

## A comparative semantic analysis of personal names in Igbo and Tiv

Philomena Ijeoma Olumba<sup>1</sup>, Stephanie Terna<sup>2</sup>, Torkuma Tyonande Damkor<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1,2&3</sup>Department of Languages and Linguistics, Benue State University, Makurdi, Nigeria.  
[olumbaijeoma2018@gmail.com](mailto:olumbaijeoma2018@gmail.com)<sup>1</sup>, [stphystephy453@gmail.com](mailto:stphystephy453@gmail.com)<sup>2</sup>, [dankortorkuma@gmail.com](mailto:dankortorkuma@gmail.com)<sup>3</sup>

\*Corresponding author

Received: 05 June 2022 | Accepted: 26 July 2022 | Published: 11 August 2022.

**Abstract:** The study entitled 'A comparative semantic analysis of personal names in Igbo and Tiv' is relevant because the available literature at the disposal of the researchers do not treat the semantics of Igbo and Tiv personal names from the comparative perspective. Hence, the present study is designed to examine the personal names in Igbo and Tiv with the aim of discovering the similarities and differences between Igbo and Tiv personal naming systems. The study is predicated on LoCatsro (2012) notion of Anthropological Pragmatics. LoCatsro notion holds that the interpretation of semantic elements and properties are based on cultural peculiarities that can only be understood using the link between culture and contextual meaning of words. The conceptual framework supports the present study because it accounts for the existing personal names in Igbo and Tiv. The personal names in Igbo and Tiv, which are means of group and individual identities, usually reflect the experiences, wishes, religious beliefs, expectations, opinions, advice and caution among the peoples. The findings of the study show that the naming systems for the Igbo and Tiv personal names share some similarities based on the belief in God Almighty, philosophy about life, importance of children, circumstances surrounding the birth of a baby or the parents at the time of the childbirth. On the contrary, the naming systems of Igbo and Tiv differ due to certain beliefs that are peculiar to the Igbo and the Tiv peoples respectively.

**Keywords:** Culture, Ethnography, Semantics, Personal name, Tiv

**Biographical notes:** **Philomena Ijeoma Olumba** is PhD student in Linguistics at Benue State University, Makurdi-Nigeria. She has been teaching English Language and Igbo Language in Nigerian schools. Her area of specialisation is Sociolinguistics, and her area of interest is Syntax. She has published two papers in international journals.

**Stephanie Terna** bagged BA and MA Linguistics. She is doing PhD studies in Linguistics at Benue State University Makurdi, Nigeria. Her area of specialisation is Linguistic Stylistics, and her areas of interest are Oral Literature and Discourse Analysis.

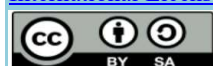
**Torkuma Tyonande Damkor** obtained BA and MA in Linguistics. He is, presently doing an academic research in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the award of PhD in Linguistics at Benue State University, Makurdi-Nigeria. He specialises in Morphology and Syntax, and his areas of interest are: Phonology, Discourse Analysis, Pragmatics and Socio-linguistics. He has been teaching English Language in Nigerian Secondary Schools since 2009. Presently, he teaches English Language at St John Bosco Secondary School, Doma, Nasarawa State, Nigeria. He has published a lot of papers in local and international journals.

### 1. Introduction

The interwoven connection between language and culture cannot be overemphasised because in some situations language influences culture while in others culture influences language. Hence, we would say that language is a feature of culture or, better still language is the medium through which culture is passed down from one generation to another and as such, it is not an overstatement to say that language sustains culture. The contact that a people have with another group of people with a different language and culture can influence the culture and the use of language by members of the ethnic groups.

Naming of children in Africa is determined by various circumstances such as tradition, political affiliation, religious inclination, social interaction, ambition and so many others surrounding the parents of the child in question. Hence, naming in Igbo and Tiv is determined by tradition, religious belief, social interaction, political loyalty and ambition. An Igbo or Tiv family that believes so much in the powers of traditional religion names its children in a manner that the

**Research Article:** This article is published by *Jozac Publishers* in the *Journal of Languages, Linguistics and Literary Studies (JLLLS)*. This article is distributed under a Creative Commons [Attribution \(CC BY-SA 4.0\) International License](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/4.0/). **Conflict of Interest:** The author/s declared no conflict of interest.



belief of such a family is manifested through the names of the family members. On the whole, names are consciously given to children in Igbo and Tiv nations.

Saville-Troke (2003) asserts that ethnography deals with the description and analysis of culture. Palmer (1996) opines that semantics studies meaning through individual languages. According to Denham and Lobeck (2013), semantics is concerned with studying the rules of meaning based on sounds and signs in a particular language. Hence, semantics could be defined as the study of meaning which is language specific.

