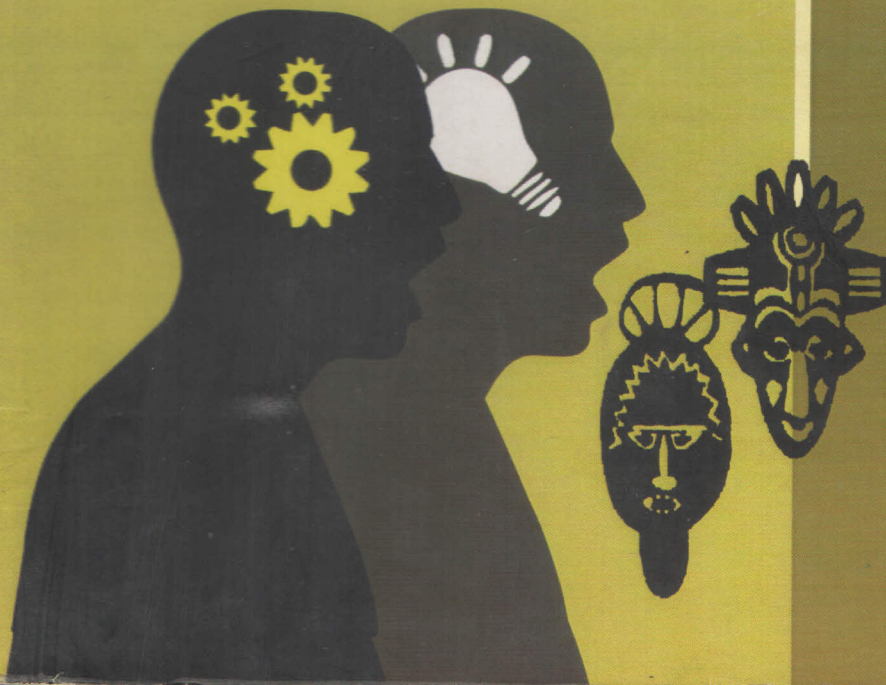


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Contents

X-bar analysis of Igala noun phrase, <i>Umaru Jacob Yakubu & Ojonugwa Naomi Johnpaul</i>	1-24
Trends in linguistic contrastive studies: A case for the contrastive functional analysis, <i>Daniel Ogum & Idegbekwe Destiny</i>	25-49
Problems of teaching and learning French in tertiary institutions in Bayelsa state, <i>Marie Therese Teibowei</i>	50-67
The sociocultural, linguistic and religious implications of numerical code in Yorùbá personal names, <i>Olúwolé Tẹwógboyè Òkẹwándé</i>	68-91
A study of pronoun focus in Fulfulde, <i>Bashir Usman, Adamu Abubakar Muhammad & Idris Muhammad Bello</i>	92-101
Metaphorical conceptualisations of ingestion verbs 'eat' 'drink' and 'swallow' with its grammatical structures in the Kanuri language, <i>Shuaibu Mohammed, Kaka Gana Abba & Abande Mohammed Shettima</i>	102-116
Mwulite nka okwukwu nye ụmụ akwụkwọ na-amụ Igbo dika asụsụ epum (Igbo L ₁): Ntụta aro ụfọdụ, <i>Nwakaego Nwigwe & Chira Ekwenze</i>	117-125

The sociocultural, linguistic and religious implications of numerical code in Yorùbá personal names

Olúwolé Tẹwógboyè Òkẹwándé

Abstract

This study examines the use of numerals in Yorùbá personal names based on the preference attached to this category of Yorùbá names. It illustrates the socio-cultural, linguistic and religious roles played by the numerical code in Yorùbá personal names. The study, which is descriptive, makes use of semiotics, which is the study of science of signs, draws its data from some Yorùbá textbooks and participant observation. The study shows that the socio-cultural, linguistic and religious functions of Yorùbá numerical personal names include one (1), more than one or greater than one (1+ or >1), which is only coded with ọlá (wealth). Two (2) is coded with wealth, religion, birth circumstance, chieftaincy among others. Eight (8) is exclusively coded with ọlá (wealth). Two hundred (200) is mostly coded with wealth, royalty or kingship. It is found out from the study that numerical code two (2) occurs in all the contexts examined in this study. This is believed to be as a result of important roles played by two (2) in Ifá divination. It is equally found out that all the numerical codes in Yorùbá personal names are used to express joy, birth circumstance, honor, chieftaincy, royalty and kingship. In other words, numerical code is never used to express displeasure and bad state of heart such as sadness, grief or sorrow.

