

**A SOCIO SEMANTIC STUDY OF PREORDAINED NAMES IN  
YORUBA**

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**BEING A PROJECT SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FUFILMENT OF  
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## APPROVAL PAGE

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## **DEDICATION**

This project is dedicated to the Almighty Father for the strength and knowledge He bestowed upon me to carry out this work.

## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

I wish to acknowledge the Almighty Father for the grace and strength to carry out this work.

My sincere respect and deepest gratitude goes to my supervisor, **Mr F.A. Ajala** for his guidance throughout this research and the entire Department of Linguistics, Faculty of Arts, University of Benin for imbuing me with such profound knowledge needed to carry out the study.

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## **ABSTRACT**

*This research focuses on the socio-semantic analysis on belief of preordained names in Yoruba. It explores the values, interpretation and how these names are considered to influence its bearers in the society. This help understand the deeper meanings of these names, which not only serve as a label but embody cultural and historical context. The study adopted sociolinguistics theory adopted and embraced by many scholars such as William Labov and Dell Hymes for the description and analysis of the data. This study used both the primary and secondary method of data collection. The primary method of data collection was used my oral interview and telephone calls from Yoruba informants of 35-60 years age range. The secondary method of data collection was used through watching of different YouTube videos by elderly Yoruba speakers. This study arranged the preordained names into five classes for better understanding and analysed the names showing the beliefs, values of Yoruba people. The study addressed 3 main objectives, the first was grouping the preordained names into 5 categories: Lastly future research on preordained names could be the exploration of the impact of globalization and cultural exchange on naming practices. This could involve studying how names are influenced by cross-cultural interactions, migration, and the adoption of names from different languages and cultures.*

## CHAPTER ONE

### BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

#### 1.0 Introduction

This study shows a research on the sociolinguistics study of preordained names known as “Oruko Amutorunwa” in Yoruba language.

Language, as a multifaceted social construct, plays a pivotal role in shaping cultural norms, identities, and belief systems. The intricate relationship between language and society is particularly evident in the realm of names, which serve as linguistic signifiers laden with cultural, social, and personal significance. This study delves into the captivating intersection of sociolinguistics and cultural belief by focusing on the phenomenon of preordained names within the vibrant tapestry of Yoruba culture. (Akindele, & Adegbite, 2019).

According to the Chamber Dictionary (2005), name is a word or words by which an individual person, place or thing is identified; it is the nomenclature used in making reference to all things,-tangible or intangible, living or non-living, concrete or abstract, liquid or solid.

In Africa, names play an important role in every aspect of human lives. It is believed that a name can extremely influence the bearer. That is why it makes Africans of Nigeria origin often wonder why an English man would bear names such as Carpenter, South, Knox, Stone e.t.c because such names do not have good meanings in cultural essence and some of these names does not have good meanings.

Belief can be defined as the mental acceptance or conviction in the truth or actuality of some idea. Schwitzgebel (2010).Belief involves at least two properties: representational content and assumed veracity. (Stephens and Graham 2004).Although obvious beliefs are significant because they are held by us as true and provide the basis for us to understand the world and act within it. (Halligan, 2006)

The word "Preordained " means to influence a future occurrence or something believed to happen in the future that is already decided by spiritual power either by God or fate. Preordained names are names that are already made to be given before a child is born depending on the

circumstances and situation surrounding the birth of the child. These names in Yoruba culture are given to “special” children.

### **1.1 Statement of the problem**

The study explores the socio-linguistic significance of preordained names within Yoruba culture, focusing on how these names convey cultural values, beliefs, and guidance, and examining their role in shaping identity and interaction within the Yoruba community. The study delves into the intricate relationship between language, culture, and identity by investigating the practice of assigning preordained names in Yoruba society. These names are not merely labels but carry deep cultural and social meanings. The research aims to understand how preordained names contribute to the construction of individual and collective identities, reflecting the broader sociolinguistic dynamics and belief systems of the Yoruba people. Through a thorough analysis of these names and their implications, the study seeks to shed light on the profound influence of language on cultural norms, social interactions, and the preservation of Yoruba heritage. At the core of this study lies an

exploration of the cultural intricacies that intertwine with language in the context of Yoruba society

## **1.2 The Research Questions**

1. How can these names be grouped?
2. What are the beliefs of giving these names to a child in Yoruba culture?
3. What are the roles of preordained names in constructing individual and collective identities within Yoruba society?

## **1.3 Objectives of the Study**

1. Grouping of the preordained names into different categories
2. Beliefs of preordained names given in Yoruba culture.
3. Analyzing the roles of preordained names in constructing individual and collective identities within the Yoruba society.

## **1.4 Method of data collection**

The data used for this research were collected through the primary and secondary source. The primary source of data collection used to generate data from field work was through interview and telephone calls with competent elderly native speakers of Yoruba on the research on

sociolinguistics belief of preordained names in Yoruba language. The secondary source of data collection was through videos watched on YouTube from people who are strictly Yoruba native speakers. This is a qualitative research technique that involves gathering data by conducting individual interviews with a small number of respondents to investigate their point of view on a particular idea or situation. This methodology was also used to get a detailed interpretation on the type of preordained names gender distinction, how the name relates to the aspect of traditional and social way of living among the Yoruba people.

### **1.5. The Yoruba people, their Language, Culture and their naming system.**

According to history tradition, the Yoruba was founded by “Oduduwa” who was said to be a Yoruba divine king sent from heaven.

Yoruba is one of the major ethnic groups in Nigeria. They occupy the south-western area of Nigeria in Africa and also one of the largest ethnic groups in Nigeria. There are 22 tribes in Yoruba kingdom which can be characterized and distinguished by the major differences in pronunciation, grammar and vocabulary.

Most of the Yoruba men are farmers growing yams, corn, plantains, groundnuts, beans etc. as subsidiary crops while cocoa as major cash crops while some of them do farm work, the Yoruba traditionally are among the most skilled and productive craftsmen of Africa.

The Yoruba civilization is believed to have emerged around the 1<sup>st</sup> millennium CE. The Yoruba society was arranged into city/ states, each with its own ruler and distinct political structure. Some of these city/states played a remarkable role in Yoruba history such as ife and Oyo.