Geertz (1973) asserts that culture is a pattern of doing things transferred from one generation to another among a people while meaning refers to the properties of an object which suggest or point to something else. This implies that cultural meaning is hinged on the relationship between the patterns of doing things by a people. Then, meaning could be regarded as the message that is signalled by the patterns among such a people. He further states that culture features complex meanings because the meanings are embodied in symbols.

Igbo refers to a people who are indigenes of Nigeria. According to Adibe (2009), Igbo are a major tribe in Nigeria and occupy the South Eastern states of Abia, Anambra, Ebonyi, Enugu and Imo as well parts of Delta, Akwa-Ibom, and Rivers states in the South-South region of Nigeria. Notwithstanding, the Igbos are resident in all the states in Nigeria and in other countries due to their business activities in order to earn a living. According to Udu (2009), 'Tiv' is the nomenclature referring to the ancestral father of the Tiv people, the language of the people and the people whose native language is Tiv. Adzer (2016) confirms the above interpretation of the nomenclature 'Tiv' by submitting that 'Tiv' refers to the ancestral father of Tiv race, members of the ethnic group who are the children of Tiv and the language of the ethnic group. She also submits that 'Tiv is a Semi-Bantu linguistic affinity' and Tiv language has its native speakers as natives of Benue, Nasarawa, Cross River, Plateau and Taraba States respectively, however, the largest number of Tiv people are indigenes of Benue State.

There are existing works on Igbo and Tiv personal names but no available literature at the disposal of the researchers shows a comparative analysis of the personal names in Igbo and Tiv languages. Hence, the present study is designed to examine the personal names in Igbo and Tiv with the aim of discovering the similarities and differences between Igbo and Tiv personal naming systems. The study is predicated on LoCatsro (2012) notion of Anthropological Pragmatics. LoCatsro notion holds that the interpretation of semantic elements and properties are based on cultural peculiarities that can only be understood using the link between culture and contextual meaning of words. The conceptual framework supports the present study because it accounts for the existing personal names in Igbo and Tiv. The personal names in Igbo and Tiv, which are means of group and individual identities, usually reflect the experiences, wishes, religious beliefs, expectations, opinions, advice and caution among the peoples. The framework has helped in examining the meaning and circumstances surrounding the personal naming systems among the Igbo and Tiv peoples.

## **2. Review of previous works on Igbo and Tiv personal names**

Nnandi-Eruchalu (2018) carried out a study titled 'A socio-linguistic study of the emerging trends in Igbo personal names. The aim of the study was to examine the societal factors responsible for naming children in Igbo culture. The previous study portrays that circumstances such as religious beliefs, importance attached to having a child and the views of the Igbos about wealth influence the naming system among the Igbo people. Ezeudo, Aboh and Idika (2021) did a morphosyntactic analysis of Onitsha personal names. The study assessed the syntactic and morphological structure of some Onitsha personal names (OPN). The findings of the study show that clipping, prefixing and suffixing in an orderly manner characterise the personal names such that, the meaning of the names are interpreted based on their structural components. However, the previous study was focused on a morpho-syntactic analysis of Onitsha personal names.

Onumajuru (2016) carried out a semantic and pragmatic analysis of Igbo names. The study was designed to examine the structure of Igbo names and analyse their meanings. The findings of the study show that names in Igbo are philosophical and some of the names are so complex that only the family of the bearer can decode the message passed across through the names. However, the previous study only focused on the analysis of Igbo personal names. Mmadike (2014) carried out an anthropological study of Àlà names in Igbo and the aim of the study was to examine the fate of Àlà names in Igbo culture. The findings of the study show that Àlà anthroponyms are found in Igbo, and the belief of Igbo people in traditional religion and the coming of Christianity and the new wave of Christian fundamentalism make the people uninterested in Àlà names. Despite the relevance of the previous study, it centred on Àlà personal names in Igbo.

Mensah, Rowan, Tiav and Ishima (2019) underwent a study titled 'Aspects of traditional Tiv naming practices: A sociocultural account'. The aim of the study was to examine the interaction of the Tiv people naming system with their sociocultural experience and physical environment. The study was anchored on Goddard's Ethnoprismatic Paradigm which deals with the link between cultural and contextual meanings in the interpretation of language. The findings of the study show that there is a close link between Tiv sociocultural dynamics and its personal naming system. The previous study was limited in scope so could not cover the similarities and differences between Igbo and Tiv personal names.

Udu (2019) carried out a study on the topic 'Names as Repositories of Worldview: Empirical Evidence from the Morphological and Semantic Analysis of Tiv Personal Names'. The aim of the study was to assess the Tiv worldview as expressed in personal names. The findings of the study show that Tiv philosophy and worldview are expressed in

personal names of the Tiv people. Mensah and Ishima (2020) studied sentential names in Tiv and the aim of the study was to discover the extent to which names as communicative systems can deepen our knowledge of the grammar of the Tiv language. The study discovers that sentential names in Tiv are basically simple sentences which are formed by complex morphological structures involving compounding, affixation and agglutination given the rich inflectional properties of the language. However, the previous study focused on the Tiv personal names.

