

Fostering the Usage of Urhobo Native Name (s) (*Ode*) among Urhobo People and Christians: An Indigenisation Perspective

OMOROVIE Ikeke, PhD

**Department of Religious Studies and Philosophy,
Delta State University, Abraka, Nigeria drikeke@delsu.edu.ng.**

Abstract

European colonialism had enormous negative effects on African culture. It contributed to eroding or de-emphasising many African cultural values. The cherished tradition of having native names for persons and places was corrupted as Africans were forcibly made to replace their native names or take on English names at the point of admittance into formal schools. The influence of colonialism was also in vogue through the work of Western missionaries who often behaved like their colonial counterparts. The Western missionaries frequently saw no good in African native names and could not comprehend their meanings. Many of them condemn Africa as a dark continent, a pagan land, a fetish place, and a land filled with demons. Working from this mental framework, many of them enforced the replacement of African names, without which you cannot be a Christian even when the traditional names were filled with positive meanings. This paper argues using hermeneutics and critical analytic methods that Urhobo native names should be fostered in families, society, Christian life, and in Christian baptism. An African by free choice may decide to bear an English name or even a Christian/biblical name but it should never be imposed upon him/her. The paper finds that names are important in Urhobo culture. It also reveals that the usage of Urhobo names has been weakened by Western forces and the insistence by some Christians that to be a Christian you must bear an English name. The paper is not against persons bearing names they desire (whether English or Christian) if need be, but it should not be at the detriment or relegation of native names. The paper concludes that there is a need to foster the usage of Urhobo native names in Christian baptism, Christian life, and family.

Keywords: African, Baptism, Christian, Christianity, colonialism, decolonial, family, inculturation, indigenization, Indigenous, name, native, ode, society, Urhobo.

Introduction

One would have thought that if a person is Urhobo, the person would use Urhobo native names in family, social, or Christian life. But that is not often the case. Many people grew up in a society deeply informed by coloniality and also the influences of the earlier Western missionaries who brought Christianity to Western Africa. Colonialism and subsequently coloniality continue to affect Urhobo culture and people negatively. While there may have been some little advantages that came during the time of colonization to the colonies, by and large nothing warrants a group of people grounded in racist ideologies coming and conquering another group of people and degrading their authentic cultural values. Right from the beginning of human history, there has always been cultural diffusion. Nothing wrong when two or more cultures are in mutual and enriching dialogue with one another, but it is dehumanizing when one culture or group of people feel superior to another and aims to abolish all aspects of the cultural values and practices of that people. The European operators of colonialism and many

of the White missionaries saw very little or nothing good in African cultures, the Urhobo culture inclusive. Note that as Engelbert Mveng states, “For five centuries the missionary expansion of the Church was closely associated with European domination” (Kiaziki, 2009). They saw the vernacular language and native names as not civilized ones. The European colonialists insisted and enforced their language on Africans, renamed people, and places, and changed them to suit their interests. Names that they could not outrightly change, they abbreviated or spelled in their ways. Africans who embraced Christianity were discouraged from using their native names in Christian baptism, and those who refused were denied Christian baptism by many missionaries.

The denial of baptism to a person who accepted the Christian message by many missionaries, because the person refused to change his/her name, amounts to a form of injustice. It is a historic injustice that came to be partly corrected by the acceptance of native names in Christian baptism. This paper is written from the perspectives of indigenisation. The paper uses the method of hermeneutics, and critical analysis to show the need to continue to use native names, in this case, Urhobo native names in Christian baptism in Urhoboland and wherever Urhobo people reside. It should become normal to use native names in baptism. People should be comfortable using native names in baptism and their Christian lives. Many people still see it as strange to have native names in baptism. They will prefer an English name, even when that name is not the name of a Saint. The paper notes right away here that there is nothing wrong if by choice a paper uses an English name, especially that of a Christian saint in baptism. But it should never be imposed on the candidate for baptism. The candidate should be well-informed, and in the case of children, their parents should be well-informed, and the choice left for them to exercise their freedom of choice. The right to choose is a human right and should not be infringed upon, as far as the person is not acting to commit evil or a crime.

