows that a speaker can mention his or her addressee's name thrice before expressing his or her concern to the addressee. For example:

Kólá: *Kémi, Kémi, Kémi! Òótọ ọrọ korò, ọrọ kò sì lè le tíí kí a fi ọbẹ bù ú. Wíwá tí mo wá sí ibí yí lónù kì í ẹ lásán. Işẹ pàtàkì ni mo bá wá . . .*

Translation

Kólá: *Kémi, Kémi, Kémi! Truth is bitter, however difficult a word is, we cannot use a knife to cut it into pieces. I come here for a purpose. I have come here for an important matter . . .*

The mentioning of the addressee's name thrice in line 1 in the extract above shows that the speaker wants his addressee to know that he has come to discuss an important matter. In other words, the repetition is for emphasis.

During inter-house sports, secondary school students can repeatedly pronounce a competitor's name. For example;

Adé, Adé, Adé, Adé, Adé, Adé . . .

This language use shows that the students have an unflinching support for the addressee. They also want him or her to succeed. The repetitions are also shouts of encouragement to the addressee not to relent in his or her efforts to take the lead or move into the lead. But, if the addressee were a politician, the language use is evidence of the addressee's acceptability and strong support. However, during burial ceremony, this form of language use can be adopted by a speaker to show that

the speaker engages in elegy and the language use can be as a result of the close relationship between the speaker and the dead person.

The use of Yorùbá personal names with the vowel “o”

In the Yorùbá language, the vowel “o” could be pronounced either after a word or words for the purpose of weak emphasis. For example, “Olú o” (see Bamgboṣe, 1967: 40). In some cases, therefore, speakers of the Yorùbá language do lengthen the vowel “o” for various sociolinguistic reasons especially summons (see Ladipo, 1970: 32).

- (A) Ará Ọ̀yọ̀: ... K’ó ʃojúu gbogbo aiye.
 Àní l’Ọ̀jà Àkẹ̀sán l’óde Ọ̀yọ̀ o.
 Ki Gbònkàà sì fi bí ó ʃe mú Timì
 Èḍe hàn.
 Ṣàngó: Gbònkàà oooooooooo! 5
 Gbònkàà: Oooooooooooooò!
 (*Gbònkàà wọ̀lé.*)
 (Translation)
 Townsperson: ... In the presence of everybody.
 Let it be at Àkẹ̀sán Market here at Ọ̀yọ̀.
 And let Gbònkàà show us how he
 caught Timì of Ede
 Ṣàngó: Gbònkàà ...! 5
 Gbònkàà: Yes ...!
 (*Gbònkàà enters.*)

The lengthening of vowel “o” in this context in line 5 above shows that the addressee is far off and that the lengthening is for the purpose of echoing the name so that the addressee would hear that he is being called.

In another context, the language use in line 5 of the extract above could also be adopted in a state of clarion call or by the person in distress or when somebody needs the attention of another person that is not readily available on the spot. The emphasis here will definitely let the addressee know that his or her attention is urgently required. However, this language use is only possible from an old person to a young one. This is because young people do not call the older ones by their names. But, if a youth wants to make use of this language use for an elderly person, he or she would have to add “Bàbá” (father) to the name, hence, Gbònkàà oooooo will be “Bàbá Gbònkàà oooooo” (father Gbònkàà). In Yorùbá culture, a youth adds “father” to the name of an elderly person who is as old as his father but who is not his biological father. For one’s biological father, the child’s name qualifies that of his father thus, “Bàbá Olú” (Olú’s father). As a sign of respect for an elderly person who is not one’s biological father, the elderly person’s name stands in apposition to the word, “father” thus, “Bàbá Gbònkàà” (father Gbònkàà).

Depending on the situation also, on signposts, posters, and government vehicles, the lengthening of vowel “o” could be for the purpose of campaign and acceptability. For instance, the Osun State Governor’s name is “Ọ̀lágúnsóyè Oyinlọ̀lá” and this is written and pronounced as “Oyin ni oooooo.” In a similar vein, Ayòdélé Fáyòse

— the name of the Ekiti State Governor — is written and pronounced as “Fáyòṣe yes ooooooooo.”

