

**A SEMIOTIC ANALYSIS OF NAMES ASSOCIATED WITH GOD IN IGBO
LANGUAGE**

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FACULTY OF ARTS

UNIVERSITY OF BENIN, BENIN CITY,

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DEDICATION

This work is dedicated to God Almighty and to my wonderful parents, my biggest support system

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

To God Almighty, Sustainer of human life and keeper of my soul. I want to thank you for seeing me through this journey. It can only be you

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ABSTRACT

This research titled "Semiotic analysis of names associated with God in Igbo language" studied how Igbo God- names are more than just labels for the divine. These names also have deep cultural, religious, and social meanings. The goal was to learn what they mean, what forms they take, their purpose in Igbo culture, and how they have changed. The work looked at names that tell about God's character, what God does, and God's relationship with people. It shows how they link old Traditional customs with today's Christian ways. Exactly 120 names were gathered from talks with people, church records, naming events, social media, songs, journals, everyday talk and stories passed down using one on one interviews and voice recordings. These names were studied using ideas about signs from Saussure, Peirce, Barthes, and Eco. The study found that Igbo God-names act as signs of belief, records of what happened to people and the community, and ways to pass values down. For instance, Chukwuemeka (God has done great deeds) shows thankfulness and Chidinma (God is good) shows faith in God's character. They also show how old Igbo beliefs still exist in today's Christianity. The work suggested that more of these names should be written down and kept safe because they matter to the Igbo language, culture, and spirit. The research recommended that more of these names should be documented and preserved because they are an important part of the Igbo language, culture, and spirituality. In summary, the study showed that Igbo names for God are living signs that join together language, faith, and identity in a powerful way.

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.0. Background to the Study

Language serves not only as a tool for communication but also as a channel through which cultures, perspectives, and belief systems are passed on. In African societies, especially among the Igbo people of southeastern Nigeria, language is very important in how spirituality and the divine are expressed. A key part of this is the use of names given to God. These names are not random; They are full of cultural, cosmological and religious meanings, each having a strong symbolic value.

This study aims to do a semiotic analysis of the names connected to God in the Igbo language. It will explore their linguistic structures, cultural backgrounds, and symbolic meanings. This study will be working on a total of 120 names which are divided into eight themes.

The concept of God's names in Igbo cosmology is complex, encompassing a supreme creator and various deities with specific roles and attributes. "Chukwu" or "Chineke" is the ultimate creator, while "Ala" is the earth goddess, and "Amadioha" is the god of thunder.

The Igbo language, like many African languages, has many cultural expressions and symbolic meanings, especially in its religious and spiritual vocabulary. Among the most important of these are the different names for God (Chukwu/Chi). Each name has a deep cultural and theological meaning. These names aren't just words; they're signs that carry many layers of meaning; and they show the Igbo people's worldview, their understanding of the universe, and their system of values.

The concept of Chi in Igbo worldview is a personalized spiritual being, a guardian spirit or destiny assigned to an individual by "Chukwu" God at birth although this is largely disputed in modern day and Chi and Chukwu are now attributed as the same spiritual being.

1.1. The Language Situation

Igbo is a main language in Nigeria, part of the Niger-Congo group. It does more than just let people talk to each other; it carries the Igbo people's identity, culture, and beliefs.

You can hear Igbo spoken mostly in five states in Southeastern Nigeria Abia, Anambra, Ebonyi, Enugu, and Imo plus parts of Delta, Rivers, Benue, Kogi, and Cross River. About 38–40 million people speak it, which makes it one of the biggest languages in Africa.

There are lots of different versions of Igbo; some say there are over 36–100, like Owerri, Ngwa, Nsukka, Enuani, Afikpo, and Arochukwu. Some of these are so different that people who speak one might not completely understand another. To make it easier for

everyone to communicate, there's a standard version called Igbo Izugbe that's used in schools, in the news, and in official settings. This is commonly known as central Igbo.

The main Igbo-speaking states have big populations: Imo (around 5.5 million), Abia (around 3.7 million), Ebonyi (around 2.9 million), Enugu (around 4.7 million), and Anambra (around 5.6 million). Igbo is the main language in all of these places.

Even though Igbo is lively, it's up against some problems. English and Nigerian Pidgin are more common in cities, which means that younger people aren't learning to speak Igbo as well. Some versions of the language are also in danger of disappearing because people are moving around more and cultures are changing.

To keep Igbo alive, people are teaching it in schools, using it in WAEC and NECO exams, and promoting it through cultural events, Nollywood movies, music, and online platforms.

So, Igbo is a really important language with lots of speakers and deep cultural roots. To keep it around, we need to keep teaching it at home and in schools, promote the culture, and find interesting ways to use the internet to make sure it stays alive for kids in the future.

In this project work, I will be working with Central Igbo and not a dialect.

1.2. Statement of the Problem

Although there are many rich and varied names for God in the Igbo language, not much academic work has been done on these names from a semiotic point of view. Most studies focus on theological or cultural aspects, often missing the semiotic structures that control how these names communicate meaning. There is a need to investigate how these names work within the Igbo understanding of the cosmos and within the language itself, as well as unveil the deep meaning that these names of God in Igbo language convey beyond their basic forms. This study aims to address this by carefully examining the signs, symbols, and meanings contained in the names of God in Igbo culture and language.

1.3. Aim and Objectives of the Study

The aim is to show the semiotic analysis of names of associated with God in Igbo language.

- i. To show and analyze different names connected to God in the Igbo language.
- ii. To study the signs and symbols in these names using semiotic theory.
- iii. To look at the cultural, religious, and philosophical meaning of these names.
- iv. To see how these names show the Igbo cosmological beliefs, worldview and spiritual understanding.

1.4. Methodology

This study adopts a qualitative approach in both data collection and analysis to explore the names of God in the Igbo language and their semiotic meanings.

1.4.1 Data Collection

Data were collected through personal interactions with elders, traditional leaders, pastors, and language experts who possess deep knowledge of Igbo culture and religion.

Liturgical materials, folklore, proverbs, songs, and religious writings with connotations of God's names were also examined. For instance, Isi Azu ("Head of Fish") a collection of short stories, proverbs, and poems was one of the sources used.

The study further reviewed existing literature on the theological and cultural meanings of God's names and Igbo naming practices. Academic works such as Anthony Uzochukwu's *What is in a Name* and Anyabuik Cyril's *Igbo Worldview and the Translation of Igbo Names* were also consulted. Additionally, literary texts like Chinua Achebe's *Things Fall Apart* provided cultural context.

1.4.2 Data Analysis

The analysis involved identifying and sorting over one hundred names of God in Igbo. These names were examined semiotically using theories by Charles Peirce and Ferdinand de Saussure. The cultural meanings and conversations surrounding these names were also explored to reveal their symbolic and communicative functions in Igbo society.

1.5. Scope of the Study

This study focuses on the names of God used in the Igbo language. It will study both the well-known and the less common names of God, as they appear in oral stories, liturgical texts, proverbs, songs, and cultural practices. It won't try to give a complete theological explanation but will instead focus on the semiotic aspects of the names, although some theological implications will be mentioned.

1.6 Significance of the Study

This study adds to the fields of African linguistics, semiotics, and religious studies by giving new ideas about how language and culture come together to represent the divine. This will improve our understanding of how language carries cultural and religious values. For those who study African religions, it gives ideas on how Igbo people think about God through name, the deep meanings these names convey, the depth of relationship between God and Igbo people that give these names and the incidences that give rise naming God is these ways. It will also help to keep and record important parts of Igbo spirituality and improve the academic understanding of African symbolic systems.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.0 Introduction

This chapter offers a detailed examination of existing academic literature and discussions central to the present study. It is structured in three sections. First, the conceptual section defines the core terms and outlines theoretical models that guide the analysis of the names of God in Igbo language. Second, the section reviewing prior research, examines work done in related fields, including Igbo religious linguistics, semiotics, and onomastics (the study of names). Finally, the core interests of this investigation are presented, clarifying the specific research areas that this thesis seeks to address.

2.1 Conceptual Review

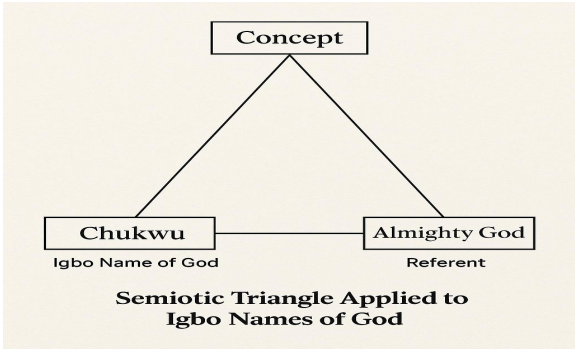
2.1.1 Semiotics and the Study of Meaning

Semiotics, which investigates signs and symbols within communication, supplies a valuable framework for understanding how language communicates profound cultural and spiritual meanings. Ferdinand de Saussure (1916/1983) proposed a two-part model of the sign, consisting of the signifier (the form the sign takes) and the signified (the concept it represents). Later, Charles Sanders Peirce broadened this into a three-part model represent amen, object, and interpretant allowing for a deeper and more interpretive understanding of signs (Chandler, 2017).

Ferdinand de Saussure describes every sign as having two parts: the signifier (the form what we hear or see) and the signified (the concept what we understand it to mean). For example, when an Igbo person says Chineke, the signifier is the sound of the word, while the signified is the concept of a Creator-God. Charles Sanders Peirce added that signs could take the form of icons (things that resemble what they stand for), indices (signs that point to something), or symbols (signs based on cultural agreement). Most divine names in Igbo function as symbols, since their meanings are shaped by collective belief and spiritual worldview.

