

A Sociolinguistic Study of Domestic Pet Names in Yoruba Language

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Abstract

Although there are variations in style and patterns, name or naming is a linguistic universal that cuts across all human societies. Naming is not only an act or a means of identity construction, it signals the bearer's socio-cultural milieu and worldviews. This present study attempts a sociolinguistic investigation of domestic pet names among Yoruba people with a view to unravelling the structural units of, and the motivations cum worldviews behind the names. The study used observation and interview methods for data collection, thirty names given to dogs and goats in some towns and villages in Oyo and Kwara States of Nigeria were randomly selected for analysis. The paper deployed onomastics and linguistic anthropology to analyze the data. Findings of the study show that the structural units of the names examined are sentence, noun phrase, adjectival phrase and noun. The study also discovers that eulogy in conjunction with the demonstration of the benevolence and supremacy of God, promotion of good neighbourliness/interpersonal relationships, prohibition of bad behaviour, promotion of worthwhile behavioural patterns and virtues, implantation of hope and caution, appreciation of nature, as well as adoration of knowledge and wisdom are the motivations for the investigated Yoruba pet names. Aside, the study finds out that names are used to entrench and preserve Yoruba sociocultural values and worldviews. The paper draws the conclusion that Yoruba pet names are a repository of values and worldviews of Yoruba race.

Key Words: Sociolinguistics, Yoruba culture, domestic pet names, worldview

Introduction

Out of all creatures, only humans are naturally and mentally equipped with the capacity to give names to themselves, other creatures, as well as elements in nature. Naming, therefore, is peculiarly a human linguistic phenomenon. Language is an identification mark of the society, the society uses language for naming; on the other hand, name is a veritable tool deployed for the identification and individuation of the membership of the society. As such, “individuals use linguistic items, such as naming strategies, to identify with people they consider as theirs or members of their group” (Lamidi & Aboh, 2011, pp. 35-36). Considering the importance of a name, Tsaaio (2009, p.8) observes:

a name proclaims, and is synonymous with the individual that bears and answers it. A name becomes a text of cultural meanings and a metaphoric incision that spells the life of the individual. It weaves a rich tapestry of life for the bearer in the binary realities of adversity or prosperity, failure or success. ... it processes the past, defines the present, divines and attends the future conceived in the womb of time and subsumes the totality of human destiny and experience.

Looking at the significance of names and naming from the African point of view, Mensah, Inyabri and Nyong (2020, p.7) note that “names and naming define personhood ... They are marks of solidarity that reinforce and sustain the African brotherhood and collective belonging.” Mensah (2021, p.2) adds that “names are central in defining the concepts of self, personhood and future life course of their bearers.” From the positions above, it is evident that a name transcends an identity marker, it shapes the entire existence of the bearer. Substantiating this stance, Ovuakporie (1998, p.44) opines that an individual’s “successes and failures,

actions and reactions, are, to a large extent, encapsulated in the mystery surrounding his name.” Lending her voice on the mystery of a name, Lindsey (1997, p.78) notes that “a name symbolically links us to our past and provides us with a sense of self-definition.” Also, a convergence of opinions among scholars is that names are repositories of histories, beliefs, worldviews, values, valiancy, norms, mores, cultural meanings, social circumstances surrounding people’s birth or the circumstances of their parents, and that naming involves projection of one’s personality onto one’s progeny (Chimhundu 1995; Maalej 2009; Tsaaior 2009; Mensah, Inyabri & Nyong 2020; Akpomuvie & Esiri 2021).

Having highlighted the inherent nature and attributes of names, what then, in a simple term, is the definition of a name? According to Olatunji et al. (2015, p.72), “[a] name is what somebody or something is called, it is a term or phrase by which somebody or something is known and distinguished from other people or things.” We conceive a name as a linguistic item, nomenclature, tag or emblem by which an individual identifies, states, expresses their personhood or what a thing is called, which differentiates them or it from others.

