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English Influence on the Structure of Igbo Personal Names

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Abstract

English–Igbo language contact increasingly shapes contemporary personal naming practices in Igboland, where English functions as both a second and an official language. This study examines the phonological and morphological structures of English-influenced Igbo personal names and investigates how these transformations reflect patterns of language contact and changing naming conventions among Igbo speakers. Grounded in Language Contact Theory, the study employed a qualitative descriptive design and thematic analysis to examine 68 purposively selected Igbo personal names. The findings reveal that English influence produces phonological modifications involving vowel substitution, stress shifts, and tone loss. Morphological adaptations include derivation, respelling, truncation, gemination, orthographic addition, and cross-linguistic hybrid formation. These processes demonstrate that sustained contact between English and Igbo is reshaping indigenous personal naming conventions and may affect the cultural and linguistic significance of Igbo names. The study contributes to scholarship on language contact, morphology, phonology, and African onomastics by documenting the structural mechanisms through which English influences Igbo personal names. It further underscores the need to preserve traditional Igbo onomastic practices and recommends that Igbo language planners intensify efforts to

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promote standard orthography and pronunciation to limit unnecessary alterations of indigenous names. Future research may extend this inquiry to the syntactic, semantic, pragmatic, and sociocultural motivations underlying the adoption of English-influenced naming forms.

Keywords: African Onomastics; English–Igbo Language Contact; Igbo Personal Names; Morphological Adaptation; Phonological Change

INTRODUCTION

Personal names are a very significant aspect of human identity. They not only help to identify individuals but also reflect their cultural backgrounds and beliefs (Abdurazzoqova, 2026). Many individuals regard personal names as cherished possessions and therefore take great care when selecting them. In Africa, particularly, "names and the art of naming attract greater recognition and are accorded greater significance" (Ogunbona & Jimoh, 2023, p. 37). Names are assigned and adopted for various reasons. They may be chosen in the hope of emulating the life or fortune of a former bearer. They may also be chosen to invoke the message of the name upon the bearer. Furthermore, they may be chosen to capture situations surrounding the bearer. According to Ibeneche and Adindu (2022, p. 142), "Parents and families with stories of life-threatening circumstances . . . are likely to give names that will always carry the weight of their experiences." Names also reflect the historical or cultural periods in which they are given. When names are considered old or out of fashion, newer ones are created.

Naming is a special and carefully considered act. Given their role in "preserving cultural heritage and identity" (Michael et al., 2026, p. 1), names are sacrosanct to cultures. In the Igbo culture, names are not just cultural or identity markers but are also meaningful "communicative tools with tons of semantic, pragmatic and socio-cultural information" (Inyima & Nwosu, 2025, p. 42). While they may be recreated or modified for creative purposes, names are preserved to avoid distorting their meanings and significance.

In Igboland, English is the second language of many. This results from the colonial heritage of Britain, which formerly colonised Nigeria, and the region's priority of formal education, which is provided in English. The influence of English on Igbo personal names can also be traced to Christian naming practices. As Obiakor et al. (2025, p. 11) observe, Christian missionaries "ma[d]e it imperative to give their converts English [n]ame[s] during

baptism." The Igbo are popularly known for creativity and industry. This extends to the creation of other forms of identity markers, including personal names. Contemporary Igbo personal names are commonly created through morphological and phonological adaptations to Western onomastic structures. This English-influenced naming practice integrates non-Igbo linguistic norms into the Igbo naming system, a trend criticised by Inyima and Nwosu (2025, p. 37), who note that "Englishisation is posing a threat to linguistic and cultural diversity."

Anglicising personal names is not an uncommon practice in Igboland. As Ukaegbu and Okon (2024, p. 1) observe, "Among the Igbo people of southeastern Nigeria, there has been a shift in the contemporary naming of children." This phenomenon has been notably researched by concerned scholars. However, there is limited investigation into how English has influenced the phonological and morphological structure of Igbo personal names and what these structural changes reveal about language contact and changing naming practices among Igbo speakers. Thus, this study has the following objectives:

i. To analyse the phonological and morphological processes shaping Igbo personal names under English influence.

ii. To evaluate how these structural changes reflect patterns of language contact and shifting naming practices among Igbo speakers.

