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The Morphology of Personal Names in English and Ebira Languages

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Abstract

The study investigates morphological structure and features of English and Ebira personal Names. For analytical purposes, hundred names were gathered in each language (English and Ebira). The personal names were obtained through interviews, published documents and the internet. Using the qualitative approach for the analysis, the study adopts Carol Hough's (2016) onomastic Model. The study identifies categories of personal names in English and Ebira languages and analyses the morphological structure and features of the names. The findings show the morphological features of English names as single-root morpheme created by means of derivational processes, name compounding, name blending and English patronymic names with the suffix -s. Similarly, Ebira names are morphologically made of single-root morphemes formed by compounding, Ebira names with prefixes 'o', 'e', 'a' as determiners and intensifiers and name borrowings. Comparatively, both languages diverge in respect to features such as derivation and name blending. Furthermore, the two languages exhibit cases of borrowings from other languages. It is also evident that historical factor has an impact on the naming system of the two languages. It can be concluded that names are more than merely verbal constructs used to refer to individuals rather, they adhere to linguistic rules, that is the morphological characteristics of a specific language.

Keywords: Morphological structure, Onomastics, Naming, English and Ebira Languages

Introduction

A name is what somebody or something is called or identified by (Olatunji, 2015). Personal name is a

term used to distinguish an individual or thing from other people or things. It can be a name given to a person after birth, which officially identifies him or her as an individual. Such



names carry various cultural, religious, and societal connotations. Names are important parts of our identity because they give us a sense of who we are, the communities in which we belong, and our place in the world. Names are also valuable sources of information. They can indicate gender, birthplace, nationality, ethnicity, religion, and position within a

family or even within a society. However, naming practices vary enormously across the globe.

As personal names form a special group within the vocabulary of a language, they obey some morphological, syntactic and semantic rules. In addition, it has been observed that personal names are governed by grammatical rules, which are structurally made up of single words, phrases and sentences (Obeng, 2001).

Therefore, studying the morphology of personal names is important as it reveals the morphological features and structures of names in the two languages.

English names are names that originated from England (British) and used in the English-speaking world. Most British parents choose their children's personal names based on aesthetic appeal. Many traditional or common first names are based on Biblical names such as 'Zacharias', or names for religious principles such as 'Grace'. In Kogi State, Ebira people inhabit a territory south-west of the confluence of the Niger and Benue Rivers though some Ebira communities also reside north-east of

the confluence; the territory surrounding the confluence is an ethnically diverse area with diffused cultural symbols. According to the Ebira peoples' belief, the factors surrounding the birth of a child, will be the inspiration behind the child's name. A very good example of this is a child born in the pit (the name will be *Itutu*), a child born on the road to Farm, Stream, or Market 'Ajoze' (on the road) or Otuoze (pave way) a child born in the market square automatically the child's name is the popular one, Anagwureyi (the popular one). Ebira Online, 2022).

Literature review

Twain (2013) asserts that the study of the internal structure of words, and the rules by which words are formed is morphology. This word itself consists of two morphemes, morph + ology. The suffix -ology means 'branch of knowledge,' so the meaning of morphology is 'the branch of knowledge concerning (word) forms. Unlike other lexical items, personal names also have structure. While some names are formed by attaching a prefix at the beginning of the name, others are formed by affixing a suffix at the end. In addition, Mohammed and Badejo (2000), posit that names depict the beliefs and cultural values of people and that it is possible to add prefixes to other lexical items to form names for example, *Mshel + bwala* → *Mshelbwala*, *Mshel + lia* → *Mshelia* and *Mshel + iza* → *Msheliza*; the 'Mshel' prefix can be ordinarily affixed to other clan names either as a mark of respect or



expression of appreciation and gratitude.

