



## MORPHOLOGICAL ANALYSIS OF ANGLICIZED YORÙBÁ PERSONAL NAMES FOR APPELLATIONS

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### Abstract:

Different studies by scholars on Yorùbá personal names have reported that personal names are adopted as surnames most, especially, among some elite - men and housewives, instead of families' names. Most of the findings of these studies have shown that attention has not been focused on the fact that there is a departure from the traditional way of adopting appellations in Yorùbá society such that personal names are now adopted as appellations having anglicized them. The paper examines the morphological processes of deriving the anglicized personal names for appellations. The data collection for this paper relies largely on the text materials and articles in learned journals on personal names. Informants for the paper are drawn from the youths and educated adults within the age brackets of 50 and 60 years. The reason for the selection is premised on the fact that the adoption of anglicized personal names for the appellation is peculiar to these groups of people. A descriptive approach is adopted for the data analysis. Findings from the study reveal that the anglicization of Yorùbá personal names is an indication of global civilization. This paper serves as a contribution to the existing literature on Yorùbá personal names.

**Keywords:** appellations, personal names, anglicized, surnames, practice

### 1. Introduction

A name in Yorùbá Society is a mark of identity. Owing to the importance attached to names, Yorùbá are careful in giving names to their children (Akinnaso 1980). They put many factors into

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consideration before giving names because they believe that any name given to a child would have an impact on such a child in future (Ajiboye 2009). Findings from scholars on Yorùbá names show that their focus is only on the classifications of names, the various fanfares surrounding naming, the practice of name modification and change and its implications on Yoruba culture and personal identity (Oduyoye 1971, Adeoye 1972, Ekundayo 1977, Akinnaso 1980, Ajiboye 2009, Ikotun and Aladesanmi 2012). Attention has not been paid to new trends of anglicizing personal names like *Holuwardarmielorlar* 'Olúwadámiloḷá', *Arbaryormie* 'Àbáyòmí' and the use of anglicized personal names for appellations in Yorùbá Society. Although Adeoye and Akintoye (2021) mention a new practice of adopting the name initial for appellations among the elites, they do not discuss this aspect in their paper. This paper is divided into four sections. Section one is the introduction. Section two focuses on the literature review. Section three contains the research methodology. Section four discusses the morphological analysis of anglicized Yorùbá personal names for appellations.

## 2. Literature Review

The concept of name in Yorùbá goes beyond a means of identification. It has different connotations in Yorùbá Society (Adeoye 1972). The following Yorùbá proverbs confirm it; "*Ilé là ní wò kí a tó sọmọ lórúkọ*" (the home is considered before giving a child name); "*Orúkọ ọmọ ni ijánu ọmọ*" (the child's name controls his or her actions); "*Orúkọ rere sàń ju wúrà àti fàdákà lọ*" (a good name is preferred to silver and gold) (Bada 1985). The implication of these proverbs is that the name given to a child has control over the child's conduct, hence, an average Yorùbá child usually avoids anything that would tarnish his or her name in the public. Due to this, Yorùbá are careful in giving names to their children because of the future implication (Ajiboye 2009). Ajiboye's (2009) submission is in consonance with Ekundayo (1977) who is of the opinion that names with a positive connotation are adopted while names with a negative connotation are abhorred. Akinnaso (1980) opines that names are drawn from the home contexts. Personal names with negative and unpleasant connotations are avoided because a child's name plays an important role in their development and future career. That being the case, a child's destiny may react to a name that has a negative social implication in future.

Aside from this, the issues of name and naming in Yorùbá have generated lots of reactions among the Yorùbá scholars. For instance, Ajiboye (2009) opines that names are used among the Yorùbá people to demonstrate their loyalty and honour to their deities and progenitors who were at the forefront of the worship of these deities. Ajiboye (2009) further expresses his displeasure with name modification and change. He explains that it violates God's law and also highlights its consequences on Yorùbá Society. Ikotun and Aladesanmi (2012) have a contrary opinion, they explain that name modification and change have their origin from the Bible and it does not violate God's law and it is unavoidable when there is acculturation. Akintoye (2016) reacts to Ajiboye (2009) by saying that anglicizing Yorùbá names causes havoc to the Yorùbá language. Akintoye and Ojo (2020:131) opine that name is a source of honour and pride, especially for those who are born from heroic and warrior families. People love identifying with such names by bearing the names of the heroic and warriors. Akintoye and Ojo (2020:134) corroborate Ajiboye's

(2009) position by explaining that the practice of name modification and change cannot only lead to loss of Yorùbá true identity, but it can also make Yorùbá names go into extinction.

