

The morphological processes of Anglicising Yoruba Anthroponyms on Facebook

Os processos morfológicos de anglicização de antropônimos iorubás no Facebook

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Abstract: The increasing global influence of English and the pervasive use of social media have prompted Yoruba speakers to modify their traditional names. This adaptation, known as anglicisation, often involves adjusting names to better fit English pronunciation and spelling conventions. It is done to facilitate greater digital integration and social acceptance on platforms like Facebook. Despite existing research on anglicisation, there is a notable gap concerning the specific word formation processes employed when Yoruba names are anglicised on Facebook. Hence, this study examines the word formation processes employed in the anglicisation of Yoruba names on Facebook. The analysis is based on a random sample of seventy-five names sourced directly from the platform, comprising twenty-five original Yoruba names and two anglicised variants for each. We investigated the morphological processes involved in the anglicisation of Yoruba anthroponyms on Facebook, utilising Yule's (2010) morphological taxonomy and Adeniyi's (2017) classification of Yoruba names. Our findings indicated that derivation is the most dominant morphological process (64%), followed by multiple processes (16%), clipping (14%), and acronymy (6%). Furthermore, based on Adeniyi's classification, given or birth names are the most frequently anglicised (36%), followed by destiny/situational names (20%), royalty names (16%), names associated with deities (16%) and praise names (12%). The study concluded that the anglicisation of Yoruba names on Facebook is not random; it is a clear indicator of global linguistic convergence, cultural modernity, and identity negotiation. Thus, digital spaces foster linguistic innovation and cultural adaptation among Yoruba speakers as they connect with a wider audience.

Key words: Anglicisation, morphology, Yoruba people, Onomastics, Facebook

Resumo: A crescente influência global do inglês e o uso generalizado das mídias sociais têm levado os falantes de iorubá a modificar seus nomes tradicionais, uma adaptação chamada anglicização que ajusta os nomes para se adequarem à pronúncia e à ortografia do inglês, visando maior integração digital e aceitação social em plataformas como o Facebook. Devido a uma lacuna na pesquisa sobre os processos de formação de palavras específicos usados nessa adaptação, este estudo examinou tais processos em uma amostra de setenta e cinco nomes (vinte e cinco originais iorubás e duas variantes anglicizadas para cada), utilizando a taxonomia morfológica de Yule (2010) e a classificação de nomes de Adeniyi (2017). Os achados indicaram que a derivação é o processo morfológico dominante (64%), seguida por processos múltiplos (16%), clipping (14%) e acronímia (6%); além disso, os nomes de batismo/nascimento são os mais anglicizados (36%), seguidos por nomes de destino/situacionais (20%), realeza (16%), divindades (16%) e louvor (12%). O estudo concluiu que a anglicização de nomes iorubás no Facebook não é aleatória, mas sim um claro indicador de convergência linguística global, modernidade cultural e negociação de identidade, com os espaços digitais fomentando a inovação linguística e a adaptação cultural entre os falantes de iorubá ao se conectarem com um público mais vasto.

Palavras-chave: Anglicização, morfologia, povo iorubá, Onomástica, antropônimo, Facebook.

Introduction

The act of naming is deeply embedded in the socio-cultural fabric of human societies. Far from being arbitrary, naming practices reflect a confluence of linguistic, cognitive, affective, and cultural elements (Essien, 1986). Names are carefully chosen not only to identify but to project desired personal and communal aspirations (Herzfeld, 1982). As such, it is widely acknowledged that names play a role in shaping individual personality and behavioural patterns. They act as repositories of cultural knowledge and reflect the philosophical, religious, emotional, and social worldviews of their bearers. Within the African context, and particularly among the Yoruba of South-western Nigeria, names carry profound cultural and symbolic weight, encapsulating distinctive identities, beliefs, and values (Mensah, 2021:3).

The Yoruba People

According to Sare (2023), the Yoruba people are a major African ethnic group, numbering around 50 million continent-wide, and are culturally distinct within Nigeria, known for their long

history of embracing Western education. Their history, culture, and governance are deeply rooted in their ancient religion, customs, and beliefs, with the city of Ile-Ife revered as their spiritual and ancestral homeland, and Oduduwa, as their progenitor. The Yoruba language itself, a member of the Benue-Congo branch of the Niger-Congo family, is primarily spoken in South-West Nigeria (in states like Ekiti, Lagos, Ogun, Ondo, Osun and Oyo), but it has an estimated 30 million primary speakers worldwide (Sachleicher, 2008), including significant populations in Togo, Benin, and the diaspora across Brazil, Cuba, Haiti, Trinidad and Tobago, and Venezuela ((Ehineni, 2021).