In a study Gimba, Baba, and Onietan (2000), demonstrates how Hausa nicknames can have a variety of structural classifications, including a person's genetic heritage, a person's characteristics or it may be just a praise; they can also have an occupational origin or have a borrowed word as their source. Despite these structural divisions, the nicknames have meanings or at the very least convey a sense of something in the language. The study goes on to emphasize the significance of nicknames not only to the Hausa society, but in every living human society at least for proper identification. While this work focuses on structural classifications of Hausa nicknames, the present study compares the linguistic features and socio-cultural aspects of names in two languages. In another study, Shigini (2020) explores the meanings behind Sukuma personal names given to children. Using Social Learning Theory (Bandura, 1997) and Agenda-Setting Theory (McCombs & Shaw, 1972), the researcher analyzed 30 Sukuma names obtained through phone calls with five native elderly men. Discourse Analysis revealed that; Sukuma names reflect parents' experiences before, during, and after pregnancy- Names carry significant meanings and content.

Yakub (2020) explores on the Morpho-Syntactic features of Nzema pet names. The study examines the linguistic structures of Nzema pet names using a qualitative research approach. Analyzing 90 pet names,

Yakub employs Haspelmath's Framework-free Theory of Grammatical Analysis to identify, morphological features such as Single root morphemes, Lexical compounding, Derivational and inflectional processes, Lexical borrowing and Reduplication. The study concludes that Nzema pet names demonstrate grammatical complexity, offering insights into the language's morpho-syntactic features. This study contributes to understanding the linguistic structures of Nzema and highlights the importance of pet names in language analysis.

The works reviewed above show similarities with the present study because they all focus on onomastics. This study however differs because it is a comparative morphological study of two genetically unrelated languages.

Theoretical Framework

The study adopts Carole Hough's (2016) Onomastics Model who asserts that, names provide evidence for language history in two main respects: firstly, as regards lexical and semantic contents when first coined; and secondly, as regards phonological and morphological development over the course of time. Onomastics is the study of names, its two main branches being toponymy (the study of place-names) and anthroponymy (the study of people's names). There are two branches of research within the field of Onomastics; Toponomastics and anthroponomastics.

Methodology

The data were collected through interview, library research and the internet. Information on personal names for Ebirá language were obtained through personal interview with native speakers. The English personal names were collected from library research and the internet. To facilitate a comparative study, a corpus of hundred (100) names were collected in both languages.

Data Analysis

are seen in the table below:

Table 1: Female names derived from male names

S/N	Male names	Morphological Combination	Derived Name
1.	<i>Albert (M)</i>	<i>Albert + a → Alberta (F)</i>	<i>Alberta (F)</i>
2.	<i>Ambrose (M)</i>	<i>Ambros + ine → Ambrosine (F)</i>	<i>Ambrosine (F)</i>
3.	<i>Earl (M)</i>	<i>Earl + een → Earleen (F)</i>	<i>Earleen (F)</i>
4.	<i>Daniel (M)</i>	<i>Daniel + a → Daniela (F)</i>	<i>Daniela (F)</i>
5.	<i>George (M)</i>	<i>Georg + ia → Georgia (F)</i>	<i>Georgia (F)</i>

The data above show English female names that are derived from male names by affixing various gender marker bound morphemes to form the feminine names. The following are suffixes attached to the

Morphological Analysis of Names in English

English personal names undergo a number of morphological processes, including derivation, compounding and name blending. Below is a discussion of these procedures.

Derivational Processes in English Names

Female Names Derived from Male Names

In this case, a gender marker morpheme is added to the names to form a feminine one. Examples

base to form the female names. These are *-a, -ine, ia, -een, -la*.

Suffix Ending Female Names Variation

Table 2: Suffix Ending Female Names Variation

Female Name	Morphological Combination	Derived names
1. <i>Ada (F)</i>	<i>Ada + line → Adaline (F)</i> <i>Ada + lyn → Adalyn (F)</i> <i>Ada + lynn → Adalynn (F)</i>	<i>Adaline (F)</i> <i>Adalyn (F)</i> <i>Adalynn (F)</i>
2. <i>Amber (F)</i>	<i>Amber + ly → Amberly (F)</i> <i>Amber + lynn → Amberlynn (F)</i>	<i>Amberly (F)</i> <i>Amberlynn (F)</i>
3. <i>Annabel (F)</i>	<i>Annabel + la → Annabella (F)</i> <i>Anabel + le → Anabelle (F)</i>	<i>Annabella (F)</i> <i>Anabelle (F)</i>
4. <i>Adria (F)</i>	<i>Adria + na → Adriana (F)</i>	<i>Adriana (F)</i>
5. <i>Diana (F)</i>	<i>Deana (F)</i> <i>Deanna (F)</i> <i>Deanne (F)</i>	<i>Deana (F)</i> <i>Deanna (F)</i> <i>Deanne (F)</i>

