

**Defamiliarising Names: A Socio-stylistic Analysis of Selected Anglicised Yoruba Anthroponyms on Facebook**

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**Abstract**

*The Yoruba, one of West Africa's largest ethnic groups, possess a semantically rich naming system in which anthroponyms function as communicative tools that encode destiny, circumstances of birth, aspirations, spirituality, and social status. These transparent phrase-like names on social media platforms undergo systematic morpho-phonological and orthographic transformations to align with English conventions, resulting in hybrid forms that become estranged to both Yoruba speakers and non-Yoruba audiences. This study investigated defamiliarisation strategies in selected Anglicised Yoruba personal names on Facebook, a prominent platform for digital identity performance among Yoruba-English bilinguals. Employing a qualitative descriptive approach and Shklovsky (1965), we analysed fifty Anglicised variants randomly sampled from Facebook (ten Yoruba names with five variants each). Defamiliarisation was achieved primarily through orthographic and phonetic reshaping, as well as morphological segmentation and combination. Orthographic and phonetic reshaping took the form of consonant insertion, vowel elongation and digraph insertion while morphological segmentation and combination appeared as affixation, fragmentation and reduction. These alterations obscured original meaning, introduced non-Yoruba clusters and aspiration and created perceptual difficulty, thereby prolonging engagement with the name(s) as a constructed hybrid sign. The findings revealed Anglicisation as a multifaceted phenomenon which is linguistically innovative, culturally hybrid, and sociologically strategic. It reflected*

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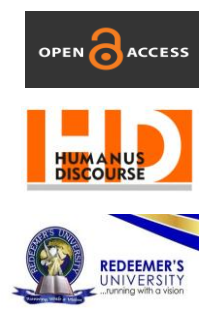
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*postcolonial language contact, global English hegemony, youth exuberance, and the desire for digital legibility and cosmopolitan appeal, yet risked eroding Yoruba semantic transparency and cultural authenticity. Ultimately, this research extended defamiliarisation beyond literary aesthetics into spontaneous, user-driven sociolinguistic practice on social media. It highlighted how everyday orthographic creativity served identity negotiation in transcultural digital environments while raising implications for language preservation and pedagogy in postcolonial multilingual contexts. Thus, Anglicisation is not merely a phonetic simplification or assimilation but a deliberate process of estrangement that negotiates transcultural identity in an English-dominant global digital space.*

**Keywords:** Anglicisation, Yoruba names, socio-stylistics, defamiliarisation, Facebook

### Introduction

The Yoruba are one of West Africa's largest and most influential ethnic groups, noted for their rich cultural heritage, advanced urban traditions, exceptional artistry, and long-lasting spiritual systems.<sup>4</sup> Yoruba is a tonal Niger-Congo language of the Yoruboid family, with three fundamental tones (do: re: mi:) that govern meaning. They are primarily found in southwestern Nigeria, where they constitute a sizable proportion of the population in states such as Ekiti, Lagos, Ogun, Ondo, Osun, Oyo<sup>5</sup> and parts of Kwara and Kogi, with smaller but significant communities in eastern Benin (often referred to as Nago or Anago) and northern Togo.<sup>6</sup> Yoruba-speaking populations can also be found in Ghana, Burkina Faso, and Niger, as well as in diaspora groups across the Americas (Brazil) and Europe, with many descended from people forced to relocate during the transatlantic slave trade.<sup>7</sup> It is one of Africa's most commonly spoken indigenous languages. According to recent scholarly estimates, the Yoruba population is between 50 and 53 million, with the majority living in Nigeria.<sup>8</sup>

### The Yoruba Naming System

The Yoruba naming system is one of Africa's most complex and philosophically rich, with names serving as potent communicative instruments that affect

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<sup>4</sup>Toyin Falola and Matt D. Childs, eds., *The Yoruba Diaspora in the Atlantic World* (Indiana University Press, 2005). See also: Toyin Falola and Akintunde Akinyemi, eds., *Encyclopedia of the Yoruba* (Indiana University Press, 2016).

<sup>5</sup>Oluwatosin M. Ajayi, Esther A. Onmoke, and Idowu O. Odebo, "The morphological processes of Anglicised names on Facebook," *Onomástica desde América Latina* 7 (2026): 1-23.

<sup>6</sup>Biodun Adediran, *The frontier states of Western Yorubaland* (IFRA-Nigeria, 1994). See also: Toyin Falola and Matt D. Childs, eds., *The Yoruba Diaspora in the Atlantic World* (Indiana University Press, 2005).

<sup>7</sup>Toyin Falola and Matt D. Childs, eds., *The Yoruba Diaspora in the Atlantic World* (Indiana University Press, 2005). See also: Toyin Falola and Matt D. Childs, eds., *The Yoruba Diaspora in the Atlantic World* (Indiana University Press, 2005).