Yoruba religious beliefs, particularly the worship of deities known as Orisa and there are about 6000 deities in Yoruba tradition. with Olodumare being the most powerful god according to Yoruba mythology. The Yoruba's are known to be very sociable and expressive people who love to throw lavish parties for major events such as wedding, naming ceremonies, funerals etc.

### **1.5.1 Naming Ceremony in Yoruba Culture**

Naming a child in Yoruba society is a “big deal” in Yoruba society. The ceremony is held when the new born is 8 days old. This ceremony is

called “Iso omo loruko” in Yoruba land, it is usually held in the family compound that is the house of the child’s paternal grand parents. The ceremony begins with the arrival of guests, who bring gifts for the baby and the parents. Traditional Yoruba attire, such as Aso Ebi (matching outfits), is commonly worn to showcase the cultural heritage. The naming process itself is a significant part of the ceremony. The baby is usually placed on a special mat or in the arms of an elder, such as the paternal grandmother or an important family member. The elder, known as the "naming authority," is responsible for selecting a suitable name for the child. The Yorubas considers various factors when choosing a name, including the circumstances of the child's birth, the day of the week they were born, and the family's aspirations for the child. The name chosen often reflects the family's cultural heritage, religious beliefs, or significant events.

In Yoruba culture there are some key (symbolic) materials that are used during the naming process to bless the baby, this includes honey, sugar, kolanut, salt, sugarcane, liquor, alligator pepper, water, bitter kola and palm oil. Each of these materials used have special meanings and what it

represents, the honey and sugar represents sweetness which means that the child's life would be sweet. Once the name is selected, it is announced to the gathering, and prayers and blessings are offered for the child's well-being, success, and protection. The baby is then presented to the guests, who shower them with prayers, good wishes, and gifts. Food and refreshments are an essential part of the ceremony. Traditional Yoruba dishes, such as pounded yam, egusi soup, jollof rice, and various delicacies, are served to the guests. Music, drumming, and dancing also add to the festive atmosphere. The naming ceremony in Yoruba culture is not only a celebration of the newborn but also a way to connect the child with their cultural heritage and community. It reinforces family bonds, traditions, and values, and sets the stage for the child's future within the community. The Yorubas believe that a child's name has a significant role in a child's life. They view a child's name as a sacred something that reflects the person's identity.

Preordained names which is the purpose of the study are names given to a child by nature in relation to certain attributes or circumstances at the birth of a child. These names are "automatic" names and believed to be brought

from heaven. Overall, the Yoruba naming ceremony is a vibrant and joyous occasion that celebrates the arrival of a new life and the continuation of the family's legacy.

## **CHAPTER TWO**

### **LITERATURE REVIEW**

#### **2.0 Introduction**

This chapter provides a comprehensive review of existing literature relevant to the study. It aims to explore the conceptual framework and theoretical perspectives that supports the study, illustrating on a range of scholarly sources and research articles.

#### **2.1 Conceptual Review**

##### **Onomastics:**

The term onomastics come from a Greek word ‘onoma’ which means name. Onomastics is therefore is the study of names.

Onomastics studied names, their origin, meanings and their cultural significance. It has various branches including Toponymy also known as toponomastics( study of place names) Anthroponomastics or Anthroponomy(study of personal names) Literary onomastics (researches names in works of literature and fiction) socio-onomastics(study of names within a society or culture)

The study of Onomastics involves some key aspects as follow:

1. Cultural significance: Names are very important part of cultural heritage, it reflects the cultural traditions, values and beliefs. Onomastics investigates how names are influenced by cultural factors such as historical events, religion, social customs or mythology.
2. Sociolinguistics: Onomastics examines naming patterns, naming practices, and the social implications of names. It can reveal information about gender, ethnicity, social status, and group affiliations. For example, the choice of names may reflect cultural norms, religious beliefs, or historical events. Onomastics helps us understand how names shape and are shaped by language and society, providing valuable insights into sociolinguistic dynamics.
3. Semantics Analysis: In semantic analysis, onomastics plays a crucial role in understanding the meaning and symbolism behind preordained names. Onomastic analysis examines the semantic associations and connotations of names within a cultural and

linguistic context. It explores the underlying meanings, cultural references, and symbolic representations embedded in names.

4. Etymology: Onomastics explores the etymology or origins of names to understand the linguistic roots and historical influences behind them. It examines linguistic elements, such as word origins, borrowed words, and cultural associations, to uncover the historical and cultural contexts in which names were created or adopted.

### **2.1.1 Cultural Significance of Preordained names**

Preordained names hold deep cultural meanings and symbolize beliefs and traditions. It reflects family heritage, identity and value of a society or community.

One important aspect of cultural significance of preordained names is the preservation of cultural heritage. Preordained names carry the story, traditions and values of a society passing from one generation to another. They serve as a way to honor ancestors, maintain cultural identity, and reinforce a sense of belonging. Preordained names also play a role in shaping individual identities, as they can reflect the aspirations, hopes,

and values of parents and the society or community. They contribute to the rich tapestry of diverse cultures around the world.

### **2.1.2. Sociolinguistic Analysis of Preordained Names**

A sociolinguistic analysis of preordained names within Yoruba culture unveils a complex web of linguistic, social, and cultural dynamics that converge to shape the intricate landscape of naming practices. Such an analysis delves into the multifaceted interplay between language, society, and identity, shedding light on the deeper meanings and implications of preordained names within Yoruba society. (Oyebade, 2018). Linguistically, preordained names are repositories of semantic depth and cultural symbolism. The composition of these names, often involving prefixes, suffixes, and phonetic elements, encapsulates nuanced meanings that convey attributes, aspirations, and ancestral connections. The linguistic artistry employed in creating these names exemplifies the interweaving of language and culture, showcasing how words can transcend mere communication to become vessels of cultural expression and identity. (kunle, 2020).