Keywords: numerical, culture, socio-cultural, linguistics, religion, code, personal name

Introduction

Several studies have been carried out on the interaction between naming and culture. Among these scholars are Evans-Pritchard, (1948); Searle, (1958); Martins, (1959); Òkèwándé and Àjànàkú (1969), Èkúndayò, (1977); Akinnaso, (1980) and Adéníyì (2004). Writing on Yorùbá personal names, Èkúndayò (1977) and Akinnaso (1980) claim that Yorùbá personal names are means by which the Yorùbá socio-cultural, religious values and linguistic forms can be learned. According to Akinnaso (1980), the use of personal names is associated with human beings or groups as a system of individual identification which has linguistic and cultural implications that vary from one culture to another. It has been argued that the Yorùbá naming system is based on home contexts such as beliefs, lineage and individual social values. However, none of the research studies has discussed the implications of numerical code in Yorùbá personal names.

Adéoyè (1982: 26) classifies the Yorùbá personal names into five. Those that,

- (i) identify a particular family to which the child belongs,
- (ii) focus on the child,
- (iii) reflect that the child's parents are both wealthy and equally entitled to certain chieftaincy titles,
- (iv) show the family's occupation, and
- (v) indicate the religion of the family.

This study, among others shows that:

- (i) the use of numerals in Yorùbá personal names as it relates to the state of the heart, birth circumstance, wealth, honor, chieftaincy, royalty, kingship, family profession and religion,

- (ii) the use of verbs is selective in Yorùbá personal numerical names,
- (iii) the environment of occurrence of numerals in Yorùbá personal names is mostly in word final,
- (iv) the use of numerical code shorten form.

The scope of this work excludes the use of numerals formed by compounding as in the following:

- (i) Èjì + Ogbè → Èjìogbè
"two Ogbè in Odù Ifá"
- (ii) Èjì + Òbàrà → Èjìbàrà or Èjìbà
"two Òbàrà in Odù Ifá"
- (iii) Èjì + Gbèdè → Èjìgbèdè
"another name for twins"
- (iv) Èjì + Òrè → Èjìrè
"another name for twins"
- (v) Omọ + Méjì → Omọméjì
"two children or twins"

The examples above mean "friendly two." These forms of numerical names are excluded by this work because; they are formed by compounding. In addition, they are outside the scope of the category of personal names. For instance, from the examples above, i-iii are non-human names. Likewise, examples iv and v are not personal names, as either of the twins or both of the twins bear these names and are never given as personal names on the eighth (naming) day. Examples i-v above and others that fall into this category are outside the scope of numerical code of personal names being examined by this work. The above names are equally used with reference to streets or road but not commonly used with reference to individual or personal names.

In addition, some Yorùbá personal names are polysyllabic or simple sentence forms, but are left out in this discussion

because, their etymology and meanings are referents in non-personal names: *Ìbejì* (Twins), which both of the twins share, as against individual person. Among such names are:

- (i) *Mo-rí-omọ-kẹ-ẹjì* → *Morómọkéjì* "I have gotten child to take care of twins"
- (ii) *Mo-rí-ẹni-kẹ-ẹjì* → *Moréníkẹjì* "I have gotten somebody to take care of twins"
- (iii) *Mo-rí-ohun-kẹ-ẹjì* → *Moróhunkẹjì* "I have gotten something to take care of twins"
- (iv) *Omọ-tó-(m)ẹjì* → *Omọtẹjì* "The child is up to twins or two-children"

In the above names, it is observed that, their referents are signified in twins (*Ìbejì*) as earlier explained. This is why the names are restricted to two (2), denoting two individuals. In the examples given above, female children bear the first three examples, while either male or female bears the fourth example.

Objective of study

The objective of this study is to show that some Yorùbá socio-cultural, linguistics and religious personal names that are associated with numerical values suggest dignity, reputable and honorable positions as well as a means of expression of good state of heart in Yorùbá tradition. In other words, good events, individual reputable status and influential background among others are identified by the personal numerical names that an individual bears. These categories of numerical expressions in Yorùbá personal names are found to relate with *Ifá* in one form or the other.

