

SEMANTIC IMPLICATURES OF OBA “KING” IN EDO PERSONAL NAMES

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APPROVAL PAGE

I, **OLAYE CHRISTABEL** a student in the Department of Linguistics Studies, University of Benin with the Matriculation number **ART2100823** has completed the requirements for coursework and research for the Bachelor of Arts Degree of the University of Benin. The work embodied in this project is original and has not been submitted in part or whole for any other degree or diploma programme of this or any other university or institution.

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PLAGIARISM CERTIFICATION

I, **OLAYE CHRISTABEL** with the matriculation number **ART2100823**, declare that this work titled: “**SEMANTIC IMPLICATURES OF THE EDO PERSONAL NAME OBA**” has successfully passed the anti-plagiarism test (with a score of %), and so does not violate any copyright regulations.

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DEDICATION

This work is dedicated, first and foremost, to Almighty God, whose grace, wisdom, and strength made this journey possible. His unfailing love and guidance have been my anchor through every challenge and success. I also dedicate this project to my family and friends, whose constant encouragement, prayers, and unwavering support have been my greatest motivation. Their belief in me kept me going even when the road seemed long and difficult. .

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ABSTRACT

This study investigates the semantic implicatures of Edo personal names containing the element “Oba” (king), examining how these names reflect and preserve the cultural identity and worldview of the Edo people. Guided by the Socio-Cultural Linguistics Approach (SCLA) proposed by Bucholtz and Hall (2005), the research explores the intricate relationship between language, culture, and identity within the Edo naming system. A qualitative research method was employed, drawing on both primary and secondary sources. Primary data were collected through focus group discussions and interviews with community members, elders, and cultural leaders, while secondary data were obtained from existing literature and linguistic studies. The data were analyzed using thematic analysis, focusing on identifying recurring meanings and cultural patterns associated with Oba-related names. The findings revealed four key semantic themes embedded in Edo names containing Oba: Sovereignty, Wealth, Adulation, and Protection. These themes reflect the Edo people’s deep cultural reverence for kingship, expressing authority, prosperity, loyalty, and divine safeguarding. The study concludes that personal names in Edo society go beyond identification; they serve as linguistic and cultural expressions that embody social values, beliefs, and collective memory. By applying the SCLA framework, the study highlights that Edo naming practices are a form of social action that reinforces identity, heritage, and community unity. Ultimately, Edo personal names containing Oba function as cultural vessels through which history, reverence, and social values are transmitted across generations.

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background Information

Names have important meanings and are essential to cultural identity that is a reflection of the values, goals, and experiences of society. In a lot of cultures, personal names, such as those of the Edo community in Nigeria, are used not only as identifiers, but also as storytellers, expressing a people's values and aspirations.

This project focuses on these semantic analyses of names associated with king within the Edo context, investigating the meanings associated with names that contain terms connected to "king," "power" and "royalty." My reason for conducting this study originates from a desire to comprehend how these names express the goals, challenges, and identities of people and families in the Edo community.

This project's main goal is to examine particular names from Edo that integrate concepts of king to explore the more general themes related to these names, including power, royalty, legacy, protection and leadership. Gaining insight into these themes will illuminate the cultural significance of king in the Edo society and offer perspectives on how people manage their relationship with the king and royalty.

Personal names are the unique names that people are given, frequently according to Ephraim (2011), reflecting social, cultural, and familial backgrounds. These names frequently act as a platform for communicating the community's values and beliefs. When we talk about "King-related names," we mean names that either directly or indirectly convey concepts of Sovereignty, Wealth, Protection and Adulation, especially by using the Edo word Oba, which means "king." These names are further categorized by this project into themes such as reverence, authority and protection to enable a more profound comprehension of their meanings.

Edo is a name in which its people share a common ancestor and language. It is the language of the ancient Benin Kingdom. As stated by Omozuwa (2003:246), "History has it that the term Edo came into use during the reign of Oba Ewuare(1440-1473). As a result, the land became known as "OtoEdo," "IvbiEdo" for the people, and "Edo" for the language in turn. Seven out of the eighteen Local Government Areas (L.G.As) of Edo State speak this language. Its most standard form is spoken within the Benin Metropolis, where the Benin Monarch's palace is located. The seven L.G.As are: Oredo, Ego, Ikpoba-Okha, Ovia South-West, Ovia North-East, Orhionmwo and Uhumwuode.

Edo is an open-syllable language characterized by a simple syllable structure. It is regarded as the primary language spoken in the Edo region. The Edo people (Imasuen 1996:3) originally used a writing system influenced by British orthography. This system captures all the sounds of the language. Although the language was first written down by

the Portuguese during their initial contact with colonial powers, it has since been transcribed using the English alphabet, as explained in Omozuwa (2010:10-11).

Several attempts have been made to classify the Ẹdoid languages. The first was by Williamson (1968, 1970), followed by Hoffman (1974) and later Elugbe (1989). The Ẹdo language is part of the Kwa subgroup within the Niger-Congo phylum (Greenberg, 1963). This classification is based on word lists collected from several languages in the Ẹdoid group, as outlined by Williamson (1968, 1970). However, she acknowledges that the classification is not yet fully developed. In this classification, the Ẹdo language is identified as ‘Bini’ and is considered part of the Central Ẹdo subgroup. Hoffman’s (1974) classification of the Ẹdoid languages closely aligns with Williamson’s earlier work. The main difference in this classification is the division into two subgroups: Southern Ẹdo and Northern Ẹdo. In this version, the Ẹdo language, referred to as ‘Bini,’ falls under the Northern Ẹdo subgroup.

Elugbe’s (1989) classification of the Ẹdoid languages presents a different perspective from earlier ones. He divides the Ẹdoid area into three main regions: South-Western, North-Central, and North-Western. These are further broken down into four subgroups: Proto-Delta Ẹdoid, Proto-South-Western Ẹdoid, Proto-North-Central Ẹdoid, and Proto-North-Western Ẹdoid. In this classification, the Ẹdo language is placed under the Proto-North-Central Ẹdoid group.

This study is organized into five chapters. Chapter One covers the methodology, the purpose of the research, and its significance and justification. Chapter Two presents the literature review, which includes the conceptual framework, previous research, and issues relevant to the current study. Chapter Three provides a general introduction, including background information and the theoretical framework guiding the research. Chapter Three focuses on the theoretical framework adopted for the study. Chapter Four presents the data analysis and discusses the findings. Chapter Five serves as the concluding chapter, summarizing the results and drawing conclusions. The study ends with a list of references.

1.2. Methodology

A qualitative research approach is used to collect data for this project, employing primary and secondary data sources to fully capture the subtleties of personal names associated with king in the Edo community.

Primary data were acquired through community focus group discussions and interviews with community members, including families, cultural leaders, and elders. These conversations were intended to uncover cultural beliefs, stories, and personal insights related to particular names, offering detailed contextual data.

Secondary data was sourced from existing literature, including ethnographic accounts, historical records, and linguistic studies, to support the theoretical background of the analysis. This blend of sources helped offer a comprehensive view of the importance of king-related names in the Edo community.

The data for this project was analyzed using thematic analysis, a qualitative approach that identifies, examines, and reports patterns (themes) within the data. The process began with transcribing interviews and focus group discussions to accurately capture participants' contributions word-for-word. Once the data was familiarized, initial coding was done by highlighting key statements and recurring patterns related to king-related names. These codes were then grouped into broader themes that captured the cultural, social, and emotional dimensions linked to the names. To strengthen the reliability and validity of the findings, peer debriefing and member checking were used. Participants were asked to provide feedback to ensure the identified themes accurately represented their intended meanings.

