

Names as Index of Social History: The Efik Example

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Abstract

Names, like language, mirror the society in which they are borne and they equally respond to social change. The naming system, it is believed is affected by the socio-cultural, political and religious ethos of the society in which the names are borne. In naming, a people's worldview is expressed. This paper investigates the impact of the Efik socio-cultural, political and religious structures on the naming system. Our investigation is restricted to Efik personal names. The names which form our data were purposively sampled from some schools' and churches' registers in the seven Efik-speaking towns – Creek Town (Obio oko), Henshaw Town (Nsidun), Duke Town (Atakpa), Ikoneto (Mbiabo), Essien Town (Obutong), Eniong and Adiabo. The study reveals that a name gives the person bearing it an identity, whereas the naming ceremony indexes the socio-cultural, political and historical significance of an individual. It also shows that Efik social history impacts on the Efik naming system.

Keywords: Names, identity, worldview, social change, language, history.

1. Introduction

Language is a vital tool for communication in every society. Ngugi (1972, p.16) states that "language is a carrier of values fashioned by a people over a period of time." And for Biobaku (1982, p.76), "language enables people to transmit their tradition; for it is a store- house of all the valuables that sustain a people from generation to generation." In line with this, Yahaya (1982, p.49) is of the opinion that the cultural heritage in any given society is expressed through the channel of language, thus making language its mirror. This is to say that language and culture are, as argued by Ifemesia (1982, p.35), "coeval" and therefore inextricable. Language, he asserts can only be explained in the context of culture and vice versa. In his view, "each local language in Nigeria...has always been ...at once an integral part, a repository and a vehicle of expression and transmission of its culture." Malinowski (2003, pp.5-6) equally believes that language is essentially rooted in the reality of the culture, the tribal life and customs of... people..." Names are of course language in use.

The naming pattern of any society not only reflects the language behaviour of the community, but it also presents, as noted by Biobaku (1982) interesting interactions between language and culture on the one hand, and language, culture and history on the other. This view is succinctly captured by Malinowski (2003, p.8) who asserts that "language in its primitive forms ought to be regarded and studied against the background of human activities and as a mode of human behaviour in practical matters", and by Tsaior (2009, pp.85/86) who asserts that "behind every name in traditional African societies stalks a history...that is shared by the group or society and becomes its veritable communal property." Osundare (in Adesanmi 2012, p.58) avers that "the world is shaped – and frequently determined by the words we use for expressing it." He opines that "in naming the world we also name ourselves, evoking a recognizable, tangible construct of the panoply of realities which constitute what we call the human experience." Names, therefore, are imbued with the experiences of the naming society.

Ubahakwe (1981, p.99) posits that "indigenous Nigerian names, like most African names, have high culture content. They are not simple labels used as baggage tags, for mere identification purposes. An indigenous name, on the whole, personifies the individual, tells some story about the parents or the family of the bearer and in a more general sense, points to the values of the society into which the individual is born." Essien (2003) equally asserts that Nigerian names give insights into Nigerian languages, history, ethics, religion and culture. It is generally believed that the more we know about our names, the more we also will know about ourselves. From the historical point of view, Awoonor (1975, p.3) has noted that in addition to documented sources, history also exists in non-documented ones as oral traditions, archaeological findings, music and ethnology. In Nigeria, for instance, indigenous names "act as undocumented historical records and landmarks" which are transmitted from generation to generation (Ansa & Okon 2003).

Names are indeed very significant because they give insights into the culture and history of a people. They not only define but are also the end product of the "concrete patterns of existential realities that attend an individual, family, group or society" (Tsaior 2009, p.85). In addition, as noted in Odebode (2013, p.79), "names do not only identify people, they historicise, socialize, spiritualise and influence people psychologically." To buttress the argument on the significance of names as the carrier of identity, we refer to the incident that caused Ngugi to drop his English/Christian name. It is on record that his denial of being a Christian was countered by the fact of his first name, 'James'. The name 'James' highlighted the contradictions between his beliefs and values and the significance of the name. The variance in his ideology and the reality of his name was interesting. The reality led to a change of name on his part in order to capture the essence of his beliefs. On this, Ikiddeh

(1972, p.xi) argues that “the change in Ngugi’s name is in itself perhaps of little consequence. What lends it some importance ...is its significance in the wider context of the writer’s beliefs.”