Adeoye and Akintoye (2021) point attention to another name adoption that is common among the elites today. This is the compounding of the families' and personal names as surnames among men and the compounding of the maiden and husbands' families' names as matrimonial names. They highlight the reasons for adopting this practice, parts of which are; to identify with their fathers so as to use their fathers' political and business influences to achieve their political goals or to promote their businesses, and for Facebook use so that they would not lose the contacts of those that do not aware that they are already married. Adeoye and Akintoye (2021) also point to another practice trending among the elites which is adopting name initials as appellations. Although, these scholars discuss various aspects of the issues of names but not in the present study. Findings from all the studies above show that there have not been robust discussions on appellations, especially, in the area that this paper focuses.

### 3. Research Methodology

This paper is purely descriptive, and its data collection relies on the text materials and articles in learned journals on naming and Yorùbá personal names. The informants for the paper are drawn from the youths and educated adults whose ages are in the brackets of 50 and 60 years. The reason for this selection is that anglicizing personal names for appellations are a common practice among the youths and the educated adults within the range of the ages mentioned above. The informants were selected from Ado-Ekiti township and Ekiti State University, Ado-Ekiti. The reason is that the authors live in Ado-Ekiti and work at Ekiti State University, Ado-Ekiti. The results of the oral interviews conducted with some of these informants who bear these anglicized Yorùbá personal names as their appellations indicate that this practice is a mark of civilization. It also shows that Yorùbá nation is not stationary; it moves at the same pace as the other civilized nations. It is also adopted to meet the global standard.

#### 3.1 Morphological Analysis of Anglicized Yoruba Personal Names for Appellations

According to the Longman Dictionary of Contemporary English (1995:52), the appellation is a name or title. It is a name or title which does not refer to the original name that a person bears. Abiodun (1997) explains that appellation is a title used to avoid calling a person his or her original name. This submission is corroborated by Oladipupo (2014) who says that appellation is a nickname or a title given to the bearer after the observation of certain characteristics that are unique to the person. He says further that appellation is not given immediately after the child is born, it is usually added to the other names already given to the child later in life. In most cases, people usually drop all other names and call and address the person only with such a nickname.

According to Abiodun (1997), the appellation is a common practice in Yorùbá setting, and it is adopted based on power, wealth, age, status, education, social position or interaction, physical appearances and habits. He says further that appellation can be given by oneself, housewives to their in-laws because Yorùbá culture forbids the housewife to call their brother and sisters-in-law by names, especially, those that were born before they were married to those

families. Adeoye and Akintoye (2021) also say that appellation is also given by friends or associates, students, drivers, touts, political thugs and co-workers as demonstrated below.

**Example 1:**

|                                 |   |
|---------------------------------|---|
| Àgékù-ejò                       | 'A half-cut snake'                                |
| Balógun (Balógun léyìn obìnrin) | 'War lord' (Warlord behind a woman)               |
| Ìdí-ìlẹ̀kẹ̀                     | 'Buttock of beads' (The buttock that wears beads) |
| Fá-rí-orò                       | 'Shaving head for festival'                       |
| Kí-ló-fa méeṣì                  | 'What causes mess'                                |
| Kò-koṣan                        | 'Never rejects any'                               |
| Kò-sòṣì                         | 'There is no insolvency'                          |
| Igi ìwé                         | 'The tree of book' (A brilliant person)           |
| Olówólayémo`                    | 'It is the rich man that the world knows'         |
| Olówóòfóyèkù                    | 'The rich man never misses chieftain titles'      |
| Ojúloge                         | 'A fine face'                                     |
| Ọ̀pẹ̀léngé                      | 'A slender person'                                |
| Dóńgòṣọ́lá                      | 'A very tall person'                              |
| Ajísefínní                      | 'A person who is always neat'                     |

According to Adeoye and Akintoye (2021), there is a drastic departure from the traditional way of adopting appellations to the practice of adopting name initials as appellations in Yorùbá society as itemized below.