Syllable or vowel lengthening in Yorùbá personal names

The vowel that occurs finally in any Yorùbá personal name, whether abbreviated or unabbreviated, can be lengthened for various sociolinguistic reasons such as caution, surprise, echo, happiness, and disbelief, depending on the context. For example, “Olúwáfẹ̀mì” or “Fẹ̀mì” can be pronounced as “Olúwáfẹ̀mìiii” or “Fẹ̀mìiii.” So, the discussion shown below will lead to the lengthening of the final vowel of the addressee’s name in line 4.

- (B) (i) Ìkòtún: Ṣọ́lá, circular ti dé láti Abuja fún owóo monetisation.
(Ṣọ́lá, a circular for monetisation has been received from Abuja)
- (ii) Ṣọ́lá: Lóòótó?
(Truly?)
- (iii) Ìkòtún: N ó máa puró ni? Wón ti n ṣe é mó owó osù yì.
(Would I be telling a lie? It is being prepared with this month’s salary).
- (iv) Ṣọ́lá: Ìkòtún-ún-ún-ún 4

The lengthening of vowel “un” in (Biv) could mean two things. First, if Ṣọ́lá knows that Ìkòtún has not been telling the truth in the past, then it would mean that Ṣọ́lá does not believe what Ìkòtún said. But, if Ìkòtún has been telling the truth in the past, then the lengthening shows that Ṣọ́lá is happy that there is an increase in salary. The lengthening of the vowel “un” by the speaker suggests that the speaker will be older than the addressee or that the speaker and the addressee are of the same age or status. The factors of age and status which will be responsible for the lengthening of vowel “un” above will also be responsible for the lengthening of vowel “un” in reaction to the discussion below.

- (C) (i) Ìkòtún: Wo ọmọ̀bìnrin tó n lọ yì
(Look at the girl that is going)
- (ii) Adé: Èyí?
(This?)
- (iii) Ìkòtún: Wo ìdí è. Ó wà.
(Look at her buttock. It is superb)
- (iv) Adé: Ìkòtún-ún-ún-ún

The lengthening of vowel “un” in (Civ) is indicative of surprise if the speaker is religiously and morally inclined. The speaker marvels at the addressee’s level of infidelity or “corruption” and that the addressee is hereby being cautioned or warned. But, if the speaker and the addressee are not religiously and morally inclined, then the lengthening shows approval of the addressee’s observation.

It has been shown in this study that Yorùbá personal names can be shortened or divided into two or more meaningful segments. For example, “Olúwọ́lé” can become “Olú” or “Wọ́lé,” “Awólọ́wọ́” can become “Awo” or “Lọ́wọ́.” The two segments are permissible depending on the preference of the bearer as well as the speaker in some cases. But can we have segments like “Lúwọ́” from “Olúwọ́lé” or “Wólọ́” from “Awólọ́wọ́”? The answer to this question is already discussed in the introductory

section of this paper, especially under the rules guiding abbreviations of Yorùbá personal names. For example, the segments “Lúwo” and “Wólọ” are not permissible because the two do not have semantic/cultural meaning(s).

However, all the vowels of bisyllabic Yorùbá personal names can be lengthened. For example; “Fẹ̀mi” → ”Fẹ́ẹ́ẹ́ẹ́miiii,” “Adé” → ”Aaaadéééé.” It can also be the vowel that occurs finally that can be lengthened, for example, “Fẹ̀miiii,” “Adéééé” as already shown in examples (Biv) and (Civ). Vowel lengthening in names, depending on the context, will be an expression of caution, surprise, disbelief, echo, summons, and love. The former premier of Western Region and later Western State, Chief “Ọ̀bafẹ̀mi Awólọ̀wọ̀” was called “Áwòdòdò” for various political reasons. For example, the speaker’s lengthening of the vowel “ò” is to show the admiration of the addressee by the speaker especially for his achievements while in office. The lengthening of the vowel “ò” could also be a wish for the addressee’s continuity in office for more political achievements. During political campaigns, differences in age, social status, education, and wealth are usually disregarded when the lengthening of vowels in names of public figures occurs.

Lengthening can also affect a vowel that occurs medially. For example, the former governor of Ọ̀yọ̀ State, *Lamidi Adeşina*, had the vowel “a” in *Lamidi* lengthened after the name is shortened to *Lam*, by his admirers which included those that were either older or younger than him. During campaigns and outings, “Lamidi” often became “Laaaam” as a form of address. Thus, “Lamidi” first becomes “Lam,” and then “Laaaam.”

