A SOCIO-ONOMASTIC STUDY OF NAMES AND NAMING PRACTICES IN EBIRA LANGUAGE

BY

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BEING A RESEARCH DISSERTATION SUBMITTED TO THE SCHOOL OF POSTGRADUATE STUDIES, NASARAWA STATE UNIVERSITY KEFFI, IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE AWARD OF A MASTER OF ARTS (M.A) DEGREE IN ENGLISH LANGUAGE

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DECLARATION

I hereby declare that this dissertation has been written by me and it is a report of my research work. It has not been presented in any previous application for Master of Arts Degree in English Language. All quotations are indicated and sources of information specifically acknowledged by means of referencing.

SANI, AZIZATU — Date

NSU/ART/M.A/ENG/028 /14/15

CERTIFICATION

This dissertation (A Socio-Pragmatic Study of Names and Naming Practices in Ebira Language) meets the regulations governing the award of Master of Arts (M.A) Degree in English Language of the School of Postgraduate studies, Nasarawa State University, Keffi, and is approved for its contribution to knowledge.

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DEDICATION

I dedicate this work to Almighty Allah who has been so gracious to me before now and always. May Allah's blessings, peace and salutation be upon the Prophet Muhammad. S.A.W. I also dedicate this work to my family and the field of language studies.

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ABSTRACT

This research examined the social -Onomastic implications of names and naming practices among the Ebira people with a view to ascertaining the pragmatic variables that usually determine the choice of names. The data were collected through interviews and the researcher's intuitive knowledge as well as personal observations. The research is descriptive qualitative. The collected data were then translated, segmented and classified into personal names, names based on belief system and circumstantial names and were analysed with the aid of Sapir-Whorf's hypothesis, Wilson and Sperber's relevance theory and Hymes' theory of context. In response to the goals and objectives of the research, the analyses revealed that Ebira names are mostly circumstantial and ritualised. The names that are circumstantial are such that reveal the socio-cultural situations that underlie the act of naming in Ebira language. These socio-cultural situations or phenomena, as the analyses have shown, help in bringing out the different strands of meanings in Ebira naming culture. Thus, it is concluded that the act of naming and the actual names in Ebira language have a lot of social and pragmatic undertones. This is because the names are usually a function of the situations, cultural circumstance and belief surrounding the birth of a child.

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.0 Background to the study

Sociolinguistics, which is essentially the study of language as it is used in a given speech community, has become a recognized part of language studies. The field has become more prominent since the 1960s and has been studied diversely to give insight on the nature of human language and societal relationships. Thus, its major focus, as argued by Hudson (1), is the study of language in relation to the society that uses it. It is the study of how people use language in their everyday lives. It examines how identities are manifested through the words we use and how, through language we (intentionally or unintentionally) create, maintain, and disrupt relationships with others.

More specifically, Socio-onomastics, which is an aspect of sociolinguistics, present a number of studies that focus on names in their cultural, social, interactive, and cognitive context. The point of departure for Socia-onomastic is to study names as elements in language that are not only employed as identificatory or reference devices but as elements that are also used to accomplish a variety of culturally, socially and interactionally relevant tasks.

This sociolinguistic perspective emphasizes the social significance of names and their role in communication. This perspective examines naming practices within different social and cultural contexts, exploring how names reflect social identities, power dynamics, and language variation. For example, research by Labov (1972) examines the social stratification of names in New York City, demonstrating how naming practices can be influenced by social class.

There is a host of approaches within pragmatics that have by tradition directly or indirectly dealt with names and naming. In more philosophical approaches. names have been linked to definite descriptions and to deixis. Within more cognitively attuned pragmatics research. issues of categorization in terms of naming are an obvious case in point where onomastics and pragmatics meet. Within socio-pragmatics and politeness, names are a *sine qua non* in discussions of terms of address, and in interactional approaches to pragmatics, the very use of names in on-line interaction, and people's opinions and attitudes toward names are central.

On the other hand, Pragmatics is an interesting aspect of language studies that is concerned with the language use and the context within which it is used. According to Yule (3). pragmatics is the study of meaning as communicated by the speaker or writer and interpreted by a listener or reader. Thus, pragmatics is concerned with the interpretation of what people mean in a particular context and how the context influences what is said.

Therefore, this research sets out to investigate the socio-onomastic and pragmatic implications of naming practices among the Ebiras of Okene Local Government of Kogi State. This will be done with a view to examining the role of language in a socio-cultural community and the context within which certain linguistic socio-onomastic choices of names are made over the others.

1.1 Statement of the Research problem

Several studies on naming practices in the sociolinguistic literature have focused on either address terms or reference terms and/or the naming system of a particular culture. Not is done on the socio-onomastic and pragmatic nature of names and naming practices particularly in Ebira culture. Thus, this research takes a rather different dimension for it focuses essentially on the

social-onomastic and pragmatic implications of names and naming practices in Ebira culture. This is undertaken in an attempt to find out the way and manner as well as the social parameters used in giving names to Ebira children. This is in addition to examining the pragmatic implications of such names.

1.2 Research Questions

The name given to an individual usually gives an insight into the cultural background of such individual in a multicultural society like ours. Consequent upon this, the research seeks to provide answers to the following pertinent questions:

i. what are the social variables that usually determine naming in Ebira culture?
ii. what are the pragmatic undertones to naming in Ebira culture?
iii. what are the socio-onomastic implications to naming among the Ebiras?
iv. what is the role of context in the naming practices of the Ebiras?

1.3 Aim and Objectives of the Study

This research is aimed at examining the social-onomastic as well as the pragmatic implications of names and naming practices among the Ebira people with a view to ascertaining the onomastic and pragmatic variables that usually determine the choice of names. The study is geared towards achieving the following objectives:

i. To examine the social variables that determine naming in Ebira culture
ii. To examine the pragmatic undertones of naming in Ebira culture
iii. To examine the socio-onomastic implications of naming among the Ebiras

iv. To examine the role of context in the naming practices of the IEbiras.

1.4 Significance of the Study

The linguistic roles of names and naming practice in understanding the culture, belief and behaviors of a speech community has been underrated. Thus, not much is done especially in studying the social parameters as well as situational context that influence the choice of names and its cultural implications. The particular significance of the study lies in the fact that it is important to understand the salient role of culture which is mostly conveyed through the elements of language particularly names. Therefore, this research strives at examining the socio-onomastic implications of naming practices among the Ebiras of Okene Local Government of Kogi State and further give an insight into the cultural believes of the people represented in their names and naming practice. The finding of this study will provide an in-depth understanding and address misconceptions, stereotypes attached to the behavioral attitude and bearers of Ebira names.

1.5 Justification for the Study

It is a fact that no individual is free to describe nature with absolute impartiality but is constrained to certain modes of interpretation even while he thinks himself most free (Whorf, 214).Thus, different speakers experience the world differently insofar as the languages they speak differ structurally, and not even the most sophisticated linguist aware of all the subtleties of structural differences among languages can escape to see the world as it is rather as it is presented through the screen of one language or the other. This is as a result of the structural differences in languages as well as socio-pragmatic differences that influence the use of language.

Therefore, this study is justifiable for it seeks to examine the social-onomastic as well as the pragmatic implications of names and naming practices among the Ebiras of Okene Local

Government of Kogi State. This becomes a necessity considering the fact that naming is a sociological phenomenon with lots of pragmatic implications.

1.6 Scope of the Study

This study centres essentially on the examination of the names and the naming practices of the Ebiras of Okene Local Government of Kogi State, Nigeria. The examination will only be restricted to the socio-onomastic and pragmatic implications of the names and the naming practices in the language. This limitation is partly as a result of time and resource constraints.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.0 Preamble

This chapter reviews some literatures that are of importance to the understanding of the research. This is done with a view to laying a solid foundation upon which the research is built. The chapter also proposes a theory within which the analysis of the data collected was based upon.