6. Dana (F)	Dayana (F)	Dayana (F)
7. Jasmin (F)	Jasmine(F) Jasmyn(F)	Jasmine(F) Jasmyn(F)
8. Judith (F)	Judie (F) Judy (F)	Judie (F) Judy (F)
9. Suzan (F)	Suzanna (F) Suzanne (F)	Suzanna (F) Suzanne (F)

The table above shows the internal structure of English names whereby, bound morphemes (**suffix, Infix**) are attached to the names to form their female variants or an elaborated form of the names are formed without an affix. For the female names that are variants of the same names, different **suffix** endings are attached to form the same feminine ones (for example, *Amber* → *Amber + ly* → *Amberly*, *Amber + lynn* → *Amberlynn*. Furthermore, in cases of the elaborated forms, the names are lengthened by addition of

more letters for example; the name *Suzan* has elaborated counterparts such as (*Suzanna and Suzanne*). However, some of these names are spelled differently because of their origin for example names like; (*Adele* has German origin with its variant '*Adelia*' from Spanish origin, '*Adeline*' from French origin with its variants '*Adella*' and '*Adelyn*' from English Origin. Furthermore, an example of the morphological process of **infixation** was also found in the examples above; (*Dana* /*deɪnə*/ → *Dayana* /*deɪnə*/).

Suffix Ending Male Name Variation

Table 3: Male names that are variants of the same names with some modification

Male Name	Morphological Combination	Derived names
1. Brendan (M)	<i>Brenden</i> → <i>Brenden (M)</i> <i>Brendon</i> → <i>Brendon (M)</i>	<i>Brenden (M)</i> <i>Brendon (M)</i>
2. Bret (M)	<i>Brett</i> → <i>Brett (M)</i>	<i>Brett (M)</i>
3. Alf (M)	<i>Alf + ie</i> → <i>Alfie (M)</i> <i>Alf + red</i> → <i>Alfred (M)</i>	<i>Alfie (M)</i> <i>Alfred (M)</i>
4. Aydan (M)	<i>Ayden (M)</i>	<i>Ayden (M)</i>
5. Bill (M)	<i>Billy</i> → <i>Billy (M)</i>	<i>Billy (M)</i>
6. Damian (M)	<i>Damion (M)</i>	<i>Damion (M)</i>
7. Dillan (M)	<i>Dillion (M)</i> <i>Dylan (M)</i>	<i>Dillion (M)</i> <i>Dylan (M)</i>
8. Dominic (M)	<i>Domenic (M)</i> <i>Dominick (M)</i>	<i>Domenic (M)</i> <i>Dominick (M)</i>
9. Donald	<i>Donnie (M)</i> <i>Donny (M)</i>	<i>Donnie (M)</i> <i>Donny (M)</i>

10. Scot(M)	Scott(M) Scottie(M) Scotty(M)	Scott(M) Scottie(M) Scotty(M)
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In table 3, similar process takes place as observed earlier in (table 2). In this table also, a bound morpheme (suffix) is attached to the names to form their male variants or an elaborated form of the names are formed without an affix. For the male names that are variants of the same names, different suffix endings are

attached to form their equals. (for example, *Alf*→ *Alf + ie*→ *Alfie*, *Alf + red* →*Alfred*, *Jax*→ *Jax + on*→ *Jaxon*, *Jax + ton*→*Jaxton*, *Jax + tyn*→*Jaxtyn*).

Furthermore, in cases of the elaborated forms, the names are lengthened by addition of more letters for example: (*Scot*→*Scott*, *Scottie*, *Scotty*)

Table 4: English patronymic names with the suffix -s

Names	Morphological Combination	Gloss
1. Jones	<i>Jone + s</i> → <i>Jones</i>	Meaning son of Jone
2. Williams	<i>William +s</i> → <i>Williams</i>	Meaning son of William
3. Robins	<i>Robin + s</i> → <i>Robins</i>	Meaning son of Robin
4. Collins	<i>Collin + s</i> → <i>Collins</i>	Meaning son of Collins
5. Edwards	<i>Edward + s</i> → <i>Edwards</i>	Meaning son of Edward
6. Evans	<i>Evan + s</i> → <i>Evans</i>	Meaning son of Evan

Table 4 gives examples of English patronymic surnames that are morphologically formed by adding the suffix ‘-s’ to indicate paternity.