Yoruba Naming System

Yoruba naming customs represent a profound and integral cultural element, as they transcend mere identification to articulate the deep socio-spiritual circumstances surrounding a child's birth. The naming ceremony is a well-structured cultural event, traditionally conducted nine days after birth for a boy and seven days for a girl, based on the belief that males possess nine bones while females have seven. An exception is made for twins, who are deified and named on the eighth day regardless of their sex. During this ceremony, a child typically receives multiple names that reflect their background, religion, and the circumstances of their arrival. These names, or anthroponyms, are considered "powerful, meaningful, and profound" (Adeniyi, 2017:86), as they encode historical events, spiritual beliefs, and familial aspirations that are believed to influence the individual's life trajectory (Odebode, 2019). The practice's significance is encapsulated in the proverb *Orúkọ ọmọ ní in ro ọmọ*, meaning 'A child's name defines what s/he becomes or does' (Fakuade, Friday–Otun, and Adeosun, 2019:260), thus illustrating that the semantic content of a Yoruba name acts as a mirror of reality, fundamentally shaping the bearer's experiences and identity. According to Soyinka (1988:50), naming is a critical business in traditional African

society because names comprise meaning and history apart from being intimations of hope and affirmations of origins.

Classification of Yoruba Names

The Yorùbá people have a rich and varied system of naming, which scholars (e.g. Babalola & Alaba, 2008; Adeniyi, 2017; Odebode, 2024) classify into several categories. One prominent category is Destiny or Situational Names (*Oruko Amútorunwá*), given based on the circumstances of a child's birth. This is why Odebode and Ojebode (2021) refer to it as a circumstantial name. Examples include *Abiona* (s/he was born on the road), *Babárinde* (the departed father has come back) and *Ìyábò* (the departed mother has come back), which signify reincarnation, *Òjò* (a male child born with the umbilical cord around his neck), *Aina* (a female child born with the umbilical cord around her neck) and *Abejide* (a child born when it is raining). Another group is Occupational Names, which reflect the family's trade. Thus, names prefixed with *Ayan* indicate drumming profession. These include *Ayánléke* (the drummer sire triumphed), *Ayanyemi* (drumming befits me) and *Ayanlade* (the god of drum music has speedily come through to this family) (Babalola & Alaba, 2008:224). Alternatively, names prefixed with *Ode* indicates hunting. These include *Odédélé* (the hunter has arrived), *Odeninhun* (the hunter god has made me to swagger slowly and joyously) and *Odebode* (an ancestor hunter has arrived home). The tragic category of Mortality names, often associated with the *Abíkú* phenomenon (children believed to be born to die and be reborn), includes names like *Tánímówò* (who can actually take care of this one?) and *Kásímáàwò* (let's keep watching to see if they'll survive), reflecting a parent's despair and defiance.

Heroic Names like *Akínnyì* (the hero achieves honour) and *Akínwándé* (the hero has arrived) celebrate bravery and strength. Names by Royalty/Nobility (e.g., *Adétúnjì* - our claim to

the crown has been revived) signify a connection to a royal lineage. Panegyrics or Praise Names (oríki) are personal or family accolades. Àlàó and Àjaní are praise names for male children, while Àbèní is a praise name for a female child. Proverb Names are derived from traditional wisdom, such as Àbáyomí (the enemy would have mocked me, but God prevented it). Place Names (e.g. individuals can be named after a place, such as Ibadan, to indicate their hometown, especially if they are a native who has migrated to a different location) and Plant Names (e.g., Araba) are also part of the naming system, often carrying symbolic or historical significance. For instance, the name Araba, meaning ‘oak tree,’ can be used to wish someone great favour and stature. It can also serve as a warning, emphasising the need for preparation as in the saying araba tun’ra mu odo n gbe arere (oak tree, be careful as rivers do consume the obeche tree bigger than you). Additionally, Araba is a title for a head Ifa priest. Finally, there are Hybrid Names, which are praise names or nicknames that have become given names, such as Àkéré [as in Akerefinusogbon] (a small but wise person). This classification system highlights the deep cultural, historical, and philosophical meanings embedded within Yorùbá names.