**Example 2:**

|     |                                |
|-----|--------------------------------|
| FFK | 'Fẹmi Fàní-Káyòdé'             |
| MKO | 'Moshood Kásìmáawòó Ọ́láwálé'  |
| JKF | 'Joseph Káyòdé Fáyẹmí'         |
| JET | 'Jádesọ́lá Èyítáyò`Táíwò'      |
| JFT | 'Jémiríyè Fọ́lọ́runṣọ`Timothy' |
| MOB | 'Michael Ọ̀péyímí Bámidélé'    |
| BAO | 'Bíọ́dún Àbáyọ̀mí Oyèbánjí     |
| ETO | 'Ebenezer Tóyìn Ọ̀jọ'          |

They explain that such a type of appellation is not a practice in Yorùbá. It was imported from British and Europe, and it is formed by acronyms.

From personal investigation, it was discovered that there is another new practice of adopting appellation among the youths and the educated adults in Yorùbá society by anglicizing personal names as manifested in the data below.

**Example 3:**

|                  |  |                      |
|------------------|--|----------------------|
| A.               |  | B                    |
| (a)              |  |                      |
| Shèddy           |  | Shèddíntìn 'Sèdowó'  |
| Kòlly            |  | Kòllíntìn 'Kòláwòlé' |
| Bòlly            |  | Bòllíntìn 'Bòláńlé'  |
| Bòbby            |  | Bòbbíntìn 'Bòbońá'   |
| Tòppy            |  | Tòppínsìn 'Tòpé'     |
| (b)              |  |                      |
| i. Tòpsy         |  | 'Tòpé'               |
| ii. Dupsy        |  | 'Dúpe'               |
| (c)              |  |                      |
| i. Yinkkus       |  | 'Yínká'              |
| ii. Tayyus       |  | 'Táyé'               |
| iii. Kayyus      |  | 'Káyòdé'             |
| iv. Kòllad       |  | 'Kòládé'             |
| (d)              |  |                      |
| A.               |  | B.                   |
| i. Yemyy Yemi    |  | 'Adéyemí'            |
| ii. Yomyy Yońmí  |  | 'Àbáyòmí'            |
| iii. Lolly Loń   |  | 'Ońońońá'            |
| iv. Funkky Fúnkì |  | 'Olu/Adéfúnńkè'      |
| v. Bukky Búkì    |  | 'Olúbùkòńá'          |
| vi. Temmy Témì   |  | 'Tèmiladé'           |
| vii. Tenny Tení  |  | 'Teníńońá'           |
| (e)              |  |                      |
| i. Wallex        |  | 'Wále'               |
| ii. Kòllex       |  | 'Kòlé'               |
| (f)              |  |                      |
| i. Olúcrown      |  | 'Adéolú'             |
| ii. Yemíking     |  | 'Ońáyemí'            |
| iii. Adégold     |  | 'Adéwúra'            |
| iv. Ońácrown     |  | 'Adéońá'             |
| (g)              |  |                      |
| i. Owóblow       |  | 'Owólabí'            |
| ii. Olúshow      |  | 'Olúwòlé'            |
| iii. Adéshow     |  | Adéseéwò'            |

|      |              |                            |
|------|--------------|----------------------------|
| ii.  | Bablow       | <b>Babalolá'</b>           |
| (h)  |              |                            |
| i.   | Remdem       | 'Rè mí and Dé molá'        |
| ii.  | Majèk Fashèk | 'Májèkódùmí and Fàshèkémí' |
| iii. | Damlèk       | 'Dámilolá and Lékan        |
| iv.  | Deyèm        | 'Adé and Yèmí'             |
| v.   | Yèmkèm       | 'Yèmí and Kèmí'            |
| vi.  | Bafèm        | 'Baba and Fémí'            |
| vii. | Bayfòl       | 'Báyo and Folúso'          |