1.3 Purpose of the Study

This project aims to explore and examine the semantic meanings associated with king-related personal names in the Edo language. These include names containing terms such as Oba (king). The following subsections outline the research aim and objectives, followed by statement of the problem.

1.3.1. Aim and Objectives

The purpose of this study is to analyze the meanings behind king-related personal names within the Edo community, uncovering the cultural significance and social messages they express. The objectives are as follows:

- i. To classify King-related names in the Edo community based on their semantic themes like authority.
- ii. To examine the cultural importance of these names and their roles in shaping personal and family identities within Edo society
- iii. To explore how these names mirror and influence the community's understanding of kingship, highlighting their social impact.

1.3.2 Statement of the Problem

Despite the deep cultural importance and rich meanings of personal names in the Edo community, there is still a lack of comprehensive academic research specifically addressing king-related names and their impact on their identity and social values. The lack of research makes it difficult to understand how these names express the goals, life experiences, and socio-economic realities of people within the Edo community. As personal names are often linked to how individuals relate to kingship, studying these connections is crucial for understanding the social environment in which they exist.

1.4 Significance and Justification of the Study

This project is significant because it sheds light on the cultural and social aspects tied to names in the Edo community, especially those related to kingship. Names go beyond simple labels; they embody meanings, histories, and hopes that represent the community's identity and values. Through the study of king-related names, this project seeks to reveal the deeper stories connected to social status, cultural pride, and personal identity. Grasping these connections offers important insights into how names record and reflect traditions that might be disappearing in modern society, influencing social interactions, family bonds, and community unity. Additionally, this study plays a key role in preserving cultural heritage, helping future generations stay connected to their origins.

This project is justified by the need to fill a significant gap in current literature about the importance of personal names within particular cultural settings, especially in the Edo community. Although extensive research exists on names from general linguistic and anthropological viewpoints, there has been little focused study on the impact of king-related naming customs. This project will enrich academic discussions and also connect with the community by giving a voice to those who might otherwise remain unheard. The findings could guide policies and educational programs designed to foster cultural awareness and respect for diversity both within the Edo community and beyond.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.0 Introduction

This chapter reviews literature relevant to this project and is organized into three sections. Section one covers the conceptual review, section two discusses previous studies, and section three addresses the concerns of the present study.

2.1 Conceptual Review

This section reviews the following concepts:

- i. Language
- ii. Morphology
- iii. Morpho-Semantics
- iv. Personal Names.

2.1.1 Language

Okolo and Ezikeojiaku (1999:1) state that language surrounds us throughout our entire lives, from birth to death. It serves as the means through which we form and experience our most significant human relationships. Language acts as a vital tool for carrying out everyday activities. It touches everyone's life from birth to death and encourages individuals to take an interest in how people from different regions

communicate. According to them, language is the means through which people form and experience their most meaningful human connections. It is seen as a key element that fosters unity among all humans. Language has the power to unite speakers from various communities, meaning it plays a vital role in all activities and interactions in our daily lives and cannot be excluded from them.

The Routledge Dictionary of Language and Linguistics (1998:672) describes language as a tool for expressing or exchanging thoughts, concepts, and knowledge, as well as for preserving and sharing experiences. It is shaped by cognitive processes, influenced by societal factors, and undergoes change and evolution over time. In this context, language is seen as a uniquely human form of expression that differs from other systems like animal or artificial communication. It involves creativity, abstract thinking, and the capacity for metalinguistic reflection. In linguistics, the ambiguity of the term 'language' is clarified and distinguished based on the theoretical framework and focus, by abstracting and narrowing down specific aspects. In this process, certain concepts are identified (though terms may vary), including a specific system of signs and rules for combination that are arbitrary but maintained through social convention.

Ferdinand de Saussure refers to such linguistic systems as *langue* (*langue* and *parole*), which serve as the basis for structural analysis. On the other hand, generative linguistics focuses on understanding a speaker's internal knowledge of language and their

ability to creatively produce an unlimited range of utterances based on communicative needs.

Finegan (2004:12) describes language as a tool for expressing thought, a system that enables the transfer of ideas from one person to another. He presents language as a medium used to convey intentions and mental concepts between individuals. A "system" essentially refers to an organized set or collection of thoughts, which can include vocal signs. A key part of Finegan's definition is the idea that language acts as a bridge between the sender and the receiver of a message.

Uwajeh (2010:9) states that language can be described as any system of communication based on semantic and symbolic representations. He explains that language consists of both meaningful (semantic) and symbolic elements. The semantic aspect, also called meaning, and the symbolic aspect, or form, are inseparable parts of language. Language serves as a way to represent reality, where R3 stands for R2, and R2 represents R1. For example, when someone says "car," the word triggers a mental image or thought of a car. In this exchange, one person acts as the communicator, while the other is the recipient, the communicatee. In another instance, the communicator becomes the communicatee, and the communicatee becomes the communicator. This exchange shows that language is truly a tool for mutual communication. Saying that language is a system structure means it's made up of units like signs or lexical elements. This definition highlights that every expression must have both a form and a meaning, and

one cannot exist without the other. Uwajeh (2010) is correct in stating that language is a semantic-symbolic system, meaning it must consist of both form and meaning. He also accurately describes language as a system-structure that exists in two states: as potential when it is ready to be used (system), and as actual when it is being used in communication (structure). Thus, Uwajeh is right in describing language as a system-structure component, emphasizing that it functions both as a potential system awaiting use and as an active structure during communication.

Osisanwo (2003:1) defines language as the human vocal noise or its arbitrary graphic representation, used systematically and conventionally for communication. This definition further emphasizes that language is a uniquely human trait. It also describes language as a tool used systematically and conventionally for communication within a group, indicating that language is primarily structured and its pattern of use must be understood by those who use it. Osisanwo's definition of language faced criticism because referring to it as "noise" is misleading. If language is a tool for meaningful communication, then it shouldn't be labeled as "noise," which typically implies something unintelligible or disruptive.

2.1.2 Morphology

Routledge Dictionary of Language and Linguistics (1998:770) explains that morphology, a term adopted by linguistics in the nineteenth century, originally referred to inflection and word formation. It is defined as the study of the form and structure of

living organisms. In school grammar, morphology relates to the study of word classes and the criteria used to classify them. Word formation is approached in different ways, including as part of inflection studies or as a separate discipline alongside morphology, or sometimes as an additional subfield within morphology. It also clarifies that there are three types of morphological models:

- a) the item and arrangement grammar, which is studied in American structuralism with a focus on distribution.
- b) the idea of item and process grammar (process morphology), essential to generative grammar, where basic abstract forms are converted into their surface structure forms.
- c) the word-and-paradigm model (paradigm morphology), which considers the word, not the morpheme, as the fundamental unit in morphological analysis.

The framework of the Dictionary of Language and Linguistics Structuralism focuses on the foundational concepts of morphology in modern linguistics. Morphology involves studying the form, internal structure, function, and occurrence of the morpheme, which is the smallest meaningful unit of language.

Ndimele (1999:1) explains that morphology examines the internal makeup of words. He states that morphology, as a field of linguistics, focuses on understanding how words are created. Although, the significance of words in human language is well known, a distinct branch of linguistics dedicated to studying the internal structure of words only

developed in the early 19th century. Previously, morphology was considered a part of syntax. In fact, many scholars still discuss morphology alongside syntax under the broad term "grammar." However, handling the internal structure of words within syntax is problematic, as it hinders giving proper attention to word structure in linguistic theory.