Anglicisation

The increasing dominance of English in Nigeria, as a language of education, commerce, and national unity, has introduced complex dynamics into indigenous language practices. While English facilitates global participation, it simultaneously contributes to linguistic erosion, bastardisation and attrition (Odebode, 2024). It affects attitudes toward native languages and fosters practices such as code-mixing, borrowing, nativisation, and notably, anglicisation (Mensah, 2021:2). Anglicisation involves the adaptation of non-English linguistic elements to English norms and forms. As Mauranen (2006:25) explains, anglicism refers to lexical or syntactic borrowings from English that retain distinct English characteristics. Ogunbona and Jimoh (2023:125) further argue that anglicisation shares parallels with nativisation, as both entail modifying one language to

fit the patterns of another. Among Nigerian youth, the deliberate anglicisation of personal names, often perceived as a symbol of modernity or global identity and integration, illustrates this shift in linguistic allegiance (Mensah, 2021:5). In many cases, the adoption of anglicised names reflects aspirations for prestige, global identity, connectedness, and alignment with English-speaking digital cultures.

A new space for reshaping linguistic identity has emerged with the rise of social media platforms like Facebook. As these digital environments promote global connectivity, they also promote linguistic creativity and adaptation. This is particularly evident among Yoruba Facebook users, who increasingly transform their traditional names to align with Anglophone expectations, thereby enhancing digital legibility and social integration. This adaptation process, often influenced by character limits, aesthetics, and perceived prestige, signifies a negotiation between cultural heritage and digital modernity.

Morphology

Morphology, which is the study of word formation and internal structure, provides a useful framework for examining this linguistic phenomenon. A morpheme, being the smallest meaningful unit of language, is central to morphological analysis. Yoruba names such as *Ayo* ('joy') and *Bola* ('meets wealth') are composed of morphemes that make the names carry both semantic and cultural weight. For example, the name *Omobola* (child meets wealth) combines the prefix *omo* (child) with the root *bola* (meets wealth). Similarly, *Adebola* (royalty meets wealth) fuses *ade* (crown/royalty) with *bola*. Through the process of anglicisation, such names are morphologically altered to suit English orthographic and phonological patterns. *Omobola* may become *Moby* or *Bolly*, while *Adebola* may be rendered as *Hardeborla* or *Adeborhlarh*.

This study is anchored on Yule's (2010) morphological taxonomy, which identifies several word-formation processes. These processes will be used to investigate the types of morphological

modifications observed in anglicised Yoruba names on Facebook. Furthermore, the study applies Adeniyi's (2017) classification of Yoruba names, which includes destiny names (names brought from heaven), occupational names (names according to family trace/profession), *Abiku* names (linked to infant mortality), given names (names parent bestow on their children), praise names (*oríkì*), names derived from deities/God worshipped, animals (animal names given to humans), plants (plant names given to humans), places (names of geographical locations), and proverbs (names coined from proverbial beliefs or ideas), to assess the source categories of names undergoing anglicisation.

From the foregoing, the practice of anglicising Yoruba anthroponyms, particularly within the digital space, has gained considerable ground. This trend is also evident in physical manifestations such as the customisation of anglicised name variants on T-shirts, bags, jewellery, and other accessories, despite the resultant distortion in pronunciation and comprehension among native speakers. These practices signify not only a response to globalisation but also an instance of linguistic invention and adaptation. Accordingly, this study aims to investigate the morphological processes through which Yoruba Facebook users anglicise their personal names and to classify these names in accordance with their original categories in the source language as defined by Adeniyi (2017).

Empirical Review

Odebode (2013) examines anglicised *abiku* (a name given to reincarnated children among the Yorubas) names on Facebook from the morpho-pragmatic lens. The research, using Yule (1985), explores the morphological processes of the selected *abiku* names and their pragmatic imports via Austin (1962) and Brown and Levinson (1987). Findings reveal clipping, blending, affixation, back-formation, acronym and multiple processes as the word formation processes and the pragmatic imports of these names are informing, appealing and questioning. Furthermore, due

to the negative connotations attached to abiku names, many individuals bearing them opt to use anglicised versions on Facebook as a means of masking their identities, a reflection of the enduring impact of colonial mentality. The research diverges from the present research in that, the present research is not limited to abiku names but anglicised Yoruba anthroponyms on Facebook.