Compound names in English are given names that are composed of more than one word. This section provides various examples of name compounding in English as follows:

Name Compounding in English

Names	Morphological Formation of the Compound Names	Gloss
1. Addison	<i>Addi + son</i>	‘Meaning son of Adam’
2. Anderson	<i>Andrew + son</i>	‘Meaning son of Andrew’
3. Annalise	<i>Anna + Lise</i>	Combination of Anna and Lise
4. Anson	<i>Agnes + son</i>	Meaning son of Agnes
5. Benson	<i>Ben + son</i>	Meaning son of Ben
6. Branson	<i>Brand+ son</i>	Meaning son of Brand
7. Sunshine	<i>Sun + Shine</i>	Combination of sun and shine
8. Maryann	<i>Mary +Ann</i>	Combination of Marry and Ann
9. Dixon	<i>Dick + son</i>	Meaning Dick’s son

Table 5: English names as compound words

10. <i>Freeman</i>	<i>Free + man</i>	Combination of free and man
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Table 5 shows various processes of name compounding in English. In these compound structures, some English names comprise two names combined to form a single name. These are names such as '*Anna + Lise*→*Annalise*, *Marry + Ann* →*Maryann*. Another structure also shows a combination of English

name and the lexical item 'son'. These are English surnames based on the father's given name such as '*Anderson*→ *Andrew + son*, *Benson*→ *Ben + son*, *Davidson* → *David + son*'. Additionally, some compound names are combination of two English words such as; *Sunshine*→ *Sun+ shine*, *Freeman*→*Free + man*'

Name Blending in English

Table 6: Name Blending in English

S/N	Name/ Blend Form	Morphological Combination
1.	<i>Latrice</i>	<i>Leah + Beatrice</i>
2.	<i>Leann</i>	<i>Leen + Anna</i>
3.	<i>Rosanna</i>	<i>Rose + Anna</i>
4.	<i>Skyler</i>	<i>Sky + Tyler</i>
5.	<i>Maribelle</i>	<i>Marry + Belle</i>
6.	<i>Saranna</i>	<i>Sarah + Anna</i>

In the table above, English names such as '*Leann*→ *Leen + Anna*, *Leatrice*→ *Leah + Beatrice*, *Rosanna*→ *Rose + Anna*, *Skyler* →*Sky + Tyler*'are a

blend of two names which shows elision of some letters to form the blend.

Morphological Analysis of Names in Ebira Language

The Morphological Processes Applied in the Formation of Ebira Names

The morphological processes applied in forming Ebira names are; compounding, affixation and

borrowing. These are presented as follows:

Ebira Names as Compound Words

A compound word in Ebira also consists of at least two words; free morphemes, combined to form a new word. This section presents Ebira compound names their morphological component, word class of each lexical item and their English gloss. Examples are seen as follows

Table 8: Ebira Names as Compound Words

S/N	Name	Morphological Composition/ Word Class of Each Lexical Item	English Gloss
1.	<i>Adeiza (M)</i>	<i>Ada + eiza</i> Noun + Noun	Father of fortune
2.	<i>Adoza (M)</i>	<i>Ada + oza</i>	Father of man

		Noun + Noun	
3.	<i>Adavenge (M)</i>	<i>Ada + venge</i> Noun + adjective	Tall man
4.	<i>Adabara (M)</i>	<i>Ada + ebara</i> Noun + Noun	Father of compound
5.	<i>Onyeche (F)</i>	<i>Onyi + eche</i> Noun + Noun	Mother of festival
6.	<i>Asipita (F&M)</i>	<i>Asi + pita</i> Det + Verb	To tell a story
7.	<i>Asivuri (F)</i>	<i>Asi + Vuri</i> Verb + Verb	Let's try
8.	<i>Otureyi (F)</i>	<i>Otu + ireyi</i> Verb + Noun	Cause trouble (Trouble maker)
9.	<i>Ozohu (M &F)</i>	<i>Oza + ohu</i> Noun + Adj	Mankind better