Concept and Socio-Cultural Significance of Personal Names in Igbo Society

A name is a designation by which an entity is identified. It fosters specific reference to a person, place, object and phenomenon. According to Fasasi et al. (2026, p.119), "Naming is universal and has become inseparable with human culture and language." As such, in most cultures, specific names are reserved for humans (personal names), while others are reserved for non-human entities.

In human society, personal names stand out among other types of names. According to Abdurazzoqova (2026, p. 8), personal names are "an active mechanism involved in the formation of social identity." They play many other roles, including preserving one's culture, emphasising religious significance, portraying social status, documenting history, and most commonly helping to draw the bearers' attention when

called. Furthermore, personal names play a significant role in meaning-making by distinguishing and identifying referents in discourse.

Name-giving in Igboland, according to Ahumibe (2026), "can be used to draw insights into their traditional values and their philosophy of life." Igbo names are given to capture circumstances surrounding a child's birth, portray gratitude for the child's birth, establish family history, reflect other social experiences, and invoke the blessings associated with their meanings. As Agozino (2025, p. 481) observes, "Far from being arbitrary, Igbo names are deliberate philosophical texts, embodying prayers, blessings, and injunctions for ethical living." Thus, name-giving in Igboland is a sacrosanct socio-cultural rite.

Igbo names are in the following structural forms: lexical (e.g. Ngozi = blessing), phrasal (e.g. Ezinne/Nneoma = good mother), and sentential (e.g. Chidimma = God is good). Semantically, they are phrased as imperatives (Tochukwu = praise God), declaratives (Chukwuma = God knows), and interrogatives (Onyemaechi = who knows tomorrow?). Commonly, interrogative names do not bear question marks, and phrasal and clausal names are neither spaced nor hyphenated as in English expressions. Thus, Onyemaechi (who knows tomorrow) is not spaced or punctuated as "Onye ma echi?" The orthography and pronunciation follow the Igbo alphabetical and phonological systems. Thus, an Igbo person may feel disrespected when their name is deliberately mispronounced or misspelled.

Morphological and Phonological Structure of Igbo Personal Names

Morphology is the scientific study of the internal structure of words and the processes of word formation. This branch of linguistics is crucial for understanding the structure of words and, by extension, personal names, since names are formed from morphemes or their combinations. A morpheme, according to Yule (2023, p. 152), is "a minimal unit of meaning or grammatical function." Morphemes in Igbo names are the smallest meaningful units into which the structures of names can be divided. Thus, a name like Chimaobim (= Chi + ma + obi + m), meaning "God knows my mind," comprises four morphemes.

The morphological formation of Igbo personal names is systematic rather than random. Names are formed through the following processes: compounding, clausal

formation, clipping, borrowing, and repetition. Compounding is the combination of two or more free morphemes to form a new word. Such names include Nnenna ('father's mother') and Uchenna ('father's will'). Clausal formation entails compressing a whole clause into a single name. Examples include Nnedimma ('mother is good') and Mmaduabuchi ('man is not God'). Clipping is the shortening of names to meaningful portions. For instance, Amaka for Chiamaka and Abuchi for Mmaduabuchi. Borrowing occurs when foreign names retain parts of their structures but are adapted to the Igbo word-formation system. Examples include Jeso for Jesus and Josef for Joseph. Repetitive structures occur on rare occasions, as in Nnanna and Dede.

A careful evaluation of the phonological system of Igbo fosters an understanding of the permissible phonological processes in Igbo names. Although Igbo dialects have distinct phonemic systems, Standard Igbo does not include certain phonemes found in the International Phonetic Alphabet. The phonemes of Standard Igbo correspond closely to its alphabet. Thus, each letter or digraph represents a single phoneme. Although tone is essential for pronunciation, it is generally not represented in the orthography of personal names. As Obiorah (2021, p. 399) notes, "Igbo names which are pronounced with functional tones are not written with tones."