Good state of heart such as *ayò* (joy), *ìbí* (birth circumstance/sex of a child), chieftaincy status (*oyè*), wealthy

status (*ọlá*), royalty or kingship status (*adé*), family work such as (*àyàn*) are expressed in numerals in Yorùbá tradition. Some Yorùbá gods like *Ògún* (the god of iron), *Awo* (the god of divinity), and *Ṣàngó* (the god of thunder and lightning) among others are likewise coded in numerals in Yorùbá personal names. The associated numerical codes are: one (1), more than one (1+ or > 1) which is mostly coded with *ọlá* (wealth). Two (2) is coded with wealth, religion, chieftaincy among others. Eight (8) is exclusively coded with wealth. Two hundred (200) is mostly coded with wealth, royalty or kingship. In other words, meaning is invented on these numbers in Yorùbá names. These meanings are also realized as symbolic significations. The need to examine the use of numerical code in Yorùbá personal names is open to research scholarship.

Methodology: Semiotic approach

Semiotics can be traced to the pioneering works of Charles Sanders Peirce, the American philosopher and Ferdinand de Saussure, the Swiss Linguist. According to Saussure, semiology is the study of signs as part of social life. He focuses on the functions of social and cultural phenomenon within semiotic system. Saussure (1974: 60) classifies signs into two entities: "signified and or sign-vehicle or meaning". He refers to the signified, mostly in form of materials (objects, images, sounds and so on). Saussure is credited with structuralism approach. To him, language is formed by signs which are related in multiple ways.

A sign or a word consists of two parts: one part is its form; the other part is its meaning. The association between form and meaning of a sign is fixed by conventions of language use. The link between the form and meaning are inseparable. According to Peirce, Semiotics is an abstract entity. Sign is something which

stands to somebody or something in some respects or capacity. This relation of "standing for" is mediated by an interpretant. According to Peirce (1931: 35), "a sign is anything which determines something else (its interpretant) to refer to an object to which itself refers (its object) in the same way the interpretant becoming in turn a sign." This means anything can be adopted as a sign.

Three modes of significations are regarded to be sufficient to describe any form of sign. These are icon, symbol and index. In an iconic mode, the signifier is perceived as resembling or imitating the signified in one way or the other. According to Peirce, one can perceive a direct resemblance between the signifier and the signified. For instance, a picture of an individual is an iconic symbol. This may be in form of an animal. This belief is associated with some Yorùbá traditions that forbid some families to eat, kill or harm some animals. It is forbidden for the *Alápà*'s family to eat, kill or harm snakes, just as for the twins or the family of twins to eat any species of monkey. These animals are believed to be the families' ancestors (Káyòdé 1984: 5). In symbol mode, there is no resemblance or connection between the signifier and the signified, that is, the object and what it stands for. A symbol's connection with its object is a matter of convention, rule or agreement between the users. In Yorùbá tradition, it can be realized in form of *Àrokò*, as such an object or something stands for something or somebody in real life. For instance, the Yorùbá believe that "fish" stands for negative and "crab" for positive or to determine the "yes" or "no" of an interrogative statement such as "ẹja n bákàn?" (fish or crab?). It is culturally accepted that "fish" symbolizes (stands for) "no" or negative and "crab" symbolizes (stands for) "yes" or positive. In an indexical mode, the signifier is

not arbitrary but is directly connected in some ways (physically) to the signified. For instance, "odour" is an index for the presence of a he-goat around. This makes Yorùbá to say "òrúkọ dé òórùn dé" (a he-goat is around with odour) or in a statement such as "bíná bá jó lóko mòjàlà ni yóó ńòfófó" (*mòjàlà* is the tell-tale of the bush burning) (Şótúndé 2009: 178).

The link rule of signs and their meanings are made known by code. According to Geoffery and Short (1981: 124), a code is "a means of conveying messages, a vehicle of communication." This may be realized in a multi-level coding. Code helps to simplify phenomena in order to make it easier to communicate experience. Codes are realized in different forms: behavioral code, verbal code, gnomonic code, poetic code, mythic code, linguistic code, acting code, code of binaries and so on. Signs are reduced to denotative signified or connotative signified forms. That is, meaning is reduced to both denotation and connotation. By denotation, is means the primary referent or literal meaning or general sense of a word or sentence. Connotation on the other hand, refers to the socio-cultural or personal association to the sign. The meaning is open to different interpretations in this case. Denotation belongs to the "first-order" signification system, while connotation belongs to the "second-order" (Ọlórúntọba-Oju 1998: 72).