Haimson and Hoffmann (2016) explore the construction and enforcement of real-name policies on Facebook, using a critical discourse analysis framework to examine the intersection of corporate policy, user identity, and platform governance. The study adopts a qualitative approach to examine Facebook's publicly available policy documents, help centre pages, and enforcement guidelines vis-a-vis user accounts of name-related disputes. The analysis shows that Facebook's real-name policy is constructed through a discourse of authenticity, safety, and community integrity, but enforcement practices often ostracise users whose cultural naming practices, gender identities, or political contexts do not conform with the platform's Western-centric, bureaucratic understanding of a 'real' name. The findings reveal inconsistencies between the policy rationale and its application, highlighting how automated detection systems and user reporting mechanisms divergently focus minority and activist users. The research concludes that Facebook's enforcement of naming norms reflects wider power inequalities, emphasising dominant cultural assumptions while limiting alternative identity expressions on the internet.

Zwane (2020) studies Zulu (the largest ethnic group in South Africa) clan names from a morphological standpoint to create awareness of the structure of the Zulu clan names. The data for the research consist of detailed personal interviews and document analysis. Findings elucidate the semantic content inherent in the morphological arrangement of Zulu clan names which conveys messages and reflects the experiences of the name originator and family's circumstances at a defined juncture in their history.

Akuamah (2021) explores a morphosyntactic study of forty-four Asante (a dialect of Akan which belongs to the Kwa language spoken mainly in Southern Ghana) weed names culled from unstructured interview of twenty Asante's native speakers. The study reveals that weed names are formed through affixation, reduplication, and compounding, which can be categorised as mono-morphemic, di-morphemic, and poly-morphemic. Additionally, these names exhibit phrasal, clausal, and sentential syntactic structures, including simple, compound, and complex forms, and function as both declarative and imperative sentences. The present study only aims to conduct a morphological analysis of anglicised personal names as against the inclusion of syntactic analysis of Asante weed names by Akuamah.

Al-Jarf's (2022) article, Variant translations of the same Arabic personal names on facebook, investigates how educated native Arabic speakers transliterate their personal names into English on Facebook, paying attention to the variation in spelling and its causes. The study anchored on a contrastive analysis framework, compares Arabic and English phonological and orthographic systems to elucidate transliteration patterns. Using a human-based approach with no algorithms or machine translation, the researcher collects 112 Arabic names from his Facebook network which yields 332 variant transliterations and 1,139 occurrences. The analysis classifies transliteration strategies into transfer from Arabic spelling (omitting short vowels), dialect-based pronunciations, French orthographic influence, and variation in representing vowels, diphthongs, and certain consonants. The study establishes that 97% of variation stems from inconsistent vowel representation resulting from mismatches between Arabic's 3 short and 3 long vowels and English's 12 vowels and 8 diphthongs, while 18% results from transferring Arabic orthography directly, and 15–17% is due to dialect or French influence. The paper concludes by recommending increased awareness of Arabic–English phonological differences, use of standardized

transliteration guidelines, and technological interventions to minimise inconsistencies. While Al-Jarf's research and the current study are similar in subject matter (onomastics) and source of data (Facebook), they differ in focus as the former dwells on transliteration and the latter focuses on Anglicism.

Ojo, et al. (2022) descriptively investigate the morphological analysis of anglicised Yoruba names for appellations among youths and educated adults in Ado-Ekiti, Ekiti State, Nigeria. The study identifies clipping, blending, introduction of consonant clusters and suffixation as the processes involved in the formation of the Yoruba personal appellations. It is therefore concluded that the anglicisation of Yoruba personal names for appellation is a new trend which is distinct from how appellations are formed in the Yoruba society. The present study also aims at examining the formation processes but of Yoruba anglicised names on Facebook as against appellations by Ojo et al (2022).