Semiotics, therefore, allows us to see names not just as labels, but as cultural expressions as living signs that carry the weight of history, faith, and identity.

Semiotic theory aids in revealing how Igbo names for God function not simply as linguistic markers, but as symbols filled with metaphysical, theological, and cosmological meaning. Names such as /Chukwu/, /Chi-ukwu/, or /Eze Chukwuoke/ are deeply rooted in cultural codes, myths, and values.



PICTURE 1

2.1.2 The Concept of Naming in Igbo Cosmology

The Oxford Advanced Learners dictionary defines name as, “a word or words by which a person, an animal, a place or thing is known or spoken to. It went further and gave other meanings as, a reputation (especially a good one), a famous person, and identification tag of somebody or something and to state something exactly; to specify something among other interpretations. The study of names is called onomastics or onomatology: this can be place names (toponyms) or personal names (anthroponyms).

In Igbo society, naming is far from a random act. It is one that carries spiritual, philosophical, and at times, prophetic weight (Uzochukwu, 2015). Igbo names often serve as descriptions, metaphors, and summaries of histories, beliefs, and expectations. When applied to the divine, these roles are amplified noticeably. For example, Omeokachie (“He who does what pleases Him”) or Chineke (“The God who creates”) reflect basic theological traits of God within the Igbo worldview.

Names in Africa, as well as Nigeria, constitute an integral part of culture.

When a child is born, one of the crucial roles of the father (in most cases) or grandfather (in some Nigeria culture) is the provision of a suitable name for the child.

According to Esimaje & Ojukwu (2019) in many cultures, the significance of naming is shown in its celebration. A name is hardly given arbitrarily. There is always a reason why a parent chooses one name over and above other possible names. Therefore, a name is not

just a label of identity, and in contradiction to the popular rhetorical question “what’s in a name?” there is a lot in African names, especially those that have divine connotations. They are in dissonance with the assertion of Shakespeare’s Juliet that a rose by any other name would smell as sweet.

The Interdisciplinary journal of African and Asian Studies stated that The Igbo-African concept of names goes beyond a tag of identification. Ehusani acknowledging the above view quoted Charles Nyamiti thus: “To an African, however, a name means much more than an identification mark, and serves more purposes than a baggage tag”⁴. He was also quick to assert: 'The African name is an important vehicle of cultural identity by virtue of their rich religious, anthropological and social content.

2.1.3 Names as Semiotic Resources

Names act as essential semiotic resources, as they hold not just lexical definitions, but a wealth of cultural, historical, and religious importance. Halliday’s (1978) systemic functional linguistics suggests that language works in three ways: ideationally (representing experience), interpersonally (enacting relationships), and textually (organizing discourse). Within this framework, Igbo names for God fulfill all three functions. They represent God’s qualities, mediate the connection between people and the divine, and help build a narrative around Igbo religious and cultural practice.

2.2 Previous Studies

2.2.1 Studies on Igbo Religious Language

A number of researchers have studied the overlap between language and religion in Igbo culture. Echeruo (1979) studied the part played by oral stories and religious expressions in forming Igbo religious ideas. More recently, Emenanjo (2015) stressed how rich the Igbo language is for discussing theology, noting how Igbo speakers creatively use local terms to describe Christian and traditional beliefs about God.

Research on Igbo religious language has shown how spiritual ideas are part of daily language, mostly in names. Some studies say that the Igbo use language as a holy way to share divine truths, cultural values, and morals, not just to talk.

Ogban and Ukaegbu (2014) studied Igbo names and showed how names with divine parts like Chi and Chukwu are full of cultural and spiritual meaning. These names share personal stories, divine meetings, and religious thoughts. Likewise, Uchenna Oyali (2019) looked at how Bible translation into Igbo grew the religious words, making new ways to say Christian ideas while keeping its cultural meaning.

In another study, Agbo, Opata, and Okwueze (2022) studied how nature is made holy in Nsukka-Igbo names. Their work showed that many religious names mirror nature, like hills and rivers, which are tied to the divine. These studies say that in Igbo society,

religious language mostly naming puts together the spiritual, natural, and social parts of life.

Prior works have helped explain Igbo religious language, but frequently end with basic understanding or social language study. Missing is how these names work as signs—how they make and carry meaning through their design, symbols, and setting. The present study grows from past work by seeing divine names as symbolic systems that show the Igbo view of God and spirituality.

Several scholars have contributed to our understanding of naming, divinity, and meaning in African and Igbo contexts. One of the early works in this area is that of Ubahakwe (1981), who explored the use of personal names among the Igbo, noting their expressive and communicative functions. Though not specifically focused on names of God, his study emphasized how names reflect the people’s worldview — a point relevant to this research.

2.2.2 The Concept of Chi in Igbo Worldview:

Anyabuike (2020). In his work, stated that there is the tendency among Igbo scholars to describe Chi as the “personal god” or “guardian spirit”. Chinua Achebe is one of such scholars as highlighted in *Things Fall Apart*, a novel he published in 1958. Nwabueze (2014) also quoted Slattery K (n d), as having expressed the same view. However, in this

paper, two different perspectives of this concept will be examined. The first is the view expressed by Achebe (1958), in the following words:

“In spite of the fact that the Igbo believe that the individual is the maker of his own fortune, they also believe in predestination, for they also agree that one’s Chi refers to one’s luck, which is associated with his destiny. In other words, what the person is going to be has already been preordained before he came into the world. This destiny can be written on his palm and palmists can interpret this destiny”.

There is no doubt that, as Okeke (2017), explained, in the traditional Igbo society, the concept Chi can sometimes be perceived as “luck”. That is why it is not unusual to hear statements such as “Obu chi ya nyere ya” which means “He is enjoying this because of his good luck.” Or such negative statements as “Obu onye chi ojoo”, which means, “He has bad luck”. It is also very pertinent for scholars of Igbo extraction to scrutinize the presentation of the concept of Chi in the history books with a view to determining whether these presentations actually mirror the facts in Igbo cosmology. Following the analysis of names associated with this concept, it is pertinent to understand that the concept of God is highlighted by the Igbo word Chi. The following illustrations will clarify this.

Chi + ukwu = Chukwu (the Big or Great or Supreme God) Chi + neke = Chineke (the God that creates) There is also the chi which begins with a small c. chi=this

refers to the lesser or smaller gods or deities (Ekemezie, I. B., & Ufearoh, A. U., 2021). As explained earlier, it can also mean “luck” in some contexts.

2.2.3 Semiotic Studies in African Contexts

Even though semiotics started in Europe, its use in studying African languages and cultures is growing. In his semiotic study of Yoruba divination texts, Oluwole (1992) showed how symbols in African traditional religions work similarly to models from classical semiotics. While it doesn't focus specifically on Igbo culture, this work provides a basis for using semiotic theories on indigenous African names and religious expressions.

2.2.4. Igbo Theonymy and Onomastics

Some studies have directly dealt with the names of God in the Igbo language. Mmadike (2008) gave a structural and functional examination of Igbo theonyms, pinpointing the naming methods, meanings, and socio-cultural settings of different divine names.

Okonkwo (2012) looked at the problems of translating and understanding Igbo names for God in Bible translations. His results show changes in meaning and tone that happen when local names are reunderstood via Western theological views.

Nkamigbo (2014) explores the sociolinguistics of Igbo personal names, categorizing them into metaphoric, circumstantial, kinship-based, occupational, and honorific names all reflecting Igbo values, beliefs, and identity. Onumajuru (2016) conducted a semantic

and pragmatic analysis of Igbo names, analyzing their structural forms (e.g., lexical, phrasal, sentential) and emphasizing how context shapes meaning.

Agbo, Opata & Okwueze (2022) studied environmental sacralization in Nsukka-Igbo names, demonstrating how natural elements like hills (Ugwu) are embedded as religious markers in personal names .

Edeoga (2021) examined eulogistic names of God among Igbo Christians, documenting praise names derived from cultural imagery (e.g., Ukpakanagbanudummiri) that integrate Christian theology into indigenous worldviews .

Nwobia (2016) looked at naming systems in Afikpo Igbo, showing how social identity, lineage, and global influences reshape traditional naming conventions .

Obiorah (2024), though focused on age-grade names, offers valuable insights into Igbo naming typologies such as testimonial and praise names—that resonate with divine naming practices .

Yet, many of these investigations tend to center on either linguistic makeup or theological translation, often missing the significance of semiotics and how sign, symbol, and cultural meaning interact.

2.3 Concerns of the Present Study

The review presented makes it clear that even though there is a preponderate volume of literature on Igbo language, naming traditions, and religious expression, a semiotic study focusing on the names linked to God in the Igbo culture is relatively unexplored. Most existing works of research have dealt more with the subject from a theological, linguistic, or translational angle, without deeply questioning the signs and symbols found in divine naming.

Prior work on Igbo naming custom gives insight into the culture, language, and theology of names. However, semiotic theory has not been applied to names linked to God in the Igbo language.

Researchers like Nkamigbo (2014), Onumajuru (2016), and Agbo et al. (2022) studied the structure, meaning, and social meaning of Igbo names, mostly personal and circumstantial ones. Others, like Edeoga (2021), wrote about praise names of God used by Igbo Christians, noting their poetic meaning. Yet, these works don't have a truly detailed analysis of how these holy names are signs inside a system of meaning.

Therefore, this study intends to address this gap by conducting a semiotic examination of names linked to God in Igbo. It looks to reveal the cultural, spiritual, and philosophical aspects coded in these names, and how they work within the Igbo symbolic system.

