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A SHIFT IN BATONU PERSONAL NAMING PRACTICES

The contact of the Batonu people with Arab traders and Islamic missionaries back in the 16th century resulted in the Batonu people's embrace of Islam which has brought profound effects on most of the traditional practices of the Batonu people. Before the Batonu people converted to Islam, every Batonu child had been given a Batonu name at birth based on order of birth, gentility, circumstance of birth, parents' occupation, natural phenomena, etc. Such child was expected to be known and addressed by that name both within and outside the community. Today, this custom seems endangered as most Batonu people now bear Muslim names given to them at birth. Thus, this paper examines the shift in the personal naming practices of the Batonu people of Nigeria. The study identifies religious inclination, the rigid personal naming practices of the people, tendency to mask identity and political / socio-economic drives as remote causes of the shift. This shift has led to a drastic decline of traditional Batonu personal names, reflecting the cultural uprooting and the loss of indigenous vocabulary. Recognizing that restoration of traditional Batonu personal naming practices would be almost impossible, the authors propose two onomastic cultural reclamation strategies: the "weak-open reversal" and the "reversal by syncretism" — to provide for appreciable revival and sustenance of these.

Key words: Batonu (Bariba, Baatonum) language, Niger-Congo languages, personal naming practices, anthroponomy, Muslim personal names, socio-onomastics.

1. Introduction

Given that culture is ever dynamic, personal naming practices are undergoing continuous transformations due to sociolinguistic, political and religious factors [Ngubane & Thabethe, 2013]. In Africa, transition from indigenous to foreign naming practices is directly or indirectly linked to colonialism and also to European and Arab missionary activities at various periods in history. Moyo [1996] and Agbontaen-Eghafona [2007] give reasons for the apparent shift by arguing that cultural commitments loosened due to social and religious imperialistic views that African names are complicated, heathen and do not fit into contemporary society. Such claims, though not true of African names, have profound effect on the African disposition and also on contemporary African naming practices.

Another area where religious imperialism has impacted on African naming practices is the ritual of bestowing a baptismal name on a child or an adult as practiced by some denominations of Christianity, notably the Catholic Church. Thus, the cause of Moyo's and Agbontaen-Eghafona's observations may relate to the personal dimension both of the name giver and the named person. This practice is also common among converted African Muslims — after conversion Muslim (or Christian) name are seen as being more prestigious. One observes that such deliberate name switch or shift on religious grounds, psychically and psychologically belittles African cultures.

The personal name shift in question manifests itself in the intercultural perspective as well. A culture willing to identify itself with another one may model its nuances, including personal naming practices, in conformity with the target culture. Bariki [2007], commenting on the naming practices of the Izon people, points out that names of other African tribes and/or English names of months and professions are either Izonised or copied and borne by the Izon people. So, names such as *Ife-ere* <Ife-woman> (Yoruba and Izon), *Hausa-ere* <Hausa-woman> (Hausa and Izon), *Nurse-ere* <Nurse-woman> (English and Izon), *Jeniwari* <January>, *Manager*, etc., and others like *Gowon*, *Azikiwe*, *Awolowo*, *Buhari*, etc. are not uncommon among the Izon people.

Another group of causes is associated with imperialism and annexation. Harrison [1999] writes that prior to Tuva's annexation into the Soviet Union in 1944, Russian names were quite rare among the Tuvans. But in the 1950s, Russian socio-realist names like *Traktor* <tractor> or *Brigada* <brigade> became popular, though they did not form a statistically significant percentage. The real decline of Tuvan names began with the emergence of standard Russian names in the 1960s and 70s when over 55 % of Tuvan children received Russian names. However, in the 1990s the share of Russian names declined to 20 % due to the upswing of cultural awareness among Tuvan people that had started in the 1980s.

Similarly, in eastern Indonesia, the Alune people had been forcefully relocated by the government three times during the 1950s–1970s. The relocations which took them to Malay speaking communities, occasioned dramatic socio-cultural and linguistic

changes including giving up Alune traditional practices in favour of Islam and Christianity. The latter resulted in losing the knowledge of Alune personal naming practices.