Igbo orthography has no silent letters, nor do individual letters commonly represent multiple phonemes as in English. Both the phonological and morphological processes involved in the formation of Igbo names are based on the Igbo alphabet. The 36 letters of the alphabet and their phonemic transcriptions in the International Phonetic Alphabet (International Phonetic Association, 1999) are presented as follows: A /æ/, B /b/, CH /tʃ/, D /d/, E /e/ and /eɪ/, F /f/, G /ɡ/, GB /g͡b/, GH /ɣ/, GW /ɡʷ/, H /h/, I /ɪ/, Ị /i/, J /dʒ/, K /k/, KP /k͡p/, KW /kʷ/, L /l/, M /m/, N /n/, Ṅ /ŋ/, NW /nʷ/, NY /ɲ/, O /əʊ/, Ọ /ɔ/, P /p/, R /r/, S /s/, SH /ʃ/, T /t/, U /u/, Ụ /ʊ/, V /v/, W /w/, Y /j/, and Z /z/. In some Igbo dialects, however, Z may be realised as /ʒ/. Thus, ezi ('pig') may be pronounced /eɪʒi/ in such dialects.

In Igbo phonotactics, certain structures are not permissible. For instance, most consonants are not doubled except for a few, such as M in Mmaduabuchi and N in Nnenna. Similarly, most spellings do not end in consonants except for M in words such as odum (lion), njem (journey), dum (all), or when it stands alone as a pronoun: nye m (give me), m ga... (I will…), etc. Consequently, Igbo syllable structures are predominantly vowel-

final and less consonant-heavy. However, some vowels may undergo assimilation or deletion in words such as Chibuike, which is often pronounced as Chibike, or Ifeanyị, which is commonly pronounced as Ifanyị. Eze et al. (2023, p. 41) note that both phonological processes occur "as a result of quick speech while articulating some Igbo names." Depending on the dialect, certain consonants correspond to one another without affecting the meanings of words. For instance, the Standard Igbo forms ìsì /isi/ (head), ìfè /ìfe/ (thing), and Mbọ /mbɔ/ (finger) are realised as ìshì /iʃi/, ìvè /ìve/, and mvọ /mvɔ/, respectively, in some dialects. These examples reflect systematic dialectal consonant correspondences in Igbo.

Language Contact and English Influence on African Naming Systems

A language can influence another language only through language contact which, according to Nordquist (2025), occurs when "speakers of different languages (or different dialects of the same language) interact with one another, leading to a transfer of linguistic features." During language contact, new language varieties may emerge, while the languages in contact may also be enriched through the exchange of linguistic features. The development of English illustrates this point. As Aliyeva (2025, p. 102) observes, language contact has been "a source of enrichment rather than erosion, positioning English as a dynamic and globally responsive language." Language contact may arise through education, religion, colonialism, urbanisation, and globalisation.

In education, learners are exposed to languages other than their own through language studies or interacting with teachers and co-students. In religion, missionary work, preaching, scripture translation, pilgrimages, and worshipping together connect speakers of different language backgrounds which eventually exposes members to the languages of one another (Ndububa, 2026). During colonialism, speakers of the colonising and indigenous languages meet through administration, trade, education, and settlement. For instance, as Sambo and Ogo (2025, p. 57) observe, "British colonialism and imperialism resulted in the global spread of English language in the nineteenth century." During urbanisation, people move to various cities for employment, education, or trade, thereby dwelling in multilingual environments that facilitate exchange of linguistic features. Migration, tourism, media, digital communication and international trade are elements of globalisation which foster language contact.

Language contact may result in language shift and linguistic accommodation. Adamou and Matras (2021, p. 2) further identify "borrowing, code-switching, convergence, pidgins, creoles, and mixed languages" as additional outcomes. These outcomes, in turn, affect vocabulary, pronunciation, word formation, and naming systems. Importantly, Auer (2021, p. 147) notes that the quality and quantity of language contact may also be impacted by "the linguistic resources available to the speakers, the amount of structural overlap between the grammars and vocabularies, the amount of variation within the languages, etc."

Through language contact, English has increasingly influenced many African languages and naming systems. Consequently, Ogunbona and Jimoh (2023, p. 35) observe that Yoruba English bilinguals "anglicize their indigenous names at both phonological and morphological levels, with apparent disregard for both semantic components and sociolinguistic functions." As a result, a Yoruba speaker may choose Bukky instead of Bukola, the original name. Similarly, Eze (2026) notes, "The dominance of the English language has influenced the names that Igbo people currently bear . . . thereby shifting from their indigenous or cultural names . . . to the Western trending names." The influence on Igbo names manifests most prominently in the adoption of Christian names and the names of historical English figures. Accordingly, Obiakor et al. (2025, p. 12) note that the modern-day Igbo person "sees most of these names as mundane, archaic and have links with deities and baptise their children after Saints, given English names that is [sic] at variance with Igbo culture."