The relegation of Urhobo names to the background is not limited to Christian baptism. At the point of becoming a Christian, there are Christians who don't believe in baptism, but they take on new bible or Christian names. Then some are not Christian but see no significance in Urhobo native names. There are Urhobo families/parents who spontaneously, without thinking about it, give English names to their children. By way of procedure, the paper will make some conceptual clarification and analysis. The paper will then examine the factors and issues affecting the use of Urhobo native names. The importance and imperative of using Urhobo native names among Urhobo people and Christians will also be studied. The focus of the paper is on the need to use Urhobo names among Urhobo people and Urhobo Christians. The focus is not on the use and importance of names in the bible or among Christians. The paper then will not do an excursion into names in the bible or Christianity.

Conceptual Clarifications and Analysis

The key concepts that require clarification in this paper are: Urhobo native names, Urhobo people, Christians, and indigenization. The term Urhobo is used to describe the Urhobo people, Urhobo culture, Urhobo institutions, etc. The Urhobo ethnic group is one of Nigeria's largest groups in the South-South or Niger Delta of Nigeria. They occupy mainly Delta Central Senatorial District and there are many Urhobo people in the Diaspora. They are the largest

ethnic group in Delta State of Nigeria. They speak the Urhobo language and many Urhobo people can speak other languages such as English, French, Spanish, etc, as well.

The word, “name” refers to: “a word or term by which a person or thing is commonly and distinctively known” (Collins, 2025, para 1). A “Name is an informal term for a word or phrase that designates a person, place, or thing” (Nordquist, 2020, para 1). *Ode* is the Urhobo term for a name. *Ode* (name) is that by which a person, thing, or reality is identified. Among the Urhobo, like other African people, a name is more than an identity, a name carries a person or thing’s mission, purpose for existence, etc. The word native means what comes from the place of birth. It is indigenous or endogenous to a place. Urhobo native name refers to the name that is traditionally used by the Urhobo people based on their Urhobo language. It is a vernacular name arising and rooted in the Urhobo language. Names such as *Ovie* (king), *Omorovie* (prince), *Aye* (Woman), and *Orhua* (family) are Urhobo names.

Indigenization is a process that is carried out collaboratively to incorporate, and include Indigenous perspectives, intentions, and processes into post-secondary education to transform places, spaces, and hearts (O’Connor, Sterenberg and Vaughan, 2020). Of course, indigenization goes beyond education. It applies to every aspect of the life of a people such as spirituality, religion, technology, science, ecology, agriculture, architecture, management, etc. It is an incorporation of indigenous values and content not just on the surface level, but should go deep into the root of what has been influenced or overtaken by colonial culture. Indigenization does not mean throwing away all colonial or exogenous heritage. In a world that has been globalizing and affected by cultural diffusion, no culture can isolate itself from others, and so some ideas can be adapted from other cultures but not to the detriment of the authentic values in one’s culture or ancestral heritage. It could also be defined as: “... the process by which Indigenous ways of knowing, being, doing and relating are incorporated into educational, organizational, cultural and social structures of the institution” (Camosun College, 2025, para 1). Note that:

Indigenization could be seen as the addition or redoing of Indigenous elements. Indigenization moves beyond tokenistic gestures of recognition or inclusion to meaningfully change practices and structures...Power, dominance and control are rebalanced and returned to Indigenous peoples, and Indigenous ways of knowing and doing are perceived, presented, and practiced as equal to Western ways of knowing and doing. Examples of Indigenization in education could include the inclusion of Indigenous

readings, adoption of Indigenous learning approaches in the classroom (Attas, 2023).