Whereas the researchers would encourage cross-cultural personal naming practices to promote social agreement and further integration, the outright abandonment of indigenous naming practices for foreign ones should be a source of concern. In the Batonu speaking areas, as of today, a child is either not given a Batonu name or the Batonu name is abandoned for a foreign name, or the traditional name is almost unused in formal communication. The situation here is, in fact, the opposite of what was happening in Siberia in the mid 20th century where a child was officially given a Russian name (also used outside the indigenous community), while also non-officially receiving a traditional name that was used on everyday basis. The situation raises concern as to the nature of Batonu personal naming practices, the extent of decline of the use of Batonu names, and the causes and effects of this shift in Batonu culture.

2. History and Sociolinguistics of the Studied Area

Batonu is a Nigerian tribe in Baruten Local Government Area of Kwara State. The people claim to be descendants of the Nikki dynasty, in the present day the Republic of Benin, as an indication of their geographical spread. This implies that, apart from Nikki, the “Bariba” people (the name for the Batonu ancestry used in the Republic of Benin) could be found in Parakou, Kandi, Sinande, Wasa, Dari, Bori, Ginaguru, Keraru, Kubu, Baade, Kpaari, and Boe in the Republic of Benin. Sanusi [2002, 2], citing earlier primers on Batonu, says that Beninese use the name “Bariba” to refer to both the language and the people. In Nigeria, however, the people refer to themselves as “Batombu” and to their language as “Batonu”. Sanusi also reports that the appellation “Baruba” or “Bariba” had been used in Nigeria formally to refer to both the language and the people until the people “got conscious of their ‘true’ identity” [Ibid.]. Today’s Batonu language native speakers do not use these appellations.¹

Shifts in naming practices are not ungrounded. The Batonu people came through centuries of cultural and religious contacts [Arai & Thoursie, 2008; Harrison, 1999]. The oral interviews conducted by the researchers with some traditional rulers, elders, Islamic clerics/imams, opinion leaders, and university lecturers (see details in Section 4 below) convince that the Batonu people’s first contacts with the outside world took place in the 16th century. The first contacted outsiders were Arab traders who emigrated from Borno, in Nigeria. In addition to their trade, they practiced their religion (Islam) and intermarried with the Batonu women. The Arab traders, later that century, were joined by three groups of Islamic missionaries, who also emigrated from

¹ The people, contrary to formal documents and usages, address themselves as “Baatombu,” meaning “the Batonu-speaking people,” or simply “Batonu” — by the name of their language. The researchers working on Batonu refer to both the people and the language as “Batonu”. This paper follows this principle for continuity and consistency in the literature.

Borno. In their quest to propagate Islam, they scattered into the hinterland (Baruten). These three groups of Islamic missionaries, Maane, Taruwere, and Toure constitute what is today regarded by the Batonu people as the “three religious dynasties.” Like their predecessors, the missionaries entered into marriage with the Batonu people. The Maane were Islamic, the Toure were mainly Senegalese, while the Taruwere were mainly Nigerians. All three were of Ethiopian dynasty, devoted to spreading Islam across Africa.

Before their contact with the outside world, the Batonu people, according to oral sources, were farmers and idol worshippers. There were five groups of idol worshippers, each associated with an idol and a mode of worship. The groups were Yeruma, Kirikuba, Naa, Geisaramo, and Kituru. Their mode of worship ranged from *deru*, “river worship”; *shinagura*, “wood worship” or “worship of carvings”; *wuru*, “tree worship”; *gobire*, “cowry worship” to *wuru-gura*, “rain worship.”

The common practice among these idol worshippers and their enthusiasts was to either transfer or give these idol names or the associated names of worship to their children. These idols and names were inheritable and were thus transferred from one generation to the other. So on arrival, the Islamic missionaries’ first task was to convert the Batonu people to Islam. The conversion had an important impact on the Batonu culture, including the idol-related Batonu names, to a large extent, being displaced by “neutral” Batonu names.