According to Ndububa (2025, p. 7), "The nature of English allows it to multiply and creep into habitable space." The influence is substantial in both Igbo place names and personal names. Consequently, non-Igbo spellings are commonly used in representing many well-known place names. Thus, non-Igbo consonant doubling occurs in spellings such as Owerri (Owere), Nsukka (Nsuka), and Abba (Aba). Likewise, non-Igbo consonant clusters occur in names such as Awka (Oka) and Onitsha (Onicha), while non-Igbo or incomplete spellings appear in Ogui (Ogwi), Oguta (Ugwuta), and Enugu (Enugwu). Similar patterns are found in Igbo personal names, particularly when they are modified as nicknames or brand names, as in Chiommy (Chioma), Gozzy (Chigozie), and Ossy or Sinach (Osinachi). These modified forms reflect departures from standard Igbo orthographic and phonological conventions. Another widespread non-Igbo practice is the use of initialisms, such as I.K. (Ikenna, Ikechukwu), N.K. (Nkiruka), and U.C. (Uchenna).

Commenting on this practice, Ibeneche and Adindu (2022, p. 130) note, "There are lots of eccentricities and inconsistencies in Igbo proper names given the abbreviated names."

Theoretical Framework

This study is framed in Language Contact Theory (LCT). LCT explains what happens when speakers from different linguistic backgrounds interact frequently. It studies how these interactions gradually influence the linguistic features of the involved languages. LCT proposes that language contact has positive outcomes, such as cultural exchange (which fosters lexical enrichment and bilingualism), as well as negative outcomes (including language attrition and loss of indigenous linguistic features which may eventually lead to language death).

The origins of LCT can be traced to Johannes Schmidt's Wave Theory and Trubetzkoy's Sprachbund Theory. Schmidt found that neighbouring languages did not rival or enrich one another, but mixed and influenced one another. In 1928, Trubetzkoy introduced the concept of the Sprachbund. According to Zhang and Peng (2018, p. 445), "The sprachbund refers to the fact that geographically adjacent non-relative languages may have certain similarities in phonology, vocabulary and grammar." However, LCT was formally established by Weinreich in his 1953 book, Languages in Contact: Findings and Problems, and has since been further developed by numerous scholars.

LCT supports the study objectives by explaining how contact between English and Igbo results in changes to the phonological and morphological structures of Igbo personal names. It supports the analysis of these changes and their interpretation as reflections of changing naming practices among Igbo speakers.

METHODS

This study adopted a qualitative descriptive research design. This design is appropriate for systematically describing and analysing the phonological and morphological structures of English-influenced Igbo names. Sixty-eight (68) Igbo names with English-inspired features were obtained through personal observation and sampled purposively. The selected names are grouped and presented in eight (8) thematically driven tables for analysis according to the study objectives. No new names were purposively coined by the

researcher. All sampled names are existing Igbo names borne by both locally known and well-known Igbo people. The sampled names were analysed according to Language Contact Theory to address the study objectives.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

In this section, the dataset is presented and analysed. Each table presents a particular category of the data. Although some names could appear in more than one table because of their multiple features, they are presented only once. During the analysis, the multiple features of such names are discussed where relevant.

Table 1. Orthographic Insertion in English-Influenced Igbo Personal Names

Original Name	Modified Form	Inserted Letter
Dike	Dikeh	H
Eke	Ekeh	H
Eze	Ezeh	H
Mba	Mbah	H
Odo	Odoh	H
Olise	Oliseh	H
Owo	Owoh	H
Afo	Afor	R
Ifeacho	Ifeachor	R
Muonago	Muonagor	R
Okafo	Okafor	R
Ozokwo	Ozokwor	R
Uzo	Uzor	r
Oke	Okey	y
Okwe	Okwey	y

Table 1 shows examples of insertion of the letters h, r, and y in Igbo personal names. These insertions do not alter the lexical meanings of the names but modify their orthographic structures to reflect common English-influenced spelling patterns. Thus, the final syllables of Dikeh, Ezeh, Ekeh, and Oliseh are adapted to the English word eh, even though the segments of the Igbo names do not reproduce the eh sound. Mbah ends like the English word ah /aː/, while Odoh and Owoh are adapted to the oh /əʊ/ sound.