In the above data, it is evident that most Ebirá names were noted to be compound words which can be made up of (Noun + Noun), (Adj + Noun), (Det + Noun), (Noun + adjective), (Noun + pronoun), (Verb + Verb), (Verb + Noun), (Noun + Adjective). However, it is observed that some of the compound names such as *Adeiza*, *Adoza*, *Ozohu*, the vowel /a/, which occur at the word medial position of the names is elided (example: *Ada + eiza*→*Adeiza*, *Oza +*

ohu→*Ozohu*, *Ada + oza*→*Adoza*). Similarly, the vowel /i/ has been elided at the mid position in names such as *Otureyi*, *Onyeche*, (Example: *Otu + ireyi*→*Otureyi*, *Onyi + eche*→*Onyeche*).

Ebirá Names with Prefixes o, e and a

Names under this category are formed by attaching a prefix to the base which are mostly verb and adjective as seen in the table below:

Table 9: Ebirá Names with Prefixes o, e and a

S/N	Name	Prefix	Base/root/Gloss	Gloss
1.	<i>Atimpo (F)</i>	a-	Timpo	Chubby
2.	<i>Ovurevu (M)</i>	o-	Vurevu	Wrestler
3.	<i>Omeyi</i>	o-	Meyi	Stylish
4.	<i>Ehuse</i>	e-	Huse	Ask
5.	<i>Eneye</i>	e-	Neye	Who knows
6.	<i>Okerevu</i>	o-	Kerevu	Smallish
7.	<i>Omeiza (M)</i>	o-	Meiza	Kind hearted
8.	<i>Omẹtere (F)</i>	o-	mẹtere	Good Woman
9.	<i>Ohunene (F)</i>	o-	Hunene	Calmness
10.	<i>Ozigi</i>	o-	Zigi	Troubled



Most of these affixes (prefixes) are determiners and descriptive markers because names that fall under this group describe the nature or physical appearance of the name bearer.

Borrowed Names in Ebirá Language

According to Malmkjær (2010), words that are borrowed from one language and used in

Borrowed Names from Arabic, Hausa and English

Arabic, Hausa and English names are borrowed and adapted into the Ebira language as a result of

another are known as loan words. As a result of increased contact with various languages and cultures, loanwords have been incorporated into the Ebira language as personal names. As a result, these terms are heavily appropriated or phonologically modified into the onomasticon of the destination languages, where they achieve widespread acceptance and usage

language contact. These names are phonologically modified or altered.

Table 10: Borrowed Names from Arabic, Hausa and English

S/N	Names and their origin	Ebira version
1.	Abdulmalik (Arabic)	Abdulmaliki
2.	Abdulrazak (Arabic)	Razaki
3.	Adam (Arabic)	Ademo
4.	Abdulrahman (Arabic)	Ramoni
5.	Dawud (Arabic)	Dawuda
6.	Abdulmutallib (Arabic)	Mutallibi
7.	Hauwa (Arabic)	Hawawu
8.	Hadiza (Arabic)	Adisa
9.	Hamsatu (Hausa) Arabic	Abisetu
10	Maimun (Hausa) Arabic	Maminetu
11	Ismail (Arabic)	Sumaila
12	Sadiq (Hausa) Arabic	Sadiku
13	Zainab (Hausa) Arabic	Senebu

The table above illustrates personal names borrowed into the Ebira language from Arabic, Hausa and English. However, these names undergo a variety of phonological modifications in the recipient language, including the addition of extra syllables (as in: *Abdulmalik*→*Abdulmaliki*,

Huwa→*Hawawu*), the insertion or removal of sounds, (as in: *Adam*→*Ademo*, *Dawud*→*Dawuda*, and the substitution of sounds (as in; *Ismail*→*Sumaila*, *Zainab*→*Senebu*, all of which are done to conform to the phonology of the target language.