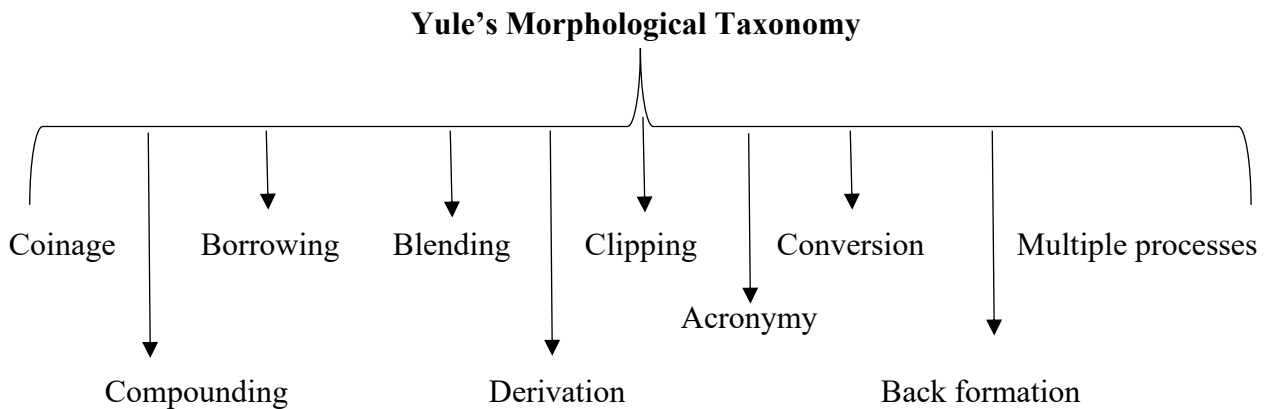
Ogunbona and Jimoh (2023) examine the pedagogical implications of anglicising indigenous names by Yoruba-English Bilinguals on social media using Variability Concept and Ethnography of Communication by Labov (1972) and Hymes (1962 respectively. The study adopts a mixed method of data analysis to get the linguistic forms and features of the anglicised indigenous names of 100 secondary school students of Adeyemi College of Education, Ondo, Nigeria. Findings indicate that the students' names are influenced at both the phonological and the morphological levels, which affects the linguistic features and semantic imports of the names. They conclude that the students' adoption of anglicism is not motivated by their inherent linguistic skills but rather a form of global influence, which educators of English as a second language should take into consideration. This work and the present study consider the process of anglicisation on social media but differ in approach as the present study focuses on the formation of the anglicised names.

Shigini and Mapunda (2023) attempt a morphological analysis of Kemunasukuma (a dialect of Sukuma language spoken in Tanzania) personal names based on Kiparsky's (1982) lexical morphology, which was developed by Katamba (1993) and Katamba/Stonham (2006). The data for the research comprises reviews of documentaries and interviews. Inflection, derivation and compounding are the notable word formation processes in Kemunasukuma personal names. Conclusively, the structural organisation of Kemunasukuma personal names, which are identified in seven patterns of increasing complexity, reflects the underlying semantic structure of the Sukuma language.

Theoretical Review

Yule's Morphological Taxonomy

Word Formation Process is referred to as the systemic ways of forming or generating new words from existing words in a language. This highlights the various ways new words come into a language. It is important to remember that these processes have shaped language over time, and many words we now use daily were once viewed as improper or incorrect. Yule (2010: 52-60) identifies ten morphological processes as captured in the diagram below.



Source: Generated by Authors (2025)

Coinage refers to the creation of entirely new words, often derived from trade names, places, or personal names, such as *aspirin*. Borrowing involves adopting words from other languages into English, as seen in *chocolate* (Spanish) or *chauffeur* (French). Also, Compounding forms new words by combining two independent words or morphemes, such as *blackboard* from *black* and *board*. Blending merges parts of two existing words, typically the beginning of one and the end of another to produce forms like *brunch* (*breakfast* + *lunch*). Additionally, Clipping shortens longer words by removing syllables to create concise forms like *exam* from *examination*. Backformation reduces a longer word to form a new word of a different class, such as *edit* (verb) from *editor* (noun). Conversion changes a word's grammatical category without modifying its form, as in *man* (noun) becoming *to man* (verb). Furthermore, Acronym formation uses the initial letters of phrases to create new terms, either as pronounceable words like *FIFA* or alphabetic forms like *DVC*. Derivation involves the addition of affixes (prefixes, infixes, or suffixes) to a base word to alter its meaning or grammatical function, such as *misinterpretation*. Infixation, particularly evident in the Kamhmu language, inserts elements within a word's root, as in *srnee* from *see*. Finally, multiple processes combine two or more of these strategies in forming a word, as in *alcoholic*, which results from both borrowing (*alcohol*) and affixation (*-ic*). Based on the above, the word formation processes employed by netizens in anglicising their names on Facebook will be considered using Yule's (2010) taxonomy.

Methodology

The data for the study consists of 75 randomly selected Yoruba names and their anglicised variants. Random sampling was used to ensure that each name in the population had an equal chance of being chosen, making the sample representative of Yoruba names. This approach reduces bias and allows researchers to generalise the findings from the sample to the population as a whole. Using Facebook search engine, the researchers input random Yoruba names which produce various

bearers of the names as well as their anglicised variants. Based on the researchers' cultural knowledge of anglicisation and hybridisation of Yoruba names and the graphological presentation of the names, two anglicised variants of twenty-five selected Yoruba name were used for the analysis and in cases where an anglicised variant is used by more than one person, we stick to just one. Adeniyi's (2017) classification of Yoruba names was employed to examine the types of names anglicised by Yoruba youths. Also, the fifty randomly selected anglicised variants were subjected to a morphological analysis based on Yule's (2010) Morphological Taxonomy. The study, therefore, employed qualitative and quantitative methods of data analysis to examine the types of Yoruba names that are anglicised and the inherent processes employed in the anglicisation of the selected Yoruba names on Facebook.