Yoruba people are a major ethnic group in Nigeria, their ancestral home is found in southwestern part of the country - Oyo, Ondo, Ogun, Osun, Lagos, Ekiti, Kwara States, and some part of Kogi State (Okunland). They use Yoruba language as their common tongue (though the code has some dialects such as Ijebu, Ijesha, Egba, Igbomina, Egun etc.). The full name of a typical traditional Yoruba person comprises three elements: personal name (*oruko abiso*), attributive name/epithet (*oriki*) and ancestral name or totem (*oriki orile*) (Orie, 2006). Personal names are usually given to children during their naming ceremony on the seventh day. Yoruba personal names give a clue to the family, religious, social, and occupational background of the bearers (Orie, 2006). For example, people from the royal family usually have *Ade* (crown) or *Oye* (chieftaincy) prefixed to their names, hence, the names *Adewale* (crown has come home), *Adeyemi* (crown befits me), *Oyeyiola* (crown rubs on wealth) etc. Families that worship Ogun deity have their personal names introduced

by Ogun e.g. *Ogunṣan* (Ogun, the god of vengeance), *Ogunrinde* (Ogun walked in); those who worship Sango (god of thunder), Egungun (ancestral masquerade) have their names introduced by Sango and Ọjẹ respectively, hence the names *Sangoniya* (god of thunder has dignity), *Ọjẹdiran* (the worship of egungun deity runs in the family). Not only that, names starting with *Ọla* (honour/wealth/nobility) project the social background of the bearers that they are of noble, honourable and wealthy descent.

Furthermore, Yoruba personal names, at times, portray the occupation of the bearers. The family whose occupation is hunting have their names prefixed with *Ọdẹ* (like *Ọdẹwale* – hunter has come into the family, *Ọdẹyinka* – hunters surround me). The families of drummers have their names introduced by *Ayan* (like *Ayankunle* – drummers abound in the family, *Ayangbayi* – drumming is prestigious).

Oriki (epithet) is a personal name deployed for the praise of an individual such as *Alabi* (a child that emerges), *Akanji* (a child that brings awakening), *Agbekẹ* (a child to be carried and pampered) (Orie, 2006), *Akanmu* (a child that is carefully chosen), *Asakẹ* (a girl child carefully chosen to be pampered). *Alabi*, *Akanji*, *Akanmu* are masculine names while *Agbekẹ* and *Asakẹ* are feminine. To this end, in Yoruba culture, personal and attributive names indicate the sex of the bearers.

Oriki orilẹ refers to the ancestral name or totem of the child. The name reveals the ancestral lineage or clan of the bearer. *Oriki orilẹ* names are unisex. Examples of such names are:

- Opo* (pillar) – traceable to the noble Oyo family
- Ọkin* (peacock) – traceable to the royal lineage of Ọfa and Oro in Kwara State
- Erin* (elephant) – traceable to the ancient lineage of the kings of old Oyo empire

Yoruba also recognizes *orukọ amutọrunwa* (names brought from heaven). These names reflect the uncommon circumstances surrounding the birth of the bearers. For instance, the first of the

twins is named *Tayewo/Taiwo* (taste or explore the world) while the second is called *Kẹhinde* (the last to arrive). Other examples of *amutọrunwa* names are

Ojo (male), *Aina* (female) – a child that has the umbilical cord twined around its neck at birth.

Ige – a child that came out with the legs instead of the Head.

Ilọri – a child conceived without a prior menstruation.

(Akinnaso, 1983; Orie. 2006; Olatunji et al, 2015).

Besides personal names, Yoruba people also give names to their domestic pets. These domestic names are not arbitrary, rather they are used to achieve certain ends. The rationale behind these domestic pet names forms the basis of this study. The study aims at identifying the structural units of the names given to dogs and goats among Yoruba people, the motivations for the names, as well as the Yoruba worldviews associated with the names.