2.1 The Concept of Sociolinguistics

Hudson (1) defines sociolinguistics as the study of language in relation to society. He argues that language is a product of the human society that uses it. hence, it is put to use differently and for different purposes. To him, the field studies language in relation to social factors including differences of regional, class, and occupational dialect, gender differences and bilingualism.

Sociolinguistics is the descriptive study of the effects of any and all aspects of society, including cultural norms, expectations, and context, on the way language is used, and the effects of language use on society. The field slightly differs from sociology of language in that the focus of sociology of language is the effect of the society on language, while sociolinguistics focuses on language's effect on the society.

Again, sociolinguistics studies how language varieties differ between groups separated by certain social variables (e.g. ethnicity, religion, status, gender, level of education, age, e.t.c) and how creation and adherence to these rules is used to categorise individuals in social or socio-economic classes. What this means is that as the usage of a language varies from place to place, language usage also varies considerably among social classes, and it is these sociolects that sociolinguistics studies.

Similarly, Holmes (22) describes sociolinguistics as the study of the relationship between language and society. He argues that sociolinguistics usually helps us to understand why people speak differently in various social contexts, and subsequently helps us to uncover the social relationships in a given speech community. According to Holmes, sociolinguistics is a move towards studying language performance. He asserts that there are two arguments why this should be studied:

i. Language is an interactive and cultural phenomenon which should be studied accordingly.

ii. Actual language use is highly structured and not at random.

These arguments split into two strands of sociolinguistics:

a. Interactional sociolinguistics.

b. Variationist sociolinguistics.

The interactional sociolinguistics deals with how language users create meaning through social interaction. It is propounded by Linguistic Anthropologist, John J. Gumperz. It focuses on language in its social context and the language used in interaction by closely observing a "speech event" in a particular speech community. Ethnographic research is used essentially to study interactional sociolinguistics.

The variationist sociolinguistics, on the other hand, focuses on social variation in dialects and examines how this variation is highly structured. This structured variation tells us that this is part of human language capacity built in system of language in a brain. William Labov and Penelope Eckert are the major proponents of variationist sociolinguistics.

Also, Labov (205) sees sociolinguistics as the study of the relation between language and society. He describes it as a field or branch of both linguistics and sociology; hence, it is, according to him, sometimes referred to as "the sociology of language". The American Linguist, William Labov, in reaction to the contention among many linguists working in a broadly Chomskyan framework that language can be disassociated from its social functions, upholds that sociolinguistics can be referred to as "secular linguistics" considering its role in understanding language vis-à-vis the society that language is put to use.

From the above explications, it can be deduced that sociolinguistics is a field of linguistics that studies language as it functions in human society. It is the study of the interaction between linguistic and social variables. It examines the interplay between language and the speech community that uses it. Ultimately, it studies how language simultaneously arises out of and is used to construct social categories such as nationality, race, name, gender, age, e.t.c. Also, cultural beliefs, values, and norms are encoded in language, and language reaffirms these aspects of cultures; all of these are the concerns of sociolinguistics.

Therefore, it can be summarized that sociolinguistics is the in-depth study of how language tells the story of us as a society over time, of how language resonates with us, and ultimately why. It offers a bridge between linguistic and cultural variables within a speech community.

2.2 SOCIO-ONOMASTICS

Ainiala, defines socio-onomastics as *"a study of people's beliefs and perceptions regarding names and name use"* (106). Ainiala and Ostman further reveal that the point of departure of Socio-Onomastic is to study names as elements in language that are not only employed as

identificatory or reference devices but as elements that are also used to accomplish a variety of culturally, socially and interactionally relevant tasks.[1]

According to Hysenaj (1) Socio-onomastics is the sociolinguistic study of names. It focuses on name use in human interaction, i.e. topics such as variation in name use, why some names are avoided, which consequences a name can cause for the name bearer, how the name users themselves perceive their own name use, as well as attitudes toward names and name use.

Socio-onomastics as a field of research started out as a sub-discipline within onomastics, the study of names. Socio-onomastics has developed as a systematic perspective on the dynamic analysis of names and naming. Whereas onomastics traditionally has largely focused on the etymology and typology of names, socio-onomastics looks at how names are used. Although socio-onomastics acknowledges the historical dimension of names and naming, the role of names in the construction of (social) identities is in focus in recent developments in the field. Socio-onomastics stresses the importance of looking at the use of names in every-day interaction: variation in name usage, why some names are avoided, why some names are coupled with particular derogatory attitudes, and how name users themselves perceive the very names they use.

The field also takes into account the social, cultural, and situational domains in which names are used, and this applies to all kinds of names, place names, personal names, commercial names, pet names, etc. Notably, social variation and situational variation are studied, and the reasons why people know certain names (but not others) are examined. The study of attitudes and stance towards names and name usage are also part of socio-onomastic research.

(https://www.benjamins.com/online/hop/)

2.3 PRE -OCCUPATION OF SOCIO-ONOMASTIC

... 19th century, onomastics flourished as part of the national romanticism movement – in the same manner as the study of dialects flourished. Scholars were in search of their ancestors, their history, and looking at elements in language was seen as one tool by which one could get closer to one's past. Dialects were seen as older forms of language: thus, studies of dialects should reveal important aspects about our past. Especially place names but also personal names were similarly seen as forming a direct link to our past. The name of a place does not automatically change if new settlers come to that place. Additionally, names can help in studying the tracks of old settlement routes: those who colonized new hunting grounds and dwelling areas gave names to places they experienced as important. By examining the lexicon included in place names and the circulation of name types, it is possible to conclude what regions those who migrated to an area came from.

Names have, in addition to their practical function, an extremely strong sociocultural function. With the help of personal names, it is easy to talk about different individuals. However, names function not only as tools for identification but also as tools for the social classification of an individual. A personal name therefore tells a community who the individual is and, secondly, lets the individual know what his or her place in the community is and thirdly, further gives an insight to the background of an individual as well as the circumstance surrounding the birth his/her birth. A Tribal name can sometimes reveal something about the individual's social and cultural background: language users may, on the basis of their experience, recognize and differentiate cultural names, names based on belief system and even societal status of the bearers of names from each other. Social values also have great importance in the selection of a first name: national

background, mother tongue, religious convictions, and even social status of the name giver affect name giving.

Names are important in regard to the operation of society and the form and use of a name can furthermore be more or less jointly controlled with the help of laws and decrees. There can be many kinds of socio-political problems associated with names: the public approval of and attention to ethnic and linguistic minorities' as well as indigenous peoples' own names in their own languages go hand in hand with democracy and equal rights. Similarly, the issue of the right to a name is inevitably connected to women's emancipation: who or what defines what surname a woman gets to use or ends up using? Strong international relations, global politics and trade have been challenging and have brought about issues pertaining to names of different languages. On an international level, through the United Nations in practice[2], experts on onomastic issues can negotiate how to standardize the use of names in an international context and how in these situations we can, among other things, take the different writing systems of languages into consideration. In the standardization of place names, the principle is to make an effort to use a specific area's population's mother-tongue names or *endonyms, special United Nations Group of Experts on Geographical Names)*

Ainiala & Östman (6) asserts that a name has an identifying function regardless of whether we recognize the elements included in the name or not. When we think of the identifying function of a name, it is irrelevant whether or not the name is transparent or opaque. Because of this, certain onomasticians have emphasized that names lack meaning. According to this extreme viewpoint, a name has no meaning at all (cf. Mill 1906) and names do not belong to linguistic classes (in

particular, that they are not nouns) – notwithstanding, that they are indeed needed in communication (Nicolaisen 1997).

In the opinions of other scholars, however, proper nouns are considered to be genuine words of a language. And words of a language always, in one way or another, have significance. According to the classical definition, a linguistic sign is a unit which simultaneously includes an expression made up of form (sound, writing, gestured sign), some cognitive content or meaning, as well as an extralinguistic counterpart, that is, a referent or an application. On the basis of this definition, a proper name must have some kind of meaning for its users, although this meaning cannot be described in the same way as, for example the *designation*, i.e. the common noun, *cat* can be described in a dictionary. But looked at from a pragmatic perspective, the very use of a name gives it (part of its) meaning.