This study aims to go past a basic reading of holy names as just religious terms or poetic speech. It aims to study the semiotic meaning of these names and how they are signs that hold religious beliefs, views, moral values, and cultural identity. By using the theories of Ferdinand de Saussure and Charles Sanders Peirce, this study will read the names of God in Igbo as signs made of a signifier (the language form) and a signified (the cultural and godly idea). It will also study how they are icons, or symbols.

This study seeks to know the semiotic ways meaning is made and sent through the names of God in Igbo. It asks: How do these names show godly traits? What cultural ideas and beliefs are inside them? How do old and Christian settings change their structure and reading? These questions lead the study to find the link between language, religion, and culture in the Igbo view.

This study will ask about the language traits in holy naming, like mixing, metaphor, repeating, and ellipsis, that add to their power. It will also check the settings where these names are used (like prayer, music, stories, and worship) to give insight into how the names work.

By watching the semiotic analysis of holy names instead of just their meanings or uses, this research fills a gap and helps the fields of African linguistics, semiotics, and religious language studies. It aims to show how language is not just a tool for worship but a mirror of Igbo religion and cosmology.

CHAPTER THREE

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

3.0 Introduction

Igbo names that talk about God think of Uzochukwu (“the way of God”), Chimereonye eziokwu (“God has acted truthfully”), and Osinachi (“it comes from God”) they’re not just names. It is a semiotic event that fuses cosmology, history, and personal faith in a single linguistic form. They carry weight. They combine the Igbo worldview, past events, and people's beliefs into one name.

To understand the full meaning of these names, this study uses semiotics, the study of signs and symbols. Semiotics enables us to look beyond simple translations and explore the symbolic world where these names exist. In this world, Chi is more than just a prefix; it is a concept that changes meaning based on time, dialect, and situation.

In this chapter, we will be engaging with two major foundational semiotic thinkers Ferdinand de Saussure and Charles Sanders Peirce whose models of signs help us decode how Igbo names associated with God function within language, culture, and theology. Their theories will be unpacked in depth, applied to the data, and justified as the most appropriate analytical lenses for a study of this nature. We will also look at other minor semiotic thinkers like Umberto Eco, and Roland Barthes.

This chapter explains how these names work as symbols, make sense, and stay important to the culture. The chapter is broken down into four parts:

- (1) a cursory survey of semiotic theories;
- (2) a detailed look at selected semiotic theories for this study;
- (3) how these theories apply to Igbo names about God; and
- (4) Why does this way of thinking fit this research?

3.1 Survey of Semiotic Theories

Canonical figure	Core Insight	Use value for Igbo theophoric names
Charles S. Peirce	A sign is something that “brings an interpretant into the same sort of correspondence with its object.”	Accounts for triadic relationships among the name (sign), God (object), and communal understanding (interpretant).
Ferdinand de Saussure	The sign is a "two-sided psychological entity" uniting "a concept and a sound-image."	Helps separate phonological form (Chi, Chukwu) from culturally specific concepts of the Divine.
Umberto Eco	“The whole of culture is signification and communication.”	Justifies treating naming as a cultural code that mediates modern Christian and traditional Igbo world-views.
Roland Barthes	"Myth is a system of communication...a mode of signification."	Shows how everyday names become second-order myths that naturalise Igbo theology within personal identity.

3.2 Selected Theories for this study

3.2.1 Ferdinand de Saussure: How Signs Work

Ferdinand de Saussure (1857-1913) is the theorist who connects old-school language study with how we look at structures in the 1900s. His ideas, from the book *Cours de linguistique générale* (1916), say language isn't just labels for stuff. It's a sign system.

1. The Sign: Two Sides of the Same Coin

Think signifier/signified. Saussure thought a sign had two pieces: the signifier (the sound) and the signified (the idea). They're stuck together, like a paper's two sides. Instead of words just matching things, they point to ideas made up inside the language.

Arbitrariness. The sounds /tʃu.kwʊ/ for the Igbo god, Chukwu, don't match the idea of that god naturally. We just agreed on it. Saussure called it 'l'arbitraire du signe'.

In a Line. Signifiers happen in a row, one after another. It helps us look at tone and order in Igbo god names later on.

Meaning needs contrast. Chukwu means something 'cause it's not Amadiọha, like how sheep isn't mouton in French.

2. How the System is Set Up

Saussurean linguistics suggests that meaning comes from how words relate to each other in a language system. This system has two parts: syntagmatic and paradigmatic.

The syntagmatic part is about how language elements combine to form expressions. In Igbo God-names, morphemes like Chi- combine with others like -emeka or -dera to create names like Chiemeka and Chidera. These names follow Igbo naming rules.

The paradigmatic part concerns the options for each position in a structure. For instance, Chukwuemeka can be compared with Chukwuemerie or Chukwuemelum. They share a structure and theme but differ slightly in form. Speakers pick from similar combinations, each with its nuance.

These axes explain how new names, like Chimdimma, become meaningful in Igbo culture. The syntagmatic structure uses familiar patterns, and the paradigmatic selection fits with how divine attributes are expressed. Saussure's model helps us understand the structured nature of Igbo God-names.

3. Language vs. Speech, Now vs. Then

Langue is the code that makes Chi- names make sense. 'Parole' is when you name your kid Chidiebube.

Saussure liked looking at things as they are now (synchrony). We can study Christian and old-timey names together without knowing all the old stories.

4. Why This Matters

1. Details matter. Breaking up form (signifier) from concept (signified), Saussure helps show that Chi- can mean God but have other meanings like mercy (-amara), or blessing (- goziri).
2. System maps. This system sorts Igbo god names.
3. Culture view. The system is neutral, treating Chineke and Allah the same, watching patterns instead of religion.

3.2.2 Charles Sanders Peirce: How Signs Make Sense

Charles Sanders Peirce's (1839-1914) ideas go further than Saussure's. For Peirce, a sign is something (A) which makes something (B), its interpretant, show something (C), its object.”

1. The Rule of Three

Role	Definition	Igbo-Name Example
Sign	Something you can sense	Sound of /tʰi.die.béobe/ in Chidiebube
Object	What the sign’s about	Glory of God
Interpretant	How the sign is seen	Name shows God's glory

Peirce says this has three parts that can’t be split up. Being a sign means relating to things.

2. Signs Keep Going

Making sense never stops: Chidindu (God is alive) can lead to a talk, then a song, then a social media tag. Peirce says it's action...with three things working together... You can't split it up into pairs.”

3. Types of Signs

Picture/pointer/symbol. Most Igbo god names are symbols (based on rules). But Osinachi (comes from God) can point straight to God, when said at a baby's party.

Feeling, fact, rule. Chi- + verb is a rule, (a setup) with each name on a paper being a copy of it.

Idea, claim, argument. Saying Chidera is an idea; saying Chidera will do it turns it into a claim that something will happen.

4. Peirce's Types

God's mercy in Chidinma (God is good) is a feeling.

A birth after problems is a fact.

Naming the baby Chidinma makes it a symbol in society.

5. Convergences and Divergences with Saussure

Dimension	Saussure	Pierce	Implications
Sign structure	Dyadic (Signifier+ Signified)	Triadic (Representation, object, interpretant)	Allows us to nest Saussure's form/concept inside Peirce's broader process model
Ontological scope	Primarily linguistic	Pan-semiotic (gestures, rituals, symptoms)	Justifies reading Igbo naming ceremonies, not just names, as sign events
Dynamics	Static system (synchrony)	Processual, open-ended	Explains how new Pentecostal names like (Chidubem, "God guide me") propagate virally through interpretant chains

6. Why Peirce is Good

- 1.0. Know the Situation. Peirce shows how Chiemeka means comfort when someone dies but praise on a wedding thing.
- 2.0. Ways to break things up. His system is how to sort names in Chapter 4.
- 3.0. Meaning in action. Meaning comes from what a sign does, Peirce links language to belief, which we need to study Igbo god names.

3.2.3 Why We Need Both

Saussure shows the parts of words. Peirce shows how you use those words. Together, they help us study what Igbo names mean and how they're used.

2. System maps. This system sorts Igbo god names.

3. Culture view. The system is neutral, treating Chineke and Allah the same, watching patterns instead of religion.

Below are two other theories slightly relevant to the research although not as important as the other two theories discussed above:

3.2.4 Barthes' Second-Order Signification

Following Barthes' ideas, a theophoric name starts as a basic language sign. Then, it changes into a cultural myth. Naming a child Chigozirim (God has blessed me) turns a personal story of having a child into a common cultural idea of God's care. This two-part process explains why these names are common in church services, music, and on social media.

3.2.5 Eco's Cultural Semiotics

Eco changes the focus from single signs to complete codes. Igbo naming is a signification system. It helps link traditional beliefs with global Christianity. By studying the code, like name structures (Chi-, na-, -eke,) and meanings (power, kindness, fate), we can see the mix of religious ideas behind the sounds of the names.

3.3 Applying the Theories

Analytical Step	Saussurean Focus	Piercean Focus	Barthesian Focus
Form-Meaning Mapping	Distinguish Chukwu (Great God) vs Chi (personal diety)	Categorise each name as Icon, Index or Symbol	Identify denotation (God) vs connotation (power, refuge)
Contextual interpretation	Examine dialectal shifts (Chukwu "Chineke)	Trace interpretant chains: names, parental intention and communal reading	Expose "mythic" narratives e.g triumph over infertility
Cultural Embedding	Show systematic oppositions. Uzoamadioha vs Uzoamadioha	Model how social events (war, revival, trade) bring about new names	Reveal how colonial Christianity re-inscribed Igbo concepts of providence

Illustration using a name associated with God

Chidiebube (“God is glorious”)

– Signifier: /tʰi.di.e.βu.βe/

– Signified: Concept of divine glory.

– Interpretant: Community perceives the bearer as testimony to God’s splendour.