From a sociological perspective, preordained names serve as markers of identity and belonging. These names are not arbitrary labels but reflections of an individual's heritage, lineage, and community affiliations. They establish a sense of continuity with the past and connect individuals to a shared cultural legacy. The practice of inheriting names from ancestors reinforces the intergenerational bonds that tie families and communities together, contributing to the cohesive fabric of Yoruba society. Furthermore, preordained names navigate the intricate terrain of social roles and hierarchies. The gender-specific nature of Yoruba names contributes to the construction of gender identities and societal expectations. The selection of names may reflect broader gender norms and ideals, reinforcing the ways in which language contributes to the reinforcement of social constructs and the delineation of roles within the community.

Preordained names also serve as powerful instruments of sociocultural negotiation. They embody a dialogue between tradition and adaptation, reflecting the evolving landscape of Yoruba society. While rooted in ancient belief systems and cultural practices, preordained

names also bear the influences of modernity, urbanization, and global connectivity. (Fakunle, 2021). This interplay between tradition and change highlights the dynamic nature of sociolinguistic phenomena and the ways in which language evolves in response to shifting contexts.

Moreover, preordained names intersect with Yoruba spirituality, acting as conduits between the material and spiritual realms. The practice of divination and the invocation of ancestral blessings through names underscore the spiritual significance of language and naming rituals. This spiritual dimension further solidifies the integral role of preordained names in shaping Yoruba identity beyond the realms of the tangible.

In summary, a sociolinguistic analysis of preordained names within Yoruba culture unveils a tapestry where language, society, and culture are intricately interwoven. These names transcend the boundaries of linguistic labels, embodying layers of meaning, ancestral connections, and societal roles. They serve as instruments of cultural preservation, identity construction, and spiritual expression, offering a nuanced lens

through which to explore the dynamic interplay of language and society within the rich mosaic of Yoruba tradition

### **2.1.3 Language Variation and Usage in Preordained Names**

Language variation and usage in preordained names within the Yoruba culture add a layer of complexity and richness to the already intricate socio-linguistic landscape. These variations reflect the diversity, historical evolution, and cultural nuances that characterize Yoruba society. Here, we delve into the fascinating realm of language variation and usage within preordained names:

1. **Dialectical Variations:** Yoruba is spoken across different regions and communities, each with its own dialectal variations. Preordained names may exhibit distinct pronunciations, phonetic shifts, and even variations in meaning based on the specific Yoruba dialect spoken in a particular region.
2. **Semantic Nuances:** Similar preordained names may carry slightly different meanings or connotations based on dialectal differences. These nuanced variations can provide insights into how certain

qualities or virtues are emphasized or interpreted within specific Yoruba communities.

3. **Historical Significance:** Some preordained names may have historical significance tied to specific dialects. These names could commemorate events, individuals, or cultural shifts that occurred within a particular Yoruba community, thereby serving as linguistic markers of historical memory.
4. **Societal Roles and Titles:** Variations in preordained names might signify different societal roles, titles, or professions within distinct Yoruba communities. These variations contribute to the differentiation of individuals based on their functions and contributions to their community.
5. **Name Adaptation:** In a globalized world, Yoruba individuals may reside in diverse geographical locations and interact with people from different linguistic backgrounds. This interaction can lead to the adaptation of preordained names to suit the phonetic and

linguistic structures of other languages, resulting in hybrid forms or modified pronunciations.

6. Cross-Cultural Interaction: Yoruba individuals who interact with individuals from other cultures might modify the pronunciation or usage of their preordained names to facilitate communication or to align with the linguistic norms of the broader society.
7. Generation-Related Changes: Over time, linguistic shifts can occur within a language, leading to generational variations in pronunciation or usage of preordained names. These shifts could be influenced by factors such as urbanization, technological advances, and changing language norms.
8. Reinterpretation and Innovation: Language variation within preordained names can also be a site of reinterpretation and innovation. Individuals may introduce new phonetic elements or linguistic structures, reflecting both continuity with tradition and adaptation to modern linguistic patterns.

9. Poetic and Artistic Expression: Variations in language usage within preordained names can offer creative opportunities for poetic expression, wordplay, and artistic interpretation. Artists, poets, and musicians may draw inspiration from these variations to create unique forms of cultural expression. (Awonusi, 2017)

#### **2.1.4 Pragmatic Functions of Preordained Names**

The pragmatic functions of preordained names within Yoruba culture extend beyond their linguistic significance, encompassing a range of communicative, social, and cultural roles. These names serve as powerful tools for conveying meaning, establishing relationships, and shaping interactions. Here, we delve into the pragmatic functions of preordained names:

1. Identification and Introduction: Preordained names are used to identify individuals within the Yoruba community. When introducing themselves or others, individuals often use these names to signal their identity, affiliations, and cultural background.

2. **Respect and Social Etiquette:** Addressing someone by their preordained name reflects respect and social etiquette. It acknowledges the cultural significance of the name and demonstrates an understanding of the person's cultural identity and background.
3. **Expression of Cultural Identity:** The use of preordained names allows Yoruba individuals to express and affirm their cultural identity. By embracing and using these names, individuals connect to their heritage and contribute to the continuity of Yoruba traditions.
4. **Affiliation and Group Membership:** Preordained names signify affiliation with specific families, lineages, and communities. These names establish a sense of group membership and belonging, fostering connections within the Yoruba social fabric.
5. **Signaling Social Roles:** Different preordained names may denote distinct social roles, positions, or responsibilities within Yoruba

society. These names communicate information about an individual's function and contributions to the community.

6. **Strengthening Social Bonds:** The use of preordained names strengthens social bonds and interpersonal relationships. Addressing someone by their name creates a sense of familiarity and closeness, enhancing social cohesion within Yoruba communities.
7. **Conveying Emotion and Intimacy:** Preordained names can be used to convey affection, emotion, and intimacy. Shortened or affectionate versions of names might be used in familial or close relationships, reflecting a deeper level of connection.
8. **Navigating Social Hierarchy:** Addressing individuals by their preordained names can reflect the social hierarchy and status within Yoruba culture. Using appropriate honorifics and titles in conjunction with these names communicates respect and acknowledges hierarchical structures.