A sign can create multiple meanings, depending on the culture in which it exists. The application of the cultural categories depends on the individual or personal knowledge. According to Lobner (2002: 201), "But we are all some ways apart from commanding all cultural knowledge, as we all have little experience in many areas of everyday life." The distinction between the semantic knowledge and world knowledge (for example, cultural and personal knowledge) is a doctrine of cultural semiotics. According to Lobner (2002: 200-1), "cultural

knowledge defines what can be called cultural categories, the categories which are tacitly accepted by the community as an identity...personal knowledge usually includes the greater part of cultural knowledge, depending on the range of the experience of the individual." The implication of this statement is that the understanding of cultural (society) symbols, as in this case, names, and the individual understanding and interpreting those symbols are necessary for invention of meaning on the cultural symbols. This study observes that there is cultural understanding in the use of numerical codes in Yorùbá personal names, the explanation of which can be better understood and explained by cultural semiotics.

The knowledge of semiotics covers different aspects of life, including names. In Africa in general and to the Yorùbá in particular, names are symbolic, as names stands for somebody, institutions, traditional office, events, and family among others. According to Oláṣoba (2005: 37) "Nobody exists in African society without a name and such names are often symbolic." This means, the meaning of a name is associated with the proper understanding of the symbols, which represent (stand for) somebody. For instance, name is associated with Semiotics, as it is a signifier (name) of the signified (individual or thing). According to Ògúndèjì (1988: 79),

the name to the Yorùbá and to Africans in general, is a double plane semiotic system. On the first plane the name as an indentifying signifier denotes the person or character (the signifier) that answers to the name. This plane of name semiotics is a universal one. On the second plane, the name is also believed to be the signifier of the historical,

sociological and psychological behavioural patterns of characters ...

Africans generally and Yorùbá in particular value their names, as such names are associated with symbols in their culture. This semiotic signification is equally expressed in Yorùbá numerical personal names.

Numerical code in Yorùbá personal names

One (1), more than one or greater than one (1+ or >1) as code in Yorùbá personal names

Two personal names are discovered by this work to relate with numerical code one (1). On one hand, a name under this category has denotative value with *Olá* "wealth." A child bears a name in relation to this name when the parent associates the birth of the child with more prosperity. A name that is associated with this in Yorùbá tradition is *Olámilékan* or *Olálékan* which means "my wealth increases by one." The noun selects the verb: *lé*, which means increases. Odùyoyè (1972: 50) refers to the verb as "stative verb." This means *Lékan* "increases by one" has denotative value with *Olá* "wealth" in Yorùbá tradition. This is why the verb *lé* is not extended to other numerical personal names such as the names listed below:

- (i) **Ìbílékan*
- (ii) **Ayòlékan*
- (iii) **Oyèlékan*
- (iv) **Adélékan*
- (v) **Ògúnlékan*
- (vi) **Ayanlékan*
- (vii) **Awólékan*
- (viii) **Òpálékan*

(ix) *Oròlékan

No personal Yorùbá name exists in form of any of the above names. The examples of the names given above select their numbers. The names are not coded in one (1). In other words, one (1) is associated with the verb *lé* "increase" only and exclusively used with *Olá* "wealth." *Lékan* is used in a numerical code expressed in a short form of *Olálékan*. Unlike other reputable and honorable status, that is sometimes hereditary in Yorùbá tradition, *Olá* "wealth" is general or natural. In this case, it relates to the Yorùbá philosophy about wealth, which is not limited to a place, individuals or family. It is naturally endowed. This is what *Oláòlèbikan* "wealthy is not of one place" entails. In other words, there is no male individual that cannot bear these names: in relation to *Olá* "wealth."

On the other hand, the Yorùbá have another name under the category of numerical code one (1). This is *Òkánlàwón* "one (of a) different (sex) has come betwixt." This name is given to an only male child that is alone among many females. This is the only name discovered here, where number serves as a subject in Yorùbá numerical personal names. It describes the state of birth. The shorten form is realized as *Òkánlà* "one different joins." The numerical code is not associated with the predicate as in other Yorùbá numerical personal names understudy. This is why the shorten form of *Òkánlàwón* is not realized as **Làwón* "different from many" as in other examples in this study. The verb *là* "separate or differentiate." The name selects the verb *là* (separate).