Sample Data Analysis

This aspect is divided into two sections. The first employs Adeniyi's (2017) classification to examine the Yoruba names that are anglicised while the second section attempts the morphological analysis of the selected anglicised variants.

Table 1: Classification of Selected Yoruba Names using Adeniyi (2017) classification

S/N	Yoruba Names	Classification
1.	Adeboye	Royalty
2.	Idowu	Destiny/Situational
3.	Damilola	Royalty
4.	Olamide	Given/Birth
5.	Akinsola	Given/Birth
6.	Abidemi	Destiny/Situational
7.	Bukola	Given/Birth
8.	Kehinde	Destiny/Situational
9.	Ayomide	Given/Birth
10.	Seyi	Given/Birth
11.	Bamigboye	Royalty
12.	Oluwaseun	Deities/God Worshipped
13.	Tayo	Given/Birth
14.	Olajide	Given/Birth

15.	Ogunlade	Deities/God Worshipped
16.	Abiodun	Destiny/Situational
17.	Oyinkansola	Given/Birth
18.	Tolulope	Deities/God Worshipped
19.	Ayinla	Praise name
20.	Jumoke	Given/Birth
21.	Iyanuoluwa	Deities/God Worshipped
22.	Adejoke	Royalty
23.	Abebi	Praise name
24.	Ekundayo	Destiny/Situational
25.	Alabi	Praise name

Source: Authors' Compilation (2025)

From Table 1, twenty-five Yoruba names have been categorised based on Adeniyi's (2017) classification. The royalty names are *Adeboye*, *Damilola*, and *Bamigboye*. These names are given to children born into kinship or chieftaincy lineages. *Adeboye* denotes 'he who, on arrival, found a chieftaincy celebration in progress' (Babalola & Alaba, 2008:20). *Damilola* denotes "make me wealthy/honour me." Note, the full potential of the name in expression(s) such as *Adedamilola* (the crown has made me wealthy/the crown has honoured me). Occasionally, a theonymic prefix can precede the name, resulting in forms like *Oludamilola* (the Lord has honoured me), *Ogundamilola* (the god of iron has honoured me), and *Sangodamilola* (the god of thunder has honoured me). However, the Yoruba associate wealth and honour with a king. In the same vein, they equate a king with a god in authority, hence the saying "Kabiyesi oba alase, ekeji orisa" (hail the unquestionable king, second to god). Therefore, [Ade]Damilola is adopted for this study as belonging to royalty. Similarly, *Bamigboye* signifies 'give me chieftaincy' or 'join me in promoting our chieftaincy family' (Babalola & Alaba, 2008:241).

Next, we have destiny/situational names, a category that includes *Idowu*, *Abidemi*, and *Kehinde*. These names are believed to be 'brought from heaven' (amutorunwa), making them circumstantial names based on the child's birth circumstances. *Idowu* and *Kehinde* are specifically

tied to twin births. *Kehinde* is the name given to the second twin to arrive, while *Idowu* is reserved for the child born immediately after a set of twins. *Abidemi*, on the other hand, is a name for a child born in their father's absence.

Given/birth names include *Olamide*, *Akinsola*, *Bukola*, *Ayomide*, and *Seyi*. These are names given to a newborn based on the parents' state of mind, affiliation, or exploit, a practice the Yoruba refer to as *abiso*. *Olamide* denotes 'my wealth has arrived.' *Akinsola*, as opined by Babalola and Alaba (2008:136), signifies 'the hero (family head) has performed a feat.' It could also mean 'bravery measures up for wealth.' *Bukola* denotes '[the Lord] added to my wealth.' While *Ayomide* means 'my joy has arrived,' *Seyi* denotes '[the Lord] does this.' It should be noted that *Olamide*, *Akinsola*, and *Bukola* have an affiliation with nobility. Also, *Bukola* and *Seyi* are clipped forms. The full names are *Oluwabukola/Olubukola* and *Oluseyi/Oluwaseyi*, respectively. However, the analysis is based on the clipped forms of these names. *Oluwaseun* is classified as a deity/God worshipped name, signifying 'thanks to the Lord.' Finally, *Alabi*, *Ayinla*, and *Abebi* are the notable praise names. *Alabi* and *Ayinla* are manes given to male children; *Alabi* means 'child born very speedily' while *Ayinla* means 'child to be praised and disciplined' (Babalola & Alaba, 2008:144 & 230). *Abebi* on the other hand, is a female praise name, meaning 'child entreated before being born' (Babalola & Alaba, 2008:3)