3. Theoretical Model

According to Machaba [2004], naming is a very important tool used among various African cultures to convey certain messages, either to an individual, family members or a community. The shift in naming practices among Batonu should, thus, be approached in a wide sociolinguistic and anthropological context.

Studies on naming practices in America [Fitzpatrick, 2012], Europe [Harrison, 1999] and Africa [Dakubu, 2000; Moyo, 2012; Ngubane & Thabethe, 2013] have provided ways of devising cultural reclamation strategies through personal naming practices. Apart from Harrison [1999] who came up with “resistance by syncretism,” others did not coin any specific terms yet outlined templates for strategies adopted by the cultures they studied. The U.S. and the Caribbean situations, illustrated by Fitzpatrick [2012], which stem from the Civil Rights movement and Black Power consciousness during the 1950s and 1970s, left imprints of cultural reclamation (henceforth, reversal) strategies which this study calls “aggressive reversal strategy.” Harrison’s “resistance by syncretism” does not capture all the reversal strategies employed by the Tuvan people in central Siberia which he investigated. Fitzpatrick’s work added what it calls “open reversal” strategy to the Tuvan situation and replaced Harrison’s “resistance” by “reversal” because of the former’s forceful connotation. The reversal strategy adopted by the Dagomba people in northern Ghana, as reported by Dakubu [2000], is that of reversal by syncretism.

In “open reversal,” the foreign culture is allowed to dominate for a while as necessity-driven non-sentimental conscious effort is applied to form new neologisms and calques for indigenous names to replace foreign names. The “reversal” strategy of personal naming could also entail harmonizing the systems of the foreign and indigenous cultures to form personal names that are exclusive to either culture. This type is known as “reversal by syncretism” or “resistance by syncretism.” Aggressive reversal emanates from sentiment and anger — an uncontrollable urge to erase (personal) names of a foreign culture, group or political system as a form of identity protest or nationalism.

4. Method

The study uses survey and descriptive research methods. The survey research methods include observations, interview, questionnaires. The descriptive research methods include simple statistical tables, frequency and percentages to clarify, juxtapose and show variations respectively. Two sampling techniques: “snowball” or “social network” and “stratified” techniques [Milroy, 1989; Rasinger, 2013] were also used. The “snowball” was handy where a researcher had to do fieldwork and deal with respondents s/he is not (very) familiar with. The technique enables the researcher to build the portion of the population needed for the study from the social network(s) of acquaintances. The “snowball” technique is similar to networking or marketing. First, the researchers spent few days making friends among respondents from the needed age groups. The researchers informed them of the objectives of the study. Through these acquaintances, the researchers made more new friends. The snowball technique fed the stratified technique, which enables the study to be conducted across six age brackets. In addition, key persons and opinion leaders representing different age groups in the study area were interviewed about Batonu personal names and their classificatory characteristics. During the interviews, questions were asked concerning the decline in the use of indigenous Batonu personal names. The informants were encouraged to reflect upon the reasons for the Batonu people’s choice of personal names and what had determined the types of names Batonu people now bear. Besides the 9 key persons and opinion leaders such as traditional rulers, Islamic clerics, and Imams, the study was added by previously made interviews with Batonu traditional religion practitioners, a total of 15 persons selected by random sampling techniques, who provided the researchers with oral information on the history of the Batonu people and their attitudes or habits towards naming practices in the study area.