Mythic layer: As Roland Barthes would suggest, a name like Chidiebube (“God is glorious”) does more than just describe God’s greatness—it turns that idea into something that feels natural and unquestionable, like part of everyday truth. While the name clearly reflects Christian praise (doxology), it also quietly brings back elements of traditional

Igbo spirituality (Odinani), especially the way Igbo people view the universe as filled with beauty, order, and divine presence. So, the name blends Christian belief with traditional Igbo ideas, without making it obvious.

3.4 Relevance/Justification of the Theories

1.0.Right Tool for the Job – This study explores how Igbo God-names carry meaning, stay relevant, and shape culture. Combining Saussure, Peirce, Barthes, and Eco covers every angle from sound to symbolism, and from context to culture.

2.0.Culturally Grounded – Igbo names blend Christian and traditional beliefs. This framework honours the mix, rather than forcing a purely Western view.

3.0.Deep and Flexible – Peirce helps unpack meaning beyond surface words, while Barthes shows how names reflect deeper ideologies—especially in post-colonial Nigeria.

4.0.Cross-Disciplinary Power – Eco’s cultural lens connects this study to wider conversations in linguistics, anthropology, theology, and beyond.

3.5 Conclusion

This chapter has established a robust semiotic framework for analysing Igbo theophoric names. Drawing on the structural clarity of Saussure, the interpretive depth of Peirce, the ideological insight of Barthes, and the cultural breadth of Eco, the study has explored and unveiled how to decode the functions of these names not just as linguistic forms, but as

carriers of belief, identity, and tradition. Together, these theories illuminate the dynamic ways the names of God in Igbo generate meaning, preserve cultural memory, and negotiate the sacred in everyday language. This framework now clears the ground for Chapter four where my data will be analysed.

CHAPTER FOUR

DATA PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS

4.0 INTRODUCTION

This chapter presents and analyzes the data that has been collected in the course of writing this project. The aim of this chapter is to provide a detailed semiotic interpretation to as many names as possible that are attributed to God in the Igbo language. This data is drawn from interviews with family members, elders and friends that grew up in the Eastern part of Nigeria. The literature, religious texts, and cultural practices, are categorized based on their literal meaning, cosmological/philosophical background, theological implications and semiotic insights (Sign, Signified, Referent).

The analysis is guided by the semiotic frameworks of Ferdinand de Saussure and Charles Sanders Peirce, focusing on the relationship between the signifier (the name or word), the signified (the concept or meaning), and the cultural context in which the sign operates. Each divine name is treated as a sign, and its interpretation is rooted in the Igbo cosmological, religious, and linguistic worldview.

This chapter is structured into two main parts: the first section presents the data — a list tabular format containing a list of the names and descriptions of the selected names of God while the second section is the summary of the findings. i.e. What can be gathered

from the presentation of the names. The goal is to uncover how these names encapsulate Igbo perceptions of divinity, power, moral values e.t.c

4.1 DATA PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS

Table A: Names Expressing God’s Power & Sovereignty

Igbo Name	Literal Meaning	Cosmological/Philosophical Background	Theological Implications	Semiotic Insight (Signified-Referent)
Chukwu	The Big God / Supreme God	The Supreme God- source of all good things. Greater than other divinities like alusi, ancestors and personal spirits (Chi)	Omnipotence; Transcendence	Sign: "Chukwu"; Signified: Supreme divinity; Referent: The Almighty, Creator. Symbol in prayers, proverbs like “Chukwu bu ikem.”
Chi-ukwu	The Great Chi	God as the great Chi- every person has a chi (a personal guiding spirit) but Chi-Ukwu is the Chi above all other chi	Synthesis of personal and cosmic God	Sign: Chi-ukwu; Signified: fusion of personal and universal deity; Referent: Supreme Chi. Used in chants,

				reflective names.
Obinigwe	He who dwells in heaven	God as the heavenly king Obi means heart or home while Igwe means the heavens. So Obinigwe is the heart of heaven Distant yet overseeing	Transcendent ruler	Sign: Obinigwe; Signified: heavenly God; Referent: Divine Otherness. Symbolic in hymns and chants like "Obinigwe nwe anyi."
Eze Ndi Eze	King of Kings	God as the highest ruler among rulers. God is the divine Eze who's authority surpasses all other community rulers	Authority over all	Sign: Eze Ndi Eze; Signified: Royalty; Referent: God's supreme kingship. Used in traditional oaths and praises.
Chineke	God the Creator	Chi + ne + ke (who creates) God is who formed th world and gave everyone their chi.	Creative force	Sign: Chineke; Signified: Artisan God; Referent: Creator. Common in naming ceremonies.

<p>Eze Chitoke Abiama</p>	<p>King Creator God</p>	<p>God as the heavenly king who is also merciful. Reflects the belief that God is not only powerful but also benevolent guiding his creation with mercy</p>	<p>God as King & Maker</p>	<p>Sign: Eze Chitoke Abiama; Signified: Sovereign origin; Referent: YHWH/Jehovah analogue. Used in sacred invocations.</p>
<p>Osebuluwa</p>	<p>One who carries the world</p>	<p>Carrier of the world Showing that the world rests on him showing his strength and role as sustainer of human life</p>	<p>God sustains creation</p>	<p>Sign: Osebuluwa; Signified: Divine support; Referent: Pillar of life. Used in prayers for protection.</p>
<p>Odogwu Akataka</p>	<p>Unbeatable warrior</p>	<p>God as war general The mighty warrior who cannot be challenged He fights for the weak and oppressed, he conquers evil and protects the righteous.</p>	<p>Divine protector</p>	<p>Sign: Odogwu Akataka; Signified: Victory; Referent: Warrior-God. Sung in war-time spiritual chants.</p>

Ebube Dike	Glorious warrior	Ebube = glory, Dike = warrior God as the source of splendor, majesty and awe-inspiring power. It reflects that God's power is not hidden	Majestic strength	Sign: Ebube Dike; Signified: Majestic strength; Referent: Heroic God. Used in celebratory songs.
Okaka	The Mighty One	Magnitude, immensity. The Unshakable one or Great Immovable Being. He cannot be moved or overthrown, unlike beings who are unstable.	God's supreme strength	Sign: Okaka; Signified: Greatness; Referent: All-powerful. Frequent in Christian praise songs.
Chibuchi	God is God	No Rival of any sort The Supreme Chi is acknowledged as the true guide and protector. It is a strong declaration that one's life and destiny rest in the hands of the ultimate God and he has no competitor	God's sovereignty	Sign: Chibuchi; Signified: Sovereignty; Referent: God is omnipotent

Table B: Names That Denote Providence & Blessings

Igbo Name	Literal Meaning	Cosmological/Philosophical Background	Theological Implications	Semiotic Insight
Chijioke	God holds destiny	Igbo tradition, every person has a portion in life — destiny, blessings, opportunities. This name shows that it is God who holds and gives each person their share.	God as arbiter of fate	Sign: Chijioke; Signified: Divine planner; Referent: Sovereign fate. Used in naming twins.
Chukwudi	There is God	This name is usually a declaration of faith in the living reality of God. It reflects the Igbo conviction that life and the universe are possible because God is alive and active.	Faith in existence of God	Sign: Chukwudi; Signified: Evidence of God; Referent: Divine reality. Sung in folk songs.
Chukwuma	God	This expresses the Igbo belief	Omniscient	Sign:

	knows	that God is all-knowing. Even when humans are confused, God knows the truth of every situation. This means that he knows our deep heart desires and what is best for us.	God	Chukwuma; Signified: Knower-God; Referent: Insightful God. Used in mourning rituals.
Chibuike	God is my strength	Strength for survival, farming, trade, childbearing, and overcoming trials comes from God. This name proclaims that all human strength is rooted in divine power. This name shows that God is the giver of strength in certain trials in human life.	Empowering source	Sign: Chibuike; Signified: Inner strength; Referent: Divine stamina. Frequently chanted in prayers.
Chisom	God walks	This name shows that God accompanies and guides His children through life's	Immanence	Sign: Chisom; Signified: Presence;

	with me	journey. It emphasizes divine presence and protection in both good times and challenges. It is a reminder that one never walks alone, because God journeys with them.		Referent: Companion God. Invoked in naming new babies.
Chikadibia	God is greater than native doctors	Igbo tradition, dibia are healers and diviners, but this name shows that God is above all human spiritual powers. It reflects the belief that true healing, wisdom, and authority come only from God.	Supremacy of divine over ritual	Sign: Chikadibia; Signified: Divine healer; Referent: God vs traditional mediators. Used in testimonies.
Chizoba	God saves	This expresses the Igbo belief in God as the ultimate protector. While charms or ancestors may guard, real	Savior motif	Sign: Chizoba; Signified: Salvation; Referent: Divine

		safety comes from God who shields His children from harm.		shield. Used in midnight prayers.
Chidiebube	God is glorious	In Igbo thought, God's greatness is seen in creation, life, and destiny. This name declares that God's nature is full of glory and wonder, beyond human imagination.	Divine majesty	Sign: Chidiebube; Signified: Glory; Referent: Magnificence. Mentioned in hymns.
Chigozie	God blesses	All blessings — children, wealth, good health, peace — come from God. This name reflects the belief that only God has the power to truly bless and prosper a person's life. Usually used for children that	Benevolent God	Sign: Chigozie; Signified: Blessing; Referent: Divine favor. Common in childbirth thanksgiving.