Two (2) as code in Yorùbá personal names

The cultural and religious importance that Yorùbá people attach to two (2) is accounted for in their names. It is believed in this study

that the code is derived from *Ifá*, which is the foundation of the Yorùbá culture. This is because, all the symbols of the major *Odù Ifá* are realized in two (2). *Odù* is a channel or medium with which the *Ifá* oracle communicates. According to McGEE (1983: 101) "The symbol in *Ifá* divination is characterized by even numbers." It should be noted that even numbers are divisible by two (2). *Odù* code is realized as suffix and prefix in the sixteen *Odù-Ifá*. Abimbólá (1977a: 16 & 7) reports that:

the word *Èjì* or *Méjì* (two)... accompanies each of their names either as a prefix or suffix ... In other words when we see the same generic pattern both on the right and left, the signature is that of one of the *ojú odù* to which a name *Èjì* + X or X + *Méjì* will be ascribed.

In addition, these major *Odu Ifá* categorized into two are described to sufficient to take care of all human situations and problems (Abimbola 1976). This opinion is believed here to have influence on the occurrence of numerical code two (2) in all contexts where the Yorùbá personal names are numerically expressed.

The recurrence of number two as it relates with *Ifá* is further contained in (Àjàyí 2002: 83) "... ọwọ méjì ní kí wọn máa gbà rán. Ìkí méjì ní ẹ maa kí. Ọrò méjì ní kí ẹ maa sọ..." (And casting of lots should be taken twice. They should be chanted twice. And they should say two words). *Ifá* is associated with two. Abimbólá (1977b: 7) observes that the *Ifá* priest manipulates his divination instruments twice as well. The scope of occurrence of this number is discovered by this work to be the widest, as it cut across wealth, honor, chieftaincy, kingship, family professions and religious domains. Almost all the numerical contexts of occurrence in Yorùbá personal names are coded in two (2). Among but not limited to these examples are:

- (i) *Oládèjì* or *Oládiméjì* "wealth becomes two"
- (ii) *Ayòdèjì* "joy becomes two"
- (iii) *Ìbídèjì* "species of birth becomes two"
- (iv) *Oyèdèjì* "chieftaincy becomes two"
- (v) *Adédèjì* "crown becomes two"
- (vi) *Àyàndèjì* "drummer becomes two"
- (vii) *Ògúndèjì* "Ògún becomes two"
- (viii) *Awódèjì* "diviner becomes two"
- (ix) *Òpádèjì* "Òpá becomes two"
- (x) *Oròdèjì* "Orò becomes two"

In the examples above, (i) describes the state of honor, (ii) describes the state of heart, (iii) describes relations or kit and kith, (iv and v) describe royalty, (v) describe occupation and (vii-x) describe religion/cult. It is noted here that two (2), collocates with values, as it occurs in different environments of occurrence. The selective verb for all the examples listed above is *di* "becomes." Also, the entire examples share the same shorten forms, indicating their associated numerical values; usually in predicates. In other words, their subjects, such as *Olá*, *Ayò*, *Ìbí*, *Oyè*, *Adé*, *Àyàn*, *Ògún*, *Awo*, *Òpá* and *Orò* did not reflect their numerical values. All these examples are realized in the same shortened form of names, mostly expressed in numerical code: *Dèjì* "becomes two." The prominence of numerical code two in Yorùbá personal name is observed to be at play here.

In the first example above, *Olá* "wealth" may select the verb *di* "becomes." The connotation of the subject, *Olá*, with numerical code two (2) is implied in the example. The output of the meaning in *Lékan* "more than one or greater than one" is rendered as one of the outputs in two (2). This is because, an addition of one as in *lékan* "increased by one" gives the sum of

two (2). There is also the possibility that the status: *Olá*, can as well be greater than two (2).

Ayò "joy" is coded in Yorùbá personal names when another joyful event coincides with the birth of a child. The memory of the joyful event is kept in the name of the child. This name selects the verb *di* "becomes", as given among the examples above. As against the situation under *Olá*, as explained above, the Yorùbá will not name a child **Ayòlékan*, because *Ayò*, "joy" is not numerically coded with one in whatever way but exclusively with two (2). Even though, **Ayòlékan* may semantically be the same as *Ayòdèjì*, "joy becomes two." However, coincidence of joy can be two, it is not numerically coded as **Ayòlékan* in Yorùbá culture as explained earlier.

Another personal numerical name is the one that describes the state of birth. It describes a situation where a male or female child exists among many females or males children. *Ìbí* "birth circumstance/sex of a child" is the subject. There is no third species of child birth besides a male and a female child. Adéoyè (1985: 347-8) says:

Ó bí Obìnrin.

Ó bí Ọkùnrin.

Èkẹta ọmọ kò sí.

He gave birth to a female.