For people in Indigenous communities, particularly in Africa, it isn't easy to comprehensively understand indigenization without taking into consideration the concept of colonization or colonialism. Colonialism can be defined as one group taking control and charge of the language, lands, resources, relationships, and cultures of another group and forming it in the image and likeness of the controlling group in such a way that the ways of being, knowing, believing and doing of the controller become the normative and the ways of the colonized are subjugated and in some cases repelled (Attas, 2023, Utin, 2024). The term colonialism refers to the acquisition of a nation of other lands, territories, and peoples (Mayhew, 2009). Another definition sees it as: “The policy and practice of a strong power extending its control

territorially over a weaker nation or people” (McLean and McMillan, 2009). For the colonizers, the people they considered to be backward, salvage, and of low IQ lack the ability and power to give names. Any name they had given before their encounter with the colonizers is either null and void or at best to be tolerated. Indigenization is giving voice to the values and ways of life of native people who were subjugated or neglected by colonialism. The decolonial seeks to undo the abiding negative influence and vestiges of colonialism. Formal colonialism has gone, but the consequent effects are still prevalent in the education, politics, economics, etc, of formerly colonized peoples. And this is why there is a need for indigenization and decoloniality.

It is in the family that a person's name is first given. It is unfortunate that when the African child went to school, he was given an additional name, an English name, or one other European name; or at the point of baptism, he was told he must adopt a Christian name. There is nothing wrong with adopting a Christian or biblical name, but the child (or parent) should be given the option to retain his native name if the name carries a positive meaning and is not at variance with authentic humanistic and Christian values.

The term Christian refers to a person who believes in Jesus Christ and follows his teachings. Jesus Christ is seen by Christians as the saviour of humanity, as the Son of God, and by many other Christians as the Second person of the Blessed Trinity, co-equal with God the Father, and God the Holy Spirit. It was in Acts 11:26, that the followers of Jesus Christ were first called Christians, which means followers of Christ. Many Urhobo people believe in Jesus Christ and his teachings, who live in Urhoboland or the Diaspora. Following the argument of this paper, they are encouraged to make use of native Urhobo names in baptism and their Christian life. They should not abandon Urhobo names.

Factors Affecting the Use of Urhobo Native Names

Some of the factors affecting the use of Urhobo native names among Urhobo people and Christians are hereby examined. It should be understood that traditionally in pre-colonial times, Urhobo people would automatically give native names to their children. It is inherently part of their culture. But with the coming of colonialism, with colonial education and Christian missionary activities which came almost the same time with the advent of colonialism, Urhobo people were schooled to give English names and they were taught that these names were necessarily superior to native names. When they went to formal schools, they were either asked to drop their native names or asked to add English names to their earlier names. Those who came for baptism in church, were to take Christian names, even when their native names aligned with positive Christian sentiments and values. And so informed and imbued with colonial or Christian ways of life, many Urhobo people started taking and giving English names to their children during childbirth. The influence of colonialism is so great that even today, there are people who think that it is a must and that to be in vogue you must give English names to your children. Then for many of those who are in the church, it is as if you cannot be baptised or become a Christian without the name of a saint or a biblical name. Many are still unaware that in the Catholic Church, for many years now, native names are used in Christian baptism. More shall be said on this later.

The relegation of Urhobo names or other traditional names cannot be separated from the theology or philosophy or belief that informed the colonization project, which also influenced

some Western missionaries. A word on this philosophy of ideology is important here. The missionaries were informed by Western colonial discourse that saw little or no value in indigenous culture. Non-western people in colonized territories were seen as underdeveloped, primitive, the other, immature, and they needed to be civilized by the West (Mayhew, 2009). Native names were part of that indigenous culture that should be civilized, and so native people had to be renamed either when they were admitted to school or at the point of baptism. The Europeans had a civilizing mission and saw themselves as superior (Mayhew, 2009). For the Europeans, Africa was damned and cursed, a dark continent filled with demons, pagans, and heathen people (Okoroji, 2006). For the missionaries, African names are not good enough and they insisted on English names (Aleke, 2024). Even today it is painful to note that there are African priests who will insist on English names for the sacraments of Christian Initiation. These things said about Africa are not true. Africans are human people with equal dignity to all other human beings. African languages, including the Urhobo language, sociologically evolved like every other human language. In 1917, for those within the Catholic Church the Church regulated in the Code of Canon Law: “Pastors should take care that a Christian name is given to those whom they baptise; but if they are not able to bring this about, they will add to the name given by the parents the name of some Saint and record both names in the book of baptisms” (Holy See, 1917, Can 761). Father Benjamin Achi of Enugu Diocese has narrated how a seminarian was almost expelled for the fact that he was more known by his native name than his baptismal name (Chimtom, 2024).