Osundare (in Adesanmi 2012, pp.58/59) views Ngugi’s rejection of his foreign name as “a postcolonial affirmation of the self.” He states that “names serve as the door to the house of experience, a guide to hidden meanings in the shadowy nooks of time and place. Names tell stories, liberate or imprison, they may also serve as self-fulfilling prophecies.” Arua (2009) sums this up with the assertion that “the meaning of... names reside in the messages they convey, the wishes they express, the histories they record and the gratitude...they express.” Therefore, Osundare (in Adesanmi 2012, p.59) concludes that “names commit.” His illustration with the Yoruba belief concerning names is apt because indeed, “it is only mad people who do not mind what names they are called, or who refuse to see the difference between the names they choose to bear and the ones the world prefers to call them by”

2. Efik: The People and the Language

The Efik people are found in the South-South geopolitical zone of Nigeria. Cook (1985, p.1) has noted that they occupy “the South Eastern corner of the Cross River State.” According to Aye (2000, p.v), “the people generally known as Efik and their kinsfolk today occupy the basins of the Lower Cross River and down to the Bakassi Peninsula, the Calabar River and down to its tributaries – the Kwa River, Akpayafe (Akpa Ikang) and the Eniong Creek.” Nair (1972) records that the Efik had occupied Calabar “towards the end of the seventeenth century or at the beginning of the 18th century.” He concludes, therefore, that Calabar is the homeland of the Efik.

Cook (1985, p.2) has observed that “Calabar or Obio Efik is the cultural, economic, political and geographical centre of the Efik – speaking area.” The Efik refer to their homeland as Eburutu and to themselves as Efik Eburutu. Efik political and social organization exemplify, “a segmented lineage structure.” Nair (1972) has observed that the most important feature of the system of Efik settlement pattern and lineage structure is the development of philo-cratric and locally dominant kin groups. He has equally noted that “the Efik social system was [and still is] lineage-based...and in the Efik political system, kinship or blood relationship was [and still is] of paramount importance.” In his discourse on the Efik of Calabar, he asserts that “the strong tradition of genealogies preserved by Efik families is an indication of the fact that a man’s position in the society depended on whether or not he could trace his lineage to the founding ancestor (akwa ete kiet) of the house to which he belonged.” If, however, no such relationship could be traced on a patrilineal or matrilineal basis, the individual is regarded as a stranger. This assertion is confirmed by Aye (2000, p.87) who states that “the Efik grew in family units generally known as house [ufok].” A house equated to a lineage and members trace their descent to a common founding ancestor. He also states that “no Efik person is expected to live in isolation; every one of them is a member of a house (ufok)” and anyone who cannot trace one for himself/herself is not Efik. Akaka (2004, p.23) equally asserts that to be regarded as Efik, one must belong to a house.