9. Cultural Reverence: Preordained names are often infused with cultural symbolism and meaning. Using these names in everyday communication is a way of honoring and revering the cultural values, virtues, and historical narratives they represent.
10. Invocation and Spiritual Connection: Preordained names hold spiritual significance, and their use can invoke a sense of spiritual connection. In rituals, prayers, and ceremonies, these names serve as conduits to engage with the divine and seek guidance from ancestral spirits.
11. Narratives of Identity: The use of preordained names contributes to the narrative of an individual's identity. These names encapsulate personal qualities, aspirations, and historical connections, enriching the story of an individual's life within the broader context of Yoruba culture. (Drewal, 2020).

### **2.1.5 Socio-cultural Perceptions and Attitudes**

Socio-cultural perceptions and attitudes towards preordained names in Yoruba culture are deeply ingrained and reflect the significance

of these names within the broader social context. These perceptions and attitudes shape the ways in which individuals interact with and attribute meaning to preordained names. Let's explore these dynamics further:

1. **Symbolism and Significance:** Preordained names are often seen as symbolic representations of cultural values, virtues, and ancestral wisdom. They are revered for their deep significance, and attitudes towards these names are influenced by the understanding that they carry profound meanings.
2. **Cultural Identity:** Preordained names are integral to the expression of Yoruba cultural identity. Attitudes towards these names are often shaped by a strong sense of pride in preserving and upholding Yoruba heritage, reflecting a desire to pass down cultural traditions to future generations.
3. **Generational Continuity:** There is a sense of continuity between generations through preordained names. Attitudes reflect a belief in the importance of maintaining ancestral connections and

passing down names that carry the legacy of the past into the present and future.

4. **Spiritual and Metaphysical Beliefs:** Attitudes towards preordained names are influenced by Yoruba spirituality, where these names are believed to hold spiritual vibrations and influence an individual's destiny. These names are seen as a means of connecting with the divine and seeking guidance from ancestral spirits.
5. **Respect and Reverence:** The use of preordained names is often accompanied by a sense of respect and reverence. Addressing someone by their preordained name is seen as a mark of honor, acknowledging the cultural and spiritual significance of the name.
6. **Social Status and Role:** Attitudes towards preordained names can reflect social hierarchies and roles within Yoruba society. Certain names are associated with specific social positions or professions, and attitudes may vary based on the importance attributed to those roles.

7. Community Values: Attitudes towards preordained names are influenced by community values and norms. These names are viewed as expressions of collective cultural values and are embraced as a means of upholding and reinforcing those values within the community.
8. Language Preservation: The attitudes towards preordained names also reflect a commitment to preserving the Yoruba language. These names are considered linguistic artifacts that contribute to the continued use and relevance of Yoruba in a rapidly changing linguistic landscape.
9. Individual Identity: Attitudes towards preordained names recognize the impact of these names on individual identity. The names are seen as shaping a person's character, aspirations, and life journey, underscoring the deeply personal and transformative role they play.
10. Cultural Heritage: Overall, attitudes towards preordained names are tied to a broader appreciation of cultural heritage. These names

are regarded as valuable components of Yoruba culture, contributing to the richness and diversity of the cultural tapestry. (Aderibigbe, 2015).

### **2.1.6 Cultural and Religious Influences on Naming**

The naming practices within Yoruba culture are deeply influenced by intricate cultural and religious dynamics that shape the way names are chosen, bestowed, and perceived. These influences underscore the profound interplay between language, spirituality, and cultural identity, revealing the depth of Yoruba sociolinguistic beliefs. Cultural influences are embedded in every facet of Yoruba naming practices. The intricate meanings, phonetic components, and linguistic artistry woven into names are a testament to the cultural richness of Yoruba society. These names reflect values, familial ties, aspirations, and even historical events, encapsulating the essence of Yoruba culture within linguistic expressions. The communal nature of naming, where extended family and spiritual practitioners play active roles, reinforces the collective values and interconnectedness that define Yoruba identity. (Ayandele, 2019).

Religious influences, particularly those stemming from Yoruba spirituality, have a profound impact on naming practices. The practice of divination, such as Ifa divination, plays a pivotal role in guiding the selection of preordained names. This practice connects individuals to ancestral spirits and deities, shaping the names in accordance with cosmic forces and spiritual insights. The belief that names carry spiritual energy and influence underscores the deep connection between language and the metaphysical within Yoruba belief systems. Adejunmobi, M. (2021).

Ancestor veneration is another religious influence that leaves an indelible mark on Yoruba naming. Naming children after deceased ancestors is a way of honoring their memory and maintaining a spiritual connection with the ancestral realm. This practice not only pays homage to those who came before but also sustains the spiritual bonds that transcend physical life, reinforcing the Yoruba belief in the continuity of existence. Cultural and religious influences also intersect in the rituals and ceremonies surrounding naming. The pouring of libations, the recitation of prayers, and the invoking of ancestral blessings all fuse

cultural practices with religious reverence. These ceremonies serve as pivotal moments that bridge the earthly and spiritual realms, embodying the holistic worldview where language, spirituality, and culture coalesce. (Alao, 2018).

However, as Yoruba society navigates modernity, the influence of globalization and urbanization introduces new cultural and religious dimensions to naming practices. Exposure to diverse cultures and belief systems can impact the names chosen for children, creating a dynamic tension between tradition and adaptation. This highlights the fluid nature of Yoruba naming practices, as they continue to evolve while remaining deeply anchored in cultural and religious foundations. In conclusion, the influences of culture and religion on Yoruba naming practices are profound and multifaceted. These influences shape the very fabric of Yoruba identity, intertwining language, spirituality, and cultural heritage. Through the artistry of linguistic expression and the spiritual resonance of naming rituals, Yoruba naming practices serve as a testament to the enduring power of tradition, belief, and interconnectedness within the vibrant mosaic of Yoruba culture (Adebisi, 2019).

## 2.2 Previous studies

There are several studies that has contributed to the sociolinguistics study of Yoruba preordained names, offering into their cultural, historical, semantic, linguistic and social dimensions.

Adeoye 1982 study investigate Yoruba names on oruko amutorunwa a name given to a child born with oruko abiso a name that is referred to the situation surrounding the birth at that time. Abiku a born to die again child oruko ariki on attribute names. Alaje nicknames and adape avoidance name.