The use of Urhobo native names has been affected by the same factors that have contributed to eroding Urhobo heritage and culture. Urhobo names are part of Urhobo culture. Whatever affects the culture affects the use of names. When a culture is despised, the likely tendency is to despise whatever is associated with that culture. The advent of Western civilization and culture denigrated African names and values. The theology behind African culture and names was relegated to the background by Western theologians and some African theologians groomed in Western epistemologies. The adverse effects of Western and European incursion into African societies are well documented by many authors (Iroanya, 2015; Chukwu, 2015; Enwo-Irem, 2015; Kiaziku, 2009). It should be noted that: “The pioneer missionaries in Africa did not appreciate the basic African socio-religious practices as part of the ‘universal ethos’ that could be explored for the Africans to better understand, internalize, and live the Christian life” (Obiefuna, 2018). Colonial education required Africans to reject their native worldviews and discard their names, culture, values, and language in favour of the European worldview (Emefiena, 2013). African languages were denigrated and degraded. Once a language is denigrated, it is invariably true that the names associated with that language will be denigrated for names are part of language.

Modernity, globalisation, and Westernisation cannot be absolved from the non-usage of Urhobo names for Urhobo children, and even businesses. Many Urhobo children are growing up in a global capitalist culture in which through the power of modern means of communication such as Satellite Television and Radio and other internet-mediated means of communication the culture whether in terms of music, films and movies, books, etc that Urhobo children face is that coming from the Western world. Most of the images, pictures, and information that many Urhobo children see or hear are from MTV, BET, etc. Right there in their palms, they are been bombarded with Western images in their cell phones, laptops, palmtops, etc. These images and names of those in the Western music world are so hyped that they see the names of these that they see as role models as the names to answer. Today many Urhobo parents are schooled into

the world of the English language. They cannot speak the language and are not familiar with Urhobo native names.

The coming of the English language has also contributed to the diminishing use of Urhobo language and names. The European colonialists brought the English language and enforced it as a medium of communication. As people went to school, they were taught the English language to the detriment of their native language and names. When they went to church, they were taught the English language also. In many Urhobo homes people speak the English language or Pidgin language to the detriment of the Urhobo language (Aghwaritefe, 2022). Many parents never speak the local language to their children or call them native names. This has contributed to eroding Urhobo native names.

The Importance and Imperative of Using Urhobo Native Names

One may wonder what using Urhobo native names in Christian baptism has to do with indigenization or the decolonial. It is because the colonial mindset that informed colonialism also influenced some of the Western missionaries that came to Africa. They were often antagonistic and saw very little good in African culture, if any. Africans were painfully described as pagans and people who didn't know God. Their languages are only tolerated as a necessary evil medium to get the gospel to the people. Even though their languages were tolerated, their names were not to be tolerated for them to come to God and Christ. For Baptism, they must change their names and adopt Western names, especially Christian names. Even if there were names of local heroes who lived holy and noble lives, they cannot bear their names.

It is either a "Christian name" as understood by the missionaries or no baptism. In some cases, and places Africans were taught to renounce all their local names and bear both their surname and other English names. And so, you see people answering John Timothy Smith, with no native name at all. Missionaries saw African names as primitive, pagan, and devilish and were to be rejected (Emefiena, 2013). The pedagogy from earlier missionaries still pervades many places in Africa. It is necessary to mitigate this pedagogy by highlighting the importance and significance of Urhobo and other African names.