When we talk about the meaning of a name, we often think about the *lexical meaning* of the morphs or words that seem to be included in it, in other words, the dictionary meaning of (parts of) appellatives used in name formation. Most names at the time of name giving are in this manner motivated expressions that are descriptive of their referents. For this original, semantic content of a name, that is, what an expression understood as a name meant at the time of name giving, we can use the term *etymological meaning*, or sometimes also *identifying meaning*. Etymological meaning is interesting when names are interpreted from the name bearer's point of view, whereas when we think of the context of usage of a name, etymological meaning is largely irrelevant.

2.4 ORIGIN OF ONOMASTIC

From the late 20th century onwards, onomastics has strongly aimed to construct a typological overview of nomenclature. The structure of names and name systems has been investigated, and name-giving grounds have been classified according to semantic criteria.

Research has in this manner developed from an analysis of individual names to an investigation of larger entities.

In one sense, socio-onomastic research is a natural continuation of typological research into names. In constructing a structural and semantic picture of nomenclature, questions about name use and variation almost inevitably had to be asked. This was especially the case in countries like Finland where onomastic research has been based on traditional collections of place names covering the whole country, which had been written down on the basis of field interviews with people in the local communities.

The term "Socio-onomastics" was first used by Hans Walther in 1971 in *Namenforschung heute*. He defined the two main missions of socio-onomastics to be the following: (a) the study of the social origin and use of different variants of proper names within various situations and contexts, (b) taking into account the name-giver, name-bearer and name-user (Walther,45).

The socio-onomastic research by Hans Walther and other Eastern German scholars was carried out within a framework of Marxist linguistics. From the beginning it was meant to be modeled on a structuralist (presumably Labovian) sociolinguistics, and it was in particular the interaction between names and the society at large that were under discussion. Names were seen to undergo different kinds of formal alterations and to vary in many ways. In German, besides 'Sozioonomastik', the term 'Namensoziologie' was also used (see e.g. Naumann 1989 [1984]: 394–395; Seibicke 1982: 11; Witkowski 1975: 60). Usually, no substantial difference is to be found between these two approaches; the two terms – *socio-onomastics* and the *sociology of names* – were used interchangeably.

From the beginning, anthroponymic (the name of a person) and toponymic (named after a place) variables were at the heart of all socio-onomastic endeavors, but with a focus on the issue

of variation and variability (Nicolaisen, 123). In addition, it was acknowledged that onomastic variables were to be sought in different societal and cultural registers (Nicolaisen, 123). In other words, socio-onomastics is comparable to sociolinguistics, and name variation is not regarded as random but as orderly.

2.5 Pragmatic Perspective of Onomastic

In traditional onomastics, proper names are most often analyzed either from a diachronic perspective, allowing precise description of their original motivations and their various linguistic developments; or from a typological perspective, approaching names as linguistic structures in order to find out how names work similarly to, and in what respects differently from, other parts of the grammar of a language. The historical and structural approaches have thus stimulated our understanding of the way proper names were used in the societies in which they were created, and how they work as part of human language. However, the field of onomastics has often been accused of lacking in innovation.

According to Levinson (69) "the study of place-names or onomastics is one of the older branches of linguistic enquiry [...]. But despite the long tradition of study, little of theoretical interest has emerged". (69)

The truthfulness of his quotation is surely debatable, and rests on how a particular scholar defines "theoretical interest". But it is true that the study of the everyday use of names has not traditionally interested all onomasticians. With this volume we also hope to show the "theoretical interest" that onomastics can offer, especially now when it is re-establishing itself in relation to general linguistic research.

The pragmatic functions of proper names have mainly been discussed by scholars working within the philosophy of language tradition (cf. Searle 1969; Kripke 1972; Van Langendonck

2007). However, their discussions are typically based on introspective reflections, albeit on sound argumentation. However, even in studies by ordinary language philosophers, the way speakers actually use proper names in their daily activities is seldom systematically accounted for. In this light, taking a socio-onomastic approach implies a shift of perspective encompassing far-reaching theoretical and methodological consequences.

Some of the central issues for socio-onomastic research can in light of the background sketched out above be phrased as follows. There is need to revisit the usually strictly upheld distinction between proper nouns and common nouns, since proper names clearly also do other things than select or point out a specific referent or individual. By itself, the very fact that the same space or the same person (or pet, or commercial establishment) can be referred to with a variety of different labels indicates that the names used are not stable, and do not come with in-built limited applicability. Names do not only have reference relations, but also sense-relations to other linguistic units, and to other names. Minimally, a name needs to receive a context-sensitive description. The use of a proper name rather than of a deictic element can clearly achieve communicative tasks, e.g. express one participant's negative (or positive) stance toward another.

It is also important to find out in what manner proper names establish reference differently from how pronouns, full noun phrases, circumlocutions, and definite descriptions establish reference. On a social and sociolinguistic dimension, issues of participants' implicit and explicit social and cultural identities are also negotiated in and with names. And, most generally, proper names are not to be seen as independent of other elements in language. One pronounced aim of usage-based and pragmatic approaches to names is precisely to integrate the analysis of proper names with analyses of language use in general.

Socio-onomastic research has introduced the multifaceted issue of variety into onomastics. Names or name systems are not to be understood as static, constant or non-variable but as variable and changing. In studies on toponymic competence it has been shown – among many other things – that some names are known to all speakers of a community, while other names are in use only among specific groups of speakers.

On a par with socio-onomastics, which is more sociolinguistically attuned, a complementary field of "interactional onomastics" is being developed within interactional linguistics and conversation analysis. For instance, Enfield and Stivers (2007) apply mainly conversation analysis in studying person reference in interaction. They show that there are multiple ways of referring to individuals in interaction – with proper names, kin terms, and with descriptions.

In socio-onomastic research into personal names, many intriguing results have been gained. In studying first name fashion and name-giving grounds, it has been noticed that although parents usually try to find names that are special or rare for their children, their choices often turn out to follow some fashionable trend typical of the period. The choice of a first name is based on community values: the name givers' nationality, their mother tongue, religious convictions, and even their social status influence name giving, which is a reflection of the names and naming practices of the Ebira people.

In spite of the multifaceted research thus far in Socio-onomastic, many areas have still hardly been touched upon. In the socio-onomastic study of place names, rural names have already been in focus for decades, but urban names still lack comprehensive research: in what ways are place names – both official and unofficial – used in multi-layered and often multilingual urban

environments? The same question applies to the study of personal names: how are they used in multilingual contexts?

2.6 Pragmatics: A Conceptual Overview

The concept of pragmatics, like most academic fields, does not have a satisfactory definition. Pragmatics as a concept represents the doctrine which tests truth. by its practical consequence. It is perhaps this practical orientation that gave rise to the description of processes and procedures of pragmatics in the light of practical lessons and consequences that derive from them. Several definitions have been advanced by many scholars and these definitions have thrown light on the nature, principle and scope of pragmatics.

At the opposite extreme, pragmatics has been defined as the study of those aspects of meaning, not covered by a semantic theory and it is in this connection that some semanticists see the subject as contrasting with the semantic theory. Morris (19)) defines pragmatics as the relation of signs to interpreters. Levinson (24) notes that pragmatics is a branch of study which is concerned with the ability of language users to pair sentences with the contexts in which they would be appropriate.

Leech and Short (260) state that pragmatics is the investigation into the aspect of meaning which is derived not from the formal property of a word but from the way in which utterances are used and how they relate to the context in which they are uttered. In pragmatics study therefore, emphasis is placed on utterances rather than sentences. As defined in linguistics, a sentence is an abstract entity, a string of words divorced from non-linguistic context – as opposed to an utterance which is concrete. Daejin (339) notes that this suggests that sentences do not have meaning intrinsically. There is not a meaning associated with sentences or words. They can symbolically

represent an idea. The meaning of an utterance on the other hand, is inferred based on linguistic knowledge and knowledge of non-linguistic context of an utterance (which may or may not be sufficient to resolve ambiguity).