Literature Review

The concept of naming and names have attracted scholarly attention all over the globe. Notwithstanding, our focus will be limited to a few studies that are related to the present investigation. Lamidi and Aboh (2011) examine how naming has been deployed for identity construction in four Nigerian novels of the 21st century: – Okey Ndibe's *Arrow of Rain* (2000), *Waiting for an Angel* (2002) by Helon Habila, Abimbola Adelokun's *Under the Brown Rusted Roofs* (2008), and *Love my Planet* (2008) by Vincent Egbuson. The study discovers that "Nigerian novelists use names from various ethnic groups to uphold their Nigerianess" (p. 39): hence, indigenous fictional names (from Yoruba, Hausa, Igbo and Izo) for the characters preponderate in the novels more than English, and non-English names. The paper establishes that naming and names are used to portray identity construction of the characters and to express identity resistance (depicted via English and non-English names). The study further substantiates that names are used to perform certain actions such

as to typify religious harmony and “the novelists’ portrayal of the power to impose names with social and political identity upon their characters” (p. 44). The paper draws the conclusion that the names of the characters are a representation of “the ideological affiliations of the sampled novelists” (p.45).

Mensah, Inyabri and Nyong (2020) consider the motivations for rejection of native first names and the adoption of European and westernized ones by some youth in Calabar metropolis. The study adopts Afrocentric paradigm for analysis and findings indicate that conversion to Christianity or Islam, self-identification and determination, preference for anglicized versions of traditional names, influence of revered celebrities, individual taste, mispronunciation and misspelling of ethnic names, as well as creativity are among the motivations that inform preference for European and westernized names. The study concludes that the studied population adopts new names “to define their modernity, identity and social spaces where verbal styles based on the Eurocentric worldview are used in the creation and maintenance of distinctiveness” (p.23).

Mensah (2021) explores the “Englishisation” of personal names in Nigeria using Efik and Ibibio names as the focal points. The paper deploys a qualitative ethnographic approach via participant observation, semi-structured interview and metalinguistic conversation for data collection. The study finds out that anglicization, hybridization and tonal alteration are the mechanisms employed for the “Englishisation” of the personal names of the target population. Anglicization is effected through substitution of cultural names with English ones especially by the early missionaries while hybridization is a “mixing of elements from two languages to derive a new variety of names” (p. 8). Tonal alteration “indexes power relations. A high-low (HL) tone superimposed on a two syllable names indicates a high social status, but a high-high (HH) or low-low (LL) tone on the same name represents a low or inferior social class” (p.10). “Englishisation” of names, as Mensah (2021) observes, is a product of the global dominance of English and language contact. The article, in conclusion, submits that “Englishisation” of Efik and Ibibio personal names is owing to “favourableness toward English

and the relative perceptions of prestige and power that often accompany such names” (p.11).

Akpomovie and Esiri's (2021) work dwells on naming practices among Yoruba, Edo and Urhobo peoples of Nigeria. The paper uses semi-structured and informant interview methods for data collection and submits that among the three linguistic groups, the typology of names people bear is shaped by education, cultural values, immigration, religion etc. Not only that, naming patterns reflect borrowing, wishes of parents, philosophy/proverbs, events, deities, occupation, patronymics, and the like. The study also posits that names are effective tools for storing, retrieving and perpetuating cultural knowledge.

Shanmuganathan et al. (2021) have studied names and naming practices of the Telugu in Malaysia. The investigation employs interview via survey questions for data gathering. It is discovered that during the naming rite, “rice grains are spread on a bronze dish and the father writes the chosen name on rice grains using a stick rolled in gold wrapper, while chanting the name of the main deity. ... The baby's father then whispers the selected name into the child's right ear thrice and says a prayer” (p.36). The paper also argues that while children are named after deities and family progenitors, Telugu names are sourced from deities, ancestors, historical and epic characters, rivers, mountains and temples, abstract terms and personal attributes such as power, purity, joy, beauty, success, prosperity, victory, greatness, piety and devotion (p.38). The study concludes that Telugu names aim at entrenching the ethnic identity of the bearers.

Chen's (2021) study investigates the adoption of non-Chinese names as identity markers of Chinese students studying at a Japanese Comprehensive Research University in 2019. The paper explores purposive and convenience sampling methods to determine the target population while semi-structured interview is used for data collection. The study discovers that teachers' influence, Chinese conventions for terms of address, mispronunciation, and context sensitivity of personal names are the motivating factors that are responsible for the adoption of non-Chinese names by the studied population.

