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*A Communication Channel For National Development*

# EDUCATION

## EDUCATION: *A Communication Channel For National Development*

*A Book of Readings in Honour of*  
**PROF. BABATUNDE BASHIR ODERIN**

**EDITED BY**

- |                         |                       |
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*A Publication of the*  
**Faculty of Education, Lagos State University**

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A Communication Channel  
for National Development

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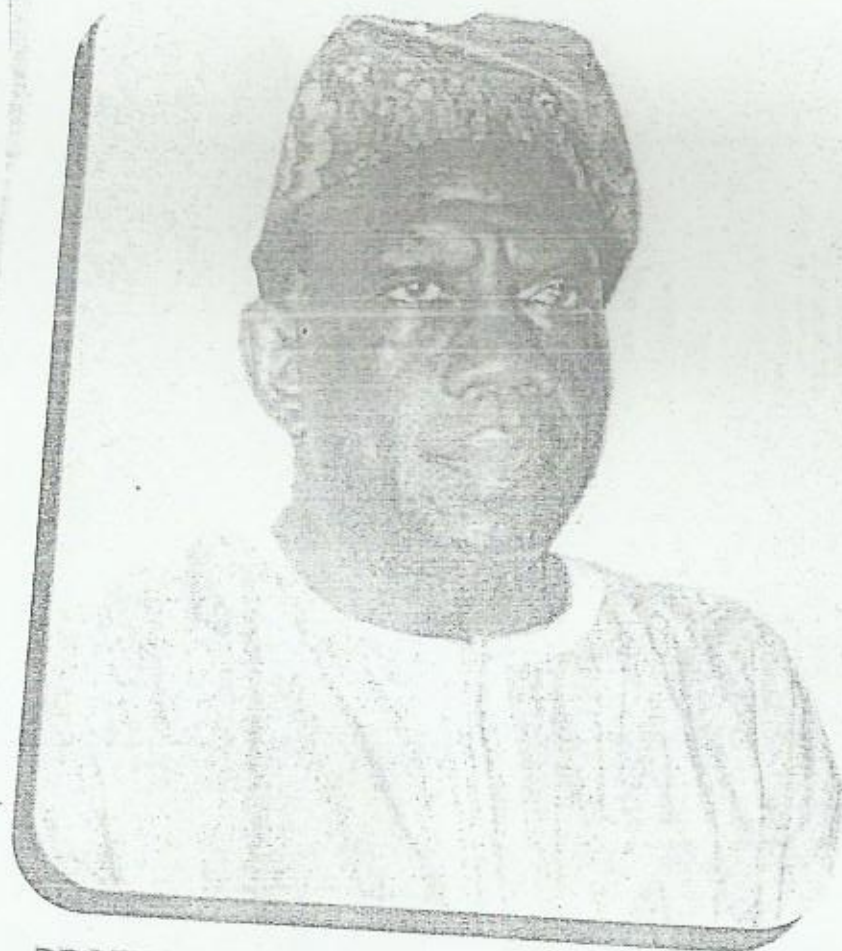
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**PROFESSOR BABATUNDE BASHIR ODERINDE**  
*Professor of Language Education*

pedagogy and educational testing. He has a chain of publications to his credit in local, national and international journals. He has authored and co-authored many publications.

Professor Bashiru Babatunde Oderinde, the educator, researcher, author, administrator and professor of Language Education was inaugurated to the referred Professorial Chair in October 2007. He gloriously retired in September, 2010 after meritorious services to the Education industry specifically and to God and humanity in general.

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## HARNESSING THE BENEFITS OF MEDIA IN PRESERVATION OF CULTURAL AND SOCIAL ROLES OF NAMES AMONG YORUBA SPEAKING GROUP IN NIGERIA.

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### Abstract

*This paper discusses the roles of culture and social implications of naming among Yoruba speaking group in Nigeria. It traces how the culture reflects the language, dressing, work and social interaction, to mention a few. It goes further to describe how the names reflect the mood, season and the religious beliefs of the parents. The features of media, which include documentation, storage and retrieval are brought into focus as means of preserving the cultural and social heritage of names. The paper ends with the implementation for teaching of Nigerian children.*

### Introduction:

Azenabor (1999:4), quoting Omoregba (1983), writes that culture refers to the framework within which a people live their lives and interpret their experiences. Its colours, shapes and links are people's views of reality. Eluwa, et al. (2005) see culture as including the people's language, their political and social organization, their beliefs and religion, their literature and art, including the way they work. Culture also includes all the material things which people produce and use as well as their means of obtaining food and raw materials. Ilesanmi (2004) notes that culture influences all works of art and that language itself is a product of culture as well as the tool of artistic creativity. Akinjogbin (2002) noted that culture transcends mini-dances, play-acting and drumming; it consists of all items in the life of a group of human beings, which make them feel they belong to one another and are distinct from any other group around them. Culture comprises the people's language, their religions, dresses, social system, economic system, food, leisure, medicine and technology, among others.