Given the last segments of Afo, Ifeacho, Muonago, Okafo, Ozokwo, and Uzo, which are realised as /ɔː/, r is added to them to correspond with the phonics of the English word or.

Okey and Okwey have attracted the y-insertion to represent the word-final vowel sound because, in the original names, the last segment sounds /eɪ/, as in the English word hey or fey. Most of these names are used by well-known Igbo personalities, such as Tonto Dikeh, Peter Mbah, Sunday Oliseh, Nkem Owoh, Tracy Ifeachor, John Okafor, Patience Ozokwor, Amaechi Muonagor, Uzor Arukwe, Okey Bakassi, and Bro Okwey.

Table 2. Orthographic Adaptation in English-Influenced Igbo Personal Names

Original Name	English-influenced Form	Orthographic Adaptation	Type of Adaptation
Buchi	Bucci	ch replaced with cc	Consonant substitution
Chidi	Tchidi	Addition of t before ch	Initial letter addition
Obasi	Obassey	Addition of -sey to replace the final -si spelling	Final syllable English-style respelling
Oluchi	Oluchy	i replaced with y	Vowel-to-consonant letter substitution
Osadebe	Osadebay	Replacement of the final -e with -ay	Final syllable English-style respelling
Ugochi	Ugoccie	-chi respelled as -ccie	Final syllable English-style respelling
Chi	Chy	i replaced with y	Vowel-to-consonant letter substitution
Nki	Nky	i replaced with y	Vowel-to-consonant letter substitution
Obi	Oby	i replaced with y	Vowel-to-consonant letter substitution
Okwi	Okwy	i replaced with y	Vowel-to-consonant letter substitution

Table 2 shows how Igbo personal names are orthographically adapted to English naming practices. Four major adaptation patterns are identified here. These include consonant substitution, initial letter addition, final-syllable English-style respelling, and vowel-to-consonant letter substitution.

Bucci, a respelling of Buchi, is adapted to the medial consonant pattern of cappuccino, and the Italian-derived Gucci, whose spelling has become familiar in English through luxury branding and pop culture. Ugoccie, for Ugochi, follows this pattern but adds a final e, also found in English words such as conchie.

Tchidi contains an addition of the initial silent t, as in the English word tzar. The final segment of Obassey, for Obasi, is respelled after the final segment of joey, where ey is phonologically rendered as /i/. The final spelling of Osadebay, produced as /eɪ/, is orthographically adapted to the English words bay or day.

Oluchy, Chy, Nky, Oby, and Okwy show a common vowel-to-consonant letter substitution pattern in many clipped or respelt Igbo names, whereby y replaces i. This is because both letters share the /i/ sound in many English words, such as happy, symbol, visa, and police.

Most of these English-influenced Igbo name forms are borne by well-known Igbo personalities, including Bucci, Ugoccie, Patty Obassey, Dennis Osadebay, Sylvia Oluchy, etc.

Table 3. English-Influenced Pronunciation of Igbo Personal Names

Original Name	Igbo Pronunciation	English-influenced Pronunciation
Chibuike	/ʧíbúíkeɪ/	/ˌʧiːˈbaɪk/
Ejike	/èdʒíkeɪ/	/eˈdʒaɪk/

Table 3 shows words whose Igbo pronunciation patterns shift to those influenced by English phonology. This adjustment is made to match the phonotactic and stress patterns of structurally similar English words. Thus, the ending of both words, -ike, rendered in Igbo as /ikeɪ/, is phonologically modified to conform more closely to the English pattern of pronouncing it in words such as bike and like.

Table 4. Orthographic Consonant Gemination in English-Influenced Igbo Personal Names

Original Name	English-influenced Form	Geminated Consonant
Chinenye	Chinny	nn
Chioma	Chiommy	mm
Chizoba//Chiziterem	Chizzy	zz
Chinaza	Nazzy	zz
Daberechi	Dabby	bb
Onuchukwu	Onny	nn
Onyebuchi	Bucci	cc
Ositadimma	Ossy	ss
Somtochukwu	Sommie/Sommy	mm
Azubuike	Zubby	bb

Table 4 presents instances of consonant gemination (orthographic) in English-influenced Igbo names, which function mostly as sobriquets. Such consonant doubling, especially where another consonant letter follows, is not attested in Igbo orthographic practices. The gemination has been introduced into the names merely for visual stylistics, given that the lexical meanings of the names are not affected. The gemination of n and m is possible in Igbo spellings, as in nnenna and mmadu, but consonant letters do not follow them.