Imoh (2021) studies the structure of Basa personal names, hinging on interview as the tool to gather data and Leipzig Glossing Rule in conjunction with literal interpretation for analysis of data. Discoveries from the investigation show that nouns, de-adjectivization, compounding, nominalization, noun phrase, sentences (declarative, imperative, interrogative, wh questions, request), proverbs, idioms and riddles constitute the structure of the personal names of the studied group. In conclusion, the paper posits that the knowledge of the structures of Basa personal names provides a clue to the grammar of Basa language.

The researchers of the present study are aware of some studies on Yoruba names such as Akinnaso (1983), Orie (2002), Ikotun (2010), Ajiboye (2011), Akinola (2014), and Akintoye (2021). Here, reference is made only to Odebode's (2012) study due to its closeness to this investigation. Odebode considers pet-naming as a protest discourse in polygamous Yoruba homes from a pragmatic point of view. The research uses two instruments of observation and interview to garner twenty-five pet names used for the study while Austin's speech act theory is deployed for analysis. Findings of the investigation identify warning, asserting, comparing, discrediting, advising, affirming, threatening, questioning and eulogizing as the illocutionary acts of the studied pet names. The paper submits that apart from the illocutionary acts performed by the names, pet names are also explored to protest in polygamous homes, as well as communicate far-reaching facts among Yoruba people.

This study aims at exploring the structural units, motivations, cultural significance cum the worldviews underlining some names given to domestic pets among Yoruba people.

Methodology/Theoretical Foundation

The corpus for this research is Yoruba names given to dogs and goats. The researchers used observation and interview methods to source for data for the study. They have people who raise these domestic animals around them, hence, they are familiar with a few names given to these animals, yet others were gathered from interview carried out in Ogbomosho, Aje-Ikose and Eleesun (Oyo

State) as well as Egosi, Ilofa, Ayedun (Kwara State), Nigeria. The researchers randomly selected thirty names that can be translated into English for the study. In addition, they interviewed many owners of these pets to know the rationale and the worldview for the names; their responses form the discussion and findings of the investigation. Interview method afforded the researchers to have a firsthand information on the sociolinguistic importance of the investigated names.

Analysis for this study drives on a bipod – onomastics and linguistic anthropology. Onomastics is the study of personal names of people. The concept comprises two arms namely anthroponomastics and toponomastics. While anthroponomastics is the study of personal names, toponomastics refers to the study of place names, whether inhabited or non-inhabited (www.britannica.com). In the words of Al-Zamor (2009, p.16):

[a]nthroponomastic studies are based on the theory that there is a strong interface between a people's language and their cultural practices. It mirrors on how language is used as cultural practices and how language is used as a powerful tool to view and understand the world view of a particular society.

Linguistic anthropology is an interdisciplinary field of study that deals with the influence of language on the social life of people. It explicates the impact of language on communication, social identity, ideologies, cultural beliefs, as well as group membership of a people (Society for Linguistic Anthropology, 2010). This paper adapts anthroponomastics/linguistic anthropology to study some Yoruba domestic pet names with a view to understanding the motivations and the cultural significance cum worldviews behind the names. Not only that, the structure of the names is also considered; this serves as a clue to the structural constituents of Yoruba names.

Data and Data Analysis

Find in the table below the Yoruba pet names used for analysis.

	Name	Gloss	Structural Unit
1.	<i>T'Olúwa lasẹ</i>	The Lord has the final say.	Sentence
2.	<i>Imọ lagba</i>	Knowledge is the ultimate	Sentence
3.	<i>Ẹda ko laro pin</i>	No one is to be written off	Sentence
4.	<i>Riro ni t'eniyan</i>	Man proposes/plans	Sentence (Adage)
5.	<i>Aye lọja</i>	The world is a market-place	Sentence (Metaphor)
6.	<i>(Wọn) Ẹe b'ọla tan</i>	(They) think wealth/honour has been exhausted	Sentence
7.	<i>Ẹni a fẹ lamọ</i>	One knows only those one loves	Sentence (Adage)
8.	<i>Gbo tiẹ</i>	Mind your own business	Sentence
9.	<i>Ẹhin laaro</i>	Think of the end/consequence	Sentence
10.	<i>Bo 'reke (mase)</i>	If you see dishonesty/falsehood (don't do it/join them to do it)	Clause/Sentence
11.	<i>Ọpọ eniyan dun</i>	There is profitability in multitude of people	Sentence
12.	<i>Tan(i) t'Ọlọrun?</i>	Who is like God or who equals God?	Sentence