This section aims at discussing the morphological processes employed to derive the anglicized Yorùbá personal names turned appellation above. According to Aronoff and Fudeman (2008:28); "*Morphology refers to the mental system involved in word formation or the branch of Linguistics that deals with words, their internal structure, and how they are formed.*" Words are formed by affixing bound morphemes to fixed or free morphemes (Oye 2011). There are three types of bound morphemes; prefix, infix and suffix. Out of these three bound morphemes, only prefix and infix are attested in the Yoruba language. Suffix morpheme is found in English and Haúsá languages.

A critical study of the data above shows that examples 3(a-d) are derived by clipping. Aronoff and Fudeman (2008: 115) define Clipping as the creation of a new word by truncation of an existing one. According to them, many nicknames are formed via this process. Going by this definition, examples 3 (a-d) are derived by truncating either the vowel or consonant in the word-final position or segments in the initial or final positions or segments on both sides. In addition to truncation, the common feature in the examples above is the generation of consonant clusters before suffixation. This contradicts Yorùbá orthography and Morphology. In that Yorùbá orthography and Morphology do not permit consonant clusters, consonants in the word-final position and suffixation (Bamgbose 1976) as manifested below.

**Example 4:**

|      | A.     |            | B          |
|------|--------|------------|------------|
| i    | Shèddy | Shèddíntìn | 'Sédowó'   |
| ii.  | Kolly  | Kollíntìn  | 'Koláwolé' |
| iii. | Bolly  | Bollíntìn  | 'Bolánlé'  |
| iv.  | Bobby  | Bobbíntìn  | 'Bobolá'   |
| v.   | Topsy  | Toppínsìn  | 'Tópe'     |

**Example 5:**

|     |       |        |
|-----|-------|--------|
| i.  | Topsy | 'Tópe' |
| ii. | Dupsy | 'Dúpe' |

**Example 6:**

|      |         |          |
|------|---------|----------|
| i.   | Yinkkus | 'Yínká'  |
| ii.  | Tayyus  | 'Táyé'   |
| iii. | Kayyus  | 'Káyòdè' |
| iv.  | Kòllad  | 'Kòládé' |

**Example 7:**

|      |       |       |                |
|------|-------|-------|----------------|
|      | A.    |       | B.             |
| i.   | Yemy  | Yemi  | 'Adéyemí'      |
| ii.  | Yomy  | Yòmí  | 'Àbáyòmí'      |
| iii. | Lolly | Loḷì  | 'Omoḷolá'      |
| iv.  | Funky | Fúnkì | 'Olu/Adéfúnkè' |
| v.   | Bukky | Búkì  | 'Olúbùkoḷá'    |
| vi.  | Temmy | Témì  | 'Tèmiladé'     |
| vii. | Tenny | Tení  | 'Téníolá'      |

**Example 8:**

|     |        |      |
|-----|--------|------|
| i.  | Wallex | Wálé |
| ii. | Kollex | Kolé |

A critical study of the examples above shows that the emboldened vowel, consonants and segments in the proper names are truncated to generate artificial consonant clusters before suffixation. For instance, in example 4A (i-v), the consonants after the initial syllable are duplicated after which the suffix *-y-* is affixed. A close look at examples 4(A) and 4(B) indicates that /y/ and /i/ are allomorphs of the same morphemes because they occur in complementary distribution. For instance, /y/ in 4(A) becomes /i/ when it appears in-between consonants and syllabic nasal consonants in 4 (B). The rule below can capture the explanation above.

$/y/ \rightarrow /i/ /c\text{-NAS}\#$

In examples 5(i, ii) the suffix *-sy-* is affixed to the consonant after the deletion of /e/ in the proper names; *Tópé* and *Dúpé*. The suffix *-us-* is affixed to the artificial consonant clusters after the deletion of /a/ in *Yínká* in example 6(i), /e/ in *Táyé* in example 6(ii), *òdè* in *Káyòdè* in 6(iii). The derivation of *Kòllad* in example 6(iv) is different from how others are derived. In that, although there are consonant clusters, only the vowel /e/ is deleted in *Kòládé*.