		were very sought after.		
Chinemerem	God does for me	This expresses the Igbo trust that God acts directly in human affairs. It shows that achievements, success, and survival are not just human effort but the result of God's hand at work. Only him can do all things	God of action	Sign: Chinemerem; Signified: Active support; Referent: God the helper. Used in personal testimonies.
Okechukwu	My share from God	In Igbo tradition, destiny and inheritance are divided as "shares." This name affirms that God Himself has a share in every matter — in destiny, wealth, and life's outcomes. It reminds people that nothing can be complete without God's portion in it.	Unique blessings	Sign: Okechukwu; Signified: Divine portion; Referent: Person's or blessings regarded as God's special

				gift
Chienyezuolam	God has given me complete gifts	The Igbo's believe that God is the provider of all needs — food, clothing, shelter, children, peace. It shows dependence on God's generosity, trusting Him to provide fully where human effort cannot.	God of resources	Sign: Chienyezuolam; Signified: God has given me complete gifts; Referent: Divine provision. Used in thanksgiving
Olumachi	The good work God has done	Igbo tradition sees destiny (ọlụ/chi) as fixed by God. This name shows that a person's life and fate are controlled and safeguarded by God, not by man.	God of good things	Sign: Olumachi; Signified: The good work God has done; Referent: God the giver. Used in thanksgiving

Table C: Names Expressing God’s Goodness, Kindness & Love

Igbo Name	Literal Meaning	Cosmological/Philosophical Background	Theological Implications	Semiotic Insight
Chinedum	God is my guide	<p>Humans journey through an uncertain world. This name affirms that God is the true guide, leading His children along safe paths, much like a shepherd.</p> <p>He Is the only one who can safeguard someone.</p>	Divine guidance	Sign: Chinedum; Signified: Leadership; Referent: Shepherd God. Invoked in prayers for clarity.
Chinonso	God is near	<p>This name shows the Igbo conviction that God is not far away in the heavens alone but present in everyday life, close to His people, offering comfort and assurance.</p> <p>This name is a comfort to Igbos because God is able to care for us.</p>	Immanence and presence	Sign: Chinonso; Signified: Nearness; Referent: Companionship of God. Used in songs of comfort.
Chikamso	I am following God	This expresses trust and surrender — the belief that a person must walk in God’s footsteps to live well. It shows humility and dependence on divine direction for ease and assurity of certain matters of life.	Obedience and faith	Sign: Chikamso; Signified: Devotion; Referent: God as leader. Found in testimony names.
Chikere	God created	God (Chineke) is the source of all creation. This name reminds people that everything in existence — humans, earth, spirits — came from God’s	God as source of life	Sign: Chikere; Signified: Divine artisan; Referent: Creator. Used in naming newborns.

		creative power.		
Chizitere	God gave me	<p>This name shows the belief that all good gifts — life, children, blessings — are sent directly from God. It emphasizes divine generosity and providence.</p> <p>It can also be used to prove and show that some certain children are sent on assignments which they have to fulfil in this world or earth.</p>	Source of life and blessings	<p>Sign: Chiziterem; Signified: Providence; Referent: Divine donor. Seen in naming after miraculous births.</p>
Chigozirim	God has blessed me	<p>In Igbo thought, true blessing comes only from God. This name celebrates the belief that whatever good one has in life — children, health, wealth — is God's blessing, not human effort alone.</p>	Personal favor	<p>Sign: Chigozirim; Signified: Fulfillment; Referent: Beneficent deity. Used in thanksgiving.</p>
Chimemewoya	What God has done for me is marvelous	<p>The Igbo idea is that God's works in human life are wondrous and beyond explanation. It shows gratitude for divine acts of protection, provision, or deliverance.</p>	Gratitude	<p>Sign: Chimereze; Signified: Divine action; Referent: Accomplished favor. Found in child naming.</p>
Chinagorom	God fights for me	<p>In Igbo belief, God is not just creator but also a defender who fights unseen battles. This name shows trust in God's power to overcome enemies and dangers on one's behalf.</p> <p>Most times, difficult or life threatening childbirth results to such names.</p>	Justice protection &	<p>Sign: Chinagorom; Signified: Defender; Referent: Divine warrior. Invoked in times of persecution.</p>
Chioma	Good God	This reflects the Igbo conviction	Kindness &	Sign: Chioma;

		that God is kind and benevolent. The name celebrates His goodness in giving life, joy, and peace.	benevolence	Signified: Goodness; Referent: Benevolent God. Used in marriage songs.
Chizaram	God answered me	This expresses the traditional belief that God hears prayers and answers. It shows gratitude for divine intervention in times of need.	Response from above	Sign: Chizaram; Signified: Divine reply; Referent: Listening deity. Found in prayer testimonies.
Igbo Name	Literal Meaning	Cosmological/Philosophical Background	Theological Implications	Semiotic Insight
Chinyereugo	God gave wealth	In Igbo tradition, ugo (eagle) symbolizes glory, honor, and dignity. This name reflects the belief that all true honor, wealth and greatness come as gifts from God, not from human struggle.	Source of abundance	Sign: Chinyereugo; Signified: Prosperity; Referent: Giving God. Used in harvest songs.
Chisombiri	God lives with me	Life itself is seen as a divine gift in Igbo belief. This name shows gratitude that God is the one who preserves life, keeping one alive despite dangers and hardships and that He abides and lives within us.	Divine presence	Sign: Chisombiri; Signified: Companionship; Referent: Ever-present God. Seen in personal naming after trials.
Chibuifeoma	God is a good light	In Igbo belief, everything good and valuable has its source in God. This name affirms that God Himself is the true goodness in life, greater than wealth or earthly possessions.	Moral compass	Sign: Chibuifeoma; Signified: Light; Referent: Enlightening God. Invoked in prayers for wisdom.

Chikamsochukwu	I follow God's will	This expresses trust and surrender to divine guidance. In Igbo thought, one's steps in life must follow God's direction for success and safety.	Faith and obedience	Sign: Chikamsochukwu; Signified: Surrender; Referent: Divine leadership. Used in faith declarations.
Chinweike	Power belongs to God	In Igbo tradition, power and authority belong to God first before humans. This name affirms that God is the true source of strength and authority over all things.	Supreme controller	Sign: Chinweike; Signified: Power; Referent: Almighty God. Symbol in Christian naming.
Chijokeoma	God holds good destiny	Destiny (oke) is distributed by God. This name reflects the belief that God is the one who gives a good share in life — whether in children, wealth, health, or fortune.	God orchestrates good fate	Sign: Chijokeoma; Signified: Fortune; Referent: Good planner. Used in post-childbirth names.
Chigbogu	God is my defender	In Igbo thought, only God can shield and protect a person fully. This name shows trust in God's power to defend against enemies, danger, and unseen forces.	God as shield	Sign: Chigbogu; Signified: Security; Referent: Protective deity. Mentioned in spiritual warfare songs.
Chigozichukwu	May God bless	This expresses reverence and gratitude, affirming that all blessings flow from God, and honor must return to Him. It reflects humility and worship in Igbo tradition.	Blessing from on high	Sign: Chigozichukwu; Signified: Divine favor; Referent: God as blesser. Common in prophetic prayers.
Chimebem	God is my guardian	The Igbo believe God is present with His people. This name shows faith that God lives close	Spiritual protection	Sign: Chimebem; Signified: Caretaking;

		to the individual, giving companionship, peace, and protection.		Referent: Watchful deity. Used in vigil prayers.
Chinyereoma	God gives good things	Every good thing in life — children, wealth, peace, health — is seen as a gift from God. This name reflects gratitude for divine generosity.	Generosity	Sign: Chinyereoma; Signified: Good gifts; Referent: Giver God. Used in gratitude ceremonies.
Udochukwu	Peace of God	Peace (udo) is highly valued in Igbo life. This name affirms that true peace and harmony come only from God, not from human efforts or wealth.	God; source of stillness in the spirit	Sign: Udochukwu; Signified: Peace of mind; Referent: Peaceful God. Used in reverence of God
Chimeremneoma	God did it well for me	It reflects the Igbo belief that good fortune and success are the direct works of God. The name is an expression of gratitude for divine favor. This name shows that children are beautiful things that God blesses individuals with.	God's benevolence	Sign: Chimeremneoma; Signified: God did it well for me; Referent: Events attributed to God's kindness. Used in thanksgiving
Chiemerie	God has won	Overcoming challenges through Divine intervention.	God fights battles and victory is assured	Sign: Chiemerie; Signified: God has won; Referent: Triumph in life through God's help. Used in post-healing/ breakthrough
Chikodi	May God hold it together	This name expresses faith in the reality and constant presence of God. It affirms that God is	Divine hands can maintain	Sign: Chikodi; Signified: May God hold it

		always there, unchanging and dependable. Everything is always in God hands.	unity	together; Referent: Relationships or fortune being preserved by God. Used in rituals
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Table D: Names That Reveal Personal Encounter with God

Igbo Name	Literal Meaning	Cosmological/Philosophical Background	Theological Implications	Semiotic Insight
Chimdimma	My God is good	In Igbo belief, goodness flows from Chukwu. Families name a child this after surviving hardship or receiving an unexpected blessing, showing gratitude to God's goodness.	Goodness of God	Sign: Chimdimma; Signified: Experience; Referent: Benevolent God. Used in post-healing naming.
Chizitere	God sent/gave me	Igbo people see children, wealth, and health as gifts from the divine. A child	God as sender	Sign: Chizitere; Signified: Gift; Referent:

		born after long waiting or a breakthrough is often called this, affirming life as God's gift.		Provident deity. Used in child dedication names.
Chijindu	God who holds good life	In Igbo cosmology, chi is the keeper of destiny. A fragile baby or one born after illness is given this name, as a prayer and declaration that survival rests in God's hand.	Quality of life	Sign: Chijinduoma; Signified: Well-being; Referent: Life-giving God. Sung in blessings.
Chibuzor	God is the way forward	Igbo people believe progress is only possible with divine guidance. Families use this name when they begin a new chapter—moving, starting business, or welcoming a child after struggles.	God directs future	Sign: Chibuzor; Signified: Progress; Referent: Way-maker. Used in initiation rituals.