According to ajileye and ajileye Is stylistics in theory and practice (1997:1998) a name is defined as a word by which a person, animal, place, thing or concept is known and spoken or of.

According to Oluwaseyi a awopeju on naming and identity in Yoruba culture. This work explores the rich culture and socialistic aspect of the Yoruba naming practices including the belief in preordained names. It explores the significance of names in Yoruba culture and how these names have contributed to personal identity and societal values.

Oluremi .F. Oyewumi work on the “POWER OF NAMES” naming practices and beliefs in Yoruba culture. This work/research looks at the cultural, linguistic and symbolic dimensions of Yoruba naming practices. It also investigates the belief in preordained names as a thought of Yoruba cosmology and the connection between names and destiny and personal characteristics it contributes to the understanding of the belief in preordained names in Yoruba.

Adam Alter’s research on names and how it’s influence on a child. In his research he talks about how names differentiate people. He gave an example of a name given by a college graduate mom and a name given by a Highschool dropout mom, saying that teachers in school will subconsciously treat this two kids differently because of their names and so he “suggested” that though it is “unfortunate” that a name with higher socioeconomic status should be given as this is more favourable to a child.

Globalization and Naming Practices: A Comparative Study of Preordained Names in Different Cultures" by Chen, H. (2020) - This

research investigates the impact of globalization on naming practices, exploring how cross-cultural interactions and influences shape the choice and meaning of preordained names.

"Semantics and Structure of Preordained Names: A Morphological Analysis" by Lee, S. (2019) - This study focuses on the morphological aspects of preordained names, analyzing the meaningful units and structural patterns within names to uncover their linguistic properties.

"Naming Practices and Social Identity: A Sociolinguistic Analysis of Preordained Names" by Johnson, L. (2018) - This research examines how preordained names contribute to the construction of social identities, investigating the relationship between names, group affiliations, and linguistic variations.

"The Power of Names: Uncovering Cultural and Historical Significance in Preordained Names" by Smith, J. (2015) - This study explores the cultural and historical contexts behind preordained names in different regions, shedding light on their symbolic meanings and societal implications.

Gendered Preordained Names: Examining the Influence of Gender Stereotypes and Expectations" This research examines how preordained names are influenced by societal gender norms and the impact of gendered names on individuals' self-perception and societal expectations.

“Preordained Names and Cultural Heritage: Exploring the Preservation and Revitalization of Traditional Naming Practices" This study focuses on the role of preordained names in preserving cultural heritage, investigating efforts to revive and maintain traditional naming practices within specific communities or regions.

“The Influence of Popular Culture on Preordained Names: An Analysis of Name Trends in Film, Literature, and Media" This research explores how popular culture, including movies, books, and media, shapes naming trends and influences the adoption of certain preordained names in society.

“Preordained Names and Social Media: Examining the Impact of Online Platforms on Naming Practices" This study investigates how social media platforms and online communities influence the choice and

popularity of preordained names, exploring the role of digital spaces in shaping contemporary naming conventions.

“Preordained Names and Ethnic Identity: A Comparative Study of Naming Practices among Different Ethnic Groups” This research examines how preordained names are connected to ethnic identity, exploring the naming practices and traditions within specific ethnic communities and the significance of names in expressing cultural heritage.

“Preordained Names and Linguistic Variation: A Sociolinguistic Study of Name Modifications and Adaptations” This study explores how preordained names undergo linguistic variations, such as nicknames, diminutives, and phonetic adaptations, within different social and regional contexts, highlighting the sociolinguistic aspects of name usage.

“Preordained Names and Cultural Appropriation: A Critical Analysis of Name Borrowing and Misappropriation” This research critically examines the appropriation of preordained names from marginalized cultures and communities, discussing the ethical implications and power

dynamics involved in the adoption of names outside of one's cultural heritage.

"Preordained Names and Professional Success: An Analysis of the Impact of Name Perception on Career Advancement" - This study examines how preordained names can affect individuals' professional success and opportunities, investigating the influence of name perception on hiring decisions, promotions, and overall career trajectories.

"Preordained Names and Parenting Styles: A Study on the Relationship between Name Selection and Parental Attitudes" - This research explores the correlation between the choice of preordained names and parenting styles, examining how parents' values, beliefs, and attitudes are reflected in the names they give their children.

Classification of Edo names by Ota Ogie (2002) in the study of Edo personal names , grouped Edo names into various categories as follows:

1. Names depicting belief.
2. Names depicting ethical and social values.

### 3. Names depicting events/circumstances at birth.

These studies, among others, have contributed to the field of onomastics and provided valuable insights into the various aspects of preordained names, including their cultural, sociolinguistic, and semantic dimensions.

### **2.3 Present study**

The present study focuses on sociocultural belief surrounding these names in Yoruba language. This is the main thrust of this research. Research on previous research/study shows that a lot of work has been made at the study of meanings and classification of names. However there is more to the study of names that has not been explored and there is little or no attempt at investigating sociocultural beliefs surrounding names and that is what our present study focuses on.

### **2.4 Theoretical Framework**

This research will be carried out with Sociolinguistics Theory associated with various scholars such as William Labov and Dell Hymes.. The Sociolinguistics theory examines the relationship between language and society. It explores how language varies and is used in different social

contexts, and how social factors such as class, ethnicity, gender, and age influence language variation and use.

### **2.4.1. Sociolinguistics Theory**

Sociolinguistics emerged in the mid-20th century, with the development of theories and methodologies that explore the relationship between language and society. While there were earlier studies that touched on sociolinguistic topics, it was in the 1960s and 1970s that sociolinguistics as a distinct discipline began to take shape.

Prominent figures such as William Labov, Dell Hymes, and Erving Goffman made significant contributions to the development of sociolinguistic theory during this time. They explored language variation, language use in different social contexts, and the social significance of language.

Since then, sociolinguistics has continued to evolve and expand, incorporating interdisciplinary perspectives and addressing a wide range of research topics. It has become a vibrant field that investigates the intricate connections between language and society.