### **3. Research methodology**

Data for the study were collected using the researchers' introspection as native speakers of Igbo and Tiv respectively. Owing to the evidence of previous studies on personal names in Igbo and Tiv, data for the study were also collected by picking some words from journal articles and textbooks on Igbo and Tiv personal names. The researcher contacted five native speakers of Tiv and five native speakers of Igbo in order to validate the collected data. The analysis of the study was based on the objectives of the study.

### **4. Presentation and analysis of data**

#### **Personal names in Igbo**

#### **4.1. Names portraying the experiences, emotions and opinions of parents prior to the birth of the child**

1a. Iheanacho 'what is being sought after' 1b. Somadina 'I shall not live alone' 1c. Kamsinyochukwu 'God has done exactly what I asked from him' 1d. Onuegbunam 'gossips/insults will not stop me' 1e. Chimamanda 'my God will never fail' 1f. Chinasaramokwu 'God responds to all that have been said about me' 1g. Onwuegbuzina 'death do not kill again' 1h. Umeziluike 'loses do not torment me further' 1i. Nnanna 'father's father', 1j. Obinna 'father's heart' 1k. Uzondo 'way to life'.

##### **4.1.1. Discussion**

The data above show that personal names in Igbo reflect the experiences, opinions and emotions of the parents prior to the time the child is born as presented in 1a, 1b, 1c, 1d, 1e, 1f and so on. For example, 1c portrays that the parents of the child bearing the name were highly grateful to God, specifically for the gift of the child. 1d portrays that the parents are determined to do or achieve a particular purpose in life. All these reflect the experiences, opinions and emotions of the parents in consonance with the LoCatsro's notion that the interpretation of semantic elements and properties are based on cultural peculiarities that can only be understood using the link between culture and contextual meaning of words.

#### **4.2. Names reflecting belief in God Almighty**

2a. Uzochukwu 'God's way' 2b. Chinedu 'God leads' 2c. Chikwe 'if God agrees'. 2d. Nwachi 'God's child' 2e. Chidiebere 'God is merciful' 2f. Amalachukwu 'Grace of God' 2g. Odochi 'mercy shown by God' 2h. Akachukwu 'hand of God' 2i. Ikechukwu 'God's power'.

##### **4.2.1. Discussion**

The data above show that Igbo names reflect the belief of the Igbo people in the supremacy of God almighty as demonstrated in 2a, 2b, 2c, 2d and many more. In 2a, 2b and 2c, the data show that the Igbo people demonstrate their loyalty to the will of God and in 2d, the people recognise divine protection and providence upon their lives. The personal naming system above is a clear instance that children are christened in the Igbo culture based on the semantic elements in relation to the belief of the people in God almighty.

#### **4.3. Names praising the beauty of babies**

3a. Ugonma 'the beautiful eagle' 3b. Ugonna 'the eagle of her father' 3c. Olaedo 'jewel of gold' 3d. Olanma 'ornament' 3e. Akwaeke 'the egg of the python' 3f. Akwaugo 'the egg of the eagle' 3g. Mkpulumma 'the seeds of beauty' 3h. Agbomma 'epitome of beauty'.

##### **4.3.1. Discussion**

The above data show that the Igbo people have so much love for their children, thereby tend to praise the beauty of the children by giving them such names as presented in 3a, 3b, 3c, 3d, 3e et cetera. In 3a, the child is compared to an eagle which implies that the beauty of the child is highly charming. The love that the Igbo people have for children plays a role in their naming system which is a proof of LoCatsro's framework which holds that the way of life of a people determines their choice of semantic elements and interpretation.

#### **4.4. Names throwing a question to the society**

4a. Asimonyekwuna 'have I asked anybody not to talk?' 4b. Ginigaeme 'what can happen?' 4c. Onyekamike 'who is stronger than I?' 4d. Ibuchukwu 'Are you God?' 4e. Obuaeme 'am I the cause?' 4f. Amachechukwu 'do we know God's mind?' 4g. Onyekaozuuru 'who is contented in life?' 4h. Onyemaechi 'who knows tomorrow?' 4i. Onyebuchi 'who is God?' 4j. Onyekachi 'who is greater than God?' 4k. Onyemauchukwu 'who knows the mind of God?' 4l. Onyekamma 'who is better?'

#### **4.4.1. Discussion**

Igbo names as presented in the above data portray that the Igbo people name their children based on the circumstances surrounding them by the time the child is born. The parents use such names as presented in 4a, 4b, 4c, 4d et cetera to advise the society in order to have a change of attitude, perception and ideologies among the people. The data show that naming system in Igbo supports the claim by LoCatsro whose notion is that semantic elements and properties as well as their interpretation are predicated on culture.