<sup>8</sup>Watimagbo Sare, "Total population of the Yoruba people," Joshuaproject.net, accessed August 15, 2025.

identity, behaviour, destiny, and social interactions.<sup>9</sup> Yoruba personal names (oruko) are classified by scholars into various overlapping groups based on birth circumstances, family goals, spirituality, occupation, and other factors.<sup>10</sup> Yoruba naming typologies include destiny/circumstantial/situational names, given/birth names, praise names, heroic names, hybrid names, place names, proverbial names, plant names etc. Destiny/circumstantial names are names brought from heaven and determined by the circumstances or clinical aspects of birth,<sup>11</sup> e.g. *Olugbodi* (a child born with six fingers). Oruko Abiso (given or assigned names) are chosen after birth by parents, elders, or diviners and reflect the child's family aspirations, circumstances, religious views, or future hopes. They frequently use theophoric elements (relating to God/Olodumare or orisa), such as *Oluwaseyi* (God has done this). Abiku names, such as *Malomo* (do not go again), are given to children who are considered prone to early death and rebirth. Such names indicate parental concern or resistance to the reincarnation of their children. Also, praise names or panegyrics (oriki) are poetic epithets that celebrate lineage, character or achievements, and are frequently used in conjunction with given names. Examples are *Ayinde* (a male child that is praised on arrival) and *Adunni* (a child who is delightful to have). Similarly, there are heroic names such as *Akindele* (the hero has arrived home. In this sense, *Akin* is a prefix for courage), and royal/nobility names such as *Adebunmi* (the crown gives me this. Contextually, *Ade* is a prefix for crown). In the same vein, proverbial names are derived from proverbs and witty sayings. Meanwhile, plant or place names are symbolic of plants (*Araba*, meaning 'oak tree,' can be used to wish someone great favour and stature)<sup>12</sup> and specific locations (*Iwo*- which may denote the native town of the bearer, who resides in a different location). Hybrid/nicknames are names given to an individual after his/her stature or personality.<sup>13</sup> Therefore, Yoruba names are semantically

<sup>9</sup>Taiwo Ehineni, "The ethnopragsmatics of Yoruba personal names: Language in the context of culture," *Studies in African Languages and Cultures* 53 (2019): 69-90. See also: Ayokunmi Ojebode and Idowu Odebode, "Titbits on Onomastics among the Yoruba Africans" (Slides, 2021).

<sup>10</sup>Adeboye Babalola and Olugboyega Alaba, *A dictionary of Yoruba personal names* (West African Book Publishers Limited, 2008). See also: Taiwo Ehineni, "The ethnopragsmatics of Yoruba personal names: Language in the context of culture," *Studies in African Languages and Cultures* 53 (2019): 69-90; Idowu Odebode, "From revitalization to bastardisation towards attrition: Reflections on linguistic onomastics," Inaugural lecture series 13 (Redeemer's University Press, 2024).

<sup>11</sup>Harrison Adeniyi, "Naming, names and praise names." In T. Falola & A. Akinyemi (eds), *Culture and Customs of the Yoruba*, (2017), 85-97

<sup>12</sup>Oluwatosin M. Ajayi, Esther A. Onmoke, and Idowu O. Odebode, "The morphological processes of Anglicised names on Facebook," *Onomástica desde América Latina* 7 (2026): 1-23.

<sup>13</sup>Adeboye Babalola and Olugboyega Alaba, *A dictionary of Yoruba personal names* (West African Book Publishers Limited, 2008). See also: Harrison Adeniyi, "Naming, names and praise names." In T. Falola & A. Akinyemi (eds), *Culture and Customs of the Yoruba*, (2017), 85-97; Stephen A. Akintoye, *A History of the Yoruba people* (Amalion Publishing, 2010); Idowu Odebode, "From revitalization to bastardisation towards attrition: Reflections on linguistic onomastics," Inaugural lecture series 13 (Redeemer's University Press, 2024); Oluwatosin M. Ajayi, Esther A. Onmoke, and Idowu O. Odebode, "The morphological processes of Anglicised names on Facebook," *Onomástica desde América Latina* 7 (2026): 1-23.

transparent phrases that communicate social, moral, religious, or historical information, influencing behaviour and identity.<sup>14</sup>

Given the above, personal names or anthroponyms thus become strong symbols of cultural heritage, familial history, and social affiliation in the context of postcolonial and diaspora identity creation. Yoruba anthroponyms, for example, are frequently semantically transparent phrases loaded with substantial meaning that reflect birth circumstances, parental goals, or spiritual beliefs.<sup>15</sup> However, in transnational and digitally mediated situations, these names are subject to the pervasive normative demands of English, the contemporary lingua franca of global digital communication. Anglicism is defined as lexical or syntactic elements acquired from English into another language that retain distinctive English qualities or appear foreign in the target language.<sup>16</sup> The process of Anglicisation, which entails changing the phonological, orthographic, and morphological structures of Yoruba names to correspond to English language patterns, emerges as an essential sociolinguistic method for navigation and negotiation. These elements can originate in English or be adopted later. The use of Anglicisms can enrich the target language, yet also raises worries about its integrity. This borrowing frequently demonstrates the influence of English culture, technology and global trends. Thus, Anglicisation is more than just a practical act of phonetic simplification or assimilation. Rather, it consists of complicated tactics that deviate from the language's norms.

The global development of digital communication platforms has offered unprecedented opportunities for intercultural interaction and linguistic hybridity, fundamentally altering how identity is constructed and performed in diverse sociolinguistic situations. Among these processes, the dynamic interaction between indigenous naming systems and mainstream language effects offer fertile ground for scholarly investigation. Facebook, being the primary site of contemporary social contact, functions as a digital laboratory for onomastic innovation. The strains of global English collide with the declaration of Nigerian/Yoruba identity here, resulting in hybrid anthroponymic forms that are purposefully defamiliarised. These linguistic changes reflect cross-cultural compromises between cultural preservation, social legibility and individual creativity.