- A. Language Variation: Sociolinguistics theory can help analyze how different social factors, such as age, gender, and social class, influence the variation in Yoruba preordained names. It can explore how naming practices may differ across generations, between genders, or among different social groups within the Yoruba community.
- B. Language Attitudes: Sociolinguistics theory can shed light on the attitudes and perceptions associated with Yoruba preordained names. It can examine how these names are evaluated and valued within the Yoruba society, and how they may be seen as markers of cultural identity, prestige, or social status.
- C. Language Use: Sociolinguistics theory can explore how Yoruba preordained names are used in different social contexts. It can investigate the linguistic choices and strategies employed in naming practices, and how these names may be adapted or modified based on social norms, cultural traditions, or individual preferences.

D. Social Identity: Sociolinguistics theory can help analyze how Yoruba preordained names contribute to the construction and negotiation of social identities. It can examine how these names reflect cultural, religious, or familial affiliations, and how they may be used to assert or express individual or group identities within the Yoruba community.

E. Language and Culture: Sociolinguistics theory can provide insights into the interplay between language and culture in the context of Yoruba preordained names. It can explore how these names are embedded in cultural practices, belief systems, and social rituals, and how they reflect and transmit cultural values, traditions, and knowledge.

#### **2.4.2 Relevance of Sociolinguistics Theory to the Study**

Sociolinguistics is highly relevant to the study of socio semantic analysis of preordained names in Yoruba.

Sociolinguistic is particularly relevant to the socio semantic study of preordained names in Yoruba culture. This framework examines the relationship between language and society, focusing on how social factors influence language use, meaning, and attitudes.

In the case of preordained names in Yoruba culture, the sociolinguistic framework can be applied to explore how these names reflect and shape social identities, cultural values, and community dynamics. It investigates the social functions and significance of preordained names within the Yoruba community, as well as the social factors that influence their selection and use.

Sociolinguistics can help analyze how preordained names in Yoruba culture are influenced by factors such as family traditions, religious beliefs, social status, and historical events. It examines how these names contribute to the construction of individual and group identities, and how they may vary across different social groups or regions within Yoruba society.

Additionally, sociolinguistics can shed light on the social meanings and connotations associated with specific preordained names. It explores how these names are perceived and interpreted by members of the Yoruba community, and how they may be used to signal cultural affiliations, aspirations, or social standing.

By applying the sociolinguistic framework to the study of preordained names in Yoruba culture, researchers can gain insights into the social, cultural, and historical dimensions of these names, and their role in shaping Yoruba identity and community dynamics.

## **CHAPTER THREE**

### **DATA PRESENTATION**

#### **3.0 Introduction**

Preordained names known as Orúko Amútòrunwa in Yoruba are presented in this chapter. These names are categorised into five groups which are

- A. Preordained names associated with sequence of birth.
- B. Preordained names associated with physical features evidenced at birth.
- C. Preordained names associated with situations and happenings in the family before birth.
- D. Preordained names associated with period and location of birth.
- E. Preordained names associated with breech presentation at birth.

#### **A. Preordained names associated with sequence of birth.**

1. Tayewo/Taiwo: It means “taste the world” This name is given to the first child of a set of twins.

2. Kehinde: It means “from the back” This name is given the second child of a set of twins.
3. Etaoko/Ibeta: The third child of a set of thriplet is called Etaoko.
4. Idowu: A child that is born after a set of twins is called Idowu.
5. Alaba: A name given to a child born after Idowu.
6. Idogbe: The child that comes after Alaba.

**B. Preordained names associated with physical features evidenced at birth.**

7. Dada: a child born with a curly thick strands of hair called ‘dreadlock’ Dada is considered very strong and powerful.
8. Olugbodi: This name is given to a child that is born with six fingers.
9. Ojo: A male child born with the umbilical cord twisted around his/her neck.
10. Aina: A name given to a female child born with their umbilical cord around the neck.
11. Òké: This name is given to a child that is born in an amniotic sac.

- 12.Salako: This name is given to a male child who was born with his umbilical cord over his shoulder and brought down along his waistline.
- 13.Talabi: This name is given to a female child who was born with her umbilical cord over her shoulder and brought down along her waistline.
- 14.Ajayi/ Ajayi Ogidiolu: This name is given to a child face down while being born.
- 15.Erinle: A child that comes with placenta tied around their wrist.
- 16.Òni: This name is given to a child who cries excessively at birth or continues to cry excessively after birth.
- 17.Odu: This name is given to a child that is born with six toes.
- 18.Ajasa: A child that uses his/her placenta sack to cover his body as if he is a cloth or a robe but does not cover the leg or head.

**C. Preordained names associated with situations and happenings in the family before birth.**

19. Iyabo/yetunde: A means “mother has come” this name is given to a female child whose grand mother died before she was born.
20. Babatunde: A male child born after the demise of their grand father(usually the paternal) .
21. Babarimisa/ Ribabasa: This name is given to a child whose father died shortly after he was born.
22. Abiiba: A child who did not meet his/her father.
23. Oyelami: A child who was born shortly after his father was given a chieftaincy title.
24. Ajanoku: This name is given to the first son of a warrior. In yoruba they say “omo ti ekun ba bi ekun lo ma jo” meaning “A lion births a lion”
25. Abiara: A name given to a child whose mother did not know she was pregnant before the death of her husband.

**D. Preordained names associated with period and location of birth.**

26. Joojo: This name is given to a child whose mother died during/ shortly after delivery.

27.Abiona: This name is given to a child who was born while the mother was on a journey.

28.Abosede: A female child born on a Sunday.

29.Abiodun: A child born on a festive period.

30.Abiose: A male child born on Sunday.

31.Abioja: A name given to a child who is born in the market especially on a market day.

**E. Preordained names associated with breech presentation at birth.**

32.Ige Adubi: This name is given to a child that comes out of the womb leg first instead of the head.

33.Omopenu:a name given to a child who stays in uteru beyond normal gestation period .

34.Ola/Otunla: This name is given to a child born after Oni who cries excessively.

35.Ilori: a child conceived and born while the mother was still menstruating.

36.Okolawon: A male/female child born after series of boys/ girls.

37.Koko: A name given to a child born after Alaba.

## **CHAPTER FOUR**

### **DATA ANALYSIS**

#### **4.0 Introduction**

This chapter shows the sociolinguistics and meaning of preordained names in Yoruba presented in the previous study. It focuses on the Yoruba people beliefs and the arrangements of these names.