13.	<i>Se b'o ti mọ</i>	Act/live according to your level or means	Sentence
14.	<i>Aje laake</i>	We ought to nurture wealth.	Sentence
15.	<i>Alaanu ku</i>	The merciful are still available.	Sentence
16.	<i>Yaawa</i>	Come promptly.	Sentence
17.	<i>Qna inu jin</i>	The path to the heart is far.	Sentence
18.	<i>Igbẹhin a dun</i>	The end/outcome shall be well.	Sentence
19.	<i>Ba o ku, ise o tan</i>	If there is life, there is hope.	Sentence (Adage)
20.	<i>Owo ko n'iran</i>	Wealth has no race.	Sentence
21.	<i>Aje la n wa</i>	It is wealth we are seeking.	Sentence
22.	<i>Eniyan ni ẹ bẹ</i>	Appeal to humans.	Sentence
23.	<i>Bo se 're (oo ba nibe)</i>	If you do/act/behave well (you will see the outcome)	Clause/Sentence
24.	<i>Igi aje</i>	The tree of wealth	Noun phrase
25.	<i>Iya laje</i>	Prominent woman trader	Noun phrase
26.	<i>Dun-un sin</i>	Pleasurable to rear/worship	Adjectival phrase
27.	<i>Suuru</i>	Patience	Noun
28.	<i>Adu loju</i>	Blackie	Noun
29.	<i>Iwa</i>	Character	Noun

Table 1: Some Yoruba Names for Dogs and Goats

From the data above, twenty-three names fall under the sentence, two have noun phrase as their structural unit, one is an adjectival phrase while four are nouns. The structural units of these names give a clue that majority of Yoruba names are sentential in nature. The pet names with their structural units are presented thus:

Sentence

- (declarative) – *t'Oluwa lasẹ, imọ lagba, ẹda ko laro pin, (wọn) se b'ọla tan, ẹhin laaro, ọpọ eniyan dun, owo ko n'iran, aje la n wa, aje laake, eniyan ni ẹ bẹ, igbẹhin a dun, ba o ku ise o tan, bo se 're (oo ba nibe), se b'o ti mọ, alaanu ku, yaawa, ọna inu jin, aye lọja, ẹni a fẹ lamọ*
- (Imperative) – *gbọ tiẹ, bo r'eke (mase), se b'o ti mọ*
- (interrogative) – *tan(i) t'Ọlọrun*
- Noun Phrase – *igi aje, iya laje.*
- Adjective Phrase – *dun-un sin*
- Noun – *suuru, adu, adu loju, iwa*

Nineteen names in the data are declarative sentences as pointed out above. Some of them are discussed in the following lines. *T'Oluwa lasẹ* (the Lord has the final say) establishes the finality of God's decision on a matter irrespective of the efforts of a person or the opposition against an individual or a line of action. The name is a reiteration of the omnipotence of the Supreme God over humanity, his will transcends that of individuals on any matter. *Imọ lagba* (knowledge is supreme or the ultimate) emphasizes the importance of knowledge; the name is an admonition for all and sundry to seek and pursue knowledge in all its forms (cultural, philosophical, occupational and the like). It is believed that knowledge is a priceless asset to its possessor, thus,

the name gingers people to acquire knowledge in order to live an impactful and fulfilled life. *Ẹda ko laro pin* (no one is to be written off) is didactic and instructive in nature; it decries contempt against fellow humans owing to their present predicament. The name amplifies hope for a better and positive turn-around for folk passing through challenging and unpalatable circumstances. It teaches morals in some sense. *Riro ni t'eniyan* (man proposes/plans) is the shortened form of the axiom, *riro ni t'eniyan, sise ni t'Oluwa* (man proposes, God disposes). Yoruba people believe in the Supreme God who is in charge of everything in the universe. Hence, they believe everything exists as he has destined, purposed or wills. As such, all creatures are at his mercy.