Efik refers to both the people and their language. Cook (1985, p.1) has noted that “historically and as a language of literature, Efik is the most important language of the Cross River State; even though it has fewer L1 speakers.” Efik, like other languages in the state, is classified under the new Benue Congo sub-family of the larger Niger-Congo family. It belongs to the Lower Cross languages, (Udoh 2003). Calabar, the homeland of the Efik people is a heterogeneous society. Its socio-cultural, political and economic histories highlight its heterogeneity. For instance, Udoh (1983, p.7) observes that the Efik community of early and mid 20th century was greatly heterogeneous. He states that “people from various communities in Nigeria in particular, and from other coastal countries of West Africa, had come to live among the Efik people before Britain imposed her rule on the people.” According to Nair (1972, p.2), Barbot’s comments on the population figures of Old Calabar in early 20th century include the fact that “it had the greatest share of any European traders on the coast” (Nair 1972). It is equally on record that Calabar was a slave holding community. Slaves were the primary export commodity of Efik merchants prior to oil trade. Calabar, therefore, had a large slave population, particularly, after the abolition of the slave trade. In addition to slaves, there were persons in Calabar who were neither ‘Efik by blood relationship, nor slaves bought by Efik slave holders’. These, referred to as ‘strangers’, were immigrants who, according to Nair (1972) sought protection by being attached ‘to one of the powerful Efik nobles’. Nair (1972, pp.37/38) records that the incorporation of slaves and these ‘strangers’ into Efik “houses” meant “the houses became increasingly heterogeneous and cosmopolitan in nature.”

As a result of the heterogeneous nature of Calabar, Efik has come in contact with many other languages within and beyond the Cross River region. The activities of Christian missions enhanced the status of Efik, making it a dominant indigenous language. It was used widely as a lingua franca within and around Calabar, and it became a second language to non-Efik people in and around the region. Uya (1986, p.30) says of the language that “the use of Efik as a medium of instruction in schools in the lower grades gave the language a prominence far out of proportion to its original speakers.” As the language of ‘instruction’, ‘civilisation’ and ‘achievement’ in the Cross River region and into the Cameroons, Efik impacted on other languages and culture and was equally impacted on linguistically and culturally. This impact has far reaching effects on the Efik

naming system as will be shown later. Efik naming practices, therefore, draws attention to the impact of intra- and inter- ethnic relations which result from cross-cultural contacts as a result of language contact situations. This is observed in:

- The factors which determine the giving of names
- The anglicization of Efik names
- The modification of the tonal structure of Efik names
- The adoption of foreign names by Efik people

1. The Efik Naming Practices

Odebode (2013, p.79[Soyinka 1988, p.50]) asserts that “naming is a critical business in traditional African society because names comprise meaning and history apart from being the intimation of hope and affirmation of origins.” Efik naming practices are in a number of ways similar to such practices elsewhere in Nigeria. As in other societies, personal names among the Efik give rich insights into the Efik society and provide evidence about the cultural, political, religious and historical events that have impacted on the society. As noted for the Tiv of Nigeria, an Efik name “proclaims, and is synonymous with the individual that bears and answers it. The name, therefore, becomes a text of cultural meanings and a metaphoric incision that spells the life of the individual” (Tsaoir 2009, p.92).

The Efik word for name is “enying” and the act of naming is “usio enying”. The act which is a sacred rite could take place soon after the birth of a child or a few days later, depending on the family and the state of the mother’s health. The naming ceremony is attended by close family members, a few friends and neighbours. It is usually not a big event but one that is socio-culturally, politically and historically significant in the life of an individual, as the names given not only identify but also situate the individual in a family and geo-political space. The names are retained for life. The ceremony provides the opportunity to celebrate the existence of the family and its extension in the addition of a new member to it. The participants at the ceremony, except the child itself, act as witnesses to the child, its parents, the larger family and the community that the child truly belongs to them. The Efik society is patriarchal, thus, names are given by the father or a paternal kin to the child during the naming ceremony. A number of factors determine the names given to the child and these include:

- The circumstance of birth of the child
- The child’s descent genealogically to a house (ufok)
- The family’s religious leaning
- The family’s social relationships

Failure, therefore, by a father to give a name to a child is interpreted as a rejection of the child as a member of his family, and this act could create much identity crisis for the individual. The non-performance of the naming ceremony has grave socio-cultural consequences for the child, with far reaching political and historical implications. For this, Tsaoir (2009, p.92) asserts that a name “weaves a rich tapestry of life for the bearer in the binary realities of adversity or prosperity, failure or success.” Therefore, concerning naming or refusing to name an individual, Tsaoir (2009) contends that “existence is recognized or refused, significance is assigned or ignored, [and] the individual is elevated or rendered invisible.”