Thus, instances in Table 4 such as Chinny and Onny have been formed to match the English spellings funny and penny. Chiommy and Sommy correspond to the spellings of words such as mommy and dummy. In the same manner, Chizzy and Nazzy follow the spelling patterns of Lizzy and dizzy, while Dabby and Zubby mimic the spellings of chubby and hobby. Ossy follows the spelling of bossy, while Bucci follows Gucci (see the discussion under Table 2 for more about Bucci).

Prominent Igbo people who bear these names include Chizzy Alichi, Onny Michael, Ossy Osina, etc.

Table 5. Clipping in English-Influenced Igbo Personal Names

Original Name	Clipped Form	Clipping Pattern
Azikiwe	Zik	Bilateral Clipping
Chinedu	Ned	Bilateral Clipping
Chukwudi	Chuks	Back-clipping + s-insertion
Ejiofo	Ejor	Medial clipping + r-insertion
Ikechukwu	Iyke	Back-clipping with respelling
Nwazuluwa	Zulu	Bilateral Clipping
Oluchi	Luchy	Fore-clipping with respelling
Osinachi	Sinach	Bilateral Clipping
Umeze	Umez	Back-clipping
Uneze	Nez	Bilateral Clipping

Table 5 illustrates another English-influenced Igbo name-coining practice. The examples show common name-clipping patterns that have become popular among Igbo elites and public figures. The clipped forms retain only substantial parts of the names to preserve their identity while adapting them to sophisticated English-influenced naming styles. This onomastic creativity does not end with clipping; some of the clipped names bear complementary letters, suffixes, or the respelling of a syllable.

Most of the names presented in the table are borne by well-known Igbo personalities, including Zik of Africa, Ned Nwoko, Chuks Joseph, Jim Iyke, Zulu Adigwe, Luchy Donalds, Sinach, Tony Umez, and Joe Nez.

Table 6. Derivation in English-Influenced Igbo Personal Names

Original Name	Derived Form	Derivational Process
Amaka	Makason	Suffixation (-son)
Arinze	Arizona	Creative derivation
Chioma	Chiommy	Suffixation (-my)
Chika	Chikason	Suffixation (-son)

Original Name	Derived Form	Derivational Process
Chika	Cikason	Orthographic respelling + suffixation (-son)
Chidera	Chidex	Suffixation (-ex)
Ebuka	Bukason	Suffixation (-son)
Okwe	Okwexco	Creative derivation

Table 6 presents data on names derived from indigenous Igbo personal names. The derived names are formed by attaching an English-inspired suffix to the original name or by back-clipping it before attaching the suffix. Some segments may be respelled to reflect a specific English orthographic norm.

A common suffix used in this derivation is -son, which recreates name endings similar to those of the English names Harrison, Jackson, Dawson, and Emerson. -ex is another suffix used to match names to the orthographic style of English names such as Rex, Alex, and Sussex. Arizona, for Arinze, is an adoption of an existing English-language place name (Arizona in the USA) because of its similar structure. Okwexco replicates English-influenced names or terms such as Francesco, Bosco, and al fresco. Additionally, there is a digraph reduction in the first syllable of Cikason, which is derived from Chika and assumed to be spelled Chikason.

While these derivatives are commonly used as sobriquets, endearments, or brand names, their creation shows the bearers' exposure to and awareness of English orthographic and onomastic conventions.

Table 7. Abbreviation and Initialisation in English-Influenced Igbo Personal Names

Original Name	Initialised Form	Formation Strategy
Chijioke	C.J.	Syllabic/segmental initials
Chukwuka	CKay	Initials with creative respelling
Ijeoma	I.J.	First-letter initials
Ikenna/Ikechukwu	I.K.	First-letter initials
Kelechi	K.C.	Syllabic/segmental initials
Kelechi	KCee	Initials with creative respelling
Nkiruka	N.K.	First-letter initials
Uchenna	U.C.	First-letter initials
Ukamaka	U.K.	First-letter initials

Table 7 shows instances of recreating multisyllabic Igbo names through initials or abbreviation. This is done by reducing the spelling of the name to the first two letters, as in I.K. for Ikenna, or by collecting the initials of the segments or syllables, as in K.C. for

Kelechi. Another creative process involves making the last initial pronounceable after collecting the syllabic or segmental initials. Thus, the initials are creatively respelled, as in CKay and KCee.