The axiom presupposes the supremacy of divinity over the affairs of humanity. It reiterates that God has a final verdict in the situations and affairs of human beings. The name, therefore, entrenches and emphasizes trust and confidence in God. To this end, human beings should submit their yearnings and aspirations to his supremacy. (*Wọn*) *Se b'ọla tan* ((they) think wealth/honour has been exhausted) is a reactionary name to silence despisers who disparage one's effort and achievement, and think one would not amount to anything. Yoruba folk give the name to their pets when their situation begins to have a positive turn-around so as to silence their despisers. *Ẹhin laaro* (think of the end/consequence) is another name that inculcates caution. It is instructive of considering the end or consequence of an action or decision early enough to avert regrets. Impliedly, a fellow who ponders on the outcomes of their actions and decisions rarely have numerous regrets: the name reiterates. *Ọpọ eniyan dun* (there is profitability in multitude of people) depicts the benefits and advantages of collective actions. Whatever worthy line of action people unanimously undertake succeeds because of unity and cooperation mustered and exerted.

The name encourages individuals to unite together to pursue worthwhile courses. *Owo ko n'iran* (wealth has no race) is a name that calls people to hard work, for prosperity and wealth belong to the industrious. The name decries and denounces indolence but upholds industriousness in legitimate

means of livelihood. *Aje la n wa* (it is wealth we are seeking) summarizes the objective of human toiling under the sun – seeking prosperity and financial freedom. Indirectly, it is telling the pet to contribute its quota to the wealth of the owner via maximum productivity, and if it is a male, it should grow well, be hale and hearty, so that if sold, it should accrue a large sum to the owner. *Aje laake* is an admonition for people to nurture their means of livelihood being a tool for their wealth and prosperity. The name, therefore, prompts everyone to industriousness and the nurture of their means of livelihood. *Eniyan ni e be* (appeal to humans) is a short form of the axiom, *eniyan ni e be, Olurun kii binu/se ibi* (appeal to humans, God does not lose his temper/does no evil). The name is a eulogy to the Supreme God for his benevolence in contrast with the mischievous and devilish tendencies of human beings.

In another vein, the name is calling humanity to desist from atrocities in that when tragedies/calamities occur, humans are the cause. *Igbəhin a dun* (the end/outcome shall be well) like *eda ko laro pin* is a vociferation for and or amplification of hope – it is an assurance that all will end well no matter the present predicament. Impliedly, the name signals hope and condemns despondency, in that light is seen at the end of the tunnel. *Ba o ku, ise o tan* (if there is life, there is hope) is also a signal of hope and not to give up. As far as one is alive, situations of life can change for the better – this is the major import of the name. *Bo se 're* (if you do/act/behave well) is an abridged form of the sentence, *bo se 're, oo ba nibe* meaning if you do/act/behave well, you will see the outcome. The name is a call to everyone to watch their actions and behavioural patterns because there are consequences for all deeds. It cautions people against misbehaviour.

It should be noted that aside being declarative sentences, some pet names are language embellishments used for rhetorical purposes. Such names are *riro ni t'eniyan*, *eni a fe lamọ*, *ba o ku ise o tan*, and *aye lọja*. While *riro ni t'eniyan*, *eni a fe lamọ*, *ba o ku ise o tan* are adages, *aye lọja* is a metaphor.

The three names that fall under imperative sentence are *gbọ tiẹ*, *bo r'eke mase* and *se b'o ti mọ*. *Gbọ tiẹ* (mind your own business) is instructive: it instructs one not to meddle in other people's affairs unadvisedly. The name instills restraint, self-control and self-discipline in the hearers. *Bo r'eke mase* literally means "if you see dishonesty/falsehood, don't do it/join them to do it." At times, the name is abridged as *bo r'eke* (if you see dishonesty/falsehood). The name instills caution against being part of unhealthy and unwholesome affairs. The name aims at promoting healthy relationships and peaceful co-existence in the society. *Se b'o ti mọ* (act/live according to your level/means) is an admonition for individuals to be content with their status and means per time.