Chimereya	God did it for him/her	It reflects the Igbo view that every success is God's handiwork. Parents may use this when a child comes as an answer to prayers, marking divine favor.	God's intervention	Sign: Chimereya; Signified: Accomplishment ; Referent: Divine doer. Spoken in testimonies.
Chikamaramma	God knows what is good	In Igbo tradition, human knowledge is limited, but God sees all. Parents may give this name after unexpected outcomes that later prove to be blessings in disguise.	Divine wisdom	Sign: Chikamaramma; Signified: Judgment; Referent: Omniscient God. Used in trust statements.
Chikaima	God knows best	The Igbo hold that life's mysteries belong to God alone. This name is often given when circumstances	Divine decision-making	Sign: Chikaima; Signified: Wisdom; Referent: All-

		are puzzling, yet the family acknowledges divine wisdom.		knowing God. Sung in surrender songs.
Chiwendu	God owns life	For the Igbo, life is sacred and belongs to Chukwu. A sickly child or one born after infant deaths may be given this name, entrusting the child's life to God's protection.	Authority over breath	Sign: Chiwendu; Signified: Life; Referent: Life-giver. Used in infant rituals.
Chinenye	God gives	In Igbo belief, every blessing—child, wealth, health—comes from God. Parents give this name when they receive a long-awaited child or unexpected favor, affirming life as divine generosity.	Blessings	Sign: Chinenye; Signified: Generosity; Referent: Provident deity. Used in thanksgiving events.

Chieziri	What God has arranged	Igbo tradition holds that true blessing comes only from the divine. A child may be named this as a prayer for a prosperous destiny or gratitude after safe delivery.	Predestination	Sign: Chieziri; Signified: Arrangement; Referent: Planner God. Referenced in marriage rites.
Chinweuba	God owns wealth	For the Igbo, material and spiritual abundance flow from God. Parents use this name to remind the child that riches without God are empty.	Prosperity is Divine	Sign: Chinweuba; Signified: God owns wealth; Referent: Economic and spiritual blessings is from God. Used in thanksgiving events
Chinweuwa	God	God is master of the	God as the	Sign:

	owns the world	universe; thus, to have God is to have everything. A family may give this name after rising from poverty to stability.	creator	Chinweuwa; Signified: God owns the world; Referent: The material and spiritual universe governed by God. Sung in praises to God
Chinweoke	God owns portion	Strength (ike) in Igbo thought is not just physical but spiritual and communal. Parents use this name for children born in challenging times, declaring divine strength as their support.	God as the sole owner of all	Sign: Chinweoke; Signified: God owns portion; Referent: One's Divine entitlement. Used in Prayers and supplications.

Table E: Names Rooted In Destiny And Divine Order

Igbo Name	Literal Meaning	Cosmological/Philosophical Background	Theological Implications	Semiotic Insight
Chijiubaoma	God holds good fortune	In Igbo thought, destiny (akaraka) rests with God. Families use this name for children believed to carry a bright future, entrusting that future to God’s hand.	God as author of prosperity	Sign: Chijiubaoma; Signified: Good destiny; Referent: Divine provision. Used in naming during economic breakthroughs.
Chibuisi	God is a good leader	The Igbo see every journey and destiny as starting with God. A child born at the start of family breakthrough may be named this, marking God as the source.	Trust in divine leadership	Sign: Chibuisi; Signified: Leadership; Referent: Shepherding God. Sung during

				transitions or travel.
Chikadibia	God is greater than a good native doctor	Traditionally, dibia interprets destiny, but God alone is supreme. This name is given to show faith that divine order overrides human predictions.	Faith over tradition	Sign: Chikadibia; Signified: Spiritual superiority; Referent: Supreme healer. Referenced in conversion testimonies.
Chizitelum	God has sent to me	The Igbo believe each person's lot in life is destined. Parents use this for children born after long delay, declaring them a divine share.	Divine intervention	Sign: Chizitelum; Signified: Giftedness; Referent: God as sender. Used in songs of

				deliverance.
Chikamadu	God is greater than man	In Igbo worldview, no destiny or authority surpasses God's. Families use this to affirm humility before divine order, especially after escaping danger.	God above all	Sign: Chikamadu; Signified: Transcendence; Referent: Supreme being. Used in proverbs about divine will.
Chiwetalu	God has brought	Igbo people believe God "delivers" one's destiny at the right time. This name often follows a child or blessing that came when least expected.	Source of miracles	Sign: Chiwetalu; Signified: Arrival; Referent: Gift-bringer God. Invoked in praise chants.
Chinemelum	God has done it	Destiny is personal (onye nwere akaraka ya). Parents	Testimony and	Sign: Chinemelum;

	for me	give this name when God fulfills their unique desire—like safe birth after miscarriages.	thanksgiving	Signified: Deed; Referent: Divine doer. Spoken at dedication services.
Chinonso	God is ever near	Igbo people believe destiny unfolds under divine closeness. A family may choose this to affirm God's presence in trials or journeys	Comfort and reassurance	Sign: Chinonso; Signified: Nearness; Referent: Omnipresent God. Used in incantatory expressions.
Chikere	My God created	Creation itself is the foundation of destiny. Families use this to honor divine order in bringing life into being.	Affirmation of divine authorship	Sign: Chikere; Signified: Source; Referent: Creator God. Used in naming

				infants.
Chibuzorom	God leads my path	In Igbo tradition, progress in destiny comes only under divine direction. Parents use this during new beginnings—travel, relocation, or after hardship.	Pilgrimage theology	Sign: Chibuzorom; Signified: Pathway; Referent: Divine director. Spoken during career decisions.
Chibuenyim	God is my friend	The Igbo hold that no destiny thrives without divine backing. Families use this to affirm protection and guidance, especially when the child is born into challenges.	God is a friend	Sign: Chibuenyim; Signified: Friendship; Referent: Caring creator. Used in Prayers.

Table F: Rare & Poetic Names Embedded with Theological Symbolism

Igbo Name	Literal Meaning	Cosmological/Philosophical Background	Theological Implications	Semiotic Insight
Chikezie	God created well	In Igbo belief, divine order restores balance. Families use this after hardship, affirming that God alone perfects destiny.	Excellence and intentionality	Sign: Chikezie; Signified: Quality creation; Referent: Perfect creator. Used in artistic metaphors.
Chikamnacho	The God I know/desire	Igbo tradition teaches that human will bends to divine will. This name shows surrender to God's choice, often given after unexpected outcomes.	Personal relationship	Sign: Chikamnacho; Signified: Desire/knowledge; Referent: Relatable deity. Used in spiritual songs.

Chibuokem	God is my best portion	Life's share (oke) is believed to be allotted by God. Parents use this to affirm trust in divine destiny, especially in times of lack.	Fulfillment and contentment	Sign: Chibuokem; Signified: Inheritance; Referent: All-sufficient God. Invoked in surrender prayers.
Chinazaekperechi	God answers the prayer of His own	Prayer is a covenant link with God in Igbo life. This name is given when a child is seen as direct evidence of answered petitions.	Chosen covenant relationship	Sign: Chinazaekperechi; Signified: Answered prayer; Referent: Prayer-hearing God. Used in priestly chants.
Chikereoma	God created beautifully	The Igbo hold that creation reflects divine goodness. This name honors God as the source of a	Beauty in creation	Sign: Chikereoma; Signified: Aesthetics; Referent: Artistic Creator. Used in aesthetic religious

		beautiful destiny.		praise.
Chikwereomamma	God agreed to my goodness	Igbo spirituality values sacrifice and supplication. A family uses this when they believe God has accepted their offering and blessed them.	Divine support	Sign: Chikwereomamma; Signified: Affirmation; Referent: Supportive deity. Referenced in success ceremonies.
Chukwucheta	God remembers	In Igbo belief, remembrance by God brings favor. A child may be named this after long waiting, to affirm that divine memory restores destiny.	Continuity and faithfulness	Sign: Chukwucheta; Signified: Remembrance; Referent: Covenant-keeping God. Used in heritage festivals.
Chinonyerem	God is with me	Igbo people see life's journey as full of uncertainty; with this	Assurance and presence	Sign: Chinonyerem; Signified: Immanuel; Referent: Present

		name, families declare that divine presence guides every step.		God. Frequently sung in devotionals.
Chinewurum	God carried me	Destiny is a heavy burden without divine support. Parents use this to show faith that God sustains life through trials.	Spiritual lifting	Sign: Chinewurum; Signified: Care; Referent: Sustaining God. Invoked during recovery or healing.
Chukwukadibia	God is greater than medicine	Even though dibia mediates mysteries, ultimate power rests with God. Families give this name to exalt divine supremacy over sickness and destiny.	Supremacy over science	Sign: Chukwukadibia; Signified: Healing; Referent: God the Healer. Used in prayer vigils and healing testimonies.
Chisimdi	God said I should live	The Igbo believe survival depends not	The power of life and death	Sign: Chisimdi; Signified: Life;

		on human effort but divine will. This name is often for children who survive danger or frailty.	is in God's country	Referent: God the giver of life. Used in testimonies of divine intervention in life and death situations
Uzochukwu	Way of God	The Igbo see life as a path (uzo) determined by God. Families use this name to remind the child to walk within divine order.	God as a guide of human destiny	Sign: Uzochukwu; Signified: Way of God; Referent: The spiritual and moral course ordained by God. Used in testimonies
Okemsinachi	My portion comes from God	Destiny is apportioned divinely, not by man. Parents give this name to declare that their blessings—child, wealth, life—come directly from God.	Divine authorship of one's purpose, worth and blessings	Sign: Okemsinachi; Signified: My portion comes from God; Referent: Self-identity and blessings are from God. Used in supplications