Arnold and Andrew (2001:xvii) define morphology as the study of word structure and the area where phonology, syntax, and semantics intersect. They argue that morphology holds a central conceptual position within linguistics. They further state that words are distinguished by their relationships to others based on their forms, specifically through form paradigms and lexical groupings. Malt (2009) defines morphology as the mental system involved in word formation or the branch of linguistics that focuses on words and how they are created. This definition assumes that morphology involves developing rules that represent speakers' knowledge of word formation patterns within and across languages. Morphological analysis of natural language is a productive and ongoing area of linguistic research. Morphology therefore serves as a means to gain understanding of word structure and formation within a language.

Haspelmath and Sims (2002:3) argue that morphology is the study of how morphemes combine to create words. This definition suggests that morphemes are the building blocks of words and that words cannot exist without morphemes coming together to form them. This may not be completely accurate. Words are made up of morphemes, which fall into two categories: morphs (bound morphemes) and words (free

morphemes). Not all words are made up of morphs, and importantly, morphs add extra grammatical meaning to the root word they attach to. This distinction means the definition doesn't clearly separate a word from a morph.

2.1.3 Morpho-Semantics

Marantz (2010) explains that morpho-semantics is a branch of linguistics that studies how morphological processes shape the meaning of words. It examines the connection between morphology and semantics, focusing on how meaning is encoded and altered through morphological structures. In Marantz's definition, both morphology and semantics share a common feature and that is meaning. Morpho-semantics studies how the meaning of words is transformed and regulated through morphological changes by analyzing how these processes affect meaning within a construction to suit its syntactic and communicative context. He explained that morpho-semantics examines how word meanings are altered and shaped through morphological changes, focusing on the role these changes play in fitting expressions into appropriate syntactic and communicative contexts.

Ackerman and Stump (2014:18) define morpho-semantics as the study of how a word's morphological features and structure relate to its meaning and how it fits into sentence structure. Ackerman and Stump's definition explains that morpho-semantics examines how a word's internal and external structure interacts with its meaning and its

role within a sentence. It emphasizes that the meaning of a morpheme or word can be influenced by how it is structured or formed.

Borjars and Vincent (2011:134) argue that morpho-semantics studies the connection between the form of words and how they are understood, focusing on how the structural features of morphemes affect the meaning of words in a language. Borjars and Vincent's definition emphasizes the link between word formation and meaning. It aligns with the views of Marantz (2010) and Ackerman & Stump (2014), highlighting how morphological structures, processes, or rules shape the meaning of words or sentences.

According to Lieber (2010), morpho-semantics examines how a word's morphological structure works together with its semantic makeup, focusing on how morphological elements contribute to the full meaning of complex words and sentences. Lieber emphasizes that complex words and sentences cannot be easily analyzed due to their structural complexity. She explains that morpho-semantics focuses on examining how morphological structures influence the meanings of these complex linguistic forms.

Scalise and Guevara (2017:13) explain that morpho-semantics examines the connection between morphology and semantics, emphasizing how morphological processes influence word meanings and help interpret sentences. Scalise and Guevara's definition aligns with those of Marantz (2010), Ackerman and Stump (2014:18), and Borjars and Vincent (2011:134), emphasizing the close relationship and influence of

morphology on semantics. They explore how meaning depends on word structure, and vice versa, where applicable.

2.1.4 Personal Names

Algeo (1985:142), as a lexicographer, views personal names primarily as tools for reference, without considering their social, psychological, or cultural significance. However, Algeo also explores the complex cultural, historical, and linguistic factors that influence the meaning and use of names. He views names as indicators of individual identity, social norms, and language development. He also highlights important factors that make a name meaningful, including its cultural, social, and psychological roles. Algeo examines naming customs within particular cultures, showing how they often embody rich cultural meanings, religious symbols, or family traditions. He explores the cultural importance of personal names and discusses how they relate to social hierarchies, gender roles, and historical events. He also examined how personal names indicate social group membership and social status. Overall, Algeo's definition of the functions of personal names, including their role in shaping individual identity, provides a detailed and insightful understanding, highlighting the complex connections between names, language, culture, history, and society.

Hodges (2006) states that a person's given name serves as a badge of cultural identity, closely tied to religious identity and language. His definition highlights the strong connection between personal names, cultural belonging, religion, and language

factors that often play a crucial role in name selection for a child. Hodges emphasizes that a person's given name functions as a symbol of cultural identity. This implies that names are not just random labels but are deeply rooted in cultural settings. They often embody cultural heritage, traditions, and values, acting as a bridge that connects individuals to their cultural origins and community. Hodges highlights the strong connection between personal names and religious identity. Many names carry religious significance, often rooted in sacred texts or linked to religious ceremonies like baptisms or naming rites. The choice of a name may reflect the parents' beliefs and practices. He also points out the role of language in shaping how names are formed and used within different religious and cultural contexts. Names are shaped by linguistic elements such as phonetics, morphology, and semantics. Additionally, language acts as a medium through which cultural and religious meanings are expressed in names. In summary, Hodges' definition emphasizes the intricate relationship between personal names and elements of identity and culture. It shows that names are not just labels, but powerful symbols that represent and influence both individual and communal identities within cultural and religious settings.

Hough (2016:327) defines a personal name as a linguistic symbol used to uniquely identify an individual within a specific culture or community. This means names function as language-based codes that represent and distinguish individuals, becoming key identity markers within their social groups. Names serve as markers or labels that enable individuals to be identified and distinguished within linguistic systems. This definition

clarifies that names are often tied to specific communities or cultures, meaning they aren't always universally recognized. Some names may be local or regional, understood primarily by members of a particular group. Hough acknowledges that personal names are deeply rooted in specific cultural or community contexts. Naming practices differ across societies, often reflecting cultural norms, traditions, historical meanings, or family ties that enhance the symbolic value of names within a particular culture. Hough's definition offers a clear and thoughtful view on personal names, highlighting their linguistic, social, and cultural roles. It stresses the significance of names as symbolic tools used for communication, identity, and the expression of cultural values within various human societies.

Roeper (2020:499) defines personal names as lexical expressions used to identify individual human beings. This definition is broad and does not confine personal names to any particular culture or community. A personal name is basically viewed as a way to identify and differentiate individuals. By describing personal names as lexical expressions, Roeper emphasizes their linguistic aspect. Names are considered part of a language's lexicon or vocabulary, consisting of words or phrases with specific meanings and roles within the linguistic system. Roeper emphasizes that names play a key role in expressing and affirming human identity. Each name is linked to a distinct individual and their heritage. Names help shape individuality and self-identity by reflecting personal traits like gender, ethnicity, or cultural background within social settings.

According to Crystal (2008:393), a personal name is a linguistic label or signifier. The signified refers to the linguistic entities made up of sounds or symbols that carry meaning and represent the bearer of the name, while the signifier is the name itself. Names are therefore viewed as linguistic labels used to identify specific individuals. As a linguist, Crystal sees personal names as referents for people. Crystal highlights the referential role of personal names, showing how they identify and distinguish specific individuals within a linguistic context. Each name is linked to a unique person, enabling precise recognition and reference during social interactions. Names allow people to address, mention, or discuss specific individuals in different communication situations. Crystal's definition is simple and clear, perfectly capturing the core purpose of personal names without adding unnecessary complexity. By defining names as linguistic labels or signifiers, this definition shows that names are language-based tools created specifically for identification and reference. A personal name serves as a unique identifier, an organized combination of words and titles, that distinguishes an individual.