#### **4.5. Names depicting four market days of 'Eke', 'Orie/Oye', 'Afo' and 'Nkwo'**

5a.Okeke/Nweke 'male/female child born on Eke day' 5b. Mgbeke/ Nwanyieke 'female child born on Eke day' 5c. Nwoye/Okoye 'female/male child born on Orie/Oye day' 5d.Mgboye 'female child born on Orie/Oye day' 5e.Nwafo/Okafo 'female/male child born on Afo day' 5f. Mgbafo 'female child born on Afo day' 5g Nwankwo/Okonkwo 'female/male child born on Nkwo day' 5h.Mgbankwo 'female child born on Nkwo day'.

#### **4.5.1. Discussion**

The data show that the personal naming system in Igbo recognises their market days which are 'Eke', 'Orie/Oye', 'Afo' and 'Nkwo' as a way of preserving and promoting such markets through the people. The data; 5a, 5b, 5c, 5d among others show the market days on which the people bearing such names were born into the world. Through such names, the bearers remember their birthdays and the naming tells the society that the markets are important to the Igbo people and must be treated as such.

#### **4.6. Names portraying the importance of wealth**

6a. Akukalia 'when wealth is too much' 6b. Akuabata 'wealth has arrived' 6c. Akunna 'wealth of the father' 6d. Ubabike 'wealth is strength' 6e.Akajiaku ' a rich person' 6f.Ononjuaku 'one in the midst of plenty wealth' 6g.Obianujuaku 'one who was born to the family at a time of plenty'. 6h.Ugboaku 'vehicle that carries money' 6i.Iteego 'pot of money' 6j. Ojiegonekwu 'one who has money has the final say'.

#### **4.6.1. Discussion**

The data show that the Igbo people attach a lot of importance to wealth, therefore, they demonstrate the feelings through their naming system as is presented in 6a, 6b, 6c, 6d et cetera. This pattern of naming children portrays that the way of life of a people determines their choice of semantic elements and interpretation. The naming system is in consonance with LoCatsro's notion that semantic elements and properties as well as their interpretation are predicated on the way of life of the people.

#### **4.7. Names portraying the importance of children**

7a. Nwakaego 'child is more valuable than money' 7b.Nwabundo 'child is shelter' 7c.Nwamaka 'child is precious' 7d.Nwakanma 'child is better'.

#### **4.7.1. Discussion**

The data portray children are very dear to the Igbo people as presented in 7a, 7b, 7c, and 7d. The naming system suggests that the Igbo people can do everything to get a child and when the child is born, adequate care must be given to them since bearing a child is a priceless gift from God. In 7b, the child is considered to be the shelter in which the parents can hide from rain and sun. The notion that children are important is reflected in the culture of the Igbo people and their personal naming system which agrees with LoCatsro's notion that culture and context have a role to play in the naming system of the Igbo people.

#### **4.8. Names representing the Philosophy and Worldview of Igbo People about Life**

8a. Onwuegbuchula 'premature death should not come'8b. Ilokanuno 'enemies are people from one's household'8c. Udokanma 'peace is better' 8d.Igwebuike 'there is strength in number' 8e.Onwudinjo 'death is evil' 8f.Adaora 'the daughter of the people'8g. Nkiruka 'better days are ahead' 8h. Ndubuisi 'it is life that matters' 8i. Ekwutosi 'do not condemn others'.

#### **4.8.1. Discussion**

The data portray that certain names in Igbo are meant to express the views of the parents about life and societal happenings as can be seen in 8a, 8b, 8c, 8d, 8e among others. In 8g, the name expresses the hope of the parents for a better living in the fullness of time and in 8i, the society is cautioned against condemning one another. The Igbo naming system is closely linked with the way of life of the Igbo people, thereby the present study supports the notion by LoCatsro's notion that semantic elements and properties as well as their interpretation are predicated on culture.

#### **Personal names in Tiv**

#### **4.9. Names portraying Kinship/Clan Link**

9a. Tyônàndè 'paternal clan has burnt', 9b. Tyôvìhì 'paternal clan has destroyed' 9c. Tyôdòò 'paternal clan is good', 9d. Tyôyìmà 'paternal clan has saved' 9e. Tyôwasé 'Paternal clan has helped', 9f. Ígbàdòò 'maternal clan is good', 9g. Ígbàwásé 'maternal clan has helped', 9h. Igbàyimà 'maternal clan has saved and 9i. Tyôbèè 'paternal clan has vanished'.

#### **4.9.1. Discussion**

The data show that names in Tiv reflect the importance, value and power of the clanship or kinship over the child or parents of the child as presented in 9a, 9b, 9c, and 9d and so on. The culture of Tiv people highly recognises the importance of the paternal blessing and protection upon a child as persevered through their naming system. The Tiv naming system is in consonance with the LoCatsro's notion that the interpretation of semantic elements and properties are based on cultural peculiarities that can only be understood using the link between culture and contextual meaning of words.