Culture could be viewed in various dimensions. It could be seen as an aspect of knowledge, different types of school, education, family and transmission of norms from one generation to another, maintenance of political consensus and personality. It could equally be seen as a form of belief which is entrenched in the language of a people and a mode of socialization among groups of people. Culture is the totality of man's life, his activities in his environment and generations (Olebara, 2008:7).

One thing that is paramount in every culture is that it is embedded in the language of the people. There is no linguistic group that does not have its culture reflected in its language. When learning such a language, one will see spices of the culture of the people in the language. This is why language experts describe language as a repository of culture, that is, the culture of the people resides in their language. Okorie (2008:123) opines that a culture which also includes the language of a people is the totality of the people's ways of life and which completely makes them what they are.

When one studies language acquisition and language learning among any group of people, one observes that the culture is embedded in the language and that is why it is a bit difficult to learn a second language. There is the tendency of imposing one culture on the other. For example, 'won' (third person plural) in Yoruba, which means 'they' in English is used as honorific marker for an elderly person. 'Won n bo'. - He (they are) is coming. Someone who is not conversant with the culture or mindful of grammatical structure in English will use the plural form: 'They are coming' instead of 'He is coming'. One can see that culture is relative to every group of people. What one group sees as important may not be seen by the other. That is why it is good to have a good understanding of other people's culture and to respect such a culture in order to live in harmony with them.

The Yoruba culture is a unique one. It is reflected in all aspects of their life; religions beliefs, trade or occupation, naming, family setup, etc. With particular reference to naming, the Yoruba attaches a great importance to naming. There is no name without a meaning. 'He ni a n wo ki a so sono loruko', (We are conscious of the home before we give a name to a child.) shows The Yoruba belief that you do not just give a name to a child. For example, only those who are from chieftaincy homes can name their children 'Oloye' (Owner of the throne), Oyeayemi (The throne fits me) and so on. Only the worshippers of 'Ogun', the god of iron, can name their children Ogungbemi (The god of iron supports me), Ogundimu (The god of iron paves the way).

The Yoruba give names according to periods and seasons, mood and objects of worship, or even as a memorial, a means of settling scores, or eulogizing. The thrust of this paper is to discuss some of the various names of Yoruba, their social implications and communicative importance.

What is in a Name? Among the Yoruba, a name serves to identify, eulogize, and determining the character of a person. A Yoruba adage says, *A ki i ri onio oba ki a ma ri ewa oba lara re*, meaning, You do not mistake a prince for an ordinary person because he would carry the aura of a prince. This same expression is used as a praise for someone who has performed a feat among his peers or in a society. In the same way, a name could serve as a title or a metaphor. For example, the following names could be a title: Bobagunwa (A cabinet member of a king), Oloriogun (Captain), Otunba (The right-hand man of the king). Names could be metaphorical. For example, when people express their disgust about their leaders or boss, they could use the following names: Aninilara (One who makes life difficult), Adaniloru (One who oppresses people wickedly), Amuludun (one who makes people happy).

A name in Yoruba land, therefore, is a means by which people express their opinions about other people as a result of mood, situation, eulogy or identification. According to Ladele, et al. (2006: 156), Yoruba names could be classified as:

*Amatorunwa* (Names brought from heaven/womb) e.g. *Taiwo* and *Kehinde* (Twins), *Ige* (a child born with his legs coming out of the womb first instead of the head), *Abiso* (Names given at birth) e.g. *Ayodele* (Joy has reached/come home), *Abiku* (a child that comes and goes or a reincarnated child) e.g. *Malomo* (Do not go back again), *Oriki* (praise or eulogy) e.g., *Olofa-ina* (the one with a fiery arrow), *Oruko Idile* (Family Name) e.g., *Akingbola*



(The famous), *Orufo Oye* (Chieftaincy Title) e.g. *Bobagunwa* (The one who sits in honour with the king), *Oruko Oye Ologun* (Military Title) e.g. *Balogun Olorogun* (Head of the Guards/Army), *Oruko Esin Abinibi*

(Names associated with traditional religion) e.g. *Sangolana* (God of Thunder paves the way).

In this paper, we shall classify Yoruba names as follows:

#### Names According To Periods and Season

Yoruba gives names according to time and season. Any child born in the time of war could be named as follows:

*Abogunde* (One who comes in the time of war)

*Abogunrin* (One who walks or arrives in the time of war)

*Ogunyinka* (War or trouble surrounds me)

*Ologunde* (The warrior has come)

*Arogunjo* (One who delights in warfare)

Some names reveal the mood of the parents at the time the children were born.