### Theoretical Approaches

This study is first grounded on Viktor Shklovsky, the Russian Formalist's idea of defamiliarisation (*ostranenie* or making something strange), which holds that when something grows familiar to us, we cease to recognise it. Therefore, the purpose of literature, or art in general, is to force readers to see the world in a different light; to defamiliarise the familiar and then to force them to notice

<sup>14</sup>Taiwo Ehineni, "The ethnopragmatics of Yoruba personal names: Language in the context of culture," *Studies in African Languages and Cultures* 53 (2019): 69-90. See also: Idowu Odebode, "From revitalization to bastardisation towards attrition: Reflections on linguistic onomastics," Inaugural lecture series 13 (Redeemer's University Press, 2024).

<sup>15</sup>Niyi F. Akinnaso, "The Sociolinguistic Basis of Yorùbá Personal Names," *Anthropological Linguistics* 22, no. 7 (1980): 275-304.

<sup>16</sup>Anna Mauranen, "English as the lingua franca of the academic world," in *English in Academia*, ed. C. Gnutzmann (2006), 125-134.

again what they had grown accustomed to. He contends that this will enable people to appreciate the expression's artistic virtues. Defamiliarisation is a fundamental idea of Russian formalism. Viktor Shklovsky posits that 'the technique of art is to make objects unfamiliar, to make forms difficult, to increase the difficulty and length of perception because the process of perception is an aesthetic end in itself and must be prolonged.'<sup>17</sup>

Defamiliarisation is an aesthetic method of presenting ordinary things in an unconventional manner to shock the habitual manner of perception and restore the viewer's experience. According to Shklovsky, the process of defamiliarisation 'devours' experience, reduces perception to something absolutely habitual and mechanical; and this is where the role of art comes in, which is 'to make the stone stony again' and make the 'difficulty and length of perception' longer.<sup>18</sup> This monumental formulation has outgrown its original domain of literary theory and has come to act as a critical application for deconstructing a variety of linguistic, sociolinguistic, postcolonial and media-related phenomena, wherein the common code, be it linguistic, cultural or semiotic, is systematically made to feel alien. Halliday uses the term foregrounding in place of defamiliarisation, to mean 'a prominence which is motivated.'<sup>19</sup> According to Halliday and Matthiessen (2006) defamiliarisation is not just being weird or different, it is about using particular syntactic or lexical patterns to draw attention to the text's deeper meaning.<sup>20</sup>

Meanwhile, in Anglicising Yoruba names, defamiliarisation is not only a stylistic device but a strategy for negotiating identity through a sociolinguistic platform for trans-cultural situations. It has specific and verifiable procedures for different perceptual and cognitive detachment from the source form. One can achieve defamiliarisation by employing systematic changes in the phonological or morphological structure of a language. Haugen and Carrington give two guidelines (orthographic and phonetic reshaping, and morphological segmentation and recombination) within which the study is hinged.<sup>21</sup>

Orthographic and phonetic reshaping entails the modification of spellings and sounds to conform to the system of the target language or to formulate new forms that defy the system of the target language. Indeed, borrowing entails phonological substitution, whereby the English sound replaces an indigenous sound and the phenomenon of importation, whereby alien sound forms are imported into the source language.<sup>22</sup> In the Anglicisation of Yoruba

<sup>17</sup>Viktor B. Shklovsky, "Art as technique," in *Literary Theory: An Anthology*, ed. J. Rivkin and M. Ryan (Blackwell Publishing Ltd., 1998).

<sup>18</sup>Viktor Shklovsky, *Zoo, or Letters Not About Love*, trans. Richard Sheldon (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1971).

<sup>19</sup>Michael Halliday, *Explorations in the functions of language*. (Edward Arnold, 1973)

<sup>20</sup>Michael Halliday and Christian Matthiessen, *Constructing experience through meaning: A language-based approach*. (Continuum, 2006).

<sup>21</sup>Einar Haugen, "The Analysis of Linguistic Borrowing," *Language* 26, no. 2 (1950): 210–231. See also: Lawrence Carrington, *Education and Development in the English-speaking Caribbean: A Contemporary Survey* (United Nations-CEPAL, 1978).

<sup>22</sup>Einar Haugen, "The Analysis of Linguistic Borrowing," *Language* 26, no. 2 (1950): 210–231.

anthroponyms, there is consonantal prothesis and digraphs; vowel manipulation, consonant gemination and insertion.

The morphological segmentation and recombination break down and build up the internal structure of the name. Akinnaso explains that Yoruba names are usually semantically transparent phrases.<sup>23</sup> In cross-cultural situations, this transparency is lost and the name is reanalysed as a sequence of morphemes or syllables. As a result, fragmentation and affixation emerge.

