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**ANALYSIS OF MONUMENTAL AND TESTIMONIAL
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Abstract

The study of names in general otherwise known as onomastics is made up of several components, two of the main components are: anthroponyms – personal names and toponyms – place names. Onomastics is a rich source of data for linguistic research especially anthroponyms. Specifically, this paper analyzes Oboloanthroponyms from the perspective of monumental and testimonial names. Based on this, the objectives of the paper were to: find out whether there exist monumental and testimonial personal names in Obolo; and ascertain the various monumental and testimonial categories of Oboloanthroponyms. To achieve these, the researcher and his assistants made use of introspection, personal interviews, extensive library work for materials on anthroponomastics and related areas of focus as well as burial/Funeral programme handbooks. The findings of this paper showed that monumental and testimonial anthroponyms are present in Oboloanthroponyms; and that there are such monumental categories as heroic exploits, physical prowess, etc. and testimonial categories such as temporary barrenness, male preference, etc.

Keywords: Monumental, Testimonial, Anthroponyms, Analysis**Introduction**

The beauty of language rests on its ability to provide solution to certain human issues. Right from creation, the supremacy of man to other creatures has always rested on his ability to creatively use language to name entities and nonentities. Therefore, it will be no gainsaying that the activity of naming is as old as man.

In a like manner, anthroponyms, or personal names, has been a part of man's existence. No wonder they receive a special treatment in the sociolinguistic study of a language. Anthroponymy is a subdomain of onomastics that deals mainly with the formation of personal names. Anthroponyms are of particular syntactic and semantic interest in linguistics, since they show special referential values and determination/modification constraints, and particular discourse values.

Anthroponyms encode world view experiences which are propositions or beliefs about the universe. Beliefs are formulations of what is thought about the universe, its objectives and relations. Ayuwo (1998) asserts that our choices of

certain personal names derive from our world view. As Batoma (2006) posits, names are rich depositories of information about the perception of people and places.

In Obolo, just like other African societies, names are not just devices of direct reference affording common, stable ways of thinking and speaking about particulars; and the associated mental names are not merely singular mental representations for a long-term use. Proper names and their associated mental representations are, additionally, and by their nature, markers of their referents' significance. Another fundamental function of proper names is to signal or mark a person's individuality (Jeshion 2009).

The onomastic elements, since they are no longer common nouns, are neither descriptive nor describable elements anymore, but are now only used to link words, phrases or sentences with individuals or with a geographical or social elements. In this anthroponomic study, I shall analyze both monumental names – names based on achievements or heroic deeds; and testimonial names – names based on fortunes as well as joy accompanying child birth.

This paper mainly focuses on analyzing monumental and testimonial names of Obolo. Based on this, the objectives of the study shall be to: find out whether there exist monumental and testimonial personal names in Obolo; and ascertain the various monumental and testimonial categories of Oboloanthroponyms (OAs).

Brief Historical Background of the Obolo

The Obolo people are not well-known; hence, the need to provide some information on them under the following headings: brief historical background, geographic location, linguistic classification, the explanation of the name “Obolo” and the linguistic situation in the area.

According to Ejituwu (1991), the Obolo ethnic nationality is a distinct group of people who migrated from an ancestral home called Urombi or Ramby into the eastern fringes of the Niger-Delta in about 300 BC. The Obolo people attempted settling in the Calabar area but met a stiff opposition that made them to move further west through the creeks until they founded a home *Ebon-Okwan-Obolo* around River Andoni. It was here that a shrine was established as their national deity *YokObolo*. In the course of time, many other settlements were founded. By about 1000 AD, Ejituwu (1991) pointed out that the Obolo had planted themselves in the eastern corner of the Niger-Delta and had taken possession of the entire territory.

The other myth of the origin of the people under discussion has it that the Obolo people left Egypt for Benin and after a brief stay in Benin they left in search of a more peaceful abode. This journey took them through Ijo territory to Urombi where tradition has it that the Obolo people stayed a while before they migrated to their present site. The Obolo language is spoken by people numbering about 100,000 (Aaron, 2000). The language is used extensively by the people in the day-to-day running of their affairs. But, the English language and Nigerian Pidgin are also widely used by the Obolo people.