In bisyllabic names that end with the vowel “a” such as “Şọlá,” “Kọ́lá,” “Lọ́lá,” and “Bọ́lá,” the vowel “a” can be replaced with either the vowel “e” or “i” before vowel lengthening takes place. This is also the case with “Fẹ̀mi” and “Kẹ̀mi.” The vowel “i” can be replaced with the vowel “o.” This lengthening will show that there is a sort of intimacy between the speaker and the addressee. For example, the names can be realized as shown below:

Şọlá → *Şọléééé* or *Şọlíííí*.
Kọ́lá → *Kọ́léééé* or *Kọ́líííí*
Bọ́lá → *Bọ́léééé* or *Bọ́líííí*
Lọ́lá → *Lọ́léééé* or *Lọ́líííí*
Fẹ̀mi → *Fẹ̀móóóó*
Kẹ̀mi → *Kẹ̀móóóó*

The lengthening of vowels like “é,” “í,” and “o” in these examples is in recognition of the speaker’s love and affection for the addressee. The speaker should either be older than the addressee or that the speaker and the addressee are of the same age.

The use of “èmi” (first person singular pronominal) with any Yorùbá personal name

On the use of Yorùbá personal names, readers of *Èfúnşetán Aníwùrà* — a Yorùbá drama book written by Işọla (1970) — must have seen how the first person singular pronominal “èmi” can be used with any Yorùbá personal name in social interactions to express power, nostalgia, or as a response to a question depending on the social

situation or context. In a reaction to the behavior put up by a person or a group of people, the speaker can mention his or her name with the first person singular pronominal, “èmi,” together with eulogy to express power, nostalgia, or a question. An extract taken from Iṣọla (1970: 5) shows that the claim made above is possible. See line 3 of the extract.

Èmi ni ng o pa yin.
 Kíni ẹ fi mí pè?
 Èmi Èfúnṣetán Aníwúrà
 Bí irùgbòn alágbàṣe gùn tó apá,
 Ẹni tí ó gbóko fún un lògá rẹ
 Ojọ tí inú bá tún bí mi báyi . . .

Translation

It is I that will kill you (pl)
What did you (pl) liken me to?
I Èfúnṣetán Aníwúrà!
If the hired laborer's beard is as long as an arm
His master is still the person that has given him a work to do
Any other day that I am as annoyed as this . . .

In this context, the speaker is saying that she is very powerful and she wants her addressees to know that they would be ruthlessly dealt with if they should misbehave again. Note that the first person singular pronominal stands in apposition to the woman's name.

In another context, a speaker can use his or her name together with the family eulogy as shown in Iṣọla (1970: 6) essentially to express a nostalgic feeling. See lines 1 and 2 of the extract.

Èmi Ọsúntúndé, ọmọ Mógàjí
 Ọmọ alẹsin léèkàn, èmi ọkúnrin náà!
 Ìyàwó méjì ni baba mi fẹsónà fún mi:
 Ohun tí yìò lé ni nílẹ ẹni, . . .

Translation

I Ọsúntúndé, the son of Mógàjí
A child that has a horse at the stable, I the man!
My father had had the plan to hand over two wives to me at the same time;
Whatever that will send one away from one's house, . . .

In the extract above, the speaker's use of his name with the family eulogy is meant to serve as a reminder of his past good upbringing and regret for his present miserable position.

The reduction of Yorùbá personal names to initials or Anglicized forms

In informal situations, the literate speakers of the Yorùbá language do reduce any Yorùbá personal name to either the first letter that is a consonant, the first two letters

which could be either a vowel and a consonant or a consonant and a vowel or randomly selected two or three letters depending on the speaker's preference. For example, "Adékúnlé" can be shortened to "Kúnlé" and then reduced to "K." However, instead of "K" as in the word "Kill," what they do pronounce is "K" as in the word "cable" (for more on phonological interference, see Ikọtun, 1999). In addition to the sounds that are adopted as initials, words like "the" "sir," "bàbá" and phrases like "the honorable" are often added. For example, "sir k," "the k," "bàbá k," and "the honorable k." Any of these address forms shows evidence of intimacy and friendliness and address forms like these are either from an older person to a younger person or from a colleague to another colleague that are of the same age or from admirers, young or old, or even parents. Among the literate speakers of the Yorùbá language also, parents whose child answers "Kúnlé" can be addressed as "Daddy K" for the father and "Mummy K" for the mother.