Several studies<sup>24</sup> have explored Anglicisation, Yoruba anthroponyms and defamiliarisation from various standpoints as both a stylistic notion and a method as a result of divergence. However, there is a significant gap in the defamiliarisation of spontaneous, user-driven linguistic inventiveness found on social media platforms, where identity performance is both fluid and highly noticeable. As a result, the purpose of this study is to explore the morpho-phonological and orthographic procedures used to achieve defamiliarisation in the Anglicisation of selected Yoruba anthroponyms on Facebook, shedding more light on defamiliarisation as a sociolinguistic practice rather than just a literary or aesthetic concept.

### Empirical Review

*Yip Cheng explores personal and family names in multilingual-multicultural Malaysia.*<sup>25</sup> The study posits that a name is what gives an individual a special identity and it is discovered that Malaysia as a country comprises three major ethnic groups: the Chinese, the Malays and the Indians. The Chinese naming system is remarkably practical, particularly in its role in preventing incest. By placing surnames at the forefront, they established a straightforward method to regulate marriage choices, effectively avoiding incestuous relationships centuries before the advent of DNA testing. Islam exerts a profound influence on Malay naming conventions. A name is considered a form of prayer and carries the parents' aspirations for their child's future. Hindu naming practices in India diverge significantly from other cultures. Instead of parental choice, a priest determines the baby's name based on the precise birth time and date. Numerology serves as the foundation for this naming process. The study

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<sup>23</sup>Niyi F. Akinnaso, "The Sociolinguistic Basis of Yorùbá Personal Names," *Anthropological Linguistics* 22, no. 7 (1980): 275-304.

<sup>24</sup>Ruichao Geng and Junyan Wei, "Application of the concept of defamiliarization in translation studies: Case studies of the translation of film titles," *Journal of Language Teaching and Research* 7, no. 1 (2016): 192-197. See also: Katarina Seresová and Edita Jurčáková, "Anglicisms as a consequence of vocabulary change reasons for the use and their stylistic function," *International Academic Institute Journal* 10, no. 10 (2017): 10-20; Chukwuebuka U. Oraegbunam, "Deviation as defamiliarisation techniques in written Igbo poetry," *Cihan University-Erbil Journal of Humanities and Social Sciences* 7, no. 2 (2023): 34- 41; Idowu Odebode, "From revitalization to bastardisation towards attrition: Reflections on linguistic onomastics," Inaugural lecture series 13 (Redeemer's University Press, 2024); Oluwatosin M. Ajayi, Esther A. Onmoke, and Idowu O. Odebode, "The morphological processes of Anglicised names on Facebook," *Onomástica desde América Latina* 7 (2026): 1-23.

<sup>25</sup>Yip Cheng, K. "Names in Multilingual-Multicultural Malaysia." *Names*, 56, no 1 (2008): 47-53.

focuses on ethnicity and name with unique attention to self-identity, nation identity and ethnic identity. The present study focuses on the defamiliarisation strategies in Anglicised Yoruba names on Facebook.

Odebode examines Anglicised abiku names on Facebook from the morpho-pragmatic lens.<sup>26</sup> The study uses Yule (1985) to explore the morphological processes of the selected abiku names, and Austin (1962) with Brown and Levinson (1987), to benchmark their pragmatic imports. Findings reveal clipping, blending, affixation, back-formation, acronym and multiple processes as the word formation processes and the pragmatic imports of these names are informing, appealing and questioning. Furthermore, the study indicates that due to the negative connotations attached to abiku names, many individuals bearing them opt to use Anglicised versions on Facebook as a means of masking their identities, a reflection of the enduring impact of colonial mentality. The research diverges from the present study. While Odebode focuses exclusively on abiku names, the current research expands this scope to include all Anglicised Yoruba personal names and surnames on Facebook, further investigating the underlying motivations and the broader implications for the vitality of the Yoruba language.

Geng and Wei apply the concept of defamiliarisation in translation studies to the translation of film titles.<sup>27</sup> They investigate the methods used in this process and the degree to which defamiliarisation is applied. Translating film titles is considered a form of artistic reinterpretation. To achieve successful translations, translators must blend the film's style, theme, and the target audience's aesthetic preferences with cultural understanding. By approaching film titles as artistic expressions of reality, translators can better grasp and convey the desired aesthetic impact through defamiliarisation. The study recommends that effective film title translations should balance familiar and unfamiliar elements. As translators master defamiliarisation techniques, the quality of film title translations is expected to improve. Geng and Wei have successfully examined defamiliarisation in the translation of movie titles, the present study aims to explore the defamiliarisation of Anglicised Yoruba names on Facebook.

Seresová and Jurčáková explore Anglicisms as a consequence of vocabulary change, reasons for its use and their stylistic functions.<sup>28</sup> This study investigates the reasons for the integration of Anglicisms into the German language, their potential drawbacks and their stylistic impact. The primary focus is on the lexical level, as this is the linguistic domain most affected by this phenomenon. The study identifies several motivations for using Anglicisms, including language economy, necessity, vocabulary enrichment, stylistic flair, conceptual

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<sup>26</sup>Idowu Odebode, "A morpho-pragmatic study of selected Anglicised Yoruba names on Facebook." In Chijioke U. et al., *Existentialism, Literature and the Humanities in Africa*, Cuvillier Verlag, Germany. (2013): 338-350

<sup>27</sup>Ruichao Geng and Junyan Wei, "Application of the concept of defamiliarization in translation studies: Case studies of the translation of film titles," *Journal of Language Teaching and Research* 7, no. 1 (2016): 192-197.