Adegbija's (189) interest is in the usage properties of pragmatics. To him:

> Pragmatics is the study of the language used in particular communicative context and situation. Of necessity, this would take cognizance of the message being communicated, ort the speech act being performed; the participants involved, their intention, knowledge of the word and impacts of these on interaction; what they have taken for granted as part of the context... the deductions they make on the basis of context; what is said or what is left unsaid, the impacts of the non-verbal aspects of interaction of meaning etc. (189).

To Kempson (68), pragmatics explains 'how it is that speakers of a given language can use the sentences of their language to convey messages which do not bear any necessary relation to the linguistic content of the sentences used.' He however, sees pragmatics as the study of the general principles involved in the retrieval of information from an utterance.

Mey (6) posits that pragmatics studies the use of language in human communication determined by the conditions of society. Throwing more light on this, Mey opines that communication in a society is effected basically through the vehicle of language. The users of language being members of the society use language on society's premises; society controls their access to communicative means. Pragmatics therefore, looks at those premises and determines how they affect communication.

Yule (127) offers a four-dimensional approach in his definition of pragmatics. To him, Pragmatics is the study of speaker's meaning, contextual meaning and how more get communicated than is said or written and the study of the expression of relative distance.

Saeed (182) opines that while semantics is the study of conventional, linguistic meaning, pragmatics is the study of how this linguistic knowledge is used in context. In his view, pragmatics is the study of how hearers, for example, have to combine semantic knowledge and other types of knowledge and make inferences in order to interpret a speaker's meaning.

The definition adopted for the purpose of this study, however, is the one by Leech (6) who sees pragmatics as the study of meaning in relation to speech situation. The speech situation enables the writer/speaker to use language to achieve a particular effect on the mind of the reader/hearer. Thus, the speech may be described as goal oriented. Here, priority is given to the speech situation to enable the interlocutor to use language to achieve a particular impact on the mind of the reader/hearer. This then implies that the meaning which the speaker or writer intends to communicate is guided by intention.

Pragmatics infers that speaker/writer often mean much more than they say or write and therefore, expects their hearer/listeners to understand them. They will generally assume that some aspects of meaning that are not expressed in words are deductible from context. This assumption is based on their shared environment, value, social conventions or world views which guide them to interpret meaning beyond words of grammatical structures (text). The notion of the speaker/writer intended meaning is crucial in the study of pragmatics. Pragmatics therefore, is about investigating the speaker writer meaning rather than what is expressed in words.

2.7 Context in Pragmatics

The term context encompasses a wide notion, covering both linguistics and non-linguistic factors of language use. Words are normally embedded in specific linguistic structures such as collocations, phrase, clause and sentence. Linguistic context is primarily seen in terms of what comes before and after an expression in a text. Though meaning of words are often thought of by people as if each of them has an independent and separate existence, it needs be understood that no word can be fully understood independently of the other words in the same context. When a word stands entirely by itself, we need to place it within a situational, linguistic and cultural context in order to understand its meaning. The term context can be put as the relevant aspects of the physical and social setting of an utterance of discourse. Crystal (72) defines context as the place in which a communicative event occurs.

Nunan (5) sees context as a situation giving rise to the discourse and within which the discourse is embedded. He identified two types of context – the linguistic and non-linguistic or experiential context. The linguistic context refers to language that surrounds or accompanies the place of discourse under analysis. The non-linguistic context includes the type of communicative event that is taking place at that particular time – it could be a joke, story, lecture session etc. the topic, setting which includes the location, time of the day, season of the year and physical aspects of the situation which include the size of the room, arrangement of furniture, the participants and the relationship between them and the background knowledge and assumption under laying the communicative events.

A very important aspect of context is provided by social conditions. In order to transmit and decode meaning, much more is done than merely arranging the forms of language in a particular order. To Malinowski in Oke (27) for an adequate description of any linguistic event,

the context of cultural context and practice is important thus he introduced the two notions of the context of culture and the context of situations. Hence, he describes context as the immediate concrete circumstances about what was going on while the words were used.

Context can be further divided into the immediate and wider context. The immediate context can be the immediate physical environment with which a conversation is taking place including the participants and the topic of discussion. The wider context on the other hand refers to the background knowledge which speaker and hearer bring to bear on the understanding of their interaction. This knowledge may include the psychological state of the participants as well as all their beliefs and assumptions about the nature of the world.

The belief is that language and context are related because every language use is sensitive to context. Context is very paramount in projecting desired intention in communication. Therefore, in this study, the relevance of context in encoding and decoding messages is not lost as both the network providers and subscribers rely heavily on context for meaningful communication.

2.8 Implicature in Pragmatics

The word 'implicature' is derived from the verb to 'imply', that is, what the speaker/writer can imply, suggest or mean as distinct from what he literally says or writes. Implicature is a pragmatic aspect of meaning.

The term implicature was first introduced into language studies by the philosopher H. P. Grice in 1975 to refer to the meaning attached to an expression over and above what is actually said. Blimes (27) notes that, "In everyday talk, we often convey proposition that are not explicit in our utterances but are merely implied by them. Sometimes we are able to draw such inferences only by referring what has been explicitly said to some conversational principle."

The native speaker of a language would notice that there are certain aspects of the meaning of utterances which are not directly observable from their linguistic context. The notion of implicature therefore, rests upon a distinction between what is explicitly said and what is implied. Thus. Mey (45) opines that the reason that pragmatics is interested in these phenomena is that we seem to be dealing here with a regularity that cannot be captured in a simple syntactic or semantic rule but has to be accounted for in other ways.

There are two types of implicatures which are conventional implicature and conversational implicature. Conventional implicature refers to the conventional meaning of a word or an expression. It does not depend on a particular context of language use. Conversational implicature on the other hand, refers to the inference that the addressee (listener) generates from the speaker's utterances beyond the semantic content of the utterance.

2.9 Description of Ebira Naming Ceremony

The naming practice in Ebira culture begins with the solemn notification of God's blessing into the family. This notification is usually done by the father of the child to his in-laws. During the solemn notification. a list of items is usually given to the man and the list is called "Isho ozi". The items will be bought for the maternal grandparents of the child. Three days after, they will send an entourage to see the child during which the child will be given "the three day bath" with a soap and palm oil. This bath is known as "Ehniy Eheketa" meaning, "the third day's bath". The bath is done to wash out all the dirt from the womb. It is also believed that the bath will prevent the child from developing body odour in the course of his/her development.

The seventh day of the child's birth is significant because it is the day that the child will be named. Names to be given are usually suggested by the child's parents. It is worthy of note that a child is usually given two names – one to represent his/her faith and the second to signify his/her culture. The names that are faith based are chosen as a result of the person's good deeds: while the culture-based names are chosen either as a result of the socio-cultural event surrounding the child's birth or the believe in reincarnation.

The Ebiras believe in the doctrines of reincarnation. For instance, if a male child is born after the death of a father, the child is believed to be a reincarnate of his father as such he is given the name "Adaovave" meaning "father reincarnate". In the case of events surrounding the child's birth, if a male child is born during a festive period like the celebration of the "Ori" or "Ekuechi", festival the child is named "Otori" and if the child is a female she is named "Opayei" meaning "mother of festival".

The following items are used during the Naming Ceremony:

i. A piece of tree called "Orobo" which is a Bamboo tree. It is used to pray for longevity for the child.

ii. Alligator pepper is also used to signify endless blessings of God upon the child; for as many as the seeds of the pepper are, so shall the child's blessings be.

iii. A mixture of palm oil and salt is also used and it is known as "Ohinne" meaning "sweetness". It is used to pray for the child.

iv. Shea butter, which is referred to as "Okume" is also used. This is believed to bring "Erou" i.e. ease on the child. It is applied on the child's legs and the legs are usually hit

on the ground three times which signifies that the child will always find peace and succor in his father's land despite the troubles in the outside worlds.