2.2 Previous Studies

Osadabamen (2013) conducted a study titled "Antidote and Succor Potency of Benin and Esan Names as a Cultural Means of Managing Morale in Society." In this research, he examined how indigenous names are consciously used to address morale issues. The study highlights how these names have helped Africans, particularly the Benin and Esan people, overcome challenges in their environment, foster social relationships, and uplift

emotional well-being. The choice of Benin and Esan names was influenced by their cultural and philosophical connotations, as well as the close relationship between both ethnic groups. These indigenous names possess a "succor potency", a soothing or uplifting power that contributes to building morale in African society. This quality enables the names to function as both antidotes and motivators within their cultural context. Hence, the paper explores the fundamental purpose of names, which is to establish identity. It also delves into the meanings of names and the contexts in which their antidote and succor potency become relevant and effective. Additionally, it examines the historical background and classifications of names, as well as the lived experiences that inspired specific names within both ethnic groups. It further highlights how the antidote and succor potency of names are experienced by both the bearer and the caller, especially among sons and daughters of Benin and Esan origin, as long as they retain the interpretations of these names. It also shows how these names help in managing morality through their sound and meaning. The study recommends the preservation and continued use of indigenous Benin and Esan names due to their antidote and succor potency. This will support ethnic identification through individual identity management and contribute to positive development in society. It concluded that, in order to prevent foreign names from replacing our indigenous ones and avoid ethnic identity confusion and the loss of cultural name value, we must promote and uphold our traditional names. These names not only preserve cultural heritage but also offer antidote and succor relief, boosting morale in the bearer.

Another study was conducted on Edo names by Aigbedo (2018), titled "A Socio-Cultural Linguistic Classification of Names in Edo". In this work, he stated that names serve as a medium for expressing the distinct ideology present within a society and also function as a means of identifying the individuals who make up that society. The study explored a sociolinguistic aspect of Edo personal names to gain meaningful insight into the language within its socio-cultural context. It was driven by the aim to better understand the socio-cultural characteristics of the Edo language and how these elements influence the people's worldview through their naming practices. The study used direct interviews with elderly native speakers and consulted secondary published sources (mainly on names and culture) as data collection methods. The collected data, consisting of personal names, were broken down into their component parts and analyzed based on the context in which the names were assigned, interpreting each component in relation to the naming circumstances. The analysis was guided by the sociocultural linguistic approach (Bucholtz & Hall, 2005), emphasizing the principles of emergence and indexicality. The study revealed that names reflect a key part of the semantic structure of the Edo language and have a distinct compositional nature. It was also found that these names are often shaped by the circumstances surrounding the birth of the child. The study also found that certain names reflect the personality or character of an individual, as well as significant events in their life. In African societies, there is generally no restriction on the number of names a person can be given, as naming ceremonies often assign multiple names based on various experiences and representations. Names are also given to some

children based on deceased relatives believed to have reincarnated in them, especially if the family notices traits the child shares with the departed. In some societies, it is customary to name children after their grandparents. These names become the individual's identity and the basis by which they are recognized and described. As the child grows, these traits often become more pronounced.

The study therefore concluded that naming children holds great significance in African society and is often accompanied by ceremonies and rituals. Some names, according to the study, are given to mark the circumstances surrounding a child's birth. For instance, if a child is born during a rainstorm or on a special day such as a celebration (ugie), market day (eki), or farming day (ugbo), the child may be named accordingly. These names commemorate the significance of those events and reflect their meaning for the child and the family.

2.3 Concerns of The Present Study

This project is driven by its potential to shed light on the cultural and social dynamics tied to names within the Edo community, especially those connected to wealth. By examining king-related names, the study seeks to reveal deeper stories related to socioeconomic status, cultural pride, and personal identity. Grasping these links can offer meaningful insight into how names influence social interactions, family bonds, and community unity. Additionally, this research plays a vital role in preserving cultural heritage by documenting and analyzing traditions that may be disappearing in today's

world, helping future generations stay connected to their origins. Although much research has been done on names from broader linguistic and anthropological perspectives, there has been limited focus on the implications of wealth-related naming practices. This study helps fill that gap. Its findings could support policy development and educational efforts aimed at fostering cultural awareness and promoting respect for diversity both within and beyond the Edo community.

CHAPTER THREE

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK: THE SOCIO-CULTURAL LINGUISTICS

APPROACH

3.0 Introduction

The Socio-cultural Linguistics Approach (SCLA), introduced by Mary Bucholtz and Kira Hall in 2005, provides a broad perspective for examining how language connects with social and cultural settings. This approach merges ideas from sociolinguistics, linguistic anthropology, and social theory to examine how language use is influenced by social and cultural contexts. SCLA emphasizes the close connection between language and social identity. It argues that people use language to express and shape their social identities, including aspects like gender, race, ethnicity, class, and age.

The SCLA highlights the need to study language use within particular social and cultural settings. It recognizes that language styles and meanings differ among social groups, communities, and situations. This approach uses a bottom-up method to analyze language practices and how they connect to specific social environments. This approach acknowledges that language is made up of indexical signs, enabling speakers to link certain linguistic forms with particular social meanings. The SCLA explores how differences in language and linguistic habits act as important tools for expressing social identity, belonging to groups, and social judgments. Its focus is descriptive, aiming to

offer a detailed understanding of how language is actually used in real-life contexts. It operates within social interactions and everyday life, highlighting how power, social hierarchies, and ideologies influence language use, moving beyond just analyzing linguistic structures.

The SCLA framework analyzes language use in connection with social identities and the discursive tools people have. It explores how language choices and patterns express and navigate individuals' social roles and beliefs. The SCLA also acknowledges how wider sociocultural factors, like historical developments, community customs, and the creation of power and hierarchy, affect language variation. Methodologically, the SCLA uses both qualitative and quantitative methods. It frequently depends on ethnographic fieldwork, interviews, participant observation, and discourse analysis to study language use within particular social settings. Researchers using the SCLA framework seek to reveal the social meanings, ideologies, and power relations that shape how language is used.

3.1 Theoretical Foundation

The Socio-cultural Linguistics Approach (SCLA), developed by Bucholtz and Hall (2005), is grounded in key principles drawn from sociolinguistics, linguistic anthropology, and social theory. This approach aims to explore the intricate link between language and society, focusing on how language use is influenced by social and cultural contexts. The SCLA framework is guided by core principles that form its theoretical basis.

Firstly, the SCLA acknowledges that identity is socially constructed. Language is more than just a communication tool, it plays a crucial role in shaping and expressing social identity. The way people speak reflects and actively builds aspects of their identity like gender, race, ethnicity, class, and age. By examining language practices, the SCLA seeks to reveal how individuals use language as a tool to build and navigate their social identities.

Secondly, the SCLA highlights the significance of context in language use. It recognizes that language forms and meanings differ depending on the social group, community, or situation. This approach uses a bottom-up method to study language patterns within particular social settings. It examines how language choices are shaped by social norms, community practices, and historical influences. By analyzing language within its social setting, the SCLA seeks to reveal how variations in language carry social and cultural significance.

Third, the SCLA acknowledges the idea of indexicality and linguistic variation. It views language as made up of indexical signs, forms that point to or signal particular social meanings, allowing speakers to link certain ways of speaking with specific social identities or contexts. The SCLA seeks to explore how differences in language use carry social and cultural significance. The SCLA explores how variations in language and speech patterns are used to express social identity, indicate group belonging, and form judgments within a society. It examines how specific language forms gain social

meanings and how speakers use these associations to communicate social identity and context.

The SCLA takes a descriptive approach, aiming to offer a detailed understanding of how language operates in real-life interactions. It goes beyond just analyzing linguistic structures to explore language's role in social interaction and everyday life. This approach examines how power, social hierarchies, and ideologies influence language use. By studying the social and cultural contexts of language, the SCLA aims to reveal the hidden power relations and social beliefs that shape how language is practiced.