A male child born after the death of his father or grandfather could be named

*Babajide* (Father has woken up or reincarnated)

*Babarinso* (Father ran away from me)

*Babawale* (Father has come home)

*Babatunde/Bababo* (Father has reincarnated)

*Babagbemi* (Father assists me)

*Babajeni* (Father delights in me)

*Enlilobo* (It is the person who left that returned)

A female child born after the death of the mother or grandmother could be named

*Iyabo/Yesunde/Tefide* (Mother has reincarnated)

*Yewunmi* (Mother is cherished)

All these names reveal the culture and beliefs of Yoruba people in reincarnation and how parents are being cherished by their children.

A child born in the festive period could be named according to the period

*Odunayo* (A festival of joy)

*Abodunrin/Abodunde* (One who arrives at the festive period)

*Abiodun* (A child born at the festive period)

Names as a means of identification

Some Yoruba names serve as a means of identification. For example,

*Taiwo* (The first of a set of twins)

*Kehinde* (The second of a set of twins)

*Idowu* (The child that follows a set of twins)

*Olorogun* (War leader)

*Arogunjo* (One that rejoices in warfare)

#### Name as a means of settling scores

In some parts of Yoruba land, especially, among the Ilaje and Ikale in Ondo State of Nigeria, some names are given to children either to settle scores among couples, family or to prove one's innocence in a matter. For example,

*Oluwadamilare* (God vindicates me). This name could be given to a child where there is dispute about the pregnancy of the child and one of the couple feels he/she is being vindicated. It could be where a person overcomes some difficulties or being vindicated over a matter.

*Ojalatan* (Not everyone in the city/town will be rich or wealthy). Such a name is given when one party is boasting of wealth or affluence. The other party in retaliation could name a child to counter the claims of such people.

*Enikanolade* (The crown is not an exclusive right of a person). Such a name is given by a member of a ruling family to spite those who feel the crown is their exclusive right.

*Meletoyitan* (I cannot end narrating what has happened). Such a name is given to a child by the parents that suffered a lot of persecution.

*Aysemitan* (The world has not seen my end/ The world could not destroy my destiny).

This name is given to a child by parents that suffered untold hardship but survived at last.

*Egbeyelo* (We would not carry the world away to heaven). This name is given to a child by parents who live in the midst of those who feel that no other person can enjoy this world than them.

#### Names according to mood

Yoruba names sometimes reflect the mood of the parents of the child. It could be a time of sadness; it could be a time of joy; it could be a time of plenty or want. All these moods dictate the names given to children among Yoruba speaking people of Nigeria.

For example, in time of joy, a child born at this period could be named *Ayobami* (I am joyful), *Ayomikun* (My joy is full), *Ayokari* (Joy for all), *Ekundayo* (tears turn to joy).

A child born in time of sorrow could be named *Ayokere* (Little joy), *Akinlotan* (All the honored ones have gone), *Enirerelo* (The good one has gone).

Sometimes, some names are given as appellation or nickname according to the mood or behavior of an individual. For example, a drunkard could be nicknamed *Emulewu* (Wine is garment), *Ajisafe* (One that loves merriment), *Afobaje* (King-maker). This one is derogatory when used in the negative sense, that is, one who always installs those whom he could control or manipulate to suit his purpose especially in political maneuver.

#### Names according to object of worship

Yoruba names reflect the religion or objects of worship by the parents or family of the child. For example, in the family where *Ogun*, the god of iron, is worshipped, their children could be named *Ogunyemi* (god of iron beautifies me), *Ogunwale* (god of iron has come home), *Ogunrinde* (god of iron has arrived).

Those who worship *Sango*, the god of thunder, give their children such names as *Sangodina* (god of thunder guards the way), *Sangonuga* (god of thunder has his domain), *Sangowanwa* (god of thunder has visited me).

Among the *Oya* (goddess of the river) worshippers, their children bear names like *Oyafemi* (the river goddess loves me), *Oyawale* (the goddess has come home).

#### Name as a memorial

Names are sometimes used among the Yoruba speaking people to immortalize or symbolize the link between the living and the dead. There are names like *Babalakin* (Father was famous in his lifetime), *Babarojo* (thankful for having a father), *Fewumi* (I cherished my mother), *Iyanwura* (Mother is gold).

#### Roles of Culture and Social Implications in Naming among Yoruba

Language is a repository of culture. Yoruba language reflects the culture of the people and this is evidenced in the names given to their children. Different dialects of Yoruba reflect their variations in the names given to their children. Equally, their religious beliefs reflect the types of names given to their children.



The social interactions of the people reflect the types of name given to their children. They use the name to reflect their moods, settle scores and above all show a great deal of appreciation and their connections to their ancestors and religious beliefs.