Borrowed names from Yoruba, Igala and Idoma

Apart from Arabic, English and Hausa languages, Ebira language also

borrowed names from other neighboring tribes such as, Yoruba, Igala and Idoma as seen below:

Table 11: Borrowed names from Yoruba, Igala and Idoma

S/N	Names and their origin	Ebira version	Semantic connotation
1.	Ajanaku (Yoruba)	Ajana (M)	Elephant
2.	Ajibogun (Yoruba)	Ajibogu (M)	Born during war.
3.	Ajoge (Yoruba)	Ajoge (F)	Nickname for good dancer.
4.	Onuvaiye (Yoruba)	Baiye (M)	Father of nations.
5.	'Ifase (Yoruba)	Fache (M)	A child whose birth was foretold by Ifa (ẹva)
6.	Ọmọṅọri (Yoruba)	Ọmọṅọri (M)	Children are the head of the family.
7.	Ọmodunbi (Yoruba)	Ọmadivi	It doesn't get bad
8.	Oluwa timilehin (Yoruba)	Otimanyi	God is my fortress.
9.	Ikutemi (Yoruba)	Ikutemi (M)	Death has disgraced me.
10.	Aiyewa (Yoruba)	Aiyewa (M)	There is life.
11.	Aduku (Idoma)	Aduku (M)	Man proposes but God disposes.

The data above also show examples of names borrowed from Yoruba, Idoma and Igala into the Ebira language. These names are also modified in order to fit into the Ebira context while some names maintain their autography. These examples show evidence of contact between Ebira language with these languages as Hough (2016), states the fact that,

contact issues frequently lead to lexical borrowing or the taking of names and words from other languages.

Comparative Study of Names in English and Ebira Languages

This section discusses the differences and similarities in morphological structure across the two languages.

Table 12: Similarities and Differences in the Morphological Features of English and Ebira Names

Morphological Structure of Names in English Language	Morphological Structure of Names in Ebira Language	Remarks
<p>Derivational Processes in English Names exhibit female names derived from male names, suffix ending female names Variation, suffix ending male names variation, Example: 1. The following suffixes are attached to the base to form their feminine form: <i>-a, -ine, ia, -ina, -na, -een, -ine, -la, -et, -antha</i>.</p> <p>2. For the female names that are variants of the same names, different suffix endings are attached to form the same feminine ones. These are - <i>ly, -lynn, -lee, -ley</i>. Moreover, some names are lengthened by addition of more letters to form their counterparts. In addition, other features found in this section are infixation, diminutive.</p> <p>3. Male names that are variants of the same names; different suffix</p>	<p>Ebira language shows instances of prefixes ‘-o’, ‘-e’ and ‘-a’ attached to the base to form the names. These prefixes are used as determiners and intensifiers.</p>	<p>In this section, both English and Ebira languages differ in the formation of names. That is, the names in English language go through various derivational processes in their formation while some Ebira names are formed by affixing prefixes which are mostly determiners and intensifiers.</p>



<p>endings are attached to form their equals by affixing the following suffixes: <i>-ie, -red, -on, -tyn.</i></p> <p>4. The data also show English patronymic surnames that are morphologically formed by adding the suffix ‘-s’ to indicate paternity Example (<i>Hugh + s → Hughes, Edward + s → Edwards, William + s → Williams, Collin + s → Collins</i>)</p>		
<p>In English name compounding, some English names consist two names combined to form a single name (as in, <i>Anna + Lise → Annalise, Marry + Ann → Maryann</i>), compound names that are blend of two names such as (<i>Leann → Leen + Anna, Leatrice → Leah + Beatrice</i>).</p> <p>Another structure also shows a combination of English name and the suffix ‘-son’ (as in, <i>Anderson → Andrew + son, Benson → Ben + son, Davidson → David</i>). In addition, the data also revealed examples of hyphenated compound</p>	<p>Most Ebira names were noted to be compound words which can be made up of (Noun + Noun), (Adj + Noun), (Det + Noun), (Noun + adjective), (Noun + pronoun), (Verb + Verb), (Verb + Noun), (Noun + Adjective)</p> <p>Furthermore, some compound names such as (<i>Adeiza, Adoiza, Adoza, example: Ada + eiza → Adeiza, Oza + ohu → Ozohu, Ada + oza → Adoza</i>), the vowel /a/, which occurred at the word medial position of the names is elided.</p> <p>Similarly, the vowel /i/, is also omitted at the mid position in compound names such as <i>Onyare, Otureyi, example: Onyi +</i></p>	<p>Name compounding in the two languages differ in terms of their structural combination. That is, English names are made up of two names combined into one, such as, ‘<i>Anna + Lise → Annalise, Marry + Ann → Maryann</i>’. In Ebira language, most names are compound words which can be made up of (Noun + Noun), (Adj + Noun), (Det + Noun), (Noun + adjective), (Noun + pronoun), (Verb + Verb), (Verb + Noun), (Noun + Adjective).</p> <p>Additionally, the analysis also show that some English names are combined with the</p>