<sup>28</sup>Katarina Seresová and Edita Jurčáková, "Anglicisms as a consequence of vocabulary change reasons for the use and their stylistic function," *International Academic Institute Journal* 10, no. 10 (2017): 10-20.

clarity, origin indication and euphemism. Anglicisms can serve various stylistic purposes, such as novelty, learning, vividness and effective communication. While acknowledging the dynamic nature of language, the study concludes that Anglicisms have become an established part of German and are generally viewed positively as enriching the language. Anglicism is possible between two languages. Seresová and Jurčáková have established the adoption of the English language into the German language; the current study focuses on examining the integration of the English language into a Nigerian indigenous language, Yoruba, thereby identifying its inherent changes.

Also, Ajileye investigates the multiplicity of cultures in Anglicised Yoruba personal names and Yoruba business names.<sup>29</sup> The research is grounded in Labov's (1972) theory of Variability concept. Data is collected by visiting businesses with Anglicised names displayed on billboards and conducting subsequent questionnaires and interviews with their owners. Findings reveal Anglicised Yoruba personal and business names facilitated increased intercultural interaction. However, these hybrid names often led to identification and meaning challenges due to their mixed linguistic elements. Additionally, they represent a new linguistic form. Ultimately, the research concluded that these names are cultural blends that enrich the language landscape, highlighting the influence of English. The present study aims to examine the defamiliarisation strategies in the Anglicisation of selected Yoruba anthroponyms on Facebook.

Zhang investigates defamiliarisation in literary works, focusing specifically on George Orwell's *Animal Farm*.<sup>30</sup> He examines defamiliarisation techniques in the text, highlighting defamiliarisation of subject matter and the narrative point of view, defamiliarisation of characters, language, pronunciation, as the defamiliarisation techniques in the text. The study concludes that the application of defamiliarisation techniques which allows authors to express their creative intentions in a text, will not only aid the interpretation of the text but also arouse and prolong readers' interest and perceived aesthetics. The present study aims to examine defamiliarisation techniques of linguistic texts (Yoruba anthroponyms) culled from Facebook.

Oraegbunam views deviation as a defamiliarisation technique in written Igbo poetry.<sup>31</sup> The study analyses modern Igbo poetry to identify and categorise the linguistic techniques employed to achieve a defamiliarising effect. By examining seventeen randomly selected poems from eight texts published between 1975 and 2015, the work reveals the prevalence of syntactic, lexical, phonological and graphological deviations. Syntactic deviations are manifested through end-weight, focusing, and topicalisation, while lexical deviations encompass

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<sup>29</sup>Ajileye, M., K. "Multiplicity of cultures in Anglicised Yoruba personal names and Yoruba business names." *The International Journal of Humanities & Social Studies*. 5 no 3 (2019): 258- 263.

<sup>30</sup>Yueyang Zhang, "The influence of defamiliarization on Literary works—A case study of George Orwell's *Animal Farm*," *Journal of Higher Education Research* 3, no. 3 (2022): 261-262.

<sup>31</sup>Chukwuebuka U. Oraegbunam, "Deviation as defamiliarisation techniques in written Igbo poetry," *Cihan University-Erbil Journal of Humanities and Social Sciences* 7, no. 2 (2023): 34- 41.

coinages, borrowings, and dialectal variations. Phonological deviations are limited to apocope and graphological alterations are used to facilitate pronunciation and rhythm. The study concludes that these deviational techniques underscore the power of language manipulation to influence reader perception. The present study draws the concept of defamiliarisation and will, however, examine the defamiliarisation strategies of the selected Anglicised Yoruba names on Facebook.

Maloku and Avdyli delve into the fundamental concepts of Russian Formalism, with a focus on how the movement turned the study of literature from external variables such as authors' biography or social environment toward the text itself.<sup>32</sup> The study emphasises the importance of literariness and defamiliarisation as fundamental tools for literary analysis. It is discovered that defamiliarisation in poetry modifies linguistic forms such as rhythm and sound, whereas in prose, it manipulates the plot and the order of events to generate an alienating impact. In conclusion, the Formalists' major contribution was their strict adherence to seeing the text as an independent system, a viewpoint that set the framework for the eventual development of structuralism. The present study shifts from the literary application of defamiliarisation to examining defamiliarisation techniques in the linguistic palance.

Tengberg et al. investigate the theory of dialogic teaching and literary perception as educational frameworks and how they can aid teacher-led literature discussions and literary reception.<sup>33</sup> They argue that dialogic theory should be reinforced with defamiliarisation and undecidability to interpret and analyse complex texts. Findings reveal that narrative complexity functions as a learning accelerator by providing friction that challenges students' habitual thinking and forces them to work with peers to address their disorientation. The study concludes that there is a strong conceptual fit between these frameworks. This implies that teachers can shift from being answer providers to facilitators of inquiry by using strategically difficult literature to foster a tolerance for ambiguity and a more sophisticated shared understanding. While Tengberg et al. relate the concept of defamiliarisation to teaching and literary perception, the current study relates defamiliarisation to selected Anglicised names on Facebook.