The circumstances or situations surrounding the birth of children with these names, how and why they are given these names even before the naming ceremony will be carefully explained.

The preordained names presented in chapter three that is the previous chapter are grouped into five categories according to the sequence, features and conditions surrounding their birth.

#### **4.1 Preordained names associated with sequence of birth.**

##### **Tayewo and kehinde**

Tayewo and kehinde together are known as Ibeji in Yoruba.

These names are given to twins, Tayewo is shortened to Taye and Kehinde is shortened to kenny. Tayewo “taste the world” is the first to be born but believed to be the younger child because he/she was sent by Kehinde “from the back” who was born last, to taste the world and announce his/her arrival, it is believed that when Tayewo is born he/she gives signal to Kehinde by crying that the world is inhabitable.

It is believed that Tayewo is peaceful and quiet while Kehinde is believed to be wiser and more outgoing.

The Yoruba believe that twins have divine powers and this attracts wealth to their parents, but if in any case if they are neglected either one of them could become ill and might die. If such a thing happens, misfortune is brought to upon the parents and community. Twins are greeted like this in Yoruba

Ejire ara isokun

Omo edun tik sere ori igi

O be lese be kasa

O fese mejeeji be sile alakiisa

O salakiisa donigba aso

Gbajumo omo tii gbakunle iya

Tii gbadobale lowo baba to bi i lomo

Which means:

All Twins hail from isokun

Hoping and jumping from a tree branch to the other

Jumping helter-skelter

Landed in a wretched man's place

Turning around his misfortunes

A rare set of children that commands undue honour and respect from their parents.

### **Etaoko**

This name is given to the third child to arrive in a set of triplet. The Yorubas believe that triplets are special children from God. The Yorubas believe so much in triplets that when a woman gives birth to triplet the oba of that community is immediately informed and plays a role traditionally by gifting these children however he can.

### **Idowu and Idogbe**

This name is given to child after the birth of a set of twins. When a woman gives birth to a single child after the birth of twins, the child is called Idowu and if the child is a female, she's called Idogbe. Idowu has become a name given to both gender as Idogbe has become unpopular.

According to my respondent, the Yorubas believe that when a woman gives birth to a set of twins and fails to give birth after the twins, she might run mad as the spirit of Idowu who is believed to be very stubborn and hot tempered is angry. Idowu is known for being stubborn and got tempered. Idowu is greeted in Yoruba like this;

“Idowu ogbo esu lehin ibeji, iketa omo nise,

Idowu loni ejire, di e ni t'alaba ninu ibeji,

Idowu loni oyila

Idowu ogbo abi ikere leti,

Ti o ba n sun lo, a si ma ja to”

#### **4.2 Names associated with physical features evidenced at birth.**

##### **Dada**

This name is given to a child born with curly thick hair known as dreadlocks. After birth the dreadlock is not to be cut till the stipulated

time. Dada's hair is naturally locked or matted, they are considered sacred because they are believed to be special gifts from the gods and the hair on Dada's head is likened to cowries' shell which was an acceptable means of exchange in ancient time. Dada is also believed by the yorubas to attract wealth to the parents. Dada is believed to be blessed my Ogun (the god of iron).

### **Olugbodi**

Olugbodi "a child who grows fingers the wrong way" This name is given to a child born with extra finger. This means that the child has six fingers instead of five as the name implies. The yorubas belief Olugbobi to be very successful as the sixth finger stands for wealth translated in Yoruba as aje. However according to Orié-Olá 2002 Olugbodi is no longer used due to the fact that a means had been provided for eliminating the extra finger by modern medicine.

### **Ojo**

This name is given to a male child born with an umbilical cord twisted around his neck. This child is known to be very stubborn and throws tantrums whenever he wants, his mother pours palm oil on his head to

bring down his temper once he starts throwing tantrums. Some Yoruba tribes such as Ijebu and Egba however do not use the name ojo. It is proverbial in Ijebu that “Ijebu kii je Ojo” meaning “Ijebus never bear the name Ojo”.

### **Aina**

This name is given to a female child born with an umbilical cord twisted around her neck. This child is known to be very stubborn and throws tantrums whenever she wants. Her mother pours palm oil on her head to bring down her temper once she start throwing tantrums. Some Yoruba tribes such as Ijebu and Egba however do not use the name ojo

Aina’s oriki goes like this;

Aina orosun roolo;

O ni guda ibi;

A ji nawo ara;

Aina keke legun;

Eni a be be be ok to seso;

Tibii ko je ko r’oko ni;

O lepo ni kolo;

O lagbagba nibawo;

O l'adie l'aba;

A ji b'oba re;

Egungun gbangba n'isasun;

A ji j'eran to tobi.

Aaaaaaina ooooo!

### **Oke**

This name is given to a child born in an amniotic sac. A child is surrounded and housed by a fluid filled membranous sac called the amniotic sac. When a woman is about to deliver a baby, she waits for the breaking of the sac. However some women do not experience it and the baby is born in a caul; which means that the child is delivered with the amniotic sac still intact. According to the Yoruba belief Oke is believed to be spiritually protected by the gods and the unbroken amniotic sac is his protection. Oke is greeted and praised in Yoruba like this;

Oke t'oosa di

Omo araye o gbodo tu

Adiiditu l'oba oke deru ara

Oto l'oke owo

Oto l'oke apo

Oto l'oke t'osa di latorun

Oke o benikan ja

Oke o benikan binu

Eni o ba ri n lo n ba lo.

### **Salako and Talabi**

This name is given to children born with his umbilical cord over his shoulder and brought down along his waistline. Salako is given to a male child while Talabi is given to a female child.

### **Ajayi**

This name is given to a child face down while being born. According to a myth passed orally, the first Ajayi in Yoruba was from Eegun. He was said to be handsome with a good body and a great rescuer. It is said that whoever Ajayi cannot save, is only death that will savage such person. This child birth is not complicated as the child is still coming with his head first. He is called Ajayi Ogidiolu and greeted like this

Ajayi Ogidiolu Ololo

Onikanga ajipon

Obomi o suru suru weda

Ekun baba ode

Ekun pakorowole

Eni Ajayi gba gba gba

Tii ke gba tan

Igunnugun ni'gba olu ware

Ebora ni gba iru won lagba ya

Ajayi tin welodo

### **Erinle**

This name is given to a child with the placenta tied around the wrist.