The Socio-cultural Linguistics Approach by Bucholtz and Hall (2005) provides a theoretical framework that combines perspectives from sociolinguistics, linguistic anthropology, and social theory. It highlights the social construction of identity, the importance of contextual language variation, indexicality, and language diversity. The approach is descriptive, aiming to explore how language operates within social and cultural settings, while also examining the influence of power, social hierarchies, and ideologies.

3.2 Theoretical Orientation

The SCLA's theoretical orientation is guided by core principles that influence its research focus and methods. It views language as a form of social practice, emphasizing that language use is shaped by social, cultural, and historical factors rather than existing

independently. Language is viewed as a means of performing actions, and through the study of language use, researchers can better understand underlying social and cultural practices. The SCLA adopts a constructivist view of social identity, seeing it as something created and negotiated through language. Social identity is seen as a fluid and continually developing concept that emerges through interactions between individuals and the larger social structures they are part of. It is influenced by various factors such as ethnicity, race, gender, class, age, as well as historical and geographical context.

The SCLA framework also operates on the principle of indexicality, which refers to how linguistic signs point to or reflect social meanings. These meanings are not fixed, they depend on context and can change based on who is speaking, the social situation, and who the audience is. The SCLA is grounded in social theory, drawing from sociological and anthropological perspectives to explore how language practices are shaped by social and cultural influences. It recognizes that language use is influenced by power relations, social structures, as well as historical and political contexts.

The SCLA framework adopts a bottom-up research approach. Instead of applying predetermined theories to linguistic data, it aims to understand language use by observing and analyzing how language functions naturally within social contexts. This approach enables researchers to reveal the social meanings and functions of language practices from the ground up. As a result, the SCLA framework incorporates multiple theoretical perspectives to explore the complex relationship between language, culture, and society.

It views language as a social practice influenced by social, cultural, and historical contexts. The framework acknowledges that social identity is dynamic and constantly evolving. It is also guided by the concept of indexicality and relies on social theory to examine the social and cultural factors that shape how language is used. The bottom-up approach to research, which focuses on observing and analyzing how language is actually used in social contexts, enables a deeper understanding of the social meanings and functions of language practices.

3.3 Theoretical Organization

The Socio-Cultural Linguistics Approach (SCLA) developed by Bucholtz and Hall (2005) provides a broad theoretical lens for examining the link between language, culture, and society. It highlights the deeply social and cultural essence of language, emphasizing how linguistic practices are shaped and influenced by societal and cultural contexts. The SCLA framework draws on sociolinguistics, linguistic anthropology, and sociocultural theory to explore the complex relationship between language, culture, and society. It emphasizes viewing language as a social practice that is deeply integrated within wider social and cultural environments, rather than as something separate.

An essential part of the SCLA framework is understanding that language not only reflects cultural norms and values but also actively shapes and creates cultural identities and social realities. Bucholtz and Hall (2005) contend that language serves as a crucial tool for individuals to negotiate, create, and contest social hierarchies, power dynamics,

and identities. In this framework, language is understood not in isolation but as embedded within particular contexts and social interactions.

The SCLA framework highlights four key domains that influence language and culture: political economy, institutions, communities, and individuals.

1. **Political Economy:** This domain examines how economic, political, and social systems affect language and culture. It explores the influence of power structures on language use and how these structures either reinforce or challenge existing social hierarchies.
2. **Institutions:** This domain looks at how institutions like education, media, and government influence language and cultural practices. It studies how these institutions regulate and standardize language use and the effects this has on social identities and linguistic diversity.
3. **Communities:** This domain explores the language dynamics within particular communities and subcultures. It looks at how language fosters solidarity, defines group boundaries, and helps build shared identities. It also examines the social and cultural aspects of language variation and change in these communities.
4. **Individuals:** This domain focuses on the personal experiences and agency of people within the wider socio-cultural setting. It looks at how individuals' language use is shaped by their social identities, such as gender, ethnicity, and

sexuality, and how they actively manage and engage with linguistic and cultural practices.

The SCLA framework highlights the complex connections between language, culture, and society, showing how language both influences and is influenced by social interactions, power relations, and cultural identities. By examining the links between language, culture, and society, the SCLA framework offers a thorough approach to understanding the intricate and diverse aspects of language and culture.

3.4 Theoretical Applications

The theoretical applications of the SCLA framework focus on analyzing how language use is shaped by social factors and, in turn, how linguistic practices influence social behavior across different contexts. A central aspect of this framework is its use in exploring how language contributes to the construction of social identity. In the SCLA framework, social identity is seen as fluid and shaped by context, rather than fixed. It is continuously negotiated through interactions between individuals and the social structures they engage with. A key focus of this approach is understanding how people use language to build, express, and manage their social identities. Researchers apply methods like discourse analysis, ethnography, and sociolinguistic interviews to investigate how social categories such as gender, race, ethnicity, and sexuality are formed, negotiated, and reshaped across various social contexts.

Another theoretical application of the SCLA framework is the analysis of indexicality, which refers to how language use signals or reflects the social context in which it occurs, pointing beyond the words themselves to social meanings and associations. The concept of indexicality is used to examine how language generates social meaning and how linguistic practices reinforce social structures, power dynamics, and cultural norms. As such, SCLA research may adopt an indexical approach to investigate how specific language use conveys and is tied to social meanings.

The SCLA framework is also theoretically significant in analyzing language and power. It views language not as a neutral tool, but as something deeply intertwined with societal structures, institutions, and power dynamics. SCLA offers a lens through which researchers can understand how language use contributes to the maintenance of social inequality, dominance, and resistance. It allows for the examination of how linguistic practices may uphold, question, or reshape existing power structures and drive social change.

Lastly, the SCLA framework is also useful for studying language within the context of globalization. As languages and cultures become increasingly interconnected, SCLA helps explore how global influences are transforming language use and contributing to the creation of new social identities, categories, and cultural expressions. In this regard, SCLA examines how cultural exchange, interaction across different communities, and the

blending of traditions (hybridity) influence language use, while also analyzing how these evolving linguistic practices contribute to shaping global cultural dynamics.

The theoretical applications of the SCLA framework provide a lens through which to examine how language practices shape and reflect social identities, cultural norms, power dynamics, and global interactions. As an interdisciplinary framework, SCLA provides diverse theoretical perspectives and research methods to deepen the understanding of the complex relationships between language, culture, and society.

3.5 Theoretical Applications to the Study of Personal Names

The Socio-Cultural Linguistics Approach (SCLA) framework by Bucholtz and Hall (2005) can be utilized to study personal names, offering deeper insight into how names are shaped and used within social and cultural contexts. Personal names play a vital role in social identity, both reflecting and influencing cultural practices, power relations, and individual agency. The SCLA framework provides a theoretical lens to explore the complexities of personal names within their socio-cultural settings.

A key element of the SCLA framework related to the study of personal names is its recognition that names are not neutral or random but carry significant social and cultural meanings. Personal names play a central role in constructing both individual and group identities. Names frequently embody cultural customs, family ties, social connections, and power relations. The SCLA framework urges researchers to examine the social and

cultural influences behind choosing names, changing them, and the meanings attached to specific names.

Another element of the SCLA framework relevant to studying personal names is its focus on language variation and change within communities. Personal names can differ linguistically across various communities, ethnic groups, or cultures. The framework offers a way to examine how language variation connects to social identity, power dynamics, and cultural norms within specific communities. For instance, choosing to use an anglicized or ethnic name can reflect the negotiation of cultural identity or processes of assimilation within that community.