He gave birth to a male.

There is no third human form.

No matter the number of male or female children, they are regarded as one species of birth, which is, giving birth to the same sex. When the parents have the second species (another sex), such a child is named *Ìbídèjì* "birth species is two." This good event is as well coded in Yorùbá personal name. This form of name is

associated with *Òkánlāwón* "one (of a) different (sex) has come betwixt" as earlier explained.

This Yorùbá belief system is contained in *Ifá* as well. *Ìbídèjì* "two sexes", that is, the complete sex of male and female are born. In *Ifá*, the dual symbolization of *Odù* is attributed to the dual interpretation of nature by *Odù*, as Jerkin (1976: 59) asserts "each of the *odù* has a dual nature that is a male and a female. The male on the right side and female is on the left." Another Yorùbá status that is numerically coded in two (2) in Yorùbá personal names is *Oyè* (chieftaincy). This status is hereditary in Yorùbá tradition an individual that hails from *ìdílé olóyè* (chieftaincy family) is easily recognized and identified by the use of numerical name, in this case, *Oyèdèjì* "chiefs becomes two."

There are two categories of chiefs under the Yorùbá political system. The first is the family chief. He is referred to as *olóyè-ilé* (family chief), and his office is *oyè-ilé* (chieftaincy title). The office is hereditary. In this case, the chief occupies the position of his fore-fathers. Some of the hereditary chieftaincy titles in Yorùbá tradition are; *Òtún-àgòrò*, *Jagun*, *Ààrẹ-àgò*, *Balógun*, *Abẹsẹ*, *Baṣṣẹrun* and so on. These are referred to as "war chiefs" (Fádípẹ 1970: 232). The second category of the chief is the honorary chiefs. This office is conferred on an individual by the king for some roles performed or expected to be performed in the locality. This is not restricted to a family and the title cannot be inherited. This category of chiefs performs an advisory role to the king and may not be recognized after the demise of the king that conferred the title on the person. The category of these chiefs is not on salary as the traditional chiefs. The hereditary family title is known as *Oyè*. Because of the value the Yorùbá attached to this reputable and honorable family title, it is expressed with number in

Yorùbá personal names. The category is as well used in numerical personal names. The dual recognition of chiefs into one family is identified by the name *Oyèdèjì* "chieftaincy becomes two" The meaning in use of *Oyèdèjì* is that another person who has a right to the chieftaincy is born.

Another status that is numerically coded in two (2) Yorùbá personal names is *Adédèjì/ Adédíméjì*, "crown becomes two." The crown in Yorùbá tradition symbolizes the head, a political head of a territory. For instance, a king is, according to Şótúndé (2009), Oláoyè (2012) and ÒgúnṢíjì and Adéoyè (2005), identified by a crown. Thus, the saying "Adé orí la fi ń mọba" (the king is identified by a crown). The verb *dí*-is associated to this name as well. Family profession can also be numerically coded in Yorùbá personal names. However, few of such family professions fall within this category. Examples of such family professions are drumming and hunting are coded numerically in Yorùbá personal names as in *Áyándèjì* "drummers are two" and *Odédèjì* "hunter becomes two." However, this is not done with other family professions. This is because code two (2) selects the noun in regards to profession. This is why a child may not be named **Onàdèjì* "cavers are two."

The family religion is equally identified with personal name in numerical code. Few examples are given under this section from v-viii in the examples above. The numerical signification is usually coded in two (2), as in *Ògúndèjì*, *Òpádèjì*, *Awódèjì* as explained above. However, not all the family religions are associated with the identification of numerals in their names. This is because code two (2) selects the noun in regards to family religion. For instance, numerical code is not allowed in family religions names in

(i) **Òjèdèjì*

- (ii) **Odùdèjì*
- (iii) **Òundèjì*
- (iv) **Oyádèjì*
- (v) **Èsùdèjì*

This means the use of numerical code two (2) is also limited or selective to signification of family religion in Yorùbá tradition.