2. Factors which Determine the Giving of Efik Name

Oduyoye (200, p.162) asserts that “a name ... is a mark...” of identity. He has equally noted that “to be nameless is to be without an identity” because for him and for others as well, “a name identifies the person”. He asserts that a name is “a linguistic symbol to be used in remembering an individual.” This assertion is very true of the Efik whose personal name not only identifies, but also situates the individual within a family space because of its genealogical implications. The individual, therefore, is not only remembered for who he is (in terms of his person), but also the house/family and the particular Efik town he belongs to, his position and status in the family, and the day and time of his/her birth. The individual is seen as an embodiment of the social history of his/her family. Efik personal names are categorised into:

- Birth name (enying emana)
- Real name (ata enying/usio enying)
- House name (enying ufok/udori enying)
- Nick/pet name (nditik enying)

4.1 Birth Name (Enying Emana)

The names categorised as birth names or ‘enying emana’ have to do with the individual’s birth circumstance. Nair (1972, p.287) reports that “it is common to have names relating to the circumstances of the parents, the community or the child itself, at the time of birth.” The names could reflect the individual’s day of birth with regards to the Efik calendar, his/her time of birth and his/her position vis- a- vis other children in the family. The Efik calendar consists of eight week days. And on the basis of this calendar, names are given to individuals

according to the day of the week the person is born. These names are:

Week days	Male	Female
Akwa/Ekpri Ederi	Edet	Arit
Akwa/Ekpri Eyibio	Etim	Atim
Akwa/Ekpri Ikwo	Asukwo/Asuquo	Ikwo/Iquo
Akwa/Ekpri Ofiong	Efiong/Ofiong	Afiong

The practice of naming children according to week days is not exclusive to the Efik. Week-day names are found in other ethnic groups in Nigeria. The time of day a child is born is also considered in name giving. The name 'Okon' is given to a male child born at night (where night is taken to mean late in the evening to anytime before the first cockcrow which signifies the dawn of a new day), and the name 'Nko' is given to a female child born during this same time. Some Efik names indicate an individual's position/rank in the family. These include:

Rank	Male	Female
1 st born child	Akpan	Adiaha
2 nd born child	Udo	Udunwan
3 rd born child	Udoudo	Udunwan-Udunwan
3 rd generation	Ita	—
4 th generation	Inang	—

Among the Efik, the circumstance surrounding a child's birth could be events which have no direct bearing on the child but on his/her parents' experience and social habit. A family which has experienced the death of a number of its children may name the child who survives 'Nyong' (derived from [yon] –to roam). This name along with 'Ndiyo/Andiyo'(derived from [yo]-to roam/ wander about) equate with the Yoruba "amutorunwa" names which Oduyoye (2001, p.85) says are circumstantial and, therefore, determined. These names in addition to giving information about infant mortality rate in the family which they are borne, also could insinuate the waywardness of the child's father or mother, thus drawing attention to the parents' life style. Efik birth names just as such names in other societies, are therefore dependent on the circumstances which surround the birth of the child and so cannot be influenced because they state the obvious.

4.2 Real Name (Usio enying/Ata enying)

This refers to the name an individual is given during the naming ceremony mentioned above. The name on this occasion is referred to as 'ata enying' which means 'real name'. Factors which determine the giving of the name are the individual's kinship or genealogy, the natural environment, the family's religious practices and the family's social relationships.