Literature Review

The Significance of Naming

Culture has a significant role to play in the structure of names. The people's culture is their entire way of life as a social group. This includes what they think of themselves, their social organization, institutions, religions and ideas (Etuk, 2002) cited in (Mark, 2011). These aspects of culture are expressed and transmitted through language; for language is the medium and vehicle of culture. As we find in other human cultures, proper names are employed in Europe and America for the purpose of identification. Unlike Africa and Jewish names, English does not go beyond functioning as identification tags (Lyons, 1968 Palmer, 1976; and Kempson, 1977). It therefore means that English names are mere referring expression, even though, they point out people as distinct individuals, but they do not have any sense in themselves. In other words, they do not communicate; they are connotative and not denotative. Such cultural values as the importance placed on child bearing in Africa, for instance does not occur in European culture, and therefore, no special importance is attached to a child's name. In English, names of animals, objects etc. are used by human beings as identification tag. Examples of such names include; *Bush, Cook, Jolly, Linda*, etc. With the advent of Christianity, English and Americans bear such names as Daniel, Benedict, Emmanuel, etc. It must be pointed out however, that such names belong to one word noun constituent. It is often asserted that Africans in spite of differences in culture share some common dominant values, which identify them as African languages in the aspect of naming. Egbokhare, (2003) as cited in (Yakubu, 2012) "African languages are in an essential sense of living repositories and data banks of the history and culture of the African people" (p.83). Language, therefore, is an embodiment of African native languages, as embodied in names, beliefs, history and worldviews of the people.

Yoruba culture attaches great importance to children and child bearing, because of the traditional role children play as helping hands on the farms, but more importantly because they are the propagators of the family name and line. Naming among the Yoruba is a revered tradition usually brought about by careful observation of the child's background, and family history, the situation surrounding his birth and the religion of his parents.

Commenting on the structure of Yoruba names, Idowu (1996) says "every Yoruba name has a character and significance of its own....every one of the names is almost invariably a sentence, or a clause or an abbreviation of a sentence, which can be broken into component parts". Odudoye (1972) said that names in Yoruba tradition, therefore, are not arbitrary labels. Rather, they convey a sense of identification and belief and act as a vehicle of communication. They convey or speak volumes about the identity of the bearer and worldview of parents. He further recognizes the following categories of Yoruba personal names: reincarnation, circumstantial, religious, occupational, mystic birth aural, royalty and social cultural.

Method of data collection/ Instrumentation

Initial data for this study were collected from Ataba and its environs between December 1996 and January 2001. The researcher and his assistants made use of diverse sources to collect data for this study, including the following:

- 1) Introspection – the researcher's knowledge of the language and the people
- 2) Personal interviews
- 3) Extensive library work for materials on anthroponymastics and related areas of focus
- 4) Burial/Funeral programme handbooks

The major instrument used for this study is interview; more specifically the unstructured and semi-structured type. The 'unstructured' interview method was preferred because the bulk of the people interviewed are illiterate village-dwellers. The other option is the semi-structured interview as a purposeful discussion between two or more people that can be used to gather valid and reliable data relevant to the research questions and objectives.

For the educated among the population, it was much easier to take down their responses without the trouble of having to interpret the questions.

Monumental OboloAnthroponyms (MOAs)

Achievement as a social factor for the classification of OAs has the communication import of heroic exploits. The heroic exploits which the Obolo people are engaged in include the capture and taming of animals and birds. As a result of the special ability displayed by man, the names associated with such exploits are in most cases praise inclined. Names in this category could be given names or family names describing individuals in terms of their deeds or actions. Monumental OAs are discussed under attainment and social status. Each one is discussed with examples.

MOAs on Heroic Exploits

Embedded in OAs that fall in this class are meanings that describe individual exploits in war or elsewhere that a show of bravery is required. Examples in 1 corroborate this claim.