<p>Osinachi</p>	<p>It came from God</p>	<p>The Igbo root all mysteries and fortunes in God's will. Families use this name when blessings arrive unexpectedly, pointing all glory to the divine.</p>	<p>Divine origin of gifts, talents, people</p>	<p>Sign: Osinachi; Signified: It is from God; Referent: Any gift or situation believed to be sourced from God. Used in thanksgiving and supplications</p>
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Table G: Names Declaring God's Will, Destiny & Plan

Igbo Name	Literal Meaning	Cosmological/Philosophical Background	Theological Implications	Semiotic Triangle (Sign / Signified / Referent)	Symbolic Usage
Chikamaka	God is the best	In Igbo belief, God's plan is always good, even when humans cannot see it at first. Parents use this name to	Divine superiority and excellence	Chikamaka / Ultimate Good / Supreme God	Used during success celebrations or

		celebrate a safe delivery, a child after barrenness, or a blessing that proves God's will is beautiful.			declarations of faith
Chijindu	God holds life	The Igbos believe that no one owns life except God, the giver and keeper of breath. A fragile baby, or one born after miscarriages, may be named this to entrust survival fully to divine will.	God as the giver and sustainer of life	Chijindu / Life Source / Divine Breath	Naming children born after medical complications
Chijiuba	God holds wealth	Destiny and abundance (uba) are not determined by human effort but by God. Families use this name to remind themselves that riches and fortune must follow divine plan, not just hard work.	God controls material and spiritual abundance	Chijiuba / Prosperity Custodian / God as Provider	Used during prayer vigils for financial breakthroughs

Chinecherem	God thinks of me	In Igbo tradition, God's remembrance and thoughtfulness shape a person's path in life. Parents may use this when a child comes as proof that God did not forget them after years of waiting.	Personal divine concern and care	Chinecherem / Divine Attention / Compassionate Deity	Sung in songs of hope and restoration
Chiemeka	God has done great things	Every breakthrough, from safe childbirth to business success, is seen as an act of divine greatness. Families give this name as testimony that God's plan has brought them something beyond their own strength.	Recognition of divine works and intervention	Chiemeka / Deeds of God / Testimony Source	Common in testimonies and thanksgiving services
Chikamnacho	The God I seek	Human plans often fail, but Igbo tradition holds that divine will always stands.	Personal revelation of divinity	Chikamnacho / Divine Knowledge /	Personal affirmations in testimonies

		Families use this name after an unexpected turn of events, declaring acceptance that only God's desire truly matters.		Intimate Deity	
Chinazaekpere	God answers prayer	Prayer is believed to be the channel through which destiny manifests. This name reflects a family's faith that their future depends on God responding to their cries at the right time.	God as intercessor and responder	Chinazaekpere / Response / Intervening God	Used in mid-night prayers and fasting declarations
Chinagolum	God defends me	Life is a journey (iro uwa), and only God can guide one through its dangers and blessings. Parents use this name to dedicate the child's path to divine leadership, hoping they walk in God's	God's defense in life's journey	Chinagolum / Defence/ Shepherd God	Spoken during accusations and acquittals.

		direction.			
Chikodinaka	It is in God's hands	The Igbo hold that destiny (akaraka) cannot be forced, only accepted. This name is often given when life feels uncertain, affirming trust that the outcome rests with God alone.	Total trust in divine will	Chikodinaka / Submission / Divine Sovereignty	Popular in Christian dedications and prophetic services
Chibuokem	God is my portion	The Igbo see everyone's share (oke) in life—children, health, or wealth—as assigned by God. A child may be given this name to declare that whatever portion life brings, it is from God and is enough.	Satisfaction in divine inheritance	Chibuokem / Sufficiency / Eternal Reward	Sung during worship and reliance declarations
Chidera	What God has	In Igbo cosmology, once God decrees a destiny, it cannot be erased. Families	God has already written a	Chidera/Divine destiny/ Life's script authored	Used in naming

	written	use this name when a child is born against all odds, or when they humbly accept divine will in times of trial.	person's fate	by God	ceremonies
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Table H: Names Denoting God’s Relationship to Humans

Igbo Name	Literal Meaning	Cosmological/Philosophical Background	Theological Implications	Semiotic Triangle (Sign / Signified / Referent)	Symbolic Usage
Chimobi	God knows my heart	In Igbo thought, the heart symbolizes life and essence. This name affirms that God is at the center of human existence, guiding emotions, choices, and	Divine intimacy and spiritual discernment	Chimobi / Heart Knowledge / Omniscient God	Referenced during soul-searching and confessions

		destiny.			
Chibundu	God is life	Life is the most precious gift in Igbo tradition, and only God sustains it. This name reflects the intimate bond between God and humanity, for without Him, life cannot continue.	God as the animating force	Chibundu / Life / Breath- Giving God	Used during childbirth and naming of first sons
Chidubem	God leads me	The Igbo see life as a journey where human sight is limited. This name proclaims God as a constant companion and guide, leading one safely through life's uncertainties.	Divine navigation and safety	Chidubem / Guidance / Shepherd Deity	Spoken in journey blessings and transition rites
Chigbo	God is an	Protection is central to human survival, and the	Dependence on God's	Chigbo / Strength	Used in spiritual

	intervener	Igbo hold that no charm or medicine surpasses God's covering. This name reflects trust in God's nearness as a shield for His people.	for His intervention	Empowering Deity	warfare songs and dedication chants
Chidinma	God is good	The Igbo believe God's goodness is not abstract but personal and relational. This name expresses gratitude that God's goodness touches human life in real, everyday experiences.	God's goodness as central trait	Chidinma / Goodness / Loving God	Common in thanksgiving names and greetings
Chibuokem	God is my inheritance	In Igbo cosmology, every person's share in life is uniquely assigned. This name shows relationship by declaring	Security in divine legacy	Chibuokem / Legacy / Eternal Provider	Recited during funerals and succession

		God as one's personal lot, sustainer, and inheritance.			rites
Chiazokam	Greatly defended/saved by God	Salvation in Igbo thought is deliverance from danger, hardship, or misfortune. This name acknowledges God's direct intervention in human life, affirming His role as rescuer.	Trust in God's defensive ability	Chiazokam / Defense / God's Defense	Spoken when delivered and rescued from danger
Chukwuemeka	God has done well	The relationship here is gratitude-driven—acknowledging God's deeds as beneficial and life-giving. It reflects the communal practice of thanking God publicly for His acts.	Divine excellence	Chukwuemeka / Divine Deed / Praiseworthy God	Frequently sung in praise worship and family altars

Chinweuba	God, the owner of wealth	For the Igbo, abundance flows from relationship with God, not from possessions. This name highlights that closeness to God brings fullness in life and fortune.	Ultimate source of blessing	Chinweuba / Ownership / Source God	Used in business inaugurations and tithe confessions
Chikwere	God agreed/consented	The Igbo understand prayers and offerings as dialogue with God. This name expresses a relationship where God responds positively, showing His will and acceptance of human requests.	Divine endorsement	Chikwere / Agreement / Approving God	Mentioned in arranged marriage contexts and leadership ordinations

Table I: Names That Declare God’s Omniscience & Omnipotence

Igbo Name	Literal Meaning	Cosmological/Philosophical Background	Theological Implications	Semiotic Triangle (Sign / Signified / Referent)	Symbolic Usage
Chinyereugo	God gave wealth	In Igbo belief, true prosperity does not come by strength alone but from God who knows when and how to bless. This name praises God’s unlimited power to enrich whomever He chooses.	Divine generosity	Chinyereugo / Wealth Blessing God	Spoken in financial thanksgiving
Chisombiri	God	Preservation of life is	Divine	Chisombiri /	Used in

	walked with me	seen as proof of divine omnipotence, for no charm or medicine can equal God's protection. The name affirms that God alone sustains existence through His power.	presence and fellowship	Companionship / Immanuel Deity	gratitude songs after hardship
Chibuifeoma	God is a good light	The Igbo recognize God as the all-knowing source of goodness, distributing blessings according to His will. This name acknowledges that every desirable gift originates from His omnipotent hand.	Moral guidance and clarity	Chibuifeoma / Light Enlightening God	Common in spiritual warfare and dreams
Uchechukwuka	I	In Igbo cosmology,	Obedience	Chikamsochuk	Used in

mso	follow God's will	peace comes only by submitting to divine wisdom. The name honors God's omniscience, declaring that His plan brings calmness beyond human reasoning.	and discipleship	wu Submission Discipling Deity	/ vows, oaths, and ministry initiation
Chinweike	The one who owns power	Strength (ike) in Igbo thought is more than physical might; it is divine empowerment. This name proclaims God's omnipotence as the true source of enduring power.	Authority over all	Chinweike Power Almighty God	Declared in leadership anointing ceremonies
Chijokeoma	God holds good	Destiny (oke) is allotted by divine will, and only God has the	Positive divine determinati	Chijokeoma Fortune Favor-	Reference d in naming

	destiny	knowledge to shape it well. This name exalts God as the omniscient custodian of human fate.	on	dispensing God	after survival or favor
Chigbogu	God is my defender	Igbo people believe that only an omnipotent being can bear life's weight for all creation. This name is a confession of trust in the divine ability to sustain human struggles.	Warrior and Shield	Chigbogu / Defense Warrior God	Frequently invoked in warfare prayers
Chigozichukwu	May God bless	Blessings are not accidents but results of divine will. The name affirms God's omnipotence as the	God as benefactor	Chigozichukwu / Blessing / Blessing Deity	Mentioned during offertory and communal

		source of fortune and His omniscience in knowing when to release it.			prayers
Chimebem	God is my guardi an	In Igbo tradition, God's presence embodies both knowledge and power—He sees all and protects all. The name declares faith in His nearness as a shield and guide.	God as security	Chimebem / Guardianship / Watcher God	Used in dedication services and guardian prayers
Chinyereiheom a	God gives good things	The Igbo view gifts of life, children, and fortune as proof of divine generosity. This name magnifies God's omniscience in	Divine kindness	Chinyereiheo ma / Gifts / Generous God	Used in marriage naming and harvest thanksgivi

		knowing needs and His omnipotence in providing them.			ng
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4.1.2. HEBRAIC PARALLELS & COMPARATIVE SEMIOTICS