Moreover, the SCLA framework's focus on the influence of institutions in shaping language and culture is relevant to the study of personal names. Institutions like government bodies, schools, and the media can regulate and standardize the use of personal names through their policies and practices. This allows researchers to examine how institutions impact the selection of personal names, as they may shape individuals' name choices and influence how certain names are perceived and accepted in society. The framework also highlights how institutional practices can contribute to the normalization of some names while potentially causing linguistic discrimination against others.

Additionally, the SCLA framework emphasizes the active role of individuals within sociocultural settings. It acknowledges that people consciously negotiate and manage

their linguistic and cultural practices, including the choices they make regarding personal names. Using this perspective, researchers can investigate the reasons behind changing or adopting names, as well as how individuals use their names to express or navigate their identities within wider social and cultural contexts.

In studying personal names, the SCLA framework offers a thorough theoretical basis for examining the social and cultural aspects of choosing names, how they are used, and the meanings they carry. By exploring the social and cultural settings surrounding personal names, researchers can better understand how names both mirror and influence individual identities, power relations, and cultural customs.

CHAPTER FOUR

DATA ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

4.0 Introduction

This chapter presents the data analysis and discussion of findings for the study on the semantic implicatures of Edo personal names containing the element "Oba". The chapter begins with a general analysis of the data, followed by thematic subsections that reflect the key areas of semantic focus namely: Sovereignty, Wealth, Adulation, and Protection. Each subsection explores how names with Oba embody these themes through their literal meanings and deeper cultural interpretations. The chapter concludes with a discussion of the overall findings, revealing the cultural values and ideologies embedded in Edo naming practices.

4.1 Analysis

This section offers an overview of the names analyzed in the study and introduces the thematic breakdown of their semantic implications. The analysis is organized into four subsections:

4.1.1 Sovereignty

4.1.2 Wealth;

4.1.3 Adulation

4.1.4 Protection

4.1.1 The Implicature Of Sovereignty

Sovereignty refers to the supreme authority or power held by a ruler or governing body. In the context of Edo personal names containing "Oba," sovereignty signifies the representation of leadership, kingship, and the ultimate control or dominion over people and land. These names carry implications of legitimacy, authority, and respect accorded to those who hold or embody royal power within the society. The data in (1) below shows the analysis of the Edo name with the theme Sovereignty.

1.a Oba nya otọ (Obayanto)

King own- pst-sl world

The king owns the world.

In (1a), the phrase "Ọba nya ọtọ" translates to "The king owns the world." The key semantic element here is the noun "oto" (world). Within the Edo cultural worldview, the "world" is not merely a physical space but symbolizes totality, dominion, and ultimate authority. By stating that the king owns the world, the name "Obayanto" encodes a strong implicature of sovereignty. Ownership of the world implies not just territorial control, but unquestionable supremacy, divine authority, and unmatched influence. It suggests that the king's rule extends beyond local or communal bounds to a global or even cosmic scale.

Thus, in this context, the name Obayanto reflects how Edo naming practices use the concept of "world" to linguistically construct and project royal power, emphasizing the king's supreme position in the sociopolitical and spiritual hierarchy. Consider the following data below;

1.b Ọba mwẹn ẹnтин (Obamwentin)

King is-prs-sl power

The king has power.

1.c Ọba zẹ agbọn (Obazagbon)

King choose-pst-sl world

The king has chosen the world.

1.d Ohan Ọba (Ohonba)

Fear-prs-sl King

Fear of the king.

1.e Ẹgbẹe Ọba mwẹẹ uyi (Egbobamwonyi)

Family king have-prs-sl prestige/honour

The king's family has pride/glory

The above data in (1b - 1e) is used to show how sovereignty is implied in Edo personal names with Entin "power", Agbon "world", Ohon "fear", and Uyi "prestige".

4.1.2 The Implicature Of Wealth

Another theme found in the concept of Oba (king) is "wealth". Within the sociocultural context of the Edo people, the king is traditionally viewed as the ultimate symbol of abundance, prosperity, and economic power. Wealth, in this sense, is not limited to material riches but includes status, influence, and divine favour. The semantic implicature of wealth in Edo names manifests through

lexical items that denote riches, blessings, or the ability to provide. When paired with Oba, these names suggest that wealth either originates from the king, is bestowed by the king, or is inherently tied to his divine rule. This implicature reflects the cultural perception that the king is both a political leader and a spiritual custodian of prosperity. Naming a child with such a structure not only reflects reverence for the monarchy but also a desire to associate the bearer with fortune, dignity, and high social value. The data below shows the analysis of Edo names with the theme Wealth;

2.a Oba ze uwa (Obazuwa)

King give-pst-sl wealth

Got wealth from the king

In the name Obazuwa, the verb “ze” meaning "gave", and the noun “uwa”, meaning "wealth", work together to express a strong semantic implicature of wealth as something that is bestowed by royal authority. The king (Oba) is positioned as the source and distributor of wealth, reinforcing his role not just as a political leader but as a provider and benefactor in the spiritual and economic life of the community.

Here, wealth goes beyond financial prosperity; it can also represent blessings, success, fertility, and social upliftment. By receiving wealth from the Oba, the name suggests that the bearer or the family has been favoured or elevated through royal or divine intervention. This implicature draws on Edo cultural beliefs, where the king is seen as a channel through which ancestral or divine favour flows, and associating a name with such an act implies that the bearer is marked by abundance. Thus, “Obazuwa” does not simply indicate past action but constructs an identity rooted in grace, inheritance, and access to prosperity through royal connection. Consider the following data below;

2.b Efe Oba ota (Efobasota)

Wealth king-prs-sl last long

Gift/wealth given by the king lasts long.

2.c Osa yi uwa gi Oba (Osayuwagioba)

God have-prs-sl wealth to king

God has brought wealth to the king.

2.d Oba yi uwa rre (Obayuarre)

King have-prs-sl wealth come/arrive

The king has brought wealth.

The data presented in (2b–2e) illustrates how the concept of wealth is conveyed in Edo personal names through the use of terms like Efe "wealth", and Osa "God"

4.1.3 The Implicature Of Adulation

In Edo culture, adulation refers to the act of showing deep admiration, praise, or reverence, often directed toward figures of authority, particularly the king (Oba). When adulation is embedded in personal names, it reflects the cultural norm of honoring and glorifying the Oba, reinforcing his elevated status in society. Names that express praise or admiration for the king do more than state reverence they construct and perpetuate the social ideology that the king is worthy of worship-like respect. Let's consider the data below in 3.a;

3.a Oba kpeḗ (Obakpee)

King-prs-sl live long

May the king live long.

In the example above, the phrase “May the king live long” is more than just a blessing, it is a form of deep reverence and admiration. The desire for the Oba’s long life reflects how highly he is valued in Edo society. It shows that the speaker not only respects the king but sees his continued existence as essential for social order and well-being.

The implicature of adulation lies in the fact that such a name elevates the king’s importance to the point where his longevity becomes a communal wish. It praises the Oba by positioning him as someone whose life is cherished and whose presence is vital. Thus, the phrase “live long” in the name functions as a linguistic act of glorification. It subtly conveys loyalty, honor, and emotional attachment to the king’s reign. By naming a child "Obakpee", parents express their admiration and publicly align with the cultural value of respecting the Oba. Consider the following data below;

3.b Ọba re uyi (Obaruyi)

King is-prs-sl prestige/honour

The king is glorious.

3.c Ọba ne ogie (Obanogie)

King is-prs-sl Chief

The king is prominent.