4.2.1 Kinship/Blood Relationship

Real names, among the Efik, confirm Nair's (1972) assertion of a lineage based social system. The ability of a family to establish its ancestral link to a founding ancestor is a decisive factor in assigning names to its members. Akak (2000) refers to real names based on ancestral descent as 'family name' because such names are given only to descendants of particular lineages/family (ufok/house). In the Efik society, these names are drawn from the family's name-bank. The names are up-dated as the family extends its social relations through marriage, friendship, political or business alliances, etc. Examples include:

Male	Female
Ekeng	Amukwa
Akabom	Nyomo
Oboko	Asari
Asama	Minika
Ikpeme	Mbonko
Eyo	Ekongo

4.2.2 Natural Environment

Aspects of the natural environment also impact on Efik real names. Invaluable or precious objects found in the environment have given rise to names such as "Eme". Eme, a name given only to female children, refers to an object that is priceless, a pearl. The sea is equally significant in Efik culture from the perspectives of religion and economy. The people were/are a coastal people who earned their living mostly by maritime trade. The names 'Inyang' (sea) and 'Esuk' (beach) make reference to this. "Inyang" also has religious implications which will be discussed under religious factors. The fact of their being a mercantile people is captured in the name "Anwaurua" (market place).

From the environment also, two animals stand out in the manner they impact on the Efik naming system.

These are bull (enang) and cat (anwa). The bull is admired for its height, weight and strength, while the cat is admired for its gentility, agility and beauty. These qualities endear these animals to the people. These admirable qualities are implied in assigning the names “Enang” and “Anwa” to children. The names, however, are given only to female children among the Efik.

4.2.3 Religion

Some Efik real names/ata enyin reflect the religious inclination of the people. These names portray what Awoonor (1975, p.54) refers to as “the very complex inter-relationships and interdependence between things (material or matter) and spirit (gods and deities)”. Names associated with religion among the Efik are traceable to the ndem worship which was common in the society. In the Efik cosmos, as noted by Aye (2000), there exist some supreme being ‘Etinyin Abasi’ and his wife ‘Ekanyin Abasi’. Between them and man are smaller gods/deities which are known as ndem. The common Efik ndem was/is the ndem mmon – the deity/god associated with water (the sea) from where they (Efik) derive their source of livelihood. Efik names such as ‘Ekpenyong’ and ‘Ekanem’ are derived from ‘Ekpenyong Abasi’ and ‘Ekanem Abasi’, the male and female water deities/gods respectively. Other names related to the sea gods are Inyang, Anansa, and Ndem/Andem. Names such as “Ukpong” (soul) and “Ekpo” (spirit), which are common among the different Efik houses/family also have religious implications. They are linked to the belief in reincarnation, which ultimately, underlies ancestral veneration. Other names with religious undertones are:

Oku	-	Priest
Abasi-anwan	-	female deity/god
Ndem/Andem	-	deity/god
Mutanda	-	a deity
Idem	-	a sacred object
Adim	-	a religious cult

One other religious factor which has greatly influenced the selection of Efik personal names is the Ekpe cult. Aye (2000) has noted that the Ekpe cult is associated with animism – the worship of animals. The animal in this case is the leopard which is called “Ekpe” in Efik. Aye (2000, p.70) records that “the leopard itself [which] name the fraternity adopts is [an] enchanting beautiful and nimble animal, though fierce and dangerous”. He goes further to assert that:

Originally, Ekpe was for religious purpose but as old Calabar community became complicated owing to the new wealth which the early trade with Europeans brought, it was quickly adapted to fulfil other economic and civil functions (Aye, 2000, p.70).

Some Efik names are drawn from the Ekpe worship and Ekpe titles. Such names include:

Ekpe	–	to celebrate the characteristics of the animal itself
Eyamba	–	the highest Ekpe title.
Ise	–	an Ekpe Grade
Idem	–	the Ekpe masquerade/ the symbol of Ekpe
Nakanda	–	to reflect the feather (ntang nkanda) which initiates stick in their hair or on their cap

It should be noted that given or real names cannot be given arbitrarily. Every Efik family has a name bank from which they are drawn. The selection of names, however, is determined by the paternal relations who by tradition are the name givers and who must have their names considered first. It has been observed that the real name (Usio enying/Ata enying) issue among the Efik is significant socio-politically and historically. It enables one to easily place the Efik person among his/her kin. Some real names/ or combinations of such are drawn from name banks which are peculiar to certain families in particular Efik communities or towns. Examples of these include:

Creek Town (Obio oko)

Male	Female
Itam	Amayo
Amboni	Ako
Aye	Edisua

Henshaw Town (Nsidun)

Effanga	Nyomo
Ewa	Ayimo
Okoyo	Ate

Duke Town (Atakpa)

Akabom	Ekpa
Antigha	Anyin
Orok	Asari

Essien Town (Obutong)

Eso	Amukwa
Offiong	Onono
Essien	

Ikoneto (Mbiabo)

Ani	
Ukotebi	Uyi
Eton	

Eniong

Ikpeme	Aruk
Asanye	Amaku
Onoyom	Awat

Adiabo

Asako	Asa
Inok	Asido

The names therefore make it easy to know the particular Efik town or community where the name bearer comes from.

4.3 Enying Ufok/ Udori enying

Enying ufok/ udori enying in the Efik culture is not regarded as “ata enying” or real/given name. This means that the individual cannot when asked for his/her name mention the “enying ufok” which translates “house name” or “a name used in the house”. Enyin ufok is regarded as “Udori enyin”, which translates “a name placed on the individual” or “an added name”. Since the Efik are very keen on the tradition of preserving their genealogies, one of the ways this is done is through the repetition of already existing names in the family. This means that children born into Efik families are given names which are traceable to the founding fathers or mothers of the particular families concerned or their siblings, friends or associates. Children whose names are drawn from the family name bank will have other names added to their names to enable other members of the family call them without the fear of being disrespectful (not to present bearers of the names but) to the patriarchs, matriarchs or older kins whose names have been preserved for posterity and recycled in the family. The added names or “udori enying” equally indicate the relationship of the forebear to the rest of the family. This is evidenced in names such as:

Male		Female	
Eteyen	- father of the child	Mmaete/Nnete/Ekaete	- father's mother
Eteakamba	- big father/grand father	Ekaeka/Nnenne/Nne	- mother's mother/grand mother
Ufanete	- father's friend	Ufaneka/Mmaufan	- mother's friend
Kokoete	- father's namesake	Kokoeka/Kokomma	- mother's namesake
Etenne	- mother's father	Eteanwan	- literally a "female" father (usually given to females who bear names ascribed to males)
Ebenne	- mother's husband	Yeyen	- grand child
Etinyin/Etete	- father's father	Mma/Nne/Nene/Nnene	- mother

Sometimes, also, "udori enying" may involve the addition of "ete" to a male's given/real name or "mma /nne" to a female's given/real name for the purpose of showing respect. For this, we have as examples:

Male	Female
Ekpe Ete	Mma Effiom
Ete Mkpang	Mma Aruk
Ete Ekeng	Mma Anyin

Birth names, particularly those which signify one's position in the family are only used as enyin ufok (house name) among the Efik people. Examples include:

Adiaha	-	1 st daughter
Adiaha-adiaha	-	1 st daughter of the first daughter
Adiaha Akpan	-	1 st daughter of the 1 st son
Adiaha Udo	-	1 st daughter of the 2 nd son
Adiaha Ita	-	3 rd in the line of 1 st daughters
Akpan nyin	-	Our 1 st son
Akpan Adiaha	-	1 st son of the 1 st daughter
Udunwan	-	2 nd daughter

4.4 Nditik Enying

Nditik Enying equates with sobriquets or nick names. Oduoye (2000) views sobriquets as "pet names" or oriki in Yoruba. He argues that an Oriki expresses the hope or aspiration of name givers. The oriki among the Yoruba people is intended to stimulate a male child towards heroic acts, whereas the female child's oriki extols her character and beauty.