Thanks to ongoing understanding and especially theological advancement in the Christian Catholic tradition, much has been done in inculturation theology to advance the use of native names in baptism. For many years, official catholic teaching affirms that traditional or native names, as far as they are not offensive to Christian values, can be used in Christian baptism. The Code of Canon Law states: "Parents, sponsors, and the pastor are to take care that a name foreign to Christian sensibility is not given" (Holy See, 1983, Can 855). The Canon states the position negatively, and it should be noted that though it is the initiative of the parents to prayerfully choose a name, some names are anti-Christian such as Lucifer, etc (Olik, 2018). The Catholic Church teaches in the Catechism of the Catholic Church, "The 'baptismal name' can also express a Christian mystery or Christian virtue (Holy See, 1993, CCC 2156). Whatever is good should be seen as a virtue.

Despite this, there are still many who are not aware of this stand and they have been so informed by the former position that rejected the use of native names that they don't want to use any native names. This paper does not in any way discount the rich Christian tradition of having biblical or saint names in baptism. The argument is that in this age of inculturation and Africanizing Christianity, the goodness of sensible native names should be highlighted. The

Catholic Church has done much in inculturation in this era of new evangelization in promoting the use of the vernacular language, but it should be noted that the use of vernacular names is often a neglected issue, yet there need to be more use of vernacular names as this will enhance people's understanding of the Christian religion and value better (Aleke, 2024).

Some don't do Christian baptism as a discipline but are Christians. They believe that baptism is not necessary, but once they become Christians by accepting Jesus as Lord and Saviour, they change all their names and either take biblical names or English names. For them, any answering of a previous native name is antithetical to being a Christian. They abhor and despise native names. A name is important and can indicate the essence of a thing (Agbo, 2010). In African culture, a name is not simply symbolic but represents ancestral presence (Magesa, 1998). Realize that to: "confer a name is therefore to confer personality, status, destiny, or express a wish or circumstances in which the bearer of the name was born" (Nyamiti, 1988, p. 42). A name can be given to recall a difficult incident in the past, not so that the incident will happen again, but for people to rise to the challenge in any difficult time that occurs again, and a name can also be given to anticipate desirable fortune in the future (Magesa, 1998). Many Urhobo names carry the worldview of the Urhobo people (Aghwaritefe, 2022). Urhobo names have meaning and people are generally believed to live out their names, such as if a person is called a thief, the person will likely be a thief in life (Oyiborhoro, 2005).

Urhobo names are not mere physical labels or tags, rather they carry spiritual significance and philosophical values (Oyiborhoro, 2005).

A person's cultural identity is crucially important to who the person is and that person's mission in this world. Part of that cultural identity comes in the native name that a person bears. By answering any name, you identify with the group or culture from which that name comes. People normally give names to remember history or what is associated with the person that is being born. To deprive people of answering their native names is to deprive them of part of their cultural identity. I remember going for an occasion and we saw a name, Crotty, what came to our mind is that this person is likely to come from Ireland. We may be wrong, but the point is that a name identifies a person's place of origin. As noted by William when African names are blotted out, much of the African past is blotted out (Emefiena, 2013). Bearing a native name in a sense is a human right. You have a human right to culture and cultural identity, unless you voluntarily choose not to exercise the right. The United Nations affirms the right of indigenous peoples to use, revitalize, develop, and transmit their cultural heritage to future generations and this right includes the use of native names for persons and places (2007). Parents have the right to name their children with native or vernacular names. People may by choice decide to answer both English, Urhobo, and Christian names. That should be left to their conscience and the exercise of their freedom. But in no way should people disregard native names.

The naming ceremony of a child in African culture is an important one. There are no special naming ceremonies among the Urhobo people (Oyiborhoro, 2005). Though some Urhobo people today do organize naming ceremonies. Giving a name is important for Africans. You cannot even be considered a person in the community without being named. Whether it was elaborate or not, the name given to you was important. The right to name a child belongs to the parents who act in consonance with family members, especially the elders.