From the above ceremony, names that usually emanate are those that are circumstantial, re-incarnational, family history, heroic feats, e.t.c.

2.10 Empirical Review

There are a number of works in pragmatics that have examined different aspects of the discipline. These include but not restricted to pragmatic analysis of greeting terms in Ebira, pragmatic interpretation of ritual practices in Ebira, pragmatic analysis of Yoruba greeting terms, etc. These are examined under this section with a view to ascertaining what has been found out and what needs to be investigated.

In "Pragmatic Analysis of Greeting Terms in Ebira" (2003), Abdullahi posits that Ebira greeting terms are structured in a way that reveals the various socio-cultural connotations that underlie such greetings. Drawing his data from questionnaires and personal observations, he analysed the collected data through Hymes' theory of context by situating the greeting terms vis-à-vis the context within which they are used. He therefore concludes that for an individual to effectively use the various greeting terms in Ebira language, he/she needs to understand the context within which the terms are applied.

Also, in "Pragmatic Interpretation of Ritual Practices in Ebira", Ozovize (2005) argues that Ebira language is rich with a lot of ritual practices but the pragmatic undertones of these ritual practices have not been explored. Thus, drawing his data from naming, title taking and ofala rituals, he analysed the collected data through Austin's speech act theory. He therefore sums that the underlying meaning in every Ebira ritual practice is largely derived from the surrounding events

which are usually expressed through words hence understanding the various ritual practices is synonymous to understanding the various strands of words used in performing the ritual acts.

Similarly, Aworo-Okoroh (2016) in "The Pragmatics of Selected Biblical Curses" argues that speech acts are of utmost importance within the shore of semantics and pragmatics, hence, should be the basis for mutually shared background knowledge between the hearer and the speaker. Drawing her data from the books of Genesis, Joshua, Deuternomy, Mark, Matthew, and Galatians, she found out that the illocutionary force in the selected biblical curses enhance the indirect implication of the executives on the hearers by contributing to the process of constituting laws in the society. She thus concluded that the context in which a curse is uttered plays an important role in the effects of the illocutionary force that accompanies the curse thereby bringing about a successful perlocutionary act.

Furthermore, in "A Sociolinguistic Study of Eggon Personal Names" (2016), Alagbe and Abashi examined the various names in Eggon language as well as the socio-cultural undertones of such names. They derived their data from interviews and personal observations and analysed them with the aid of Sapir-Whorf's Linguistic Relativism theory. The analyses revealed that Eggon names are largely determined by the socio-cultural situations surrounding the person's birth. This, according to them, explains why some bear even terrible names like Ashe'iku (a woman of death), Ajegeku (plenty beer), Ewu (suffering), Ashelo (a woman of sickness), and host of others. They therefore concluded that Eggon personal names are products of the society in which the people live.

Again, in "Pragmatic Analysis of Yoruba Greeting Terms", Khadija (2018) examines the different terms used for greetings in Yoruba language. She draws her data from interviews and

intuitive knowledge and analysed the collected data with the aid of Hymes' theory of context. Thus, she found out that greeting in Yoruba is classified into seasonal, periodic, occasional, occupational, casual, royal and situational. Therefore, she concludes that high premium is placed on greeting among the Yoruba people and that greeting is contextual; it is not just said to people hence it is used to measure an individual's level of politeness.

2.10.0 Theoretical Framework

This research will adopt an eclectic theoretical approach. On one hand, it will be based on the Whorfian Hypothesis, Wilson and Sperber's Relevance Theory and other hand it adopted Dell Hymes Theory of Context.

2.10.1 The Whorfian Theory

The Whorfian Hypothesis presupposes that the structure of a language determines the way in which speakers of that language view the world. This claim is today mostly associated with the Linguist, Sapir and his student, Whorf, a chemical Engineer by training, a fire prevention Engineer by vocation, and a Linguist by avocation. However, it can be traced back to others, particularly to Humboldt in the nineteenth century. This claim is usually referred to as Linguistic Relativity Hypothesis, Sapir-Whorf Hypothesis, or the Whorfian Hypothesis (Wardhaugh,222).

Sapir (207) acknowledged the close relationship between language and culture, maintaining that they were inextricably related so that you could not understand or appreciate the one without a knowledge of the other. Sapir further argues 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.

> It is quite an illusion to imagine that one adjusts to reality essentially without the use of language and that language is merely an incidental means of communication or reflection. The fact of the matter is that the "real world" is to a large extent unconsciously built up on the language habits of the group .... We see and hear and otherwise experience very largely as we do because the language habits of our community predispose certain choices of interpretation (Sapir, 207).

Whorf extended Sapir's ideas by asserting that the relationship between language and culture was a deterministic one. He postulates that:

> the background linguistic system (in other words, the grammar) of each language is not merely a reproducing instrument for voicing ideas but rather is itself the 'shaper' of ideas, the programme and guide for the individual's mental activity, for his analysis of impressions, and for his synthesis of his mental stock in trade. Formulation of ideas is not an independent process, strictly rational in the old sense, but is part of a particular grammar, and differs, from slightly to greatly, between different grammars. We dissect nature along lines laid down by our native languages .... We cut nature up, organize it into concepts, and ascribe significances as we do, largely because we are parties to an agreement to organize it in this way – an agreement that holds throughout our speech community and is codified in the patterns of our languages ... (Carroll, 212-214 as cited in Wardhaugh, 222-223).

Also, Whorf, while explicating the relationship between language and culture, argues that language resides with individuals and the way they use it is culturally determined. Thus, he asserts that the terms 'thought' and 'culture' are strongly interrelated. According to him, the term 'thought' pertains to the cognitive processes in an individual speaker. These thoughts are only observable through the behaviour of the speaker and the language that he or she uses. The term 'culture' in the work of Whorf stands for the structure of thought that parallels the linguistic structuring of the language used by a community of speakers. This thought structure is, to a large extent, similar for all the members of a society, because they are all in approximately similar ways influenced by their shared language. A structuring that they generally cannot resist, for it operates below the threshold of consciousness. Only a linguist, who performs research into these hidden patterning of a language's structure, is cognizant of these influencing structures (Carroll,154).

Furthermore, in the Whorfian view, language provides a screen or filter to reality: it determines how speakers perceive and organize the world around them, both the natural world and the social world. This follows that the language an individual speaks helps to form his/her world view as well as defines such an individual's experience.

Linguistic relativity, also, suggests that language influences thought patterns and cultural perceptions. Applied to socia-onomastics, this theory posits that naming practices within a particular language or linguistic community reflect and shape social and cultural constructs. For example, certain naming conventions may highlight familial relationships, social hierarchies, or cultural values.

The Whorfian Hypothesis claims have been questioned over the years. One notable voice has been Pinker (59-67) who argues that the Whorf's claims were "outlandish", adding that his arguments were circular, his evidence was either anecdotal or suspect in some other way, and all the experiments conducted to test the ideas have proved nothing. However, the Whorfian theory provides enough evidences for the relationship between language and culture for it holds that language determines thought, and that linguistic categories limit and determine cognitive categories.

2:10: 2 Socia Identity Theory

Social Identity Theory, developed by Tajfel and Turner in the 1970s, posits that individuals strive to achieve and maintain a positive social identity by identifying with and categorizing themselves into specific social groups. This theory suggests that self-concept is not solely based on individual attributes but is also derived from our membership in various social groups.

Social identity theory explores how individuals define their sense of self and group membership through social categorization. In the context of socia-onomastics, this theory suggests that names contribute to the formation of social identities by indicating group affiliations, cultural backgrounds, or social roles. Names can serve as markers of identity that shape interactions and social perceptions.

In the context of socia-onomastics, Social Identity Theory helps us understand how names contribute to the formation of social identities. Names serve as markers of group membership, cultural affiliation, or social roles, and individuals use their names to convey information about their identity to others. Here are some key points regarding the application of Social Identity Theory in socia-onomastics;

1. In-group Identification: Social Identity Theory proposes that individuals seek to identify with and positively value their in-groups, which leads to a sense of belonging and self-esteem. Names can act as cues that signal membership in particular social groups, such as ethnic or religious communities, and reinforce the sense of in-group identification. For example, a person with a distinctly Hausa name may feel a stronger connection to their Hausa heritage and identify with the Hausa community anywhere.