Essien (1986, p.83) sees "nditik enying" among the Ibibio people as "a means of endearment". He asserts that "nditik enying" is a name "...other members or friends of the family may give the child...as a sign of affection for the entire family". In the Efik society, however, nditik enying could equally be given to the individual by his/her parents or the individual himself/herself could pick his/her nickname. The common practice is for the individual to pick a nickname for himself/herself but the parents and others give him/ her a pet name. The other Efik terms for "nditik enying" are "enyin uko" (names that indicate bravery or skill) and "enyin akparawa" (name associated with one's youth). These names are acquired as a result of one's occupation, colour of the skin, physical characteristics, attitude or mannerism, among others. They could also be drawn from wise sayings, proverbs and mythical characters, including animals with superb physical characteristics. Examples of "nditik enyin" include:

Ofum osoS/Oyobio	-	(from "ofum oson awak nkok eto" meaning thunder storm which breaks the bough of trees)
Okut uko	-	(from 'okut uko odon ofon' meaning a very brave or fearless person)
Okpo ekpe	-	(a type of hard wood)
Afia Nko	-	(Nko the fair skinned)
Okon Ekpi	-	(Okon the tapper)
Owo edi owo	-	(insinuating the uncertainty of human behaviour)
Ayamurua	-	(a trader)
Uyai	-	(beauty)

As Oduyoye (1997) has noted of the Yoruba Oriki, the Efik nditik enyin may become institutionalized as personal names. For this Oduyoye (1977, pp.5-7) asserts that:

The use of attributive names is so common that many children are better known by it than their real names. Some do not even know their own real names when the attributive is so popular.

It should be noted that “nditik enying” is never derogatory. It is always honorific and for some, as noted by Oduyoye (2001, p.57), “it is considered impertinent for a younger person to call an elder by his/her Oriki or pet name”. This makes the use of the “nditik enying”, in some cases, restricted to age/peer group.

5. Impact of Language Contact on Efik Names

Of much influence on the socio-historical significance of the Efik naming system is the impact of the contact between the Efik and people from other linguistic communities, including the Europeans, especially the English. This has far-reaching implications on Efik personal names. It resulted in:

1. The anglicization of Efik names
2. The modification of the tonal structure of Efik names
3. The adoption of foreign names

Nair (1972, p.287) has observed that the distinctiveness of the Efik “is due to European influence which was brought to bear on the Efik much earlier than their neighbours further away from the coast.” He equally notes that this resulted in Efik names becoming “more anglicized in form than either Ibibio or Annang names.”

5.1 The Anglicization of Efik Names

The contact between the Efik people and European traders and missionaries led to the corruption/modification of a few Efik names as a result of the inability of the Europeans, especially, and others to pronounce such names correctly. Nair (1972, p.287) asserts that these names include:

Ene	-	Henry
Ansa/Nsa	-	Henshaw
Asibong	-	Archibong
Akabom	-	Cobham
Edem	-	Adam
Effiom	-	Ephraim
Okon	-	Hogan
Ekpenyong	-	Young
Ndanyonmon	-	Damong
Orok	-	Duke

The anglicized form therefore is regarded as the variant form of the real or actual name. For the families who bear these names, the two forms have been used interchangeably. For some families, however, the Anglicized forms have been institutionalized as family names and, therefore, can only be used as surnames.

We have observed that the preference for the use of the anglicized forms by Efik people who bear such forms is as a result of the socio-political and economic histories associated with the persons whose names were corrupted /modified. Rather than see these (names) as indicative of the superior-inferior, high-low status of the European-African relationship, such names were/ are seen as the celebration of the importance of such persons in the socio-political, economic, and religious spheres of their communities. To these can be added names such as; “Eyo Second”, “Eyo Honesty”, “Fuller”, “Ironbar”, and “Yellow Duke”.