1 a .	O k p a ñ +	e g b e	→	Okpañegbè
	k i l l e r	leopard		
	‘ T h e k i l l e r o f l e o p a r d ’			
b .	Ò b e n +	ò g è	→	Òbenògè
	c a r r i e r	matchete		
	‘ E x p e r t a t t h e u s e o f m a t c h e t s ’			
c .	E g b è +	g u ñ	→	Egbèguñ
	L e o p a r d	c h i l d		
	‘ L e o p a r d - l i k e c h i l d ’			
d .	E j i t	à s a w ọ	→	Ejitàsawọ
	H e a r t	Serpent		
	‘ H e a r t o f t h e s e r p e n t ’			
e .	U b ọ k +	ò t e t +	→	Ubọkòtetiriñ
	H a n d	catch		
	‘ T h e h a n d t h a t c a t c h e s f i s h ’			

It is a historical fact that the Obolo territory used to have leopards and elephants. The myth of the founding of Ataba is replete with the claim of a split in their ancestral home as a result of a quarrel which broke out during the sharing of leopard. The disagreement was so fierce that the forebears of the Ataba people had to leave their ancestral home at IbòtOkaàmà and migrated to the western end of Obolo land to settle. That is partially responsible for the dialectal differences.

Okpañegbè has (1a) shows that the Obolo actually killed leopards.

Òguòkìbènògè one who carries matchet is usually realized as **Obenògè** (1b) would not just carry a matchet but is an expert at using the matchet to conquer both man and territory. Fishing is the most common occupation of the Obolo. The people are involved in through gathering of sea-shells, cockles, periwinkles, catching crabs and prawns or crayfish. Other ways include the catching of small and big fishes through the use of nets or other fishing traps such as ‘*Odik*’.

Ubọkòtetiriñ is usually an expert who returns with such fish as shark. He could also return from a fishing expedition with a canoe-load of fish that he has caught.

Ubọkòtetiriñ is expert fishermen whose exploit is beyond the ordinary. To have the heart of serpent – **Ejitàsawọ** (1d) has the communication import of being as subtle as the serpent. This type of OA is also associated with bravery. The display of bravery is done when the need arises the way a serpent would do. But it is the pragmatic considerations of associative meaning that brings to the fore the connotation of this OA and its communication import.

MOAs on Physical Prowess

Physical prowess is very similar to heroic exploits. However, with physical prowess reference is made directly to the namer. In other words, such OAs refer to the individual and much strength displayed in a fight or an argument and the like. Let us look at example 2a - c.

2 a .	U n y e +	e n ê	→	U n y e n ê
	S t r e n g t h	m a n		
	‘ A s t r o n g m a n ’			
b .	K e k e +	k p ô	→	K e k e k p ô
	S t a n d	s e e		
	‘ W i t h s t a n d a t y o u r p e r i l ’			
c .	A t à +	i l e	→	A t à i l e
	P i l l a r	b i g		
	‘ A g r e a t p i l l a r ’			

OAs of this nature are borne by people who are noted for their physical strength and ability to withstand pain. Unlike 2a, 2b appears ambiguous at face value, at first, but a scrutiny of the full name **Kekekpòkàlibi** –‘stand and see, do not run’. But, connotatively, a name such as this carries an idea of an exceptionally strong person who can be confronted at the peril of the challenger. Denotatively, the name simply means ‘stand and see’.

MOAs on Professional Achievement

Monumental OboloAnthroponyms point to professional attainment in the life of the giver of the name. Such OAs also speak of the position held by the givers of the name in the society at the time the bearers were born. Also embedded in names of this category are the expectations of the givers of the names. Example 3a-d will suffice for illustrations.

3 a .	Ò g u +	i s i +	a k ô ñ	→	Òguisiakoñ
	o n e	f r o n t	w a r		
	‘ L e a d e r o f w a r t e a m o r c o m m a n d e r ’				
b .	U g a +	a n i n i m		→	Ugaanim
	M o t h e r	d i v e r			
	‘ G r e a t d i v e r ’				
c .	À t a +	ò g u +	o t â	→	Àtaòguotâ
	g o o d	o n e	h u n t e r		
	‘ A g r e a t h u n t e r ’				
d .	A k	p	o	→	A k p o
	P a	d	l o c k		

With regard to achievements, MOAs are capable of revealing the status of a person in society. Names in this category convey the area of a person’s achievement such as a great hunter, war leader; they also connote one who recovers capsized canoes; hence, ‘great diver’. It is worrisome that a person should be named **Akpo** - ‘Padlock’. But investigations show that a name like this could be given to a great wrestler. Perhaps, a little digression will suffice to explain what is meant here. The bearer of this name claims that his grandfather was a great wrestler whom no one ever defeated; but on this fateful day an opponent was about to throw him down in a wrestling contest. Before the great wrestler got to the ground, he locked his legs around his opponent’s such that though he was on the ground the challenger defecated as a result of the leg-locked

around the challenger's abdomen. It was such that he turned his opponent's victory sour, and though defeated, he was named **Akpo**.