Odebode examines the Anglicisation of Yoruba names on Facebook.<sup>34</sup> The study analyses twenty-five Anglicised Yoruba names from Facebook from the socionomastic perspective. He discovers that one of the reasons for Anglicisation is revitalisation and, in a bid to revitalise the language, it is being bastardised. This, correspondingly, may result in the loss of the Yoruba language (language attrition). The study concludes by advocating for the use

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<sup>32</sup>Flamur Maliku and Merxhan Avdyli, "Russian formalism and defamiliarisation in language," *Orbis Linguarum* 21, no. 1 (2023): 42-46.

<sup>33</sup>Magnus Tengberg, M. Johansson, and M. Sønneland, "Dialogue and defamiliarization: The conceptual framing of an intervention for challenging readers and improving the quality of literature discussions," *L1-Educational Studies in Language and Literature* 23 (2023): 1-24.

<sup>34</sup>Idowu Odebode, "From revitalization to bastardisation towards attrition: Reflections on linguistic onomastics," Inaugural lecture series 13 (Redeemer's University Press, 2024).

and practice of the Yoruba language as the only panacea for revitalising it. The present study differs from Odebode's work in the choice of theory, as it attempts to examine the defamiliarisation strategies of the selected Anglicised Yoruba names from Facebook. Hence, the study is an extension of Odebode's study.

### Methodology

This study descriptively adopts a qualitative method of data analysis to examine the morpho-phonological and orthographic strategies employed in the defamiliarisation of fifty Anglicised Yoruba anthroponyms. The data, randomly culled from the social media platform, Facebook, serves as a primary site for present-day linguistic hybridity. To ensure representativeness, the study utilises a stratified sampling technique, in which ten Yoruba anthroponyms were selected, from which five Anglicised variants were extracted. This study sets to examine the strategic defamiliarisation techniques inherent in the fifty randomly selected Anglicised Yoruba names.

### Data Analysis and Discussion

The defamiliarisation strategies identified in the selected Yoruba anthroponyms are analysed and discussed below:

**Tolulope:** Tholulorphe, Thollulorphe, Tholuylorphe, Tholhulorphe, Tholulorphey

The defamiliarisation strategies employed in Tolulope are orthographic and phonetic reshaping. Each variant involves a great orthographic change that further defamiliarises the name from its origin. In *Tholulorphe*, the initial voiceless alveolar plosive 't' is replaced by 'Th,' a voiceless dental fricative, thus introducing a sound foreign to Yoruba phonology. This supports phonological integration processes advocated by Haugen,<sup>35</sup> whereby a foreign word is domesticated by adopting the phonology of the target language. In the variant, *Thollulorphe*, consonant germination/insertion of 'l' is applied, an element of reinforcement in spelling, which is often employed for emphasis or othering in foreign names.<sup>36</sup> In the variant *Tholuylorphe*, 'y' is fixed; this results in a different syllable pattern and an insertion of a glide, which rebirths the vocalic pattern. In addition, *Tholhulorphe*, attaches an 'h' into the original name, causing an aspirated segment, further othering the name. The last variant, *Tholulorphey*, takes 'y' as a suffix and infix of 'r' and 'h'.<sup>37</sup>

**Ekundayo:** Hekundayor, Heykundayorh, Hekhundayor, Hekhundayor, Hekundayour

Ekundayo also employs orthographic and phonetic reshaping to defamiliarise the name. The variants, the name have a consistent prefixing of 'H-.' This can be

<sup>35</sup>Einar Haugen, "The Analysis of Linguistic Borrowing," *Language* 26, no. 2 (1950): 210–231.

<sup>36</sup>Lawrence Carrington, *Education and Development in the English-speaking Caribbean: A Contemporary Survey* (United Nations-CEPAL, 1978).

<sup>37</sup>George Yule, *The study of Language* (Cambridge University Press, 2010).

seen as a consonant prosthesis in a language contact situation.<sup>38</sup> *Hekundayor* and *Hekundayour* vary the final syllable with '-yor' or '-your' in place of '-yo' in the source language. They substitute the original vowel /ɔ/ with a long vowel /ɔ:/. *Hekhundayor* adds an infix '-h-' and '-dh-' which differentiates this from the later variants. In so doing, the phonological substitution is established. As proposed by Carrington,<sup>39</sup> the replacement and addition of new phonological elements is done to ensure compliance with the phonology of the target language or culture. *Heykundayorh* adds a final 'h' and this can be a reflection of hypercorrection or distinctiveness in representing the name as phonologically different from other languages. These variants systematically represent the name according to an English phonetic and orthographic pattern and thus estrange the name among Yoruba and English speakers respectively.

**Fikayomi:** Phykaryurmie, Phykaryormy, Feekaryourmmy, Phikaryourmhi, Phycaryourmy

A notable defamiliarisation strategy in Fikayomi is orthographic and phonetic reshaping. This set displays a great deal of orthographic creativity. *Phykaryurmie* substitutes 'F' with 'Ph,' displaying a graphemic substitution that carries learnt and/or classical meanings, coupled with the substitution of '-yomi' with '-yurmie' via vowel shift and suffix variation. *Feekaryourmmy* and *Fhizkaryourmmy* employ the same technique. The latter lengthens the initial vowel by replacing 'i' with 'ee,' and doubles the final 'm'. *Phikaryourmhi* and *Phycaryourmy* manipulate the final syllable, add the suffix '-hi' and change the vowel from 'i' to 'y.' The variants highlight an attempt to retain the original vowel sound while conforming to English rules.