5.2 The Modification of the Tonal Structure of Efik Names

One other impact of the contact between the Efik people and people from other language groups is the modification of the tonal structure/ pattern of some Efik names. This affects the pronunciation of such names. Nair (1972, p.287) notes that “Europeans, who found it difficult to pronounce Efik names, modified them in spelling and pronunciation to suit their convenience.” This trend is also reported by Essien (1986, p.77) whose study of the impact of English on Ibibio names led to the conclusion that “very often, original tonal patterns in names are changed and approximated somewhat to the English stress pattern”. This, he contends, is done by the placement of “a high tone on the first syllable and a low tone on the second syllable of such names”, thus, making these names “sound more like English names” as a result of the change in the tonal pattern and, therefore, in the pronunciation of the names. The modification of the tonal pattern which affects the pronunciation of names is equally noticeable in some Efik names with two or three syllables. Examples of these include:

Efik pronunciation		Modified tonal pattern
Asuquo/Asukwo	-	Asuquo/Asukwo
Ékeng	-	Ekeng
Essien	-	Essien
Ekpenyong5	-	Ekpenyong
Ekpo	-	Ekpo
Ibok	-	Ibok
Nyong	-	Nyong

Essien (1986, p.77 & 2000) observe this trend in Ibibio names and argues that "...this phenomenon is, particularly, observed when the names are preceded by some English titles such as "Mr., Mrs., Dr., Barrister". This is equally true of Efik names except that in the case of these, the trend is also observed when such names are used as surnames.

5.3 The Adoption of Foreign Names by Efik People

The Adoption of foreign names by the Efik predates the coming of Europeans to Calabar. The Efik have always adopted names from other communities, especially, when people from such communities have impacted on the Efik either as friends, marriage partners, business partners, political associates/allies, immigrants or asylum seekers. This accounts for why a number of names regarded as Efik names are found among other language groups. These include African names such as Bulley, Duker, Kusi, Amisah, Messeh, Mensah, Owoo, Kofi, Nyanibo and non-African ones like O'neil, O'dwyer, Le Nelson, Ballantyne, Solomon, Slessor, among others. For this phenomenon, however, special mention must be made regarding the activity of Christian missionaries, and thus ultimately of the church in the adoption of foreign names among the Efik. Many Efik families had willingly adopted the names of missionaries and mission workers and given same to their children as real name/ Usio enying or ata enying. There are yet others who were compelled by the church missions, as part of the evangelization process, to adopt foreign (usually European) names or names from the Bible which together were termed Christian names. Adopted names among the Efik are usually given as first names and some have been institutionalized, in some families, as names with genealogical implications. These names are now used as family names with a history or tradition behind them.

Conclusion

We have found the study of Efik names very interesting indeed socio-culturally, politically and historically. We have found Efik names to be very significant in the sense that some names are traceable to the family genealogy to which the individual belongs. Unlike some African societies where names give insights into the language, Efik names give insights into the culture and history of the people. Efik names do not give much information on Efik language. Oduyoye (2000) and other scholars on African names assert that some African names enable a person to learn some African languages. The Efik culture does not encourage the giving of names with meaning. As a slave-holding society (see 2.0 above), the Efik people differentiated themselves from the slave descendants by not "having" meanings assigned to their names. Thus, Efik real names (ata enying) have very insignificant semantic import. The social history of the society therefore, places a lot of constraints on the naming system, as we have shown in the study.

We will conclude by stating that the system responds to social changes and this invariably is reflected in the names that indigenous Efik people bear in contemporary times. The impact of modernity and Christianity in particular, in contemporary times have brought about noticeable changes in the naming pattern in Efik communities. The Efik traditionally were known not to be concerned about the meaning of their names because of the stigma associated with names with meanings. What was important in names was the genealogical, socio-cultural or political implications of such names. Some Efik people are now seen to question their names as not having semantic import like other African names. Some have been known to change their names, particularly those names which are seen to be associated with traditional religious beliefs or worship. This act, though seemingly unimportant, has far reaching implications on the Efik naming practices as well as highlighting the corrosive effect of culture contact on the Efik society.

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