Eight (8) as code in Yorùbá personal names

Another Yorùbá numerical personal name observed in this work is eight (8). Code (8) is only used with *olá* "wealth." The cultural importance of code eight (8) is also contained in *Ifá*. For example, *Òrúnmìlà*, who is the *Ifá* progenitor, left behind eight children after his departure from earth to heaven. McGEE (1983: 98) reports about *Òrúnmìlà* that "when he finally left Ilé-Ifè and the earth and returned to Heaven, he left behind eight children... Again, we get the number eight." In addition, the hierarchical structures of the Yorùbá traditional system of governance are eight. These are *Olódùmarè* (God, the Supreme Being), *Òrìṣà-ńlá*, *Òkú Ọrun* (the ancestors), *Ọba* (king), *Baálè* (village or town head), *Baálé* (household head), *Àgbà* (elder) and *Ọmọdé* (children) "thus, we get the number eight again" (McGEE 1983: 98). In *Ifá* divination, eight is associated with "number of deities in hierarchical order, number of nuts on divining chain and number of times palm-nuts are transferred to get *Odù* Signature" (McGEE 1983: 110).

The name that is commonly associated with code eight (8) is *Oládièjọ* or *Oládèjọ* "wealth becomes eighth." This category of numerical code selects the verb *dì* "becomes" as explained under numerical code two (2). This code is realized in shorten form as *Dèjọ* "becomes eight." However, the numerical code eight cannot occur with other subjects besides *Olá* "wealth." This means *Olá*

(wealth) occurs in all environment of numerical code in Yorùbá personal names. This is because *Olá* (wealth) is not restricted to a family and profession. In other words, anybody can be wealthy, just as riches. To the Yorùbá people, *owó ò níràn* (riches has no lineage). This informs the reason why the Yorùbá numerical names are not expressed in names such as the examples given below:

- (i) **Ayòdèjọ*
- (ii) **Ìbídejọ*
- (iii) **Oyèdèjọ*
- (iv) **Adédèjọ*
- (v) **Àyàndèjọ*
- (vi) **Ògúndèjọ*
- (vii) **Awódèjọ*
- (viii) **Ọpádèjọ*
- (ix) **Oròdèjọ*

The examples above are not associated with numerical code eight (8), because code eight (8) selects its code.

Two Hundred (200) as code in Yorùbá personal names

Some of the Yorùbá beliefs are expressed in two hundred (200). For example, two hundred is one of the numbers projected for the Yorùbá divinities. According to McGEE (1983: 97), "Òrìṣà-ńlá is the chief over the other deities whose number is said to be either 200..." The cultural numerical association of Yorùbá names with two (2) as a code in names such as *Adédèjì/Adédíméjì* has been explained earlier. *Adé* and *Olá* is as well indicated in numeral- two hundred (200). *Adé* and *Olá* are associated with two selective verbs: *dì/pé*, as in *Adédigba/Adépégba* "crown becomes two hundred or crown is up to two hundred" and *Oládigba/Olápégba* "wealth is up to two hundred." As explained earlier, status of

wealth; *Olá* is unlimited or restricted to family or profession. Therefore, *Olá* is coded in two hundred. It marks plenitude. *Adé* that denotes kingship is also coded in numerical code in this instance is realized as *Pégba/Digba* “up to two hundred or becomes two hundred.” This means, the traditional status of king is numerically coded in two (2) as explained earlier and two hundred (200). However, the king’s status is not numerically coded outside the two examples given. This is why the Yorùbá will never code other traditional status or state of heart in two hundred (200) as in examples below:

- (i) **Ayòpégba/Ayòdigba*
- (ii) **Ìbípégba/Ìbìdigba*
- (iii) **Oyèpégba/Oyèdigba*
- (iv) **Àyànpégba/Àyàndigba*
- (v) **Ògúnpégba/Ògúndigba*
- (vi) **Òpápégba/Òpádigba*
- (vii) **Oròpégba/Oròdigba*

The use of two hundred (200) as code in Yorùbá personal names is reference from Ifá. According to Agboqlá (2012: 59), “many Ifá’s scriptures have become idioms, proverbs, tales, school stories, theories.” In *Ifá* corpus “Ogúndá Méjì: 200 yrs = 1yr” with author’s translation that:

Àbémólè èékán abojú regúnregún
Adifá fún Òrúnmilà...

Wón ní kó rú igba ataare kó lè baà pé igba odún láyé

Òrúnmilà rú igba ataare, ó sì pé igba odún

Wón ní kó rú eyo ataare kan kó lè baà se òpòlòpò odún láyé

Òrúnmilà rú eyo ataare kan kó lè baà se òpòlòpò odún láyé

Òrúnmilà wá wípé ‘è ò rí pé IGBA ODÚN, ODÚN KAN NI’
Àbémólè èékán abojú regúnregún

Cast divination for *Òrúnmilà*...

He was asked to sacrifice 200 alligator pepper so that he can live for 200 years.