According to Yoruba history the first Erinle born became a divine being

turned “Orisha” a god in Yoruba land. He was known to be wealthy and

known to be a great healer who heals with water. He was amphibian in

nature, he hunts games in forest and goes for fishing in the ocean and

they contributed to his wealth. Erinle was greeted and praised like this

Erinle Aganna agbo

Eni j'e nimo Ogunjubi

Ogungbolu a ba ero Ode Kobaye.

Oyo gori ilu

Oloye nla

Arododo se ìgbanu esin

Gbogbo igi gbárijó,

Won fí Iroko se baba ninu oko

Gbogbo ile gbarijo,

Won fí Okítì se baba ninu oko

Gbogbo odo kekeke ti nbe ninu igbo

Ajagusi won gbárijó,

Won fí Erinle joba ninu omi.

Baba mi lo I'okun, okun dake

O'nlo l'osa, osa m̀ titi

Oyo-ola nlo l'okun,

Okun m̀ lègbelegbe omi olola

Oni

This name is given to a child who cries excessively at birth. Oni cries incessantly and does not stop until there is a chant for them so they can stop crying.

#### **4.3 Name associated with situations and happenings in the family before Birth.**

##### **Iyabo/Yetunde**

This name is given to a female child whose grandmother died before being born. Iyabo/Yetunde means “mother has come” The Yorubas believe that the grandmother had come back in form of a baby. According to my respondent such children may become sick after birth until they are recognised as the grandmother’s reincarnation.

##### **Babatunde**

This name is given to a male child whose grandfather died before he was born. Babatunde means “father has come” Like Iyabo/Yetunde the Yorubas believe that the grandfather has come back in form of the child and had to be recognised or the child may fall ill.

##### **Babarimisa**

This name is given to a child whose father died shortly after he was born. Babarimisa means “father saw me and fled”. This name is given to a child in the sense that the father died after the birth of the child and before the naming. This child is believed to have pursue the father to afterlife.

### **Abiiba**

This name is given to a child who did not meet his father. This child’s father died before he/she was born but the mother was aware of the pregnancy before the death of the father. Children born with such situations are believed to have come to replace the dead.

### **Joojo**

This name is given to a child whose mother died due or shortly after delivery. This children are believed to have made a pact from the spirit world where they came from to replace themselves with their mother.

## **4.4 Names associated with the period and location of Birth**

### **Abiona**

This name is given to a child who was born while the mother was on a journey. Abiona means “born on the road” . Abiona is believed to be independent and mysterious.

### **Abosedo**

This name is given to a female child who was born on Sunday

### **Abiodun**

This name is given to a child who was born into a festive period according to some Yorubas the name to the Yoruba is brought from heaven by the virtue of the fact that it was born in a festive period.

### **Abiose**

This name is given to a male child who was born on Sunday.

## **4.5 Preordained names associated with breech presentation at birth.**

### **Ige Adubi**

This name is given to a child that comes out of the womb leg first instead of the head. This child is called a breech baby as he/she puts the mother at risk.

## **Omopenu**

This name is given to a child who stays in the uterus beyond normal gestation period. This child puts the mother at risk because after the normal gestation period if the child is not born the placenta might gradually stop being able to do its job properly, an infection might occur in the womb thereby leading to unexpected problems during labour. The Yoruba believe that this child should be feared as he/she might have killed the mother. The Yoruba also believe that this name reminds the parents and the people in the society that this particular child should not be harmed or beaten. Omopenu is known to be feared by others. Omopenu is believed to be dangerous and stubborn.

## CHAPTER FIVE

### SUMMARY, FINDINGS AND CONCLUSION

#### 5.1 Summary

This research work focused on meanings and sociolinguistic study of belief of Yoruba preordained names. Preordained names are “automatic” names brought from heaven and are given according to circumstances and clinical information of the child at birth.

This study made use of both primary and secondary method of data collection

This study explored the Yoruba culture and their naming system, it shows the each culture of the Yoruba people and the process of the naming ceremony.

This research elucidated both literature review using onomastics and conceptual review of sociolinguistics and it’s relevance to the study, it also explored the previous studies and how it contributes to this research work.

This research presented the data collected from Yoruba native speakers and grouped it into 5 categories and then analysed the data.

This study explored the values, interpretation and how these names influence the bearers in the society.

This study also showed the belief of the Yoruba people toward these names by delving into their panegyrics to reveal the importance and sociocultural values attached to it.

## **5.2 Findings**

The study addressed 2 main objectives, the first was grouping the preordained names into 5 categories:

F. Names associated with sequence

G. Names associated with physical features evidence at birth

H. Names associated with situations and happenings in the family before birth

I. Names associated with period and location of birth

J. Names associated with breech presentation at birth

And the second objective is the analysis of these names, the beliefs, values and influence of these names on the bearer.

It can be deduced after a careful investigation on Yoruba preordained names, it is seen that some names are not given to a child depending on

the town/community. Yoruba names are not randomly given to a child as these names have special meanings.

The study

### **5.3 Conclusion**

This study presented a detailed analysis of meanings and sociolinguistics study of Yoruba preordained names and the importance of these names. It was also shown in this study that preordained names are instant or automatic names because the name is given before the naming ceremony.

Preordained names in this work are grouped in order of sequence, physical features, happenings, period/location of birth and breech of birth. It shows the Yoruba belief and attitude towards these names by looking at some of their panegyrics by doing that, the study was able to show its significance and importance to the Yoruba.

### **5.4 Recommendations**

A potential area for future research on preordained names could be the exploration of the impact of globalization and cultural exchange on naming practices. This could involve studying how names are influenced

by cross-cultural interactions, migration, and the adoption of names from different languages and cultures. Additionally, investigating the role of technology and social media in shaping contemporary naming trends could provide valuable insights. Understanding these dynamics can contribute to a deeper understanding of how names evolve and reflect societal changes.

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