Similarly, senior secondary school students and polytechnic/university students do bring their knowledge of English language to bear while addressing each other or one another. They do Anglicize the shortened Yorùbá personal names to either adjectives or adverbs, although the shortened forms remain nominals. However, Yorùbá names that are normally handled this way are usually reduced to two syllables. For example, an addressee's name which is "Olúwafẹ̀mi" which can be reduced to "Fẹ̀mi" can be addressed as "Fẹ̀mistic," "Fẹ̀motic," "Fẹ̀mostical," or "Fẹ̀mostically." Forms of address like these can also be from some elderly people to the young ones who are of school age. While forms of address like the above show friendliness and solidarity among students, the address forms show love from the elderly ones to the young ones. Good behavior or excellent academic performances will serve as the bases of the address forms from the elderly ones who are literate to the young ones who are students. The factors of friendliness, solidarity, and love will also be responsible for vowel lengthening in Anglicized Yorùbá names that are adjectives or adverbs. When this is the case, the vowel of the second syllable will be lengthened. For example, we could have "Femooooostical" or "Femooooostically."

Furthermore, the vowels that occur in Anglicized Yorùbá personal names that are monosyllabic or bisyllabic can be lengthened. For example, the name "Dàda" can be Anglicized as "Dad" and what should normally be *Ìkòtún* can be Anglicized as *Ikòt* by the literate speakers of the Yorùbá language. The vowel "a" in "Dad" can then be lengthened as in "Daaaad"; and "Ikòt" can be realized either as *liikòòòòòt* or as *Ikòòòòòt*, depending on the speaker's preference. This type of lengthening primarily suggests intimacy on the part of interlocutors. The lengthening could also mean three things. First, the speaker is happy at the addressee's presence or appearance. This may be because the addressee has been away for some time. Second, the addressee has done something which interests the speaker. Third, the speaker and the addressee are of the same age or that the speaker is older than the addressee. If the addressee is a politician or a public figure, this mode of address could be from a younger person to an elderly person.

The use of Yorùbá personal names with eulogies

It has been shown in this research work that Yorùbá personal names can be used with eulogies in social interactions. When so used, at least five major reasons can be

responsible for it. First, if the speaker is a singer or a praise singer or a person who engages in eulogies, he or she can adopt this language use as a mark of recognition in a social gathering or in recognition of the gift given to him or her by the addressee or for the purpose of a request for gratification from the audience. Second, any of the illiterate speakers of the Yorùbá language who belongs to the age group of fifty and above can also adopt this form of address for an addressee either as a form of greeting or in reply to a greeting, especially from a younger person. This type of language use is evidence of affinity between the speaker and the addressee. It also shows that the Yorùbá people do show affection during greetings. In some cases, the addressee will appreciate the greeting by giving the speaker some money for this special form of address.

Similarly, if the addressee is on a sick bed, this form of language use is meant to serve as invigorating remarks and encouragement for the addressee to recover from his or her sickness. It is also possible to adopt this type of language use during dispute settlement. The purpose is to soften the addressee's mind and quieten his or her anger. Another thing which this language use does is that it produces encouragement. For example, if one is working on the farm, this type of language use, if adopted as a form of address, is meant to invigorate and produce strength for the addressee. It can also be an expression of hearty, cheering welcome from a long journey or absence.

However, if the speaker is a literate speaker of the Yorùbá language, the address form will be a mixture of English and Yorùbá words. So, for an adult, who is not as old as the speaker, it will be:

Àgbéké
My dear
How are you?
Pèlẹ́ (Greeting to you (sgl))
My dear . . .

But, if the addressee is a young girl, the address form will take the following form:

Àgbéké
Nice girl
Beautiful girl
Pèlẹ́ (Greeting to you (sgl))
My dear . . .

And for a boy, it will be,

Şolá
Good boy/fine boy
Pèlẹ́ (Greeting to you (sgl))
My dear . . .