<p>names such as (<i>Billy-Joe, Mason-Lee, Ava-Rose, Amelia-Rose, Isabella-Rose</i>).</p>	<p><i>are</i>→<i>Ọnyàre, Outu +ireyi</i>→<i>Otureyi</i>)</p>	<p>lexical item 'son' to form compound name while some Ebirá compound names are formed by elision of the vowels /i/ and /a/ at the medial position. Also, examples of hyphenated compound names are found in English language which does not exist in Ebirá language.</p>
<p>Blending is another morphological process found in the formation of English names. Examples, <i>Leann</i>→<i>Leen + Anna, Leatrice</i>→<i>Leah + Beatrice</i>.</p>	<p>No evidence of this feature in Ebirá language.</p>	<p>Unlike English language, Ebirá language has no examples of blend names.</p>
<p>English borrowed names:The history of English borrowed names dates back to the Norman Conquest, when Germanic tribes conquered England, and the Puritan movement of the late 16th and early 17th centuries, when names were taken from the Bible. Because of this historical context, the English language has adopted a number of names.</p>	<p>Here, the analysis shows various examples of names borrowed into the Ebirá language from languages such as, Arabic, Hausa and English. These names undergo a variety of phonological modifications in the recipient language, including the addition of extra syllables, the insertion or removal of sounds and the substitution of sounds; all of which are done to conform to the phonology of the target language.</p> <p>The study also illustrates personal names borrowed into Ebirá language from 'Yoruba, Idoma and Igala. While some names retain</p>	<p>Both languages exhibit cases of borrowings from other languages. While Ebirá borrowed names go through the processes of phonological modifications in the recipient language, English names not. However, English borrowed names can be traced to its historical development when Germanic tribes conquered England, the Norman conquest, names borrowed from the Bible with the rise of puritans in the late 16th and 17th century. As a result of these historical background,</p>



	<p>their autography, some were modified in order to fit the Ebira background.</p>	<p>several names are borrowed into the English language.</p> <p>In addition, it is clear that religious factor also has an impact on name borrowing in the two languages.</p>
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The table above explains the differences and similarities in the morphological features of names

across the two languages. However, it is clear that both languages converge and diverge in some of these features.

Discussion

This study has carried out a comparative analysis of personal names in English and Ebira Languages in terms of morphological structure. Thus, the morphological analysis revealed the internal structure of personal names in the two languages and the morphological processes involved in the formation of the names such as, name compounding, blending, and borrowing.

However, it is apparent that English names have morphological features such as; derivational processes (female names derived from male names, suffix ending female names Variation, suffix ending male names variation and English patronymic names with the suffix-s) and morphological processes involved in the formation of these names such as compounding, and borrowing while the Ebira names show morphological features such as; compound names, Ebira names with prefixes ‘o’, ‘e’ and ‘a’, and morphological process such as borrowing.

From the analysis conducted, it can be deduced that names are more than merely verbal constructs used to refer to individuals rather, names adhere to linguistic rules, that is the morphological characteristics of a specific language. As Obeng (2001), observed that personal names are governed by grammatical rules, which are structurally made up of single words, phrases and sentences. It is also evident that historical factor has an impact on the naming system of a particular society.

Conclusion

This research has compared the morphological structure and features in English and Ebira languages. It can be concluded that, names are not just oral construction of words to make reference to people rather, names follow linguistic rules, i.e., the morphological structure and features as discussed above. It is noteworthy, nonetheless, that the naming rules of the two languages differ because of the diverse cultural practices and settings. This study has therefore, added to the body of knowledge regarding the onomastics of the two languages, particularly the Ebira language, which has not



received much attention in more recent studies.

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