The vernacular language, such as Urhobo, is well accepted as a medium to celebrate the Church's liturgy. In Urhoboland, the Catholic Mass is celebrated in Urhobo language, outside

the English Language. There are Hymns and songs in the Urhobo language. One of the foremost choirs in the Catholic Diocese of Warri is the Emmanuel Urhobo Catholic Joint Choir. Since the Urhobo language is promoted through these means, there is no reason why vernacular names should not be promoted. After all, we use vernacular names such as Oghene (God), *Ogheneme* (my God), *Oghenerode* (great God), etc in naming God. There is no reason not to encourage the use of vernacular names more than ever before. Parents should not feel ashamed in using vernacular names in baptism for their children.

Way Forward in the Fostering of the Use of Urhobo Native Names

There can be no respect and safeguarding of native names if people despise African culture. The first place then is to call for respect for African cultural values. Africans should respect what is authentic and accords with human dignity in their culture, they should not, in the name of Christianity, destroy things simply because it is African (Obiefuna, 2018). African traditional naming ceremonies should be valued and respected (Obiefuna, 2018). Painfully, there are Christians and some other so-called educated Africans who have no respect for naming ceremonies. They see naming ceremonies as fetish and idolatrous. Some Urhobo people today organize naming ceremonies for their children, and this present author has attended many. This is a practice that should not be discouraged.

It behooves Urhobo parents to ensure that in giving names to their children they don't ignore Urhobo native names. For Urhobo people who are Christians and desire they adopt a Christian or saint or any other English name with a positive meaning; they should also ensure that they bear Urhobo native names. Authentic Urhobo native names with good meaning are not in any way inferior to English names.

There should be continuous education on the part of Christian leaders and teachers to get their members aware that Urhobo names are good and can be used in Christian baptism or when one becomes a Christian. In becoming a Christian, you don't have to reject your native name for a bible name. You may, by choice, take an additional bible or Christian name, but not by relegating your native name. People who fail to bear native names should be made aware of the significance of native names. They should be encouraged to bear their native names. Feeling an affinity with an English name because of the background or situation we were born into should not make us reject our native names. Together with an English name, if you desire to bear one or your Christian name, you should in addition ensure that you bear a native name and you use it. It is not enough to bear a native name; you should make use of it. Let people know your native name. Feel a sense of pride when people call you by your native name. Identify with your native name. There is nothing wrong with Urhobo names. English names should not be privileged over Urhobo native names in family, society, and church. Urhobo native names should not be seen as aberration. Realize the following that:

...parents should be encouraged to take pride in giving their children indigenous names that reflect their authentic cultural and moral values, the consciousness of God, and then to have them (the children) baptised with such names. If this is to be effectively realized and sustained, the various agents of evangelisation in our local church, priests especially, need to be agents who are literate in sound theology and grounded or well versed in our local cultures (Aleke, 2024, p. 97).

The educational curriculum in Urhoboland should encourage and create awareness of the importance of native names. This can be done especially in subjects like social studies, history, civic education, etc. With the National Universities Commission (NUC) CCMAS, in which universities were allowed to create 30% of the curriculum informed by their local context, it is very possible to apply this challenge in preserving our cultural context in some of the courses in this new curriculum. There is a need to revamp the entire educational system and curriculum to re-educate Africans to value themselves and recover their identity (Emefiena, 2013).