3.d Oba mwẹẹ uyi (Obamwonyi)

King have-prs-sl prestige/honour

The king has glory.

The data presented above in (3.b - 3.d) shows how the concept of adulation can be conveyed in Edo personal names through the use of terms like Uyi "prestige" and Ogie "chief".

4.1.4 The Implicature Of Protection

In the Edo naming system, certain personal names reflect the desire for divine, ancestral, or royal protection. These names are more than mere identifiers; they carry deep cultural meanings rooted in the people's worldview and belief systems. Protection in this context often implies security, preservation from harm, and guidance, either from the Oba (King), deities, or ancestral forces.

Names that carry the semantic element of protection typically express a plea, gratitude, or acknowledgement of a protective force. Such names imply that the bearer is under divine or royal protection and by extension, no harm can come to

them. This reveals a societal belief in the power of names to influence destiny, and the importance placed on protection as a vital aspect of life.

Through this, the names serve not just as identity markers but also as protective charms, constantly spoken into existence. Let's consider the data below in 4.a;

4.a Idu sinmwin ọba (Idusinmwinoba)

Edo people protect-prs-sl king

The king is protected by the Bini's

In the name Idusinmwinoba, which translates to “The king is protected by the Binis,” the implicature of protection is expressed through the subject “Idu” (the Edo/Bini people) and the verb “sinmwin” (to protect). This construction does not merely describe an action but reflects a deeper cultural value embedded in Edo society.

The presence of “Idu” (Bini people) in the name shows a collective responsibility and allegiance to the king. In this context, the people themselves are positioned as protectors of the monarchy, suggesting that protection is not only expected from the king to his subjects but also reciprocated by the people.

This name implies a mutual duty of care, where the king's power is legitimized and safeguarded by the loyalty of his people. It reflects how communal support and allegiance are core elements of the monarchy's survival. The Bini people's identity becomes inherently linked to the protection and preservation of their sovereign.

Therefore, the use of "Idu" (Bini) in the name functions indexically, pointing to a broader ideology of protection, loyalty, and unity between the king and his people, a vital aspect of sociopolitical life in Edo culture. Consider the following data below;

4.b Osa gi õba t̃o (Osagiobato)

God is-prs-sl king live long

God is the king's protector

4.c Igbinna õba (Igbinnoba)

Fight-prs-sl king

One who took refuge from the king

4.d Oba iwi (Obaiwi)

King-prs-sl secure

The king's life is secured and protected.

The data presented above (4.b -4.d) shows how the concept of protection can be conveyed in Edo personal names through the use of terms like Osa "God", Igbinna "fight" and Iwi "secure".

4.2 Discussion of Findings

This section presents the findings from the semantic analysis of Edo personal names containing the element "Oba" (king). The analysis is divided into four paragraphs, corresponding to the four themes explored in the previous section: Sovereignty, Wealth, Adulation, and Protection. Each paragraph discusses how the semantic implicature related to each theme is constructed in the names whether through single words or full phrases.

In the analysis of Edo personal names under the theme of sovereignty, it was found that both single words and phrases can signal sovereign power when associated with Oba (king). For example, in the name Ohonba, Ohan is a single

word which means "fear", while in the name Obamwentin, mwen entin is a phrase meaning "to have power".

The theme of wealth shows that the king is often positioned as a source of prosperity. In the name Obazuwa, the noun uwa "wealth" is a single word, while in the name Obayuwarre, yi uwa rre is a phrase meaning "wealth have come". These words can both signal wealth when associated with Oba (king).

Names under the theme of adulation often include expressions of reverence and praise. For example, in the name Obaruyi, uyi is a single word which means "prestige", while in the name Obakpee, kpee is a phrase which means "live long". These words can both signal adulation when associated with Oba.

Names reflecting the theme of protection often portray the king as a guardian or one who deserves safeguarding. In the name Idusinmwinoba, the phrase sinmwin oba means "protect king". While in the name Igbinnoba, Iginna is a single word which means "fight". These words can both signal protection when associated with Oba.

CHAPTER FIVE

FINDINGS AND CONCLUSION

5.1 Summary of the Study

In this study, Chapter One introduces the concept of personal names as reflections of social, cultural, and familial backgrounds, highlighting their role in communicating community values and beliefs. It focuses specifically on Edo personal names that incorporate the word "Oba," meaning "king," which conveys themes of Sovereignty, Adulation, Protection, and Wealth. The chapter also provides background information on the Edo language and its historical significance within the Benin Kingdom, noting the regions where Edo is predominantly spoken. The chapter also laid out the purpose of the study and justified its relevance by explaining the structure and flow of the research through five main chapters.

Chapter Two reviewed existing literature and theoretical perspectives relevant to the study. It was divided into three main sections: the conceptual review, the review of related studies, and the concerns of the present study.

The conceptual review discussed key linguistic concepts essential to understanding this research. It began with language, emphasizing its role as a

uniquely human tool for communication, identity formation, and social cohesion, as described by scholars such as Okolo & Ezikeojiaku (1999), Finegan (2004), and Uwajeh (2010). Morphology was explored next, focusing on how words are formed and structured through meaningful units called morphemes, drawing on perspectives from Ndimele (1999), Haspelmath & Sims (2002), and others. The section also examined morpho-semantics, which studies how morphological structures influence meaning, highlighting insights from Marantz (2010), Ackerman & Stump (2014), and Lieber (2010). Finally, personal names were reviewed, with scholars like Algeo (1985), Hough (2016), and Crystal (2008) emphasizing that names are more than identifiers, they are linguistic, social, and cultural symbols that reflect identity, heritage, and societal values.

The review of related studies explored existing research on naming practices and their semantic or cultural implications. It showed that while many studies have addressed the linguistic and anthropological aspects of names, few have focused on the semantic implicatures of Edo personal names, especially those related to the title Oba (King).

The final section, concerns of the present study, identified the cultural and social motivations behind this research. It stressed that Edo names connected to wealth and kingship reflect deeper values of prestige, status, and cultural pride.

The study aims to preserve and analyze these naming traditions, highlighting their importance in maintaining cultural heritage and understanding community identity.

Overall, Chapter Two established the theoretical and conceptual foundation for analyzing the semantic implicatures of Edo personal names containing “Oba”, linking linguistic form to cultural meaning.

Chapter Three discussed the Socio-Cultural Linguistics Approach (SCLA) developed by Bucholtz and Hall (2005) as the theoretical framework for the study. The SCLA explains the relationship between language, culture, and society, emphasizing that language is not only a means of communication but also a tool for constructing and expressing social identity.

The framework highlights that identity is socially constructed and context-dependent, shaped through interaction and influenced by cultural and institutional factors. It also stresses the concept of indexicality, which shows how language reflects social meanings, relationships, and power dynamics within a community.

Furthermore, the SCLA views language as a social practice influenced by institutions, communities, and individuals. It provides a lens for analyzing how language both reflects and maintains social structures, power relations, and cultural norms, while also serving as a means of resistance and change. The

approach extends to globalization, examining how cultural exchange and hybrid identities affect language use and identity formation across societies.

The framework also applies to the study of personal names, recognizing that names are socially meaningful and connected to cultural traditions, family ties, and identity negotiation. It allows researchers to explore how naming practices reflect cultural belonging, institutional influence, and personal agency within specific sociocultural contexts.

In essence, this chapter established the SCLA as a comprehensive and flexible framework for understanding how language, culture, and identity interact, providing the theoretical foundation for analyzing the sociocultural significance of personal names in this study.