A name like **Akpo** is indeed a traditional means of communicating the fact that Obolo names are not mere tags, but are certainly meaning laden. Such OAs actually have in them social factors that are enclosed in semantic categories that non-native speakers of Obolo cannot easily see nor can they understand the embedded meanings in the names.

MOAs on Social Status

Monumental OboloAnthroponyms (MOAs) are also harbingers of information on the achievement of social status. This is explicated through the following examples in 4 a-d.

4 a . Òg u + u b ọ ñ + irî ñ → Ôgubọñirî ñ

W h o c h i e f f i s h

' c h i e f o f f i s h (c a t c h e r s) '

b . Dê + òg u + i l e → Dêòguil e

M a n w h o b i g

' a h i g h l y p l a c e d m a n '

c . U b ọ ñ + èb i + ofià → Ubọñèbiofià

C h i e f t h e h e r b a l i s t

' c h i e f o f h e r b a l i s t s o r d i v i n e r s '

d . Unọ n + u b ọ ñ → Unọnubọ ñ

B i r d k i n g

' k i n g o f b i r d s '

The data in 4(a-c) have communication import on the social status of the bearers. Some of the names may have been nicknames for people who are associated with the eagle 'Ìgò'(Unọnubọñ). Considering that the eagle is the king of birds, anyone so named after it is believed to hold an important position in the community; even if, he has not been given chieftaincy title. In some cases, the Obolo people who bear such names see it as a precursor to being made a chief.

Testimonial OboloAnthroponyms (TOAs)

Testimonial OboloAnthroponyms (TOAs) are a semantic category found in the social factor called FORTUNE. TOAs have the communication import of testimonies of the fortune of parents of bearers of such names. TOAs have a bearing with information, revolving round the birth of a child and the joy it

brings. Embedded in TOAs are communication events such as Temporary Barrenness, Preference for Male Children, and Unexpected or Circumstantial Births. Each of them is presented with examples in an attempt to describe their communication import and the implications of such names.

TOAs on Temporary Barrenness

The meaning of some testimonial names in Obolo suggests that the parents of bearers of such names may have been childless for a while. These are also reflected in additional prayers or cry for help as in the example 5.

- 5 a . Òwàjì + in ò + m bere → Òwàjìnò mber e
 G o d heard p l e a
 ‘ G o d h a s h e a r d m y p r a y e r ’
 b . Òwàjì + in ò + èmì + ìda → Òwàjìnò mìda
 G o d hear my voice
 ‘ G o d h a s h e a r d m y c r y ’
 c . Kpeyakà + ichak + èmì → Kpeyakichakèmì

not again laugh m e
 ‘ I w i l l n o t b e a l a u g h i n g s t o c k a g a i n ’

It is observed that several TOAs are denotatively speaking simple sentences. But the connotative meaning is what brings out the essence of this semantic category. The corpus in (5c) exemplifies a person who has been laughed at by neighbours and probably the entire community for being barren. When at last a baby is born by this person, the neighbours and community at large are asked to stop laughing as such a parent stops being a laughing stock.

TOAs on Male Preference

There are certain names that bear information on the preference of male children. The desire to have a male child in every family is important in Africa. The Obolo people are not left out of this desire. After all, it is believed that the lineage is preserved through male offspring. TOAs communicate the deep - seated desire of the Obolo to have, or are pleased with having a male child as exemplified in 6.

- 6 a . Oriè + kêmì + m m a → Orièkêmm a
 Male m e l i k e
 ‘ I p r e f e r a m a l e ’
 b . Ìbele k + ògutè → Ìbelekògutè
 Resembles f a t h e r
 ‘ S h e l o o k s l i k e h e r f a t h e r ’
 c . O r i e + m o + nù ñ → Orièmônù ñ
 M a l e w i l l c o m e
 ‘ A m a l e c h i l d w i l l c o m e ’

Also, 6 (b) is given to a male child to show that he looks like his father. But when used for a female child, it follows that there is that wish that a male child were born or a wish that the female child were a man. This hope is further revealed in a name like that of (c) which clearly states that a male child is being expected. The communication import of names in this category is the preference for male children by the givers of such names. The Obolo like many Africans do not take lightly the absence of a male child in the family. This could explain why there is a preference for a male who is expected to carry on the lineage of the family.