In summary, the analysed names comprise nine given/birth names, five destiny/situational names, four royalty names, four deity/God worshipped name and three praise names. The statistical analysis of these names, based on their frequency and percentage distribution, is presented in Table 2 below:

Table 2: Frequency and Percentage Distribution of the Selected Yoruba Names

Name Type	Frequency	Percentage
Given/Birth names	9	36
Destiny/Situational names	5	20
Royalty	4	16
Deities/God Worshipped	4	16
Praise name	3	12
Total	25	100

Source: Authors' Compilation (2025)

Table 2 indicates that given/birth names account for 36% of the dataset, with nine tokens. Destiny/situational names, which have five tokens record 20% while deities/God worshipped names and royalty names, with four tokens each, represent 16%. Lastly, praise names have three tokens which translates to 12%. As Adeniyi (2017:87) suggests, parents and family members bestow names upon a child, as newborns do not inherently arrive with names. A child can receive numerous names from various family members, from the eldest to the youngest. This cultural practice largely accounts for the highest frequency observed in the given/birth names category.

Table 3: Word Formation Analysis

S/N	Yoruba Names	Anglicised Variants	Word Formation Process
1.	Adeboye	Hardebowyay	Multiple process
2.		Hardeboye	Derivation
3.	Idowu	Heedowho	Multiple process
4.		Hidowu	Derivation
5.	Damilola	Dhamhee	Clipping
6.		Dammy	Clipping
7.	Olamide	Lamide	Clipping
8.		Olamidey	Derivation
9.	Akinsola	Harkinsola	Derivation
10.		Harkeensholar	Multiple process
11.	Abidemi	Abeedemi	Derivation
12.		Harbeedayme	Multiple process
13.	Bukola	Becky	Clipping
14.		Bhukholar	Derivation
15.	Kehinde	Kenny	Clipping
16.		Kennedex	Multiple process
17.	Ayomide	AY	Acronym
18.		Haryourmhidey	Multiple process

19.	Seyi	SY	Acronym
20.		Shey Hi	Derivation
21.	Bamigboye	Barmegboye	Derivation
22.		Barhmigbohyeh	Derivation
23.	Oluwaseun	Holuwacheun	Derivation
24.		Holuwahsheyhun	Derivation
25.	Tayo	T Y	Acronym
26.		Taryor	Derivation
27.	Olajide	Horlarjide	Derivation
28.		Horlajeeday	Multiple process
29.	Ogunlade	Hogunlarday	Derivation
30.		Hogunlardeh	Derivation
31.	Abiodun	Abbey	Clipping
32.		Harbiodun	Derivation
33.	Oyinkansola	Hoyinkansola	Derivation
34.		Hoyinkansolar	Derivation
35.	Tolulope	Tholulorphe	Derivation
36.		Tholulorphey	Derivation
37.	Ayinla	Haryhinlar	Derivation
38.		Haryinlar	Derivation
39.	Jumoke	Jummy	Clipping
40.		Jumorekhe	Derivation
41.	Iyanuoluwa	Hyhanuholuwah	Derivation
42.		Heeyhanuholuwa	Derivation
43.	Adejoke	Adejhokeh	Derivation
44.		Ahrdejoke	Derivation
45.	Abebi	Harbhebhi	Derivation
46.		Harbhebee	Derivation
47.	Ekundayo	Hekundayor	Derivation
48.		Hekhundhayor	Derivation
49.	Alabi	Halabi	Derivation
50.		Harlarby	Multiple process

Source: Authors' Compilation (2025)

Table 3 outlines the various processes involved in the anglicisation of twenty-five selected Yoruba names. For this study, we analysed two anglicised variants for each of these names. Below, Table 4 presents the frequency and percentage distribution of these analysed anglicised variants.

Table 4: Frequency and Percentage Distribution of the Anglicised Variants

Morphological Process	Frequency	Percentage
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Multiple process	8	16
Derivation	32	64
Clipping	7	14
Acronym	3	6
Total	50	100

Source: Authors' Compilation (2025)

Table 4 shows that multiple processes account for eight frequencies, derivation for thirty-two, clipping for seven, and acronyms for three. These numbers translate into percentages of 16%, 64%, 14%, and 6% respectively. As opined by Haimson and Hoffmann (2016) Facebook users modify their ‘authentic self’ to fit Facebook’s demand of real name policy names. Yoruba Facebook users, however, employ different processes in re-presenting their names on Facebook to fit the social media real name policy. The processes employed are derivation, multiple process, acronym and clipping as proposed by Yule (2010).