Urhobo people should resist the negative aspects of Western and global culture that are eroding their cultural heritage. An African name is a “vehicle of cultural identity” and also reveals personhood (Ehusani, 1991, p. 124). Some will adopt an attitude of total rejection of English and Christian names. While this paper advocates for safeguarding native Urhobo names and their use in Christian baptism and life, in as far as they are names with good meaning, by the fact of the Christian heritage of some and the fact of living in a global community, people may of their own free will decide to use other names. They should not be maligned for this. Deciding to have an English or Christian name if need be should be left to people’s enlightened conscience. I once attended a conference in which the works of Rt Rev Monsignor Professor Ogunmodede were being examined. Ogunmodede had written that authentic African philosophy must be done in the African language. Ironically, as some of the panel members noted, Ogunmodede’s work is in the English language. If his proposition is to be accepted, it would mean all that he has written in English, including that proposition, is inauthentic. While encouraging the use of African languages and names, the pragmatic reality is that our African past of encounter with Europe and the adoption of Christianity by many Africans cannot be overlooked. Ultimately, what should matter is living an authentic human life in service of the supreme being and humanity. Native names of course can assist in that project. But the following fact should also be taken into consideration: “However, for an African priest in the twenty-first century, amidst the cultural reawakening, to continue to discourage or even prevent people from using native theological names at baptism means that the priest is neck deep into an identity crisis. Sadly, the worst thing that can happen to someone is not knowing his identity” (Chidi, 2022, para 12). Don’t insist or force people, rather enlighten people, especially parents, and let them eventually make the choice. But they should be encouraged. Archbishop Augustine Obiora Akubeze has quarreled at the fact of priests who turn down children who bring native names for baptism (Chimtom, 2024). There is a need to continuously make such priests understand that there is nothing wrong with native names with good meaning.

Conclusion

The paper has examined the imperative of fostering the usage of Urhobo native names in Christian baptism, Christian life, and in Urhobo society especially by Urhobo people. The paper revealed that native or vernacular names are important. Names reveal identities, missions, callings, history, culture and so much more. The diminishing of the usage of native names was caused by western missionaries who insisted that people coming to Christianity or enrolling in schools. must bear English names. Urhobo native names usage was also negatively affected by globalization, westernization, cultural diffusion, ignorance of the value of native names, etc. The colonial masters saw nothing good in native names and fought to erase native names. At times, the Europeans indeed tolerated native names, despite this, they imposed or added to African native names. The paper argued that there are many African native names with good

meaning and are in line with positive human and Christian sentiments. The use of Urhobo native names should be fostered through education and awareness of the importance of Urhobo native names, usage of native names in Christian baptism and life, usage by Urhobo people in naming their children, etc. The indigenization project of incorporating African values and ethos, and decoloniality in undoing the many negative aspects of colonialism will not be complete without making Urhobo native names have their true place in the African society.

References

- Agbo, J.N. (2010). Cross-cultural understanding of beliefs: The question of the mythical conditioning of language. *Journal of Cultural Studies*, 8 (1), 21-37.
- Aghwaritefe, H.O. (2022). *Personal names as repository of worldview on example of the Urhobo people of Nigeria: A thesis submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree*. doi. 10.13140/RG.2.2.33709.36320
- Aleke, A.N. (2024). *Adaptation of indigenous names in African Christianity: Inculturation and new evangelization in practice*. *MINISTERIUM – A Journal of Contextual Theology*, 10, 81-98.
<https://journals.ezenwaohaetorc.org/index.php/Ministerium/article/viewFile/3048/3178>
- Attas, R. (2023). *What is decolonization? What is indigenization?*
<https://www.queensu.ca/ctl/resources/decolonizing-and-indigenizing/whatdecolonization-what-indigenization>
- Camosun College. (2025). *Indigenization*. <https://camosun.ca/about/dr-lloyd-morin-centre-excellence-teaching-and-learning/indigenization>
- Chidi. (2022). *Native baptismal name*. <https://existentialtheology.com/67-native-baptismal-name>
- Chimtom, N.K. (2024). *African archbishop challenges prosperity Gospel, idea of a ‘white man’s God’*. <https://cruxnow.com/church-in-africa/2024/08/african-archbishopchallenges-prosperity-gospel-idea-of-a-white-mans-god>
- Chukwu, J.C. (2015). European influences on traditional Igbo crafts. In D.I. Ajaegbo, Kelechi Johnmary Ani and Paul Obi-Ani (ed.), *Perspectives on Igbo History and culture: Festschrift in honour of Mazi Professor Okoro Ijoma* (pp. 231-240). Enugu: Snaap Press Limited.
- Collins. (2025). *Name*. <https://www.collinsdictionary.com/dictionary/english/name>