#### **4.10. Names portraying Natural Objects**

10a. Awèn 'stones' 10b. Ívé 'ogbonu' 10c. Gbèndá 'road' 10d. Tòhò 'Bush' 10e. Gbóúgh 'stick' 10f. Kór 'rope' 10g. Agbèndè 'scales' 10h. Iwen 'stone' 10i. Vàndè 'rock'.

##### **4.10.1. Discussion**

The above data show that Tiv people name their children after natural objects as presented in 10a, 10b, 10c, 10d et cetera. The naming system aligns the child bearing the name with the strength and mystery of the objects as seen in 10f, 10g, 10h and 10i. The naming system portrays that the naming system is culturally dependent, and the Tiv people appreciate the beauty of nature and identify themselves with it through naming their children after the objects.

#### **4.11. Names portraying Royal Status/Intention/Recognition**

11a. Tòr 'Chief' 11b. Torkuma 'suitable for chief' 11c. Tòrdùè 'Chief has emerged' 11d. Tòrwúà 'Chief has killed' 11e. Tòryímà 'Chief has saved' 11f. Tòrkwàsè 'Queen' 11g. Tòrsàà 'having desire for chiefdom'.

##### **4.11.1. Discussion**

The data above portray that Tiv personal names reflect the desire, recognition and love of the Tiv people for chiefdom as presented in 11a, 11b, 11c, 11d et cetera. The chiefdom personal names in Tiv language begin with 'tor' and the second syllable of the word reflects the meaning in connection with chiefdom. The naming system accounts for the circumstances which could be desire, calamity, help or fate, surrounding the issue of chiefdom among the Tiv.

#### **4.12. Names portraying Mystical Power**

12a. Ifàn 'curse' 12b. Tsáv 'witchcraft' 12c. Ishòlibò 'sin' 12d. Tsàvhèmbà 'witchcraft is superior' 12e. Tsáv-wúà 'witchcraft has killed' 12f. Tsáv-tim 'witchcraft has destroyed' 12g. Tsáv-mbù 'there is witchcraft' 12h. Tsáv-ngèè 'witchcraft is widespread'.

##### **4.12.1. Discussion**

The data above represent the recognition of mystical powers among the Tiv people as presented in 12a, 12b, 12c, 12d, et cetera. The Tiv people believe that certain bad happenings are as a result of witchcraft, thereby the naming system among the Tiv people features mystical power names. The belief in the powers of witchcraft is passed down from generation to generation through the naming system. Hence, bad experiences befalling the parents of a child could make them name their children with *tsav* 'witchcraft' names.

#### **4.13. Names expressing Assertion/Question**

13a. Órfétàrgà 'nobody knows what will happen tomorrow' 13b. Sàànmóyól 'I am rejoicing' 13c. Mvèndàgà 'I have not refused' 13d. Mrùmùm 'I have agreed' 13e. Mngòhòl 'I have accepted' 13f. Vihimgà 'I am not offended' 13g. Shiddò 'It is good again' 13h. Kpadòò 'However, it is good' 13i. Kànhèmbè 'who is superior?' 13j. Ortsèrgà 'Nobody lives forever' 13k. Kánánfé 'who knows' 13l. Ánárúmúm 'who will accept' 13m. Dòókéngér 'good-looking' 13n. Mdòòmkíghír 'the end of beauty' 13o. Kwásédòò 'fine woman'.

##### **4.13.1. Discussion**

The data feature names that make assertions and declarations based on the personal experiences of the parents, their feelings and societal happenings as it is presented in 13a, 13b, 13c, 13d and so on. The naming system reflects that there is a link between semantic elements and the contextual meaning in accordance with the LoCatsro's notion which holds that interpretation of semantic elements and properties are based on cultural peculiarities that can only be understood using the link between culture and contextual meaning of words.

#### **4.14. Names making Plea/Petition**

14a. Zamber 'plea' 14b. Zúngwèm 'pity me' 14c. Wásèm 'help me' 14d. Iwàsèn 'help' 14e. Yimàsè 'help us' 14f. Ìvsè 'fill us' 14g. Ngüzàmbèr 'I am begging' 14h. Vèrsè 'bless us' 14i. Sàlèm 'I desire' 14j. Zúngwènèn 'You should pity' 14k. Ùngwànèn 'You should listen' 14l. Nànèn 'You should give'.

##### **4.14.1. Discussion**

The data show that Tiv people have names which express the desires, hopes, and aspirations such as blessing, forgiveness, gifts and help of the child's parents. The desires of parents could make them give their children such names as presented in 14a, 14b, 14c, 14d, 14e, et cetera. The culture of the Tiv people recognises the importance of

plea, forgiveness, generosity, and as such, the recognition is expressed through the personal naming system of the people.