The only name that falls under interrogative sentence in the data is *tan(i) t'Ọlọrun*. *Tan(i) t'Ọlọrun* (who is like God or who equals God?) buttresses the mightiness, unlimited nature and power of God. The name emphasizes Yoruba belief in the Supreme God who is omnipotent, omniscient and has no limitation whatsoever. The name solidifies and cements faith, absolute trust and confidence in God – it also eulogizes him.

Two names have the structure of the noun phrase in the data, namely *igi aje* and *iya laje*. *Igi aje* (tree of wealth) is closer in sense to *aje laakẹ*. To call an animal *igi aje* is to appreciate it and make it realize its importance as a means of wealth generation; the name, consequently, encourages it to be more productive. *Iya laje* (prominent woman trader) in Yoruba parlance is often used for a woman who is a successful trader. It is also a traditional title for a prominent female entrepreneur. As such, the nomenclature is synonymous with *igi aje*. The name encourages high prolificacy from the animals so called thus. Like *igi aje*, only doelings are named *iya laje*.

The name *dun-un sin* is the only item with the structure of the adjectival phrase in the data collected. It has two shades of meaning – (i) the animal is pleasurable to rear, and (ii) God is pleasurable to worship/serve. If *dun-un sin* is in relation to the pet, it implies there is no risk to keep or rear the animal – it is a way of gladdening the pet to make it grow well, and be prolific

(if it is a doeling). If the owner names the pet in reference to God, they signify that it is a pleasure to serve or worship the Supreme Being. This is a way of acknowledging, appreciating and eulogizing God.

Four names are in the form of noun in the data, they are *adu*, *adu loju*, *suuru* and *iwa*. The name *adu* or *adu loju* (blackie) is given to a dog or a goat with a black fur in adoration of the natural beauty of the animal. *Suuru* (patience) summons all and sundry to imbibe and manifest the virtue patience as it is seen as the queen of all virtues. It is believed that with patience, anything is achievable, and that difficult situations are bound to change for good. As such, the name vociferates exhibition of the virtue, patience, by everybody in their pursuits and undertakings. *Iwa* signifies character. Of course, animals are no moral agents, as such they cannot have character, but the name is given to pets so that as people hear it, it will nudge them to be of good character wherever they find themselves.

Discussion of Findings

When asked why they acquire pets, majority of the respondents affirmed that it is good to have such domestic animals around one because they are a ransom to humans. Many of the interviewees claimed that they believe the death that ought to claim them, their loved ones or any looming evil around them and their loved ones, at times, take their domestic animals. As such, these animals bear some losses and calamities that would have befallen their owners. Some older respondents submitted that dogs do see what is invisible to human eyes, as such, they bark for their owners to be cautious. A few of the elderly interviewees testified that when they were bereaved of some loved ones, their dogs kept barking for a long time prior to the arrival of the bearer of the message. To this end, they believed that their dogs saw the spirits of the departed that came around their residence, hence, the continuous barking of their dogs. A few of the elderly respondents also posited that the rheum from dog's eye is one of the items used to make charm for anyone who wants to see the invisible to the natural eyes.

Apart from the above, a vast majority of the respondents claimed that they just delight in seeing these domestic pets around them, hence acquiring them. Some others submitted that they used their dogs for hunting and as guards around their houses especially at night. Others disclosed that they raise these pets for economic purposes: they affirmed that anytime they are in desperate need of money, they dispose of one or two of these animals to meet their pressing needs. In addition, they affirmed that they also sell off the puppies of their bitch and the kids of their doeling a few weeks or months after birth. When asked how they acquire these pets, they stated there are two ways of acquisition – by purchasing a puppy/kid or by being given on agreed terms and conditions. They explained that one can be given a bitch or doeling so that the puppies and kids produced by these animals are shared between the giver and the new owner. Odebode (2012) confirms this practice of acquisition in his investigation.

Aside establishing a relationship between the pet and the owner, some elderly respondents affirmed that names are not given to pets just for identification, it is done with some intentions in mind. Among the intentions is for others around them to hear the names of their pets and use the signification to adjust their conduct and positively modify their patterns of behaviour and way of life.