2. Self-Categorization: According to Social Identity Theory, individuals categorize themselves and others into social groups to establish a sense of identity. Names play a crucial role in this categorization process, as they provide information about an individual's social background, cultural identity, or gender. By categorizing individuals based on their names, people create cognitive boundaries that shape their social perceptions and behaviors.

3. Intergroup Differentiation: Social Identity Theory suggests that individuals tend to emphasize the differences between their in-group and out-group members to enhance their own group's distinctiveness and self-worth. Names can contribute to this intergroup differentiation by serving as markers of social, cultural, or ethnic differences. For instance, individuals may associate specific names with certain stereotypes or attributes, leading to biases and distinctions between groups.

4. Identity Salience: Social Identity Theory emphasizes the contextual factors that activate specific identities. Names can evoke different aspects of an individual's identity depending on the social context. For example, in a professional setting, individuals may choose to use a formal name or modify their given name to align with professional expectations and

signal competence. The salience of different identities associated with names varies across social situations and influences behavior and self-presentation.

Social Identity Theory provides a framework to examine how names contribute to the formation of social identities and influence social categorization and intergroup dynamics. By understanding the social processes related to names and identity, researchers can gain insights into the complex ways in which names shape social interactions, perceptions, and self-concept.

2.10.3 The Relevance Theory

The relevance theory may be seen as an attempt to work out in detail one of Grice's central claims "that an essential feature of most human communication, both verbal and non-verbal, is the expression and recognition of intentions" (Grice, 14-18). In developing this claim, Grice laid the foundation for an inferential model of communication, an alternative to the classical code model. According to code model, a communicator encodes the intended message into a signal, which is decoded by the audience using an identical copy of the code. According to the inference model, on the other hand, a communicator provides evidence of the intention to convey a certain meaning, which is inferred by the audience on the basis of the evidence provided (Wilson and Sperber, 2). They further argue that "an act of uttering is of course a linguistically coded piece of evidence, so that verbal comprehension involves an element of decoding" (Wilson and Sperber, 2). They however assert that the linguistic meaning recovered by decoding is just one of the inputs to a non-demonstrative inference process which yields an interpretation of the speaker's meaning.

Furthermore, Wilson and Sperber argue that the goal of relevance pragmatics is to explain how the hearer infers the speaker's meaning on the basis of the evidence provided. Thus, the relevance theoretical account is best described as a reaction to an aspect of Grice's central claims

that "utterances automatically create expectations which guide the hearer towards the speaker's meaning" (Grice, 365-367). Grice described these expectations in terms of a Co-operative Principle and maxims of quality, quantity, relation, and manner: which speakers are expected to observe (Grice, 368-372). Thus, this argument upholds the fact that the interpretation a rational hearer will give, will certainly be the one that satisfies those expectations. Such interpretations will undoubtedly be culture and context dependent.

Quite interesting, relevance theorists share Grice's intuition that utterances raise expectations of relevance. However, they question several other aspects of Grice's argument including the need for a Co-operative Principle and maxims. The relevance theory focuses essentially on pragmatic processes which contribute to implicatures rather than on explicit, truth-conditional content, and the role of deliberate maxims, which are violating utterance interpretation, as well as the treatment of figurative expressions as deviations from a maxim or convention of truthfulness (Wilson and Sperber, 3).

The central claim of the relevance theory is that the expectations of relevance raised by an utterance are precise enough, and predictable enough, to guide the hearer towards the speaker's meaning. It is aimed at explaining in cognitively realistic terms the expectations of relevance and what it amounts to, as well as how they (the expectations) might contribute to an empirically plausible account of comprehension (Wilson and Sperber, 3).

2.10.4 Dell Hymes Theory of Context

Dell Hymes is considered by many to be the founder of the area known as Ethnography of Communication. In 1962, he proposed "ethnography of speaking" as a way to study how people talked. Later the name was changed to include other symbolic means of expression and called ethnography of communication.

One of the goals was to create a theory that helped researchers study language use in specific context: (at that time, some researchers in the field of linguistics were trying to study language by itself, removed from the times and places people talked). Hymes thought that by looking at how people actually use language, patterns could be discovered that otherwise would not be by just looking at the words themselves. Hymes (9) states that, "the starting point is the ethnographic analysis of the communicative conduct of a community". Communicative conduct is what people do when they communicate with each other. He set out to show that researchers could use his methods to study this communication (talk) systematically.

To study the communication of a particular culture, Hymes proposed basic units that indicate which area of the culture one is most interested in examining. He set forth the following six units: speech community, speech situation, speech event, communicative act, communicative style, and ways of speaking.

Dell Hymes has identified several kinds of context but dwelt extensively on situational context. The situational context concerns mainly with socio-cultural considerations. The context of culture includes beliefs, value system, religion, conventions that control individuals' behaviour and their relationship with others. These socio-cultural rules of behaviour often guide them in order to communicate effectively with one another. Some beliefs or conventions may be considered as universal, while some are culture-specific, especially those that guide utterances, non-verbal communication and other forms of social behaviour that may be interpreted meaningfully. Knowledge of socio-cultural rules of behaviours brings up the idea of "communicative competence" which according to Dell Hymes (72) is the ability of the speaker to know when to speak, when not and as to what to talk about with whom, when, where, and in what manner. This

competence is integral with attitudes, values and motivations concerning language, its features and uses in the most suitable and appropriate contexts.

Therefore, through the Whorfian Hypothesis, Wilson and Sperber's Relevance theoretical approach and Dell Hymes' theory of context, the collected data were analysed from the socio-pragmatic point of view with a view to seeing the socio-pragmatic phenomena which determine names and the naming practices in Ebira language.

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.0 Preamble

This chapter examines the methods through which the research data were collected and classified for analysis. It also x-rays the procedure through which the data were sourced, collected and analysed.

3.1 Research Design

The research adopted a descriptive, qualitative approach in the analysis of data collected to determine the socio-onomastic and pragmatic variables that influence the choice of names and naming practice in Ebira Language.

3.2 Method of Data Collection

The data for this research were collected through the researcher's introspection, personal observation, and interviews with the custodians of the Ebira culture. The researcher's introspection and personal observation were adopted for the fact that the researcher is a native speaker of Ebira language. The interviews, on the other hand, helped the researcher to get the socio-cultural dimensions to names and the practices of naming in Ebira culture.

3.3 Instrument for Data Collection

A tape-recorder was used in the course of gathering data especially during the conduct of interviews with the native speakers of Ebira language. The recorded interviews were then translated into English for analysis.

3.4 Sources of Data

The data for this research were derived from interviews carried out with the native speakers of the Ebira language. The native speakers from Okene in Kogi state and those from Toto in Nasarawa state were instrumental in the course of gathering data for this research. Thus, respondents from Okene and Toto were the major sources of data for this study.

3.5 Area of Study

The data for this study were essentially derived from Okene Local Government Area in Kogi state and Toto Local Government Area in Nasarawa State. These areas were chosen as a result of the fact that they have high concentration of Ebira speakers. Additionally, the choice of these areas was also necessitated by the fact that the language is spoken in its natural form in these places.

3.6 Method of Data Analysis

The collected data for this research were classified into: personal, circumstantial/situational, occupational names, etc. The classified data were then analysed through an eclectic theoretical approach consisting of Whorfian theory, Social Identity theory, Wilson and Sperber's theory and Dell Hymes' theory of context in order to see the socio-cultural, socio-onomastic cum pragmatic implications of the Ebira names on the speakers and the world at large. On the whole, the analyses were done with the aid of tables, each specifying the names, the interpretation and the functions that such names are performing.