#### **4.15. Names portraying Socio-cultural Situation/Status**

15a. Ièrén ‘character’ 15b. Shàgbàòr ‘wealthy man’, 15c. Kpàmòr ‘wealthy man’ 15d. Chiàn-òr ‘blessed man’ 15e. Ìshò ‘innocence’ 15f. Shìàdà ‘evidence’ 15g. Tivzuà ‘Tiv people have gathered’ 15h. Tivfà ‘Tiv people know’ 15i. Shàngèvzùà ‘Shàngèvzùà people have gathered’, 15j. Yàvìhì ‘the house is bad’ 15k. Yàdòò ‘the house is good’.

##### **4.15.1. Discussion**

The above data feature names that acknowledge cultural values, good character, unity and justice among the Tiv people. 15a promotes good character, 15b adores social and economic status, 15e promotes justice, 15g promotes or acknowledges unity among the Tiv people. The Tiv naming system is in consonance with the LoCatsro’s notion that the interpretation of semantic elements and properties are based on cultural peculiarities that can only be understood using the link between culture and contextual meaning of words.

#### **4.16. Names portraying occupation**

16a. Sùlé ‘farming’ 16b. Kpèngá ‘trading’ 16c. Ikyôô ‘hunting’ 16d. Sùá ‘fishing’ 16e. Iwà ‘blacksmithing’ 16f. Ishōr ‘dancing’ 16g. Ōrtwèr ‘medical doctor’ 16h. Ōrtèsè ‘pastor’ 16i. Ōrjìr ‘judge’ 16j. Ticà ‘teacher’ 16k. Ōrtōhō ‘hunter’.

##### **4.16.1. Discussion**

The above data show that personal names in Tiv reflect the occupation of the child’s parents as presented in 16a, 16b, 16c, 16d and so on. The people engaged in certain occupations such as farming, trading, hunting, blacksmithing, dancing, herbal medicine and judgement in order to earn a living. Hence, the parents name their children after the occupation of the parents at the time the child was born.

#### **4.17. Names portraying belief in God**

17a. Aòndòyímá ‘God has helped’ 17b. Aòndòngú ‘there is God’ 17c. Aòndòhèmbà ‘God is Supreme’ 17d. Msén ‘Prayer’ 17e. Mséndòò ‘Prayer is good’ 17f. Tér ‘Father/Lord’ 17g. Térngù ‘there is father/Lord’ 17h. Tersoo ‘Lord loves’ 17i. Térúngwá ‘Lord has heard’ 17j. Ter-rumun ‘Lord has answered’.

##### **4.17.1. Discussion**

The data above show that Tiv names reflect the belief of the Tiv people in the supremacy of the almighty God as demonstrated in 17a, 17b, 17c, 17d et cetera. The personal naming system above is a clear instance that children are christened in the Igbo culture based on the semantic elements in relation to the belief of the people. Names in this category show the religious belief of the parents of the child in God and such names usually begin with Aòndò ‘God’, Msen ‘prayer’ and Ter ‘Lord’ as presented in 17a, 17b, 17c, 17d 17e, et cetera.

#### **4.18. Names expressing circumstance surrounding the childbirth or parents of the child**

18a. Msúrshimà ‘comfort’ for a child that has brought joy to the family’ 18b. Yángúchàn ‘home is complicated’ for a child born when you are confronted with complicated issues in the house, 18c. Átsáákáá ‘It must be said after some time’ 18d. Iòrsúlá ‘people have been avoided’, 18e. Iòrpálégh ‘people have avoided’ 18f. Mbáhiín ‘people are offending’, 18g. Mbápùùn ‘people are criticising’ 18h. Mliàmbèè ‘no more cry’ 18i. Àhàngbà ‘laughter is going on’ 18j. Gàndè ‘beyond control’ 18k. Iòrpùù ‘people have criticised’ 18l. Iòrwùèsè ‘people have praised’ 18m. Wámhèmbá ‘child is more valuable’ 18n. Wámđòò ‘child is good’.

##### **4.18.1. Discussion**

The data show that circumstances surrounding the birth of a child or parents of the child could influence the personal name given to the new-born baby. The personal names presented in 18a, 18b, 18c, 18d 18e et cetera portray different circumstances such as mockery, victimisation, cry, criticism, praises among others surrounding the parents at the time the child was born.

#### **4.19. Names expressing Aspirations/ Hope**

19a. Ayàngéáhùngùl ‘it shall be forgotten’ 19b. Avádòò ‘it shall be well’ 19c. Ávákár ‘It will be realised later’ 19d. Áválúmún ‘It will be agreed later’.

##### **4.19.1. Discussion**

The data portray that parents of the child have a hope for better days in the future when the society will celebrate them or treat them with high recognition. In 19a, 19b, 19c and 19d, we can see that personal names serve as a reminder and consolation to the parents of the child that the future has goodies for them and they must live to benefit the goodies.