Chapter Four analyzed and discussed the semantic implicatures of Edo personal names containing the element “Oba” (king). The findings were organized around four major thematic areas ; Sovereignty, Wealth, Adulation, and Protection, each reflecting how language and culture intertwine in Edo naming traditions to express reverence for kingship and social values.

Under the theme of Sovereignty, names associated with Oba signify authority, legitimacy, and divine rulership. Examples such as Obayanto (“the king owns the

world”) and Obamwentin (“the king has power”) express total dominance, leadership, and respect for the king’s supreme role in both political and spiritual hierarchies. Words like oto (world), entin (power), ohan (fear), and uyi (honour) encode royal strength and the acknowledgment of the king’s ultimate control over land and people.

The theme of Wealth reflects the king as a source of prosperity and blessing. In Edo culture, wealth symbolizes not only material riches but also divine favor, fertility, and success. Names like Obazuwa (“got wealth from the king”) and Obayuwarre (“the king has brought wealth”) highlight the belief that abundance flows from royal or divine authority. Lexical items such as uwa (wealth) and efe (gift/wealth) portray the king as both benefactor and custodian of the community’s well-being.

Under the theme of Adulation, Edo names express praise, loyalty, and deep admiration for the Oba. Names such as Obakpee (“may the king live long”) and Obaruyi (“the king is glorious”) convey the people’s reverence and emotional attachment to the monarch. Through words like uyi (honour) and kpee (live long), the names linguistically reinforce the cultural ideology that the Oba’s life and reign are sacred and essential to social harmony.

The theme of Protection reveals how Edo names function as cultural symbols of safety, unity, and divine guardianship. Names like Idusinmwinoba (“the king is protected by the Binis”) and Osagiobato (“God is the king’s protector”) emphasize mutual protection between the king and his people. Elements like sinmwin (protect) and osa (God) reflect faith in both spiritual and communal defense, portraying the Oba as both a protector and one worthy of protection.

The discussion of findings shows that names containing Oba are not arbitrary; they carry layered meanings that reflect power, wealth, respect, and safety. Through these names, the Edo people linguistically encode their worldview, one that honors kingship, celebrates prosperity, and values loyalty and protection. The study demonstrates that Edo naming practices serve as a linguistic and cultural medium through which identity, reverence, and social values are preserved and expressed.

5.2 Summary of Findings

This study examined the semantic implicatures of Edo personal names containing the element Oba (king), revealing how these names embody deep cultural meanings and values within Edo society. The findings show that Edo

personal names are not arbitrary but serve as linguistic expressions of identity, belief, and reverence for the monarchy.

From the analysis, four major themes emerged; Sovereignty, Wealth, Adulation, and Protection, each reflecting distinct yet interconnected aspects of Edo sociocultural life.

- i. Under the theme of Sovereignty, names containing Oba were found to express authority, leadership, and divine kingship. Such names reflect the central role of the king as both political and spiritual head, embodying power and legitimacy
- ii. The theme of Wealth revealed that the king is perceived as the ultimate source and distributor of prosperity. Names under this category portray Oba as a benefactor whose blessings bring abundance, success, and social elevation.
- iii. The theme of Adulation demonstrated how Edo personal names function as acts of praise and reverence. These names express admiration for the king, acknowledging his greatness, glory, and importance to communal harmony and continuity.
- iv. Lastly, the theme of Protection emphasized the belief in the king as both a guardian and one who deserves safeguarding. Names in this category

highlight mutual loyalty between the Oba and his people, symbolizing security, divine favor, and collective responsibility.

Overall, the findings affirm that Edo personal names containing Oba carry rich semantic depth that transcends mere identification. They encode cultural ideologies, reinforce social hierarchies, and preserve the reverence accorded to the monarchy within Edo society.

5.3 Conclusion

This study set out to examine the semantic implicatures of Edo personal names containing the element “Oba”, exploring how such names reflect and preserve the cultural values, identity, and worldview of the Edo people. Drawing upon the Socio-Cultural Linguistics Approach (SCLA), the research revealed that language, culture, and identity are deeply interconnected within Edo naming practices. Through the analysis of names linked to kingship, the study uncovered how Edo people use names as a linguistic and cultural medium to express reverence, pride, and their relationship with authority and spirituality.

The findings demonstrate that personal names in Edo society transcend mere identification; they are powerful carriers of social meaning and collective memory. Names containing Oba embody four major thematic implicatures; Sovereignty,

Wealth, Adulation, and Protection, each representing an essential aspect of Edo values and beliefs. Under the theme of Sovereignty, names express authority and divine rulership; under Wealth, they project prosperity and blessings associated with royal favour; under Adulation, they convey loyalty, respect, and glorification of the king; and under Protection, they symbolize divine or communal safeguarding linked to the monarchy.

By applying the Socio-Cultural Linguistics framework, the study showed that Edo names are not arbitrary linguistic constructions but social actions that communicate identity, allegiance, and worldview. They serve as both reflections of the people's history and instruments that reinforce cultural continuity. Thus, the Edo naming system operates as a living archive, preserving values of unity, reverence, and power through language.

In essence, this research concludes that Edo personal names containing "Oba" encapsulate the community's socio-political structure, religious beliefs, and moral ideals, offering a window into how language shapes and sustains culture. Beyond their linguistic beauty, these names remain testimonies of a people's pride in their heritage, their loyalty to the throne, and their deep-rooted connection to identity and tradition.

The study ultimately reaffirms that language, especially through naming, is not only a means of communication but also a vessel of history, belief, and belonging. The Edo people's enduring reverence for Oba reflects a timeless truth: that names are more than words, they are voices of culture, echoes of legacy, and symbols of collective identity.

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APPENDIX

OBA WORD INITIAL WORD LIST

Ọbazee - The king is helpful

Ọbaretin - The king is strength

Ọbazogie - The king brings prosperity

Ọbasuyi - The king is (worth) glorious

Ọbareṅṅen - The king knows all

Ọbadagbonyi - The king upholds the world

Ọbasohan - The king is worthy to be feared

Ọbagueḍo - The king is the hands of the Bini's

Ọbaseki - The king arrives at the market

Ọbabueki - The king established the market for all the people

Ọbadiaru - May it be well with the king in all his undertaken

Ọbadolo - The king is the peace maker

Ọbameḍo - The pride of the Bini's is the king

Ọbarisiagbon - The king is the source of the world

Ọbasogie - The king is worth a prominent chief

Ọbaikponmwene - The king has nobody to thank except God

Ọbagie - The king sent

Ọbakhavbaye - The king's saying is best to the world

Obahiagbon - The King does not trouble his people but sent to maintain the world.

OBA WORD MEDIAL WORD LIST

- Ohọbamu - The fear of the king is dreadful
- Osagiọbaghadiaye - God has sent the king to the world
- Osayọbase - God has created the king well
- Aighọbahi - No one prays to be like the king
- Aikhiọbare - One shouldn't be far from the king
- Ẹguọbadia - One who stayed with the king
- Aiguọbarueghian - Nobody prays to be the king's lasts long
- Aiguọbataẹkpẹn - No one strives with the king's age
- Odọbaiwu - The king's way remain open to all

QBA WORD FINAL WORD LIST

- Oviẹnriọba - A slave doesn't become king
- Ainwasọba - You are not bigger than than the king
- Ẹkiọba - The king's market
- Ọbaredo - The king is Ẹdo
- Aiwẹnriọba - No one can change the king
- Agbọnmọba - The world has blessed the king
- Oyairuọba - The king never suffers
- Ogiesọba - The king is greater than the community head
- Ẹdọba - The day of the king.
- Ẹdenagọba - The time of serving the king is never wasted