The use of Yorùbá personal names with the negative marker “kọ”

All Yorùbá personal names can take negative maker “kọ.” For example, “Adé kọ” (it is not Adé) or “Olú kọ” (it is not Olú). However, if a speaker has told an addressee that it is Adé who has done something and the addressee is asking again whether it

is Adé who has done it, the speaker could say, “Adé kọ,” Àdè ni’ (it is not Adé, it is Àdè) or “Adé kọ, Òjó ni” (it is not Adé, it is Òjó). This language use by the speaker shows that the speaker is annoyed with the addressee. This is because the addressee has pretended not to hear what he is being told. This language use also shows that the interlocutors are either of the same age or that the addressee is younger than the speaker. The tone change on the two Adés in “Adé kọ,” Àdè ni’ (it is not Adé, it is Àdè) is very important here, because it is the tone change that shows the annoyance of the speaker.

Some other uses of Yorùbá personal names

There are some other uses of Yorùbá personal names. Each of the syllables in all Yorùbá personal names, whether abbreviated or unabbreviated, can be stressed in social interactions. For example, O-lú-wá-fẹ-mi or O-lú-fẹ-mi or Lú-wá-fẹ-mi or Fẹ-mi. This language use shows joy and encouragement if the addressee has performed well. On the other hand, it can depict disappointment and sorrow if the addressee has performed badly or something bad has happened to the addressee.

Furthermore, it is possible for a person’s name to be wrongly pronounced in social interactions. For example, a speaker can say “Èyí tó ló n jẹ Dáúdí” (The one that says he is Dáúdí) when the speaker is supposed to pronounce “Dáúdá.” Here, the vowel “à” is realized as the vowel “ì.” This language use here is deliberate. This shows that the addressee, who is not physically present during the time of address, is not in the good book of the speaker. It also shows that the speaker dislikes the addressee.

Similarly, the pronunciation of an addressee’s name by a speaker can show the speaker’s temper and feelings about the addressee. See line 3 of an extract taken from Iṣòla (1970: 65).

... Àwọ̀n ará ilú gan-an ibá ti pa mí.
 Ṣùgbọ̀n taa ni ó dán irú èyí wò?
 Àwẹ̀ró!

Translation

... The town’s people would have killed me
 But who has done this type of thing?
 Àwẹ̀ró!

In line 3 in the extract above, the use of the addressee’s name by the speaker shows the speaker’s temper. It is also evident that the addressee’s attention is urgently required and that she is a suspect.

As a play on words and in informal situations, if an addressee’s personal name is identical with the name of a public figure like a president of a country, a sportsman, a governor of a state, one can replace the surname of the addressee with the surname of the public figure. For example, if the addressee’s name is “Olúṣẹ̀gun Arówólò” one can address him as “Olúṣẹ̀gun Qbásanjó” (Olúṣẹ̀gun Qbásanjó was the former Executive President of Nigeria). Apart from the fact that this form of address shows that the speaker is older than the addressee, it is also a sign of intimacy and friendliness between the speaker and the addressee. However, one question that has not been addressed in this paper is: why are some Yorùbá personal names wrongly spelled and wrongly written? The answer to this question can be the focus of another paper.

Conclusion

In this paper, we have shown how Yorùbá personal names that are bisyllabic, trisyllabic, and polysyllabic can be used in social interactions. We have also shown how the trisyllabic and polysyllabic names can be retained or have some of the syllables deleted in social interactions. The paper shows that each of the syllables in all Yorùbá personal names, whether abbreviated or unabbreviated, can be stressed, and that the vowel that occurs finally in any Yorùbá personal name can be lengthened. It is also shown that all the vowels of Yorùbá personal names that are bisyllabic can be lengthened and that any Yorùbá personal name can be reduced to either two or three letters depending on the speaker's preference.

Furthermore, we have shown that the socio-cultural factors that can influence the use of Yorùbá personal names in social interactions include affection, affinity, intimacy, and friendliness, to mention a few, and that the social functions of Yorùbá personal names are, among others, encouragement, surprise, disbelief, emphasis, nostalgia, power, caution, suspicion, and attention. What do the social functions of Yorùbá personal names in greetings or as greetings show about the social life of Yorùbá? They depict that, sociologically, the Yorùbá are a loving, caring, accommodating people who express their affection, nostalgia, and so on, even in their greetings.

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