CHAPTER FOUR

DATA PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS

4.0 Preamble

This chapter is essentially concerned with the analysis of the collected data. The collected data were grouped into personal, family and occupational names and were analysed so as to reveal the socio-pragmatic dimensions of such names.

4.1 Names Based on Circumstances

The table below shows the various names that can be derived as a result of the circumstances that produce them in Ebira language:

S/N	Name	Sex	Meaning	Circumstance
1	Eniyamere	M	A child whom the eyes have seen	When a child is born after a long period of waiting.
2	Aze	F	A child of difficult circumstance	When a child is born at the time when things are generally difficult.
3	Ochiiji	M/F	A child of a termagant (a woman who is notoriously quarrelsome)	A child given birth to by a woman who is considered to be troublesome and quarrelsome.
4	Anoze	F	On the way to the farm	When a child is delivered on the way to the farm.
5	Ananwureyi	F	A child who was heralded by memorable events	When the birth of a child is preceded by so many remarkable and memorable events

6.	Ireyi	F	A messenger of good news	When a child's birth is surrounded by so many remarkable events and good tidings.
7	Anayimi	F	A child that was given or surrendered to me	When a child is given to foster parents or a relative to take care of.
8	Oricha	M	A child who was given or surrendered to me	Same as (7) above
9	Onyeche	F	the mother of festival	When a child is given birth to during or immediately after a festival, she is seen as the mother of festival.
10	Ezuhio	M	Heralded by many people or the multitude	When the birth of a child is talked about by many people in the community.
11	Enebe	M	Heralded by many or multitude	Same as above.
12	Azamare	M	Test or trial	This name is given to a child who is perceived to be under serious attacks for survival.
13	Asimi	F	If mankind will allow me the survival of this child	When a child's survival is seriously threatened by a group of persons.
14	Enesi	M	The most sought and much loved	When the parents have been longing for a child.

15	Itopa	M	A historic child	When a child is believed to have broken so many barriers in order to survive.
16	Amewuru	M	Of the one who causes chaos	When a child is given birth to by a troublesome father or mother.
17	Adajinege	M	The tallest of them	When a child appears to be the tallest among all his siblings.
18	Adavize	M	Father of wealth	When a child is born into a wealthy family and he is the only beneficiary of the wealth.
19	Adeyiza	M	Father of all	When a child is the only male child in the family.
20	Adomuha	M	Father of abled man	When a child is born of a man who was hitherto described as not man enough.
21	Adooro	M	The one that is a stumbling block	When a child is perceived to be a threat in a family.
22	Ahovi	M	Enquire very well	When a child is perceived not to be one's own.
23	Aduvo	M	Father of hand	When a child is considered to be too hand friendly i.e. he likes only to be carried.

24	Ajooze	M	The one standing on the way	When the birth of a child is considered a hindrance to some people.
25	Onoto	M	The one that is proud and self-centred	When a child's parents are considered proud and arrogant, the child will be perceived as having the traits of his parents.
26	Onoruoiza	M	Good man	When a child is given birth to by good parents, he will also be considered to be good.
27	Onozasi	M	The one people search for	When a child is perceived to be the people's messiah.
28	Onotu	M	The one that is met	When a child is considered to be the source of his parents' happiness.
29	Onsachi	F	The one that accept to be sent	When a child is ever ready to be sent on errands.
30	Onuchi	F	The one that you help to bring down the load from the head	When a child is perceived as the one who eases his parents' sufferings.
31	Onume	M	The one in the period of time	When a child comes when he is most needed.
32	Onuwoji	M	The adviser	When a child is perceived to be wise and discerning.

33	Onuya	M/F	The sufferer	When the child's parents experienced a lot of hardships at the time of his birth.
34	Osheyiza	M/F	That which is memorable	When the birth of a child is considered as the most memorable and remarkable thing that has ever happened to the parents, family, or community.

The above table revealed the different dimensions of the Ebira culture demonstrated through names. The names, which are essentially situational circumstantial, have different underlying meanings. These underlying meanings have helped in conveying the cultural identities of the Ebira people. It is worthy of note that the bulk of the names in Ebira language are situational, circumstantial or even communal. This is partly as a result of the heavy reliance on cultural ways by the people. This reliance has led them to naming a child "Adooro"; a name which connotes "a child who is perceived to be a threat or stumbling block to the family". This choice of name also proves the Sapir-Whorf Hypothesis, or the Whorfian Hypothesis which acknowledged the close relationship between language and culture. It is the cultural belief as well as the traditional perception of the Ebira people of certain situation that has warranted the existence of such name and its choice. Also, the name "Onuya": the sufferer, a name given when the child's parents experienced a lot of hardships at the time of his birth, relates Wilson and Sperber Relevance theory. The Name "Onuya" as a linguistic element has given the hearer inference into the circumstance of the birth of the name bearer which represents the speaker evidence provided beyond linguistic

units. Though, one's perception about a person may not always be true. However, as a result of the stereotypical name given to the child, he/she may grow up behaving as a threat to his/her family's successes; for we believe in the power of names in Nigeria and African at large.

4.2 Names Based on Belief System

There are a number of names in Ebira language that are given based on the belief of the custodians of the language's culture. These names usually reveal different strands of cultural ways. The table below captures some of these names.

S/N	Name	Sex	Meaning	Event
1	Otuwho	M/F	A child named after a succession of deaths of other children in a family	When a child is given birth to after several other children have died, he/she will be seen as the reincarnate of the previous children.
2	Ovavi	M	A child named after a succession of deaths of previous children	Same as above.
3	Onozare	F	A child seen by the naked eye.	When a child is seen with the spiritual eye to be someone great in future.
4	Adaviruku	M	Heir of the family	When a child is considered as the heir to a throne or a family business.
5	Ozovehe	M	Symbol of life or creation	When a child is given birth to few months into the marriage (usually between 9-11 months).

6	Otori	M	Friend of the oracle or the shrine for worship	When a child is believed to be a product of a shrine or some forms of incantations.
7	Uhuoto	M	A spectator in a world of uncertainties	When a child is born at a time when death rate is prevalent in a community.
8	Adinoyi	M	A protector and a shield to so many	When a child is believed to be a father to many and a protective shield to a multitude.
9	Omata	F	Endless nature of creation	When a child is believed to be endlessly beautiful.
10	Ozomata	M	A symbol of hope and abundance for the future.	When a child's birth is believed to bring to an end the sufferings of the people. It is the symbol for continuity and eternal creation by God.
11	Ajimituwho	M	Spare me today till tomorrow	When a child is believed to be a reincarnated one is showing mysterious signs of death. Tomorrow metaphorically continues till eternity (since tomorrow has no end).
12	Avidime	M	An initiator of good tidings	When a child is believed to be a source of open doors for others. He is described as the "initiator of good tidings".
13	Adeeku	M	Father of masquerade	When a child is given birth to by worshippers of masquerades.

14	Adabara	M	Father of compound	When a child is believed to be the source and summit of his family compound.

Drawing from the above table, it can be deduced that the people's beliefs are brought to bear on the names heavily. This is evident in such a name like "Ozovehe" which means "symbol of life or creation". Such name is usually given to a child who is given birth to few months into the marriage. Thus, the belief is that since the woman conceived few weeks into the marriage, she is full of life and has the ability to conceive as many children as possible. Unfortunately, this is always not the reality of things in our modern and scientific society. Notwithstanding, as the table above revealed, a good number of Ebira names are given based on the parents guardians' belief system. Also, the Name "Ozomata" – A symbol of hope and abundance for the future, represents the ideology of the Social identity Theory, as it not only provides the bearer of the name a sense of identification with the Ebira community but ensure a sense of positive value, which leads to a sense of belonging and self-esteem.