#### **4.20. Names portraying death and reincarnation**

20a. Kúwúá ‘death has killed’ 20b. Kúyàngé ‘death has prevented’ 20c. Kúhèmbà ‘death is great’ 20d. Kúzèndà ‘death has sent away’ 20e. Tèrhìdè ‘Father has come back’ 20f. Tèrndèr ‘father has resurrected’, 20g. Ngòhìdè ‘mother has come back’ 20h. Kúkàsè ‘death has surrounded’.

#### **4.20.1. Discussion**

The above data show that death is not a friend to the Tiv people and as such, the Tiv people lament how death treats them badly through their personal naming system. Certain names in Tiv represents the wickedness of death to the Tiv people as it is presented in 20a, 20b, 20c, 20d among others. The Tiv culture recognises mourning for the dead since death is no friend of the Tiv people. This notion that the Tiv people have about death, is preserved and passed on from one generation to another through the naming system.

#### **4.21. Borrowed names**

21a. Sèfànú 'Stephen' 21b. Yòhàné 'John' 21c. Yòbù 'Job' 21d. Mòsè 'Moses' 21e. Peteru 'Peter' 21f. Adamu 'Adam' 21g. Yusuf 'Joseph' 21h. Isiàkà 'Isaac' 21i. Ibrahim 'Abraham' 21j. Yàhàyà 'John' 21k. Obàsànjò 'Obasanjo' 21l. Gowon 'Gowon' 21m. Dámkòr 'Danfodio'.

#### **4.21.1. Discussion**

The data above show that borrowed names in Tiv reflect the religious beliefs of the people, personal relationship with people from a different extraction, cultural contact as in 21a, 21b, 21c, 21d, 21k, 21l among others. The borrowed personal names into the Tiv language are nativised such that, they feature the phonology of the Tiv language as presented in 21a, 21b, 21c, 21d et cetera. However, some borrowed personal names maintain the phonology of their origin as in 21g, 21h, 21i, 21j, 21k and 21l. The borrowing of personal names into the Tiv language is influenced by Christianity, Islam, personal relationship and affection that the Tiv people may have for someone from another tribe bearing the borrowed name.

#### **Similarities between Igbo and Tiv personal names**

Igbo personal names portray the experiences, opinions and emotions of the parents prior to the birth of the child as in 1a, 1b, 1c, 1d, 1e et cetera, and the Tiv personal names also reflect same as presented in 13a, 13b, 13c, 13d, 13e, 18a, 18b, 18c, 18d, 18e et cetera. Igbo personal nouns reflect belief in God almighty as presented in 2a, 2b, 2c, 2d, 2e et cetera. The personal names in Tiv also reflect strong belief in God almighty as presented in 17a, 17b, 17c, 17d, et cetera.

Igbo personal names throw a questions to the society as a way of appealing to the conscience of the people as presented in 4a, 4b, 4c, 4d 4e et cetera. The personal names in Tiv also reflect challenging assertions and questions as presented in 13i, 13k and 13l. Igbo personal names emphasise the importance of children as presented in 7a, 7b, 7c and 7d. Personal names in Tiv also reflect the importance of children as presented in 18m and 18n.

Igbo names represent the philosophy and worldview of the people about life as in 8a, 8b, 8c, 8d, 8e et cetera, and similar situation is found in the Tiv language where personal names expressing the aspirations and hopes of the people could be connected with the philosophy and worldview of the Tiv people about life as presented in 13a, 15a, 15b, 15c, 15d, 18c, 19a, 19b, 19c and 19d. Igbo personal names portray emphasis on the beauty of babies as presented in 3a, 3b, 3c and 3d, and some personal names in the Tiv language also emphasise the beauty of babies as presented in 13m, 13n and 13o.

#### **Difference between personal names in Igbo and Tiv**

Personal names in Igbo depict the four markets days as presented in 5a, 5b, 5c, 5d, 5e, 5f but in Tiv, children are not named after market days, rather markets are named after personal names among the Tiv people. Igbo personal names emphasise the importance of wealth as in as presented in 6a, 6b, 6c, 6d, and 6f whereas, personal names in Tiv do not emphasise the importance of wealth. Tiv personal names portray the significance and power of natural objects as presented in 10a, 10b, 10c, 10d, 10e, 10f whereas, such names are not found among the Igbo people. Tiv personal names represent mystical powers as presented in 12a, 12b, 12c, 12d, 12e et cetera whereas, Igbo personal names do not represent mystical powers.

Tiv personal names reflect recognition for kinship or clanship powers as in 9a, 9b, 9c, 9d et cetera but Igbo personal names do not reflect kinship nor clanship. Hence, we would say that Tiv people recognise the importance and role of kinship and clanship in their naming systems whereas, the Igbo do not. In the Tiv naming system, the recognition of royal positions or status takes place as presented in 11a, 11b, 11c, 11d, 11e et cetera but royal positions or status is not recognised in the Igbo naming system. Names portraying mystical powers are found in the Tiv language as presented in 12a, 12b, 12c, 12d, 12e et cetera whereas, such names are not found in the Igbo language.