This naming practice reflects the influence of English naming conventions, where initials are commonly used as personal identifiers. Thus, bearers may use them as signatures, sobriquets, or stage names. Notable Igbo figures who bear similar names include KCee, CKay, I.K. Ogbonna, etc.

Table 8. Hybrid Formation in English-Influenced Igbo Personal Names

Hybrid Name	Constituent Elements	Type of Hybrid Formation
Chyboy	Chy (English-influenced spelling of the Igbo element Chi) + boy (English)	Cross-linguistic hybrid formation
Chygirl	Chy (English-influenced spelling of the Igbo element Chi) + girl (English)	Cross-linguistic hybrid formation
IkeobaraJesus	Ikeobara (Igbo) + Jesus (English form of the biblical name)	Cross-linguistic hybrid formation
Yahwehdimma	Yahweh (Hebrew) + dimma (Igbo)	Cross-linguistic hybrid formation

English influence on Igbo name-coining practices extends to the combination of lexical elements across linguistic contexts. As shown in Table 8, Igbo names are formed by blending Igbo words with English or English-influenced words while retaining identifiable structures from each language.

Thus, in Chyboy, the English word boy is combined with Chy, an anglicised spelling of the initial segment Chi found in Igbo personal names such as Chinedu and Chimezie. Some individuals alternatively spell the name Chiboy, thereby retaining the indigenous orthography of the initial segment. Chygirl, also spelled Chigirl, is the feminine counterpart of Chyboy and is formed through the same English-influenced morphological process. It is commonly used by Igbo females whose names begin with Chi, such as Chioma and Chinenye. Similarly, IkeobaraJesus combines the Igbo naming phrase Ikeobara ('power of the blood') with Jesus, the English form of the biblical name, and is commonly borne by Igbo Christians in English-influenced religious contexts. Yahwehdimma, a hybrid alternative to the Igbo name Chidimma ('God is good'), combines Yahweh, the Hebrew divine name commonly encountered in English-language biblical and religious discourse, with Dimma ('is good'), an Igbo name predicate..

This study found that English has largely influenced the phonological and morphological structures of numerous Igbo personal names. This influence sometimes distorts the meanings of the names.

Thus, the English-inspired phonological processes shaping indigenous Igbo personal names mainly involve adaptation to English phonology, particularly through tone vowel substitution, stress shift and tone loss.

At the morphological level, the processes include derivation, orthographic insertion or substitution, respelling, truncation, digraph reduction, suffixation, initialisation, and cross-linguistic hybrid formation.

From the perspective of Language Contact Theory, the study found that the influence of English on the structures of countless contemporary Igbo names implies active language contact between English and Igbo. Thus, the number of English-inspired Igbo personal names increases over time.

These findings are supported by Language Contact Theory, which proposes that continuous contact between languages results in changes while identifiable aspects of the languages may remain.

CONCLUSION

This study has shown that the contact between English and Igbo increasingly influences the phonological and morphological aspects of Igbo personal names. Some of the English-inspired naming practices have gained wide acceptance among numerous Igbo speakers. Many of these names are also used by well-known Igbo people as nicknames, stage names, brand names, signatures, or informal personal identities. Thus, it may be concluded that English has occupied a considerable space in Igbo naming conventions and continues to shape contemporary Igbo naming practices.

Igbo speakers should endeavour to preserve the traditional forms of Igbo personal names to promote the preservation and development of the language. Igbo language planners and educators should also increase awareness of standard Igbo orthography and pronunciation to reduce unnecessary modifications of indigenous Igbo names.

Given the study's focus on the phonological and morphological aspects of the influence of English on Igbo personal names, future studies may investigate other linguistic

aspects or the motivation behind adopting these forms. Future research may also juxtapose English influence on personal names in Igbo with that in any other language.

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