He did and lived for 200 years.

He was asked to sacrifice one alligator pepper so that he can live forever.

He did and lived forever

Òrúnmilà said “don’t you see that **200 YEARS IS EQUAL TO ONE YEAR**”

The equivalence of two hundred years to one year is evinced from *Ifá* as shown from *Ogúndá Méjì* above.

Findings and Conclusion

The examination of the numerical code in Yorùbá personal names show that, its use cut across these five forms of personal names in Yorùbá identified in the work. This study has shown the importance Yorùbá place on numbers in their personal names in relation to the state of heart, birth circumstance, chieftaincy, wealth, family religion and professions among others. It is shown from the work that numerical codes in Yorùbá personal names are only used to express positive or good events among the Yorùbá. In other words, bad, sorrowful, or negative events are never expressed in numerical code.

It is equally shown from the work that the environment of occurrence of numerical code in Yorùbá personal names can be morphologically categorized into five:

- (i) *Òkanlàwón* “they are differentiated by one”
- (ii) *Olálékan* “wealth increases by one”

- (iii) X + 'dièjì/'DiMéjì "becomes two"
- (iv) Olá'dèjò "becomes eighth"
- (v) Olá/Adédigba/Péigba "become or up to two hundred"

It is observed that the occurrence of numerical codes in the above examples of names are formed by prefix as in example one (i) and as suffixes as in examples two to five (ii-v) of the numerals. This supports Abimbola's (1976) opinion in this work, on the formation of code two (2), as applicable with the sixteen principal *Odù-Ifá*. From the examples above, *Òkánlàwón* "one (of a) different (sex) has come betwixt." that has its numerical code marked in initial syllables, all other Yorùbá personal numerical codes occur in the final syllables. It will be recalled that only one principal *Odù-Ifá*: *ÈjìOgbè*, also falls within the category of prefix in numerical code two (2), while *Odù Òyèkú Méjì* to *Òfún Méjì* fall within the suffix category of numerical code two (2). The suffix form in the principal *Odù-Ifá* is equally noted to have the widest areas of occurrence of numerical code in Yorùbá personal names. This means, the numerical code in Yorùbá personal names are morphologically derived from the derivation of *Odù Ifá* as shown above.

This study also demonstrates that the Yorùbá personal names are only coded in one (1), more than one or greater than one (1+ or >1), which is mostly coded with *olá* (wealth). Two (2) is coded with wealth, religion, chieftaincy among others. It shows from the work that, two (2) has the widest areas of occurrence than others in the Yorùbá personal names. The influence of which has been from *Ifá*. Eight (8) is exclusively coded with wealth. Two hundred (200) is mostly coded with wealth, royalty or kingship. In other words, meaning is invented on these numbers in

Yorùbá names. The opinion in this study assumes that, there is religious influence on the occurrence of numerical codes in Yorùbá personal names. Religion cannot be separated from culture. According to Ìşòlá (2010: 36) "if you leave out the religion, you are left with deformed culture." This means that religion plays a vital role in culture. This opinion buttresses the roles of *Ifá* in the use of numerical code in Yorùbá personal names.

It has also been shown in this work that the numerical code in Yorùbá personal names can only collocates with four verbs: *là* "differentiates", *lé* 'increased', *dì* "becomes" and *pé* 'up to' as shown in the examples above. However, *dì* "becomes" has the widest environment of occurrence. This work also shows that, the Yorùbá numerical codes in personal name do not recognize counting or quantifying in decreasing form as against the general rule of counting of numbers or numerals in Yorùbá that recognizes reduction or less: *dín*. Therefore, *dì*, *pé*, *lé* and *dín* are verbs mostly used with numerical code in Yorùbá personal names, since these verbs collocate with counting and/or measurement.

Furthermore, it is discovered from this work that not all the nouns subject are expressed in numerical codes in Yorùbá personal names. For instance, none of the numbers associated with numerical codes listed above can occur with *Olú*, *Akin*, *Ayé*, *Owó*, *Omi*, as it is in the numerical codes with *Olá*, *Adé*, *Oyè* and others, as shown in the work. This means that not all events or noun subjects can be numerically coded in Yorùbá naming tradition. This work concludes that culture and religion play vital role in the use of numerical codes in Yorùbá personal names.

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Abstract

This paper
attention
complex
Particip
pronoun
marker
pronoun
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forms of
of the p
reduced
pronoun
attache
assimil
typical
metaph

Keywords
phonol

Introduction
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