In example 7(i-iv), the subjects are deleted whereas, the subjects and the segment in the final position are deleted in 7(v). But, only the segments in the final position are deleted in examples 7(vi, vii). Furthermore, there is no evidence of suffixation in examples 7A (i-vii). In the sense that /i/ in 7B(i-viii) changes to /y/ because /y/ is a semi-vowel, and both have the same pronunciation, hence, it is easy for /i/ to change to /y/ in the word-final position. Although there are consonant clusters in example (8), no deletion occurs. The suffix *-x-* is an affixed word finally.

Another morphological process employed to form appellation from Yorùbá personal names is compounding. This is achieved by adding English words to Yoruba names. This is done

in two ways. The first way is by translating parts of the personal names into English; it may be the first name or the second name but Yorùbá names must be given prominence in the order of arrangement as demonstrated below.

**Example 9:**

|      |          |           |
|------|----------|-----------|
| i.   | Olúcrown | 'Adéolú'  |
| ii.  | Yẹmíking | 'Ọbáyẹmí' |
| iii. | Adégold  | 'Adéwúra' |
| iv.  | Ọlácrown | 'Adéọlá'  |

In example (9) above, the English words; *'crown'*, *'king'* and *'gold'* are added to the Yorùbá words by the right.

The second way is by adding English words to the Yorùbá personal names. The English words at times may not have relevance to the names as shown below.

**Example 10:**

|      |          |           |
|------|----------|-----------|
| i.   | Owóblow  | 'Owólabí' |
| ii.  | Olúshow  | 'Olúwọlé' |
| iii. | Adéshow  | Adéseéwò' |
| iv.  | Bablow   | Babalọlá' |
| v.   | Adéwesco | 'Adé      |
| vi.  | Adékonga | Adé       |

In example (10) above, the English words; *'blow'*, *'show'*, *'wesco'* and *'konda'* are added to the Yorùbá personal names, and they do not have any relevance with the name. The only thing that can be said is that these English words are used for embellishment and to mere hail the bearer.

Another morphological process employed to form appellation from Yorùbá personal names is blending. Aronoff and Fudeman (2008:113) define blending as a process of combining parts of two or more words. In example 11(i-vii) below, parts of two names are combined to form one name having truncated the emboldened segments.

**Example 11:**

|      |             |   |
|------|-------------|---|
| i.   | Remdem      | 'Rẹmí and Dẹmọ <b>lá'</b>                     |
| ii.  | Majẹkfashek | 'Májẹ <b>ẹk</b> ódùmí and Fásẹ <b>ẹk</b> ẹmí' |
| iii. | Damlẹk      | 'Dámil <b>ọ</b> lá and Lé <b>ka</b> n         |
| iv.  | Deyẹm       | 'Adé and Yẹ <b>mí'</b>                        |
| v.   | Yẹmkẹm      | 'Yẹ <b>mí</b> and Kẹ <b>mí'</b>               |
| vi.  | Bafẹm       | 'Bab <b>a</b> and Fẹ <b>mí'</b>               |
| vii. | Bayfọl      | 'Báy <b>ọ</b> and Fol <b>úso'</b>             |



#### 4. Conclusion

This paper examines morphological processes employed to derive anglicized personal names for appellations. The paper views these types of appellations as new practice and a complete departure from the old traditional way of adopting appellations in Yorùbá society. According to the authors, many morphological processes are employed to anglicize Yorùbá personal names for appellations. The most common features observed in these appellations are the introduction of consonant clusters, consonants in the word-final position and suffixation which contradict Yorùbá orthography and morphological processes. This practice is introduced so that appellations in Yorùbá society can meet the global standard.

#### Conflict of Interest Statement

This research is self-sponsored and has no financial gain or affiliation to any entity. Therefore, the authors hereby declare that there are no conflicts of interest.

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