4.3 Data Interpretation

From the data collected, presented and analysed, it is glaring that Ebira names are mostly circumstantial and ritualized. The names that are circumstantial are such that reveal the socio-cultural situations that underlie the act of naming in Ebira language. These socio-cultural situations or phenomena help in bringing out the different strands of meanings in Ebira naming culture. These names suggest that different happenings or events around the child's birth have a way of influencing the name(s) that will be given to a child. They also serve as prove to the Sapir-Whorf Hypothesis and the Dell Hymes theory of context on both the relationship between language and

culture as well as the fundamental and influencing role the context of birth, play in the choice of names. The Female name "Onyeche" meaning the mother of festival, given when a child is given birth to during or immediately after a festival, she is seen as the mother of festival, is chosen in the contest of the Ekuechi festival which further reveal the cultural beliefs of the Ebira people in the festival of Masquerades and the time it is celebrated which is in the month of December.

The analysis further revealed that some of the names that are circumstantial can be misleading in terms of their semantic/pragmatic configurations. For instance, a name such as "Ochiiji" which means "a child of a quarrelsome woman" will have a way of affecting the personality as well as the integrity of the child in the society. Such a child will be labeled as an offspring of a troublesome woman hence the society will be skeptical in dealing with such a child as him/her will be perceived to have some troublesome elements. Similarly, a name such as "Onuya" which means "the sufferer" will have a way of affecting the child's future. In Africa, it is believed that names have socio-cultural implications on the bearer, hence, a name given to an individual has a way of affecting him/her development and future existance. In the same vein, a name such as "Asimi" which means "allow this child to live" is given to a child when there are allegations that some persons do not want the child to survive or that some persons do not want the parents to experience the joy of parenthood. In such situations, it is worthy of note that such names are given only based on speculations but because the society believes so much in the power of names, such a name is given as a prayer to God so that He (God) will spare the child's life. This name also aligns with the Sapir-Whorf Hypothesis, indicating the belief system of the Ebira people and further acknowledges the intricate relationship between language and culture. It further interprets the relevance theory as it provides evidence as to the time the bearer of the name was

born and proves Dell Hymes theory of context as to the fact that the bearer of the name was born in the context of the Ekuechi festival.

Furthermore, the analysis has shown that a large chunk of Ebira names is those that reveal the various belief systems of the people. These names span from those that depict festivities, rituals, belief in reincarnation, e.t.c. They portray different strands of meanings and the people's belief in the socio-cultural practices. For instance, a name like "Adinoyi" which means "a shield and a protector to many" goes a long way to show the people's belief in such a name. That is, the bearer of such a name is capable of protecting the community from any unforeseen calamity. Also, a name such as "Otuwho" which means "a child born after a succession of deaths of other children" is given to a child who is believed to be a reincarnate of someone in the family. This and several other names show the Ebira people's belief in reincarnation, and the relationship between language and the cultural belief of the society that uses it as indicated by the Sapir-Whorf Hypothesis. Furthermore, the categorization of the names based on gender, meaning and circumstance/events surrounding the birth of a child, is a translation of the Social Identity theory with specific refence to the Identity Salience features of the theory. This is because the different segments emphasize the contextual factors that activate specific identities that evoke different aspects of an individual's identity depending on the social context.

Therefore, this research has been able to x-ray the different names and their connotations in Ebira language. It has revealed that the Ebira community is that which rely so much on cultural ways and context of birth especially when it comes to the act of naming. The names do not only reveal the bearers' identities and history surrounding his/her birth but also help in conveying the rich cultural practices of the Ebira people.

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.0 Preamble

This chapter carefully summarises the research work by bringing out the major arguments of the study, draws conclusion based on the study's findings and makes some important recommendations for further research.

5.1 Summary

This study examines Socia- Onomastic implication of names and the naming practices in Ebira language. This was done with a view to ascertaining the various names and their social, cultural as well as pragmatic undertones in Ebira language. The research problem, research questions, study's significance and the scope of the study were examined.

Also, the study examined language from a, socio-onomastic, pragmatics, context, implicature and some empirical studies. These and similar literatures have helped in giving a footing to the research under review. Ultimately, the research adopted an eclectic approach comprising of Whorfian Hypothesis, Social Identity Theory, Wilson and Sperber's Relevance theoretical approach and Dell Hymes' theory of context. Through these approaches, the collected data were analysed.

Furthermore, the data for the research were collected through interviews and the researcher's personal observations. The interviews were carried out with the aid of a tape recorder. The recorded data were then translated, isolated, segmented and classified for analysis.

The translated and classified data were analysed with the aid of tables. Through the tables, names revealing different situations/belief system were identified and analysed. The analyses revealed that Ebira names are mostly circumstantial and ritualized. The names that are circumstantial are such that reveal the socio-cultural situations that underlie the act of naming in Ebira language. These socio-cultural situations or phenomena help in bringing out the different strands of meanings in Ebira naming culture.

Finally, the major thrusts of the research were x-rayed by way of summary. Also, a conclusion is made from the data analysed and some recommendations were suggested for further studies.

5.2 Contribution to Knowledge

A socio-onomastics study of name and naming practices in Ebira Language investigated names and naming practices within the context of Ebira society, can contribute to knowledge in several ways:

i. The study provides insights into the social dynamics surrounding names and naming practices. By examining naming patterns across different cultures, societies, and historical periods, researchers can uncover social norms, values, and power structures. This knowledge helps us understand how names are influenced by and, in turn, influence social processes such as social class, ethnicity, gender, and cultural identity.

ii. The study provides evidence on how names play a significant role in individual and group identity formation. Socia-onomastic studies shed light on how names contribute to the construction and negotiation of personal and social identities. By examining name choices,

changes, and preferences, researchers can explore how names are connected to self-perception, belonging, and the negotiation of social roles.

iii. That names are an integral part of language and communication systems. The research helps understand the linguistic aspects of names, such as phonetics, morphology, and etymology, within specific social and cultural contexts. This knowledge enhances our understanding of language variation, naming conventions, and the use of names in different communicative settings.

iv. This Socia-onomastic study contribute to the understanding of name-based stereotypes and biases. Examining how names influence social judgments and perceptions provides insights into the ways in which individuals may be discriminated against or face societal expectations based solely on their names. This knowledge can inform efforts to reduce biases and promote fairness in various domains, including employment, education, and criminal justice.

v. The research can help track societal changes and adaptations over time. By analyzing shifts in naming practices, researchers can identify cultural shifts, social trends, and demographic changes within a given society or community. This knowledge can be valuable in understanding social transformations, intergenerational dynamics, and the impact of globalization on naming practices.

vi. The findings from socia-onomastic research such as this one can have practical applications in various fields. For example, understanding naming conventions and cultural naming practices is crucial for translators, marketers, and advertisers working in multicultural contexts.

Generally, the study of socia-onomastics contributes to knowledge by providing insights into social dynamics, identity formation, language and communication, stereotyping and bias, social change, and practical applications. This interdisciplinary field helps us better understand the complex relationship between names, individuals, and society.

5.2 Conclusion

From the above discussion, it can therefore be concluded that Ebira naming practice is largely a socio-cultural phenomenon with a lot of socio- onomastic and pragmatic undertones. It is discovered and thus concluded that the act of naming in Ebira Language is mostly Cultural, circumstantial and ritualized. The names that are circumstantial are such that reveal the socio-cultural and contextual situations that underlie the birth of a child and the act of naming in Ebira language. These socio-onomastic situations or phenomena help in bringing out the different strands of meanings in Ebira naming culture.

5.3 Recommendations

This study has essentially been centred on the examination of names and the ritual of naming in Ebira language from the socio-onomastic and pragmatic perspectives. Thus, it has succeeded in x-raying the different names and their socio-pragmatic undertones in Ebira language. However, the following areas, if explored, can go a long way in the understanding of the Ebira language and the field of socio-onomastic.

i. The socio-pragmatic nature of rituals in Ebira language

ii. The pragmatic dimensions to the naming discourses

iii. The socio-pragmatic interpretation of festival songs in Ebira language.

iv. The socio-onomastic study of town and street names in selected cities.

v. The socio-onomastic analysis of community names in resolving communal clashes.

These and similar areas, when explored, will give a wider understanding of the language and culture to its speakers and non-speakers alike.

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