From the explication of names given above, Yoruba worldviews can be gleaned therein. First, some of the names portray Yoruba belief in the Supreme God who is noted for benevolence, whose will and counsel is super-imposed on that of humans and is established in spite of human efforts. Such names are *t'Oluwa lasẹ*, *eniyan ni ẹ bẹ*, *dun-un sín*, *tan(i) t'Ọlọrun* and *riro ni t'eniyan*. Yorubas believe in life after death, such is captured in the names given to their pets; *aye ọja* succinctly depicts this belief. Furthermore, Yoruba people hold honesty, integrity and dignity in high esteem as part of their moral values; they denounce deviation from such, hence they preserve that in their naming strategies. Names like *gbọ tiẹ*, *bo r'eke (mase)*, *ẹhin laaro*, and *bo se 're* are a demonstration of such. Yoruba race

cherishes industriousness on legitimate means of livelihood as a means of wealth generation, and vociferates against indolence and sharp practices. They use names, among others, as a tool for the implantation and entrenchment of that worldview. Examples of such names are *owo ko ni'ran*, *aje laake*, *igi aje* and *iya laje*. Apart from that, denunciation of reckless living is noted in Yoruba nation, hence, the portrayal of same in their pet names: *ona inu jin*, *eni a fe lamọ* clearly posits this philosophy. In addition, like most African linguistic groups, Yoruba people are known for their resilience and ruggedness, consequently, they rarely give up easily on what they believe in – they are enmeshed in hope. Their hope-inclined nature reflects in the names given to their domestic animals. Instances of the names are *ba o ku ise o tan*, *igbehin a dun*, and *eda ko laro pin*. More so, appreciation and adoration of nature is noticeable among Yoruba people. They showcase this, among others, by the names they give to things around them. A completely black-furred dog or goat is called *adu* or *adu loju* respectively.

Africans societies are known for communal living – a practice that has cemented their brotherliness and good neighbourliness. Yoruba as an African society preserves this practice in their naming strategies. For example, they name their dogs and goats *opp eniyan dun* to emphasize the benefits in and the advantages of communal living. The names *suuru* (patience) and *iwa* (character) are used to unravel the value Yorubas place on moral virtues; that accounts for naming their pets accordingly to further ignite others to imbibe these virtues. Also, Yoruba people cherish knowledge and wisdom – the possessors of same are revered in their society. They opine that when the duo is in place, the world will be a better place of abode, hence, they nudge the members of their society to acquire and possess these “assets”; this is the reason for naming their pets *imọ lagba*.

From the foregoing, it is incontestable that Yoruba pet names eulogize the supreme God as well as establish his benevolence and supremacy in the affairs of humans; the names teach morals, promote good neighbourliness and interpersonal relationships, prohibit undesirable behavioural traits and

tendencies, promote and exalt worthwhile behaviour and virtues, give hope, propagate caution, and appreciate nature. In fact, names given to domestic pets by Yoruba people are a repository of their values and worldviews.

Conclusion

A name is a linguistic item, nomenclature, tag and or emblem by which an individual identifies, states, expresses their personhood or what a thing is called, which differentiates them/it from others. Names are repositories of histories, worldviews, values, beliefs, norms, valiancy, mores, social circumstances, among others. This study has explored thirty Yoruba names for dogs and goats using observation with interview as the method of data collection, while onomastics and linguistic anthropology have been deployed for analysis. Findings of the study indicate that the studied names take the structure of the sentence (declarative, imperative and interrogative), noun phrase, adjectival phrase, and noun. The investigation also identifies the motivations for the names to be eulogy, demonstration of the benevolence and supremacy of the Supreme God in the affairs of humans; promotion of good neighbourliness and interpersonal relationships, prohibition of undesirable behavioural traits and tendencies, promotion and exaltation of worthwhile behaviour and virtues, entrenchment of hope, propagation of caution, appreciation of nature, and celebration of knowledge and wisdom. The study concludes that Yoruba domestic pet names are a repository of Yoruba values and worldviews.

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