- Ehusani, G.O. (1991). *An Afro-Christian vision: Ozovehi, towards a more humanized world*. Lanham: University Press of America.
- Enwo-Irem, I.N. (2015). Afikpo women in traditional religion, Christianity and Islam. In D.I. Ajaegbo, Kelechi Johnmary Ani and Paul Obi-Ani (ed.), *Perspectives on Igbo History and culture: Festschrift in honour of Mazi Professor Okoro Ijoma* (pp. 266-273). Enugu: Snaap Press Limited.
- Ezeani, E. (2013). *A Philosophy of Education for African nations: Recovering from the negative effects of colonial education*. London: Veritas Lumen Publishers.
- Iroanya, A.C. (2015). Living together in African cosmology: A case study of Igboland. In D.I. Ajaegbo, Kelechi Johnmary Ani and Paul Obi-Ani 9ed.), *Perspectives on Igbo history and culture: Festschrift in honour of Mazi Professor Okoro Ijoma* (pp. 46-73). Enugu: Snaap press Limited.
- Holy See. (1917). (1917). *The code of canon law*. <https://archive.org/details/1917-or-pio-benedictine-code-of-canon>.
- Holy See. (1983). *The code of canon law*. https://www.vatican.va/archive/cod-iuris-canonici/cic_index_en.html
- Holy See. (1993). *The catechism of the Catholic Church*. https://www.vatican.va/archive/eng0015/_index.htm
- Kiaziku, V.C. (2009). *Culture and inculturation: A Bantu viewpoint*. Nairobi: Pauline Publications Africa.
- Magesa, L. (1998). *African Religion: The moral traditions of abundant life*. Nairobi: Pauline Publications Africa.
- Mayhew, S. (2009). *Oxford dictionary of Geography*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- McLean, I., and McMillan, A. (2009). *Oxford concise dictionary of Politics*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Obiefuna, B.A.C. (2018). *Issues in religion and society*. Awka: Fides Communications.
- O'Connor, K., Sterenberg and Vaughan, N. (2020). Learning from place: Developing a relationship with the land and our partners. In Kelli Thomas and Douglas Huffman(ed.), *Challenges and opportunities for transforming from STEM to STEAM education* (pp.

- 264-286). <https://www.igi-global.com/dictionary/learning-from-place/62137>
- Okoroji, J. (2006). *Decolonizing African worship*. Ubeji-Warri: Island Press.
- Olik, A. (2018). *Why do Catholics choose a saint's name at baptism?*
<https://www.catholiccompany.com/magazine/why-do-catholics-choose-a-saintsname-at-baptism>
6185#:~:text=In%20the%20current%20code%20of,Christian%20sensibility%20is%20not%20given.%E2%80%9D
- Nordquist, R. (2020). What's in a name? <https://www.thoughtco.com/name-nouns-term-1691414>
- Nyamiti, C. (1988). The naming ceremony in the Trinity: An African onomastic approach to the Trinity. *CHIEA: African Christian Studies*, 4(1).
- Oyiborhoro, A. (2005). *Urhobo names and their meanings*.
http://waado.org/UrhoboCulture/Names/UrhoboNames_Oyibo.htm
- Utin, I. (2023). Spoken English and the Nigerian Identity: A Study of the Varieties of Nigerian English – based Pidgin. *Sapiential Global Journal of Arts, Humanities and Development Studies* 6 (4).
- Utin, I. (2024). Sociolinguistics, Speaking and Intelligibility. *BW Academic Journal*, 5 (5). 2024. Pp.111-114.
- United Nations. (2007). *Universal declaration on the rights of indigenous peoples*.
https://www.un.org/development/desa/indigenouspeoples/wpcontent/uploads/sites/19/2018/11/UNDRIP_E_web.pdf