**Oluwaseun:** Holuwacheun, Holuwarh Sheyhun, Holu Wah Sheun, Holuwahsheyhun, Holuwa Sheun

Also, morphological segmentation and combination as well as orthographic reshaping are the notable defamiliarisation strategies in Oluwaseun. The prefixation and segmentation in the Anglicised variants of the name are clear. *Holu Wah Sheun* and other variants segment the original spelling into distinct parts. Such a phenomenon is related to morphological reanalysis of Yoruba naming conventions in foreign settings, where the syntactic cohesion of the name is broken.<sup>40</sup> *Holuwacheun* inserts 'ch,' a combination that yields a voiceless affricate /tʃ/ that is entirely alien to Yoruba phonology; thereby, defamiliarising the name by a change of sound. *Holuwarh Sheyhun* employs prefixation ('H-'), suffixation ('-rh'), infixation ('-h' and '-yh-') and segmentation. *Holuwahsheyhun*, however employs prefix ('H-') and infix ('-h-', '-yh-') to defamiliarise the variant.

**Morenikeji:** Mohrenikeji, Moh Reni Keji, More Ni Keji, Mo Re Ni Keji, Kheji

Again, the Anglicised variants of Morenikeji deploy morphological segmentation and recombination to defamiliarise the name. These variants illustrate progressive segmentation and morphological reduction. *Moh Reni Keji* and *Mo*

<sup>38</sup>Einar Haugen, "The Analysis of Linguistic Borrowing," *Language* 26, no. 2 (1950): 210–231.

<sup>39</sup>Lawrence Carrington, *Education and Development in the English-speaking Caribbean: A Contemporary Survey* (United Nations-CEPAL, 1978).

<sup>40</sup>Niyi F. Akinnaso, "The Sociolinguistic Basis of Yorùbá Personal Names," *Anthropological Linguistics* 22, no. 7 (1980): 275–304.

*Re Ni Keji* parse the name into smaller units but semantically opaque. This is morphologically transparent, where a speaker breaks down an unfamiliar form into something manageable in the form of meaningful bits.<sup>41</sup> *Kheji* symbolises reduction, where only the final part is kept. Defamiliarisation has been observed in cases where the names are shortened to ease usage. The insertion of a 'h' infix is an innovation offered by *Mohrenikeji*. These strategies capture the manner in which the process of defamiliarisation affects the sound/spelling and structure of an Anglicised name to become semantically disjointed.

**Bunmi:** Bunmmy, Bunmie, Bhunmie, Bhunmi, Holubunmi

Orthographic and phonetic reshaping are the defamiliarisation strategies in *Bunmi*. Alterations do not only take place in lengthy names but also in short names. *Bunmmy* employs gemination to form the variant. In contrast to *Bunmie*, which employs a suffix '-e' appears as a nickname feature. *Bhunmi* and *Bhunmie* adopt the digraph 'Bh,' which is an orthographic sign of aspiration that lacks a standard English phonetic representation, thus signifying ostranenie caused by visual innovation.<sup>42</sup> In *Holubunmi*, the prefix 'Oluwa' in the source name is changed to 'Holu-'

**Oluwatoyin:** Holluwahtoyeen, Holuwertoyeen, Holluwar Toy Yin, Holuwar Toyhin, Holuwar Toyean

Oluwatoyin is defamiliarised by morphological segmentation and recombination as well as orthographic reshaping. The variants exhibit a high level of orthographic shift. For instance, *Oluwatoyin* takes the prefixing of 'H' and segmentation as follows in *Holluwar Toy Yin*, in which the name is segmented into three English-sounding lexemes. This is symptomatic of how Yoruba names in particular, aimed to be reanalysed in diasporic situations as being segmentable and analysable as a sequence of distinct, independent lexical items.<sup>43</sup> *Holluwahtoyeen* replaces 'tohyeen' for 'toyin,' 'er' also substitutes 'a' in *Holuwertoyeen*. The dominant prefixation of 'H', the infixation of '-h-' or '-rh-' as well as segmentation of the variants, estrange the name.

**Bukola:** Becky, Bukky, Buko Lar, Bhukholar, Bhu Kholar

Furthermore, orthographic and phonetic reshaping, as well as morphological segmentation, are prominent defamiliarisation strategies in the variants of Bukola, which illustrate a range of adaptational techniques. *Becky* illustrates complete lexical substitution, using a common English name in place of that of the source language (a radical form of defamiliarisation, which annihilates both phonological and cultural markers). *Bukky* uses the gemination of 'k' to produce a diminutive familiar form attuned to English naming patterns. *Buko Lar* takes the suffix 'r' and segments the name in the source language into two. *Bhukholar* and *Bhu Kholar* employ the aspirated digraphs 'Bh, Kh' along with a 'r' suffix,

<sup>41</sup>Ava Creemers, A. Goodwin Davies, Robert J. Wilder, Meredith Tamminga, and David Embick, "Opacity, transparency, and morphological priming: A study of prefixed verbs in Dutch," *Journal of Memory and Language* 110 (2020): 104055. See also: Elizabeth L. Tighe and Katherine S. Binder, "An investigation of morphological awareness and processing in adults with low literacy," *Applied Psycholinguistics* 36, no. 2 (2013): 245–273.