TOAs on Unexpected Sex of a Child

Testimonial OboloAnthroponyms (TOAs) also communicate an expression of unexpected sex of a child. From some of the OAs in this category can be deduced the state of mind of the namers at the time such names were given. A close scrutiny of the OAs in 7 will add fillip to this claim.

- 7 a . Ñkaker e + ibe + irè + eyi → Ñkakereibeirèey i
 I did not expect is this
 “I did not expect that this is the one”
- b . Mbòk ọ + ità p → Mbòkọità p
 I receive i t
 ‘I receive it (the way it is)’
- c . Gêlè k + îwà n → Gèlekîwà n
 A n y g o o d
 ‘Which ever is good (for me)’

An expectant parent may name his child in this way against the backdrop of that child being contrary to the gender they had expected. Our investigation reveals that TOAs on unexpected sex are not lop-sided. Although, preference is for the male child, there are families who actually yearned for female children, especially, if they have been blessed with series of boys. IDOAs of this nature are not based on any particular gender. It is found that if a male child is born instead of an expected female, the child would still be named Ñkakere- I did not expect.

TOAs on Circumstantial Birth

Testimonial OboloAnthroponyms (TOAs) have been found to communicate circumstantial births. Circumstantial because the deliveries were taken at places that are least expected or the children were born in places other than their homes. It is also circumstantial if the baby was born when it was least expected, that is before the expected date of delivery. TOAs also communicate the position of a bearer in the line of children in a family. As can be seen in example 8:

8 a	O k p a n + First (male)	g u ñ c h i l d	→	Okpanguñ
b	E w e + M a r k e t	i l e b i g	→	E w e i l e
c	O r ô n + B u s h	i j a s m a l l	→	Orônijà
d	U j i + C a n o e	i l e b i g	→	U j i l e

The name in 8 (a) cannot be given to anyone who is not a first male child in Obolo land. Examples (8b-d) tell of the places where such persons were born. For example, if a woman went to fetch wood in a nearby bush and had her baby there that child is normally given such names **Orônijà**- small bush. But the baby could be given another name during the naming ceremony. In spite of giving another name, the person in focus could still be known and addressed by the initial names given to correspond to the place of birth. Hence, they are TOAs of circumstantial birth because the namers were taken by surprise.

The testimony which these names bear is the basis for categorizing them as Testimonial names under the social factor of Fortune. It is also as a result of the family receiving good fortune because of the coming of such children. This among other reasons is responsible for sub-categorizing them under TOAs. The following examples (8e-f) further expatiates this stand.

e.	Ìya + uboñ + inu	→	Ìyauboñinu
	He has wealth come		
	'He brought wealth'		
f.	Àta + isi	→	Àtaisi
	Good face		
	'Good luck'		

Conclusion

This paper on the monumental and testimonial anthroponyms of Obolo followed Ayuwo (1998) and Ayuwo (2014) in analysing Oboloanthroponyms into areas of interest to society. It offered sociolinguistic insight into the nature of OAs being the only such treatment available on MOAs and TOAs so far.

The paper further practically shows that MOAs and TOAs are frequently used for social and cultural expressions in the language and to this day stands at the very centre of the people's affairs. It must be asserted that this paper has shown that OAs also bring to the fore an understanding of the people's belief system and their traditional relationships with beings of the cosmos. MOAs and TOAs probe the realities of the world through personal experiences. OAs are also,

a product of fascinating linguistic behavior of the people in the society; thus, MOAs and TOAs take no exception to them.

This finding justifies our initial claim at the beginning of this paper that OAs are a form of Obolo language with which the Obolo talk about their world and its social realities. Based on the foregoing, it is concluded that the relationship between MOAs and TOAs and the socio-cultural environment forms the foundation of basic and important issues in Obolo language and culture which is paramount not only to sociolinguistics but also to traditional communication.

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