It is important to note that migration, the influence of other cultures, and development in science and technology have impacted negatively on Yoruba names. This is particularly noticeable at the orthographic level (e.g., Adebayo for Adebayo; Omotoyosi for Omotoyosi).

The following segment therefore discusses how the media could be harnessed to preserve the cultural and social roles of naming among the Yoruba speaking group in Nigeria.

#### **Harnessing the Benefits of Media in Preservation of Cultural and Social Roles of Naming Among Yoruba Speaking People of Nigeria.**

In this segment, we shall discuss some characteristics or features of media that relate to preservation and dissemination of information. Media, in a broad term, refer to all types of print broadcast and interactive communication. They are channels of communication through which messages are conveyed. When they are utilized for educational purposes, they are referred to as educational or instructional media. These include journals, magazines, periodicals, television, video, CD ROM, VCD, DVD and computer. These materials have some benefits that could be harnessed to preserve the cultural heritage. They extend human experience, provide meaningful information, stimulate interest, overcome physical limitation, develop shared understanding, increase commitment, storage of information, easy retrieval and access to information through books, video, computer, internet, etc, make learning concrete, real, immediate and permanent, and help to individualize instruction making each learner to go at his own pace. (Pinnington, 1992; Egbowon, 1997; Amoo, et al 2005 and Egbowon, 2006).

Media can extend human experience. An activity like a naming ceremony could be recorded on video, VCD or DVD and be brought to a different location for viewing and the information provided would be real and immediate. It could be burnt on a hard disc of a computer and projected in the class, through the use of a multimedia projector, for instructional purposes. The utilization of media has taken the event beyond its original location.

Media utilization provides useful, real and meaningful information. Media utilization in naming ceremony assists and enhances the preservation of cultural values, thereby providing meaningful information to those who are not resident in their traditional locality. The recorded material can be used for instructional purpose.

Media stimulate interest. The presentation of a naming ceremony to learners in the class via video recording, VCD or DVD can arouse their interest in learning the cultural heritage. It can equally enhance the appreciation of the cultural heritage as it stimulates and refreshes their viewers' memories of their cultural heritage.

With the use of media, physical limitations are overcome. The development in science and technology has turned the world into a global village. Thus media have broken the barriers of physical limitations. The outside world could be brought to the class or individual homes via satellite and events could be watched live. A typical example was the Eyo Carnival held in Badagry, Lagos State in 2010. The festival showcased the culture of the Lagosians. People who could not go to the venue watched the programme at home and they were able to appreciate the rich culture of Lagos State.

There is the development of shared understanding and interest through the use of media. People could appreciate the rich values in the culture of other races through live

presentations on television or access to the website of producers of programmes. This quality could be harnessed to present naming ceremony in Yoruba land for people to appreciate the culture heritage.

Yoruba youths and others who are not of Yoruba stock could be encouraged to be committed to preserving the cultural heritage through media utilization. The documentation and preservation of activities (e.g., naming) through the use of photographs, printed materials, radio, television, video/DVD and computer would encourage commitment to the presentation of culture and maintenance of cultural heritage. Media can also preserve the phonology and orthography of the language as reflected during the ceremony.

One could harness the feature of storage in media for the preservation of culture in naming ceremony. Naming events could be recorded in VCD/DVD or video. It could be burnt on the computer through the use of Adobe Premier Pro. Software and projected for a large audience through the use of a multimedia projector. It could equally be used as an instructional material in the classroom when required.

The use of media in presentation of information makes learning concrete, real and immediate. These features could be harnessed through a field-trip (to a naming ceremony site) to record the activity. This could be brought to the class for the student to view during the lesson. The live-capturing of the event will make it real when presented.

Above all, media make it possible to individualize the learning of cultural heritage in naming. Recorded videotape/VCD/DVD could be purchased by an individual and viewed at his own convenient time. It is also possible for an individual to learn the activities in segments or sequence.

#### **Implications For Teaching of Nigerian Children**

The Yoruba people believe one's character or virtue is an adornment of his or her personality (*Iwa re re leso eniyan*). This accounts for the reason why character development is one of the cardinal of African Traditional Education (Fafunwa, 1995). Apart from this, the Holy Writ (The Holy Bible) in Proverbs Chapter 22 verse 1 says: "A good name is rather to be chosen than great riches, and loving favour rather than silver and gold." (KJV).

Children of today must be taught that they must protect their names as well as the name of their families. It is an abomination for a Yoruba child to show his father's house pointing the left hand towards it. Children of today must be taught that they should always remember the sons and daughters of whom they are in whatever they do and wherever they go.

**Conclusion:** Yoruba race is very conscious of its culture. This consciousness affects the way each person relates with his siblings, gives names to his children, references the object of worship and dictates his mood. The cultural heritage could be sustained through the utilization of media benefits and this will definitely have positive implication for the teaching and learning of Yoruba culture.

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