<sup>42</sup>Lawrence Carrington, *Education and Development in the English-speaking Caribbean: A Contemporary Survey* (United Nations-CEPAL, 1978).

<sup>43</sup>Niyi F. Akinnaso, "The Sociolinguistic Basis of Yorùbá Personal Names," *Anthropological Linguistics* 22, no. 7 (1980): 275-304.

thus defamiliarising the name in the source language through non-English phonologies.<sup>44</sup>

**Temidayo:** Themidaryor, Theimhedaryour, Themmydaryor, Themmydharyor, Teemedaryour

Temidayo employs orthographic and phonetic reshaping as its defamiliarisation strategies. The Anglicised variants consistently replace the initial 'T' with 'Th,' which fits with English grapheme-phoneme correspondence, and change the final '-yo' to '-yor' or '-your,' which adds a rhotic ending unusual in Yoruba language. *Themmydaryor* alters rhythm and emphasis with gemination 'mm', but *Themmydharyor* inserts 'dh,' a digraph that conveys a fricative character not seen in the source language. *Teemedaryour* also uses gemination 'ee' to follow English spelling standards for long vowels. Each variant makes systematic phonological and orthographic changes that collectively reframe the name to fit into the target language, thus defamiliarising the variants while retaining their syllabic foundation.

**Aduni:** Hardunny, Hardunnie, Hardunhie, Har Dhu Nie, Harduni

A noticeable defamiliarisation strategy in Aduni is orthographic reshaping as well as morphological segmentation and recombination. All the variants take the prefix 'Har-'. *Hardunny* and *Hardunnie* take the English suffix style ('-ny,' '-nie'). *Hardunhie* infixes an '-h-' at the variant final position. Segmentation is notable in *Har Dhu Nie*. It is broken into three lexemes with each lexeme affixed, resulting in defamiliarisation. *Harduni* retains '-duni' from the root word but substitutes 'Har-' for 'A-'. It should be noted that little phonetic or morphological alteration can result in defamiliarisation. It should be noted that minimal modifications, substantial othering can be accomplished through modifications in morphological features and name structure.

### Summary

The analysis of defamiliarisation strategies in the Anglicisation of Yoruba names reveals two primary systematic approaches, which are orthographic and phonetic reshaping, and morphological segmentation and recombination, through which familiar names are rendered perceptually striking and unfamiliar. The orthographic and phonetic reshaping strategy operates through consonantal prothesis, where the glottal fricative /h/ is systematically prefixed to names such as *Hekundayo*, *Holuwaseun*; digraph substitution where voiceless plosives are replaced with dental fricatives, as in the case of *Tholulorphe*; vowel manipulation and diphthongisation that transforms monophthongs into English-like diphthongs as in *Teemedaryour*, *Holluwahtohyeen*, *Hekundayour* and consonant gemination as evident in *Bunmmy*, *Thollulorphe* among others; that reinforces spelling patterns for emphasis or othering. These modifications systematically substitute indigenous sounds with English phonological features, thereby creating forms that appear simultaneously familiar yet strange to both Yoruba and English speakers. By disrupting the habitual perception of these names as ordinary linguistic signs, this approach fulfils Shklovsky's objective of

<sup>44</sup>Lawrence Carrington, *Education and Development in the English-speaking Caribbean: A Contemporary Survey* (United Nations-CEPAL, 1978).

'making the stone stony again,' forcing a fresh and conscious engagement with their underlying meaning.

The morphological segmentation and recombination strategy operates by breaking down and reassembling Yoruba names as sequences of reanalysable morphemes or syllables, fundamentally altering their internal structure and semantic transparency. This is evident in variants such as *Holluwar Toy Yin, Moh Reni Keji*, and *Har Dhu Nie* among others, where originally cohesive names are parsed into independent lexical units that mimic English word boundaries while remaining semantically opaque. This fragmentation represents the loss of semantic transparency in cross-cultural contexts (Akinnao, 1980), where names are reanalysed as sequences of meaningless syllables that can be arbitrarily combined with English-like affixes. The strategy demonstrates that defamiliarisation operates not only at the phonological level but also at the morphological level, where the internal composition of names is systematically dismantled and reconstructed to create variants that estrange the source forms while simultaneously adapting them for consumption within English-dominated digital spaces.

### Conclusion

Defamiliarisation as a result of Anglicisation reflects broader sociolinguistic phenomena of language contact, identity negotiation, and orthographic creativity. The process is far from a simple process. As a linguistic process, it is one of the systematic techniques of deviation, transformation and combination at different levels of language. As a cultural process, it is a point of intersection of power, identity and hybridity. Finally, it is an aesthetic process that draws on the device of estrangement from literary theory. Each of these Anglicised variants draws on one or both defamiliarisation strategies in ways unique to the phonological and morphological structure as well as the semantic potential of the names in the source language. These processes are clearly linguistic innovations with an attempt to estrange the names. The transformation forces the name bearer and the onlooker to respond to it as not simply a given, but rather as a sign of identity that is deliberately fashioned and rewritten to fit in a transcultural context. Hence, the defamiliarisation of Yoruba anthroponyms on Facebook deviates from the conventional ways in which these names are presented in the source language.