Personal names are used in the Tiv language to express pleas and petitions as presented in 14a, 14b, 14c 14d et cetera, but such personal names are not found in the Igbo language. Personal names in the Tiv language reflect the occupation of the parents as in 16a, 16b, 16c, 16d, 16e, 16f et cetera whereas, personal names in the Igbo language do not portray the occupation of the parents at the time the child is born.

Tiv personal names reflect aspirations or hopes of the parents as presented in 19a, 19b, 19c and 19d but the Igbo personal names do not express such aspirations. Personal names in the Igbo language portray death as a wicked enemy of the Tiv people as presented in 20a, 20b, 20c, 20d, 20e and also recognise the reincarnation of the dead as in 20f and 20g. The Igbo personal naming system recognises death as evil as presented in 8e but does not reflect reincarnation of the dead. The Tiv naming system portrays borrowed personal names as presented in 21a, 21b, 21c, 21d, 21e et cetera, however such personal names are not found in the Igbo naming system.

## 5. Conclusion

The naming systems for the Igbo and Tiv personal names share some similarity based on their belief in God Almighty, philosophy about life, importance of children, circumstances surrounding the birth of a baby or the parents at the time of the childbirth. On the contrary, the naming systems of Igbo and Tiv differ due to certain beliefs that are peculiar to the Igbo and the Tiv peoples respectively.

The Igbo people express more recognition for wealth more than the Tiv people in the personal naming system. On the other hand, the Tiv people's naming system attaches a lot of recognition to kinship and clanship, whereas, the Igbo people seem not to recognise kinship and clanship in their naming system.

The personal names of Igbo and Tiv people reflects the connection between culture and meaning which is expressed using Igbo and Tiv languages respectively. Hence, personal naming systems of Igbo and Tiv people can be considered as an aspect of ethno-semantics.

## References

- Adibe, G. E. (2009). *Igbo Issues: Values, Chi, Akala Aka, Magic, Agwu and Manipulation of Divinities*. Midfield Publishers Limited.
- Adzer, C. V. (2016). A study of Tiv morphosyntactic relations. Unpublished PhD Thesis Postgraduate School, Benue State University, Makurdi.
- Denham, K., & Lobeck, A. (2013). *Linguistics for everyone: An introduction*. (2nd ed.). Cengage Learning.
- Ezeudo, C. O, Aboh, S. C., & Idika, K.M. (2021). Morphosyntactical analysis of Onitsha personal names. *Journal of Language Teaching and Research*, 12(3), 411-418. doi:<http://dx.doi.org/10.17507/jltr.1203.11>.
- Geertz, G. (1973). *The interpretation of cultures*. Basic Books.
- LoCastro, V. (2012). *Pragmatics for language educators: A sociolinguistic perspective*. Routledge. Doi: <https://doi.org/10.4324/9780203850947>.
- Mensah, E. O. (2020). Name this child: Religious identity and ideology in Tiv personal names. *Journal of Onomastics*, 1-15. Doi: 10.1080/00277738.2020.1731239.
- Mensah, E., & Ishima, J. (2020). Sentential Names in Tiv 1. *Studia Linguistica*, 74(3), 645-664.
- Mensah, E., Rowan, K., Tiav, A., & Ishima, J. (2019). Aspects of traditional Tiv naming practices: A sociocultural account. *Sociolinguistic Study*, 13(2)4, 209-230. <https://doi.org/10.1558/sols.37820>.
- Mmadike, B. I. (2014). Anthro-po-linguistic study of Alà names in Igbo. *Journal of Humanities and Social Science*, 19(10), 11-19.
- Nnamdi-Eruchalu, G. I. (2018). A sociolinguistic study of the emerging trends in Igbo personal names. *Advances in Social Sciences Research Journal*, 5(4), 167-179. Doi:10.14738/assrj.54.4408.
- Onumajuru, V. C (2016). A semantic and pragmatic analysis of Igbo names. *An International Multidisciplinary Journal*, 10(2)4, 307-324. Doi:<http://dx.dox.org/10.4314/afrev.vloi2.21>.
- Palmer, F. R. (1996). *Semantics*. (2nd ed.). Cambridge University Press.
- Saville-Troke, M. (2003). *The ethnography of communication* (3<sup>rd</sup> ed). Blackwell.
- Udu, T. T. (2009). *Tiv Language: A reference book*. Labari Publishers.
- Udu, T. T. (2019). Names as repositories of worldview: Empirical evidence from the morphological and semantic analysis of Tiv personal names. *International Journal of Language and Linguistics*, 6(4), 100-109. Doi:10.30845/ijll.v6n4p12.