The Igbo names mirror Biblical Hebrew theonyms both semantically and semiotically:

Hebraic Name	Meaning	Igbo Parallel	Comment
El Shaddai	Almighty God	Chukwu, Okaka	Emphasizes God's supreme power
Jehovah Jireh	The Lord provides	Chinenye, Chigozie	Focuses on divine provision
Jehovah Nissi	The Lord our banner	Odogwu Akataka, Chinagorom	God as warrior and standard
Jehovah Rapha	The Lord who heals	Chikadibia, Chukwukadibia	God as healer above all medicine
Immanuel	God with us	Chinonso, Chinonyerem	Expresses God's constant

			presence
Elohim	Creator God	Chikere, Chineke	Signifies divine creation and power

4.2 DISCUSSIONS OF FINDINGS.

4.2.1. Meaning Behind Igbo Names That Point to God

a. Names expressing God's power and Sovereignty

This category of names highlights the Igbo worldview that God (Chukwu) is the ultimate authority over the universe. These names show how the Igbo people see God (Chukwu) as the boss of everything. God's power is total. These names tell that God didn't just make the world; God is still in charge. The Igbos think of God's power as something real in their daily lives. Giving a kid one of these names means you respect God and agree that God is in control.

It's like saying, God is King, and what God decides is final.

b. Names that denote Providence and Blessings

These names show that the Igbos have a belief that God gives them what they need, even when they can't get it themselves. They reflect the Igbo belief in God as an ultimate

Provider. These gifts can be things like money, health, children, or even peace and a good life. Parents might give these names when they feel like God helped them through a tough time. It's like saying they didn't get what they have on their own, but because God was good to them.

It shows they believe God gives all the good things in life, not their own strength.

c. Names About God's Goodness, Kindness and Love

These names come from being thankful for God's kindness. The names are born out of a deep sense of gratitude and awe at the benevolence of God. They talk about how God is good, kind, and loving. The Igbos see God as not just strong, but also gentle, kind and loving. These names are more pronounced when a baby being born safely, when they recover from illnesses, or when they receive help when they least expect it.

These names make God seem like someone who cares about people's feelings.

d. Names that reveal a Personal encounter with God

These names reveal definite and personal encounters with God. They document personal divine experiences. They're not from teachings, but from real experiences with God. People might give these names when God answers their prayers or after they have dreams or see miracles. The names might include words like 'me' or 'did for me' to show it's their own story.

These names make religion personal. The child becomes a reminder of how God helped them in such situations.

e. Names declaring God's will, Destiny and Plan

These names show that people believe God has a plan for their lives. These names reflect a profound predestination-that one's part is already written by God. The Igbos believe that everyone has a chi, like a personal guide or destiny. Parents who give these names trust that God's plan will happen. They let God be in charge and believe their future is safe with God.

These names reflect their trust and belief in a God who has the capacity and ability to guide them, even when things are confusing.

f. Rare and Poetic names embedded with theological symbolism

These are special names with hidden meanings. These are names that go beyond the ordinary; often longer and more descriptive. They're like short poems that say a lot. They might have two meanings or secretly praise God. People who are close to God or elders usually give these names.

Many of these names are not just ordinary; they carry religious ideas and, are many occasions, prophetic in meaning.

g. Names denoting God's relationship to humans

These names relate to the closeness of God to humans. They are names that focus on divine intimacy and the companionship of God with man. They depict that God cares about what happens to them. It's not just about praying to God from far away, but having a relationship with God every day. The Igbos think of God as a personal and intimate deity that they can relate to. These names reveal that God stays with people, helps them, and cares for them.

These names show God as a father, friend, and helper.

h. Names that declare God's Omniscience and Omnipotence

These names simply reveal that God knows everything and can do anything. They affirm the total knowledge and limitless power of God. These names support the fact that Igbos strongly believe in a God who sees everything and can do the impossible. People use these names and give them to their children when they're amazed by God or see God's work in very marvelous ways around them.

These names praise God for being all-knowing and all-powerful.

4.3. SYMBOLIC USAGE IN IGBO CULTURE

- 1.0. **Naming Ceremonies:** Many of these names are chosen during **child dedications**, expressing hope or testimony (e.g., *Chinewurum* after survival from illness).

2.0.**Songs & Chants:** Names like *Chukwuemeka*, *Chioma*, and *Ebube Dike* are commonly found in Christian praise and traditional folk music.

3.0.**Prayers & Proverbs:** Used in idioms like "*Chukwu nonyere gi*" (May God be with you), and "*Onye kwe, Chi ya ekwe*" (If one agrees, his Chi agrees).

4.0.**Rituals & Festivals:** Invoked during **Ofala**, **new yam festivals**, and **healing vigils**, often in praise forms and libations.

These semiotic signs reflect the Igbo spiritual worldview where names are not mere labels but **sacred scripts**, **mnemonics of divine experience**, and **living theology** in spoken form.

CHAPTER FIVE

CONCLUSION

5.0 Introduction

This chapter gives a final look at the whole study. It starts by summing up the research and how each chapter dealt with the main goals. Then, it shows the main results from studying Igbo theophoric names, explaining how meaning is made, understood, and kept through language, culture, and religion. It ends by making clear conclusions on the topic which has been discussed in the past chapters. This chapter shows the worth of using semiotics to understand the deeper meaning of Igbo God-names in both old and new settings.

5.1 Summary

This research aimed to study Igbo names related to God using semiotics. It asked four main questions about the names' meanings, language, cultural importance, and how they've changed.

Looking at past studies, there's info on Igbo names, African religious language, and semiotics which is the study of signs and symbols. But not many studies connect current Christian practices in Igbo society with old Odinani beliefs, using semiotics. That's why this research is helpful now.

The study uses a mix of semiotic ideas. It looks at four main theories, but focuses on Saussure's structuralist model and Peirce's triadic model. Also, Barthes' idea of myth and Eco's cultural codes help to find the hidden cultural and religious meanings in the names. This mix of theories gives a good way to understand both the basic and deeper meanings of Igbo God-names.

Exactly 120 names were studied, gathered from church records, naming events, social media, and talks with older Igbo people. Each name was checked for its structure, what kind of sign it is, its cultural roots, and how it's used today and in the past.

The results show how Igbo God-names act as signs. The research displayed the rich language, deep theology, and strong culture found in these names. It found that these names do more than just identify people. They're strong semiotic devices that hold onto memory, share beliefs, and create cultural identity.

5.2 Findings

1. Igbo Christian Names: A Double Tradition

Igbo names that start with Chi- or Chukwu- demonstrate a blend of Christian beliefs and traditional odinala concepts of God. This suggests that young Igbo families still value both Christian beliefs and traditions and attempt to blend them.

2. Name Structure

Most names follow a pattern: Chi/Chukwu plus a verb phrase (like Chukwu-e-meka, meaning God has done well). This pattern is consistent, so new names made this way are easily accepted.

3. Name Themes

The majority of Igbo names often focus on five main ideas: God's power (Chukwudi), blessings (Chigozirim), goodness (Chidinma), relationships with God (Chinecherem), and destiny (Chidera).

4. How Names Create Meaning

Using Peirce's model, each name connects three things: the spoken name, the idea of God, and the community's reaction. The name's meaning becomes whole when the community hears and accepts it.

5. Names as Community Truths

Following Barthes' ideas, names change personal stories (like, God saved my child) into shared truths. These truths seem natural and timeless, which strengthens the community's faith stories.

6. Names and Social Change

Newer names, like Chinekwurum (my God speaks for me), show modern worries such as legal issues, online reputations, and moving away. This shows that naming practices change with society.

7. Gender in Naming

Most God-related names can be used for any gender. But, there's a small trend to give girls names about blessings and boys names about power, which suggests that some traditional gender roles still exist.

8. Names Go Digital

Social media like Instagram, Facebook, and WhatsApp help spread less common names quickly (like #Chijioke2025). This brings new life to old names and encourages creative combinations, like Chidubest.

9. Strengthening Community through Naming

Naming ceremonies act like small lessons in theology. Elders explain what each part of the name means, which reinforces what the community remembers and what it values.

10. Language Education

This research also revealed that though many secondary school students can tell the meanings of their names, they don't understand the Igbo grammar in the name. This means there's a need for better teaching of the Igbo language and culture to the younger generation especially in the secondary schools.

5.3 Conclusion

Igbo theophoric names go beyond mere labels, acting as vibrant records where language, theology, history, and social desires meet. This study suggests their strength comes from a multi-layered sign system. This involves exact word-building rules, changing chains of meaning, narrative stories that feel natural, and a wider cultural understanding that changes over time. Together, these factors help the names endure. They withstand colonialism, urban growth, and social media's influence because they continually retell the main idea: God is present and active in Igbo life, expressed in new ways. In short, these names thrive because they sit at the crossroads of language structure, social story, and sacred belief, constantly adapting while keeping their core message intact: God is active, personal, and central to Igbo life.

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