Derivation is the addition of bits (affixes) to a root word (Yule, 2010). It involves prefix, infix and suffix. *Hardeboye* employs prefix and infix. The name in the source language (Yoruba) is *Adeboye*. *Hardeboye* adds h- as prefix and -r- as infix, both in the first syllable; *Hidowu* also takes the prefix h- in its first syllable; *Olamidey* takes a suffix -y at its final syllable; h- and -r- are added to the initial syllable of *Akinsola* to form *Harkinsola*; *Abeedemi* takes infix -e- in its second syllable; -h- is inserted as an infix in the first and second syllable and suffix -r to form *Bhukholar*; *Shey Hi* apart from breaking the name into two words also takes infix -h- in the first word *Shey* and prefix h- in *Hi*; *Holuwacheun* has prefix h- an infix -ch-; *Holuwahsheyhun* adds prefix h- at the initial syllable, infix -h- and -y- at the word medial position (Holuwahsheyhun); *Barmegboye* employs infix -e- in its formation; also, *Barhmigbohyeh* adds infix -h- and suffix -h. These result in extensional affix. The semantic potentials of the variants are altered but retain their word class-nouns.

Meanwhile, some variants employ the combination of two processes. This is what Yule (2010) calls multiple processes. Variants such as *Hardebowyay*, *Heedowho*, *Harbeedayme*, *Haryourmhidey*, *Harkeensholar*, *Kennedex* adopt multiple processes in their formations. *Hardebowyay* combines derivation and borrowing. H- is a prefix, -r- is infix while -ay is suffixed. ‘Bow’ is however, a loan-blend, borrowed from English. *Heedowho* has hee- as its prefix and ‘do’ (verb) ‘who’ (relative/interrogative pronoun) borrowed from English. Similarly, *Harbeedayme* has h- prefixed and -r- infix. The remaining words [bee (a flying insect) day (days of the week) and me (personal pronoun in the objective case) that make up the variant are loan-blends from English. Consequently, *Haryourmhidey* has a prefix h-, infix -r- and -h-, and a loan-blend from pidgin (dey). *Harkeensholar* employs prefix -h, infix -r- and -h-, and suffix r-. It also borrows keen from the English language. However, *Kennedex* adopts clipping and derivation. *Kehinde* is reduced to ‘kenn’ while -edex is added as a suffix.

Clipping is another process notable in the anglicised variants. The variants are *Dhamhee* and *Dammy*, *Lamide*, *Kenny* and *Becky* are notable clipped variants. Clipping is the reduction in length of a word. In *Dhamhee* and *Dammy* for instance, the *lola* in the source language has been elided. Aside *Lamide* which employs a fore-clipping of ‘o’, others are back clipped. Acronym is the least word formation process with a token of 8%. It is evident in *AY* and *SY*. The first two initial letters in *Ayomide* serve as the acronym in the anglicised variant. *SY* on the other hand, adopts the first and the third letter of the four lettered word *Seyi* to form its anglicised variant.

Conclusion

This study has established that the anglicisation of Yoruba anthroponyms on Facebook involves systematic morphological adaptations and reflects deeper cultural dynamics. Using Yule’s

(2010) morphological taxonomy, the findings revealed that derivation is the most prevalent word formation process, followed by multiple processes, clipping and acronymy. These processes highlight the linguistic creativity and adaptation of Yoruba netizens to the English-speaking context, as they modify names to align with English orthographic and phonological patterns in the digital world.

Furthermore, applying Adeniyi's (2017) classification of Yoruba names indicated that given/birth names are the most frequently anglicised, followed by destiny/situational names, royalty names, deities' names and praise names. The dominance of given/birth names aligns with Adeniyi's (2017:87) assertion that parents and family members play a crucial role in naming newborns; this often results in multiple names for a single child. This also reinforces the cultural significance and functional flexibility of given names within Yoruba society, thus making them more prone to adaptation.

These frameworks revealed how morphology and cultural naming practices intersect in shaping digital identity rather than giving up their real names for the sake of social standards and expectations (Reinecke, 2011 cited in Haimson & Hoffmann, 2016). The study, therefore, underscores the role of social media as a site for both linguistic innovation and cultural negotiation.

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