130 questionnaires were distributed among six age brackets, of which 122 were duly completed and returned by respondents. This represents 93.8 % of the total number of questionnaires sent out. Age-wise, 30 respondents, out of the total 122, fall within the age bracket of 10–19 years; 25 respondents fall within the age bracket of 20–29 years; 19 respondents fall within the age bracket of 30–39 years; 15 respondents fall within the age bracket of 40–49; and another 15 respondents are within 50–59 years; while

17 respondents fall within the age bracket of 60 years and above. These figures represent 24.5 %, 20.4 %, 15.5 %, 12.2 %, 12.2 % and 13.9 % of the total respondents respectively. The questionnaire, divided into three sections, including biographical profile of respondents, domains of Muslim and Batonu personal name choices, possible reversal and factors / reasons for choices. Fakuade's [1995] "optional approach," which enables a survey of a large number of respondents, was adapted in designing the questionnaire, which contains diversified close-ended multiple choice questions and/or items arranged disjunctively in a manner akin to the "thunder stone" approach [cf. Fakuade, 1996–1997; Adegbiya, 1994]. The study also adopted the Olympic approach of computing medals in identifying the remote factors / reasons for the shift. Respondents ranked eight factors / reasons identified during the initial-fact finding stages into Excellent (Gold), Very Good (Silver) and Good (Bronze) (cf. Table 3). Respondents were asked to simply write the numbers 1, 2 and 3 (Good, Very Good and Excellent, respectively) next to the factors, now represented with the letters A, B, C, D, F, G and H (cf. Table 3), presented to them. The account was made of the number of maximum values (Gold or Excellent). Other values were considered only as complementary parts. The study uses this approach to identify the most impactful factors, which this paper labels as remote causes of the shift.

Our participant and document observation with regard to choice of names among the Batonu started from the University of Ilorin campus where we observed the choice of personal names of Batonu natives in Ilorin and found most of them bearing Muslim names. The researchers, while on the field, had to participate in various activities such as teaching, playing, and watching football matches with the informants and engaging them in general discussions. Our goal was to know the type of names (Batonu or Muslim names) that people address each other by in different domains. The document observation employed in this study included scrutinizing school registers, hospital records, associations, and club's registers. The participant observation enabled the researchers to form a network which facilitated the sampling techniques, the distribution, and timely completion and return of the questionnaires.

5. Analysis and Discussion of Data

Data collection and analysis methods in contemporary sociolinguistic research proceed from the fact that qualitative and quantitative approaches complement each other. Thus, our analysis in this paper, though qualitative via quantification, does not only enable the researchers to have a thorough examination of the shift in naming practices in Batonu, it illustrates that sociolinguistic research projects are neither exclusively quantitative nor exclusively qualitative [see Johnstone, 2000].

Table 1 juxtaposes the domains of use of Batonu and Muslim names in the study area. The domains include the use of Batonu versus Muslim names in the community, outside the community, at school, on certificate(s) or credential(s), in primary and secondary schools and on wedding cards / almanacs.

Table 1

Use of Batonu and Muslim Names

Age	N	Name in community		Name outside community		Name known at school		Name on certificate			Name in primary school			Name in secondary school			Name on wedding card	
		B	M	B	M	B	M	B	M	O	B	M	O	B	M	O	B	M
10-19	30	14	16	2	28	1	29	0	18	12	1	24	5	1	20	9	3	27
		47%	53%	7%	93%	4%	96%	0%	60%	40%	4%	80%	16%	4%	67%	30%	10%	90%
20-29	25	8	17	4	21	2	23	0	13	12	0	16	9	0	15	10	3	22
		32%	68%	16%	84%	8%	92%	0%	52%	48%	0%	64%	36%	0%	60%	40%	12%	88%
30-39	17	6	13	4	15	5	14	0	3	16	0	6	13	0	4	15	6	13
		32%	68%	21%	79%	26%	74%	0%	15%	85%	0%	32%	68%	0%	21%	79%	32%	68%
40-49	15	4	11	3	12	2	13	0	10	5	0	12	3	0	9	6	1	14
		26%	74%	20%	80%	14%	86%	0%	67%	33%	0%	80%	20%	0%	60%	4%	6%	94%
50-59	15	9	6	10	5	4	6	0	2	5	1	2	7	0	4	4	4	11
		60%	40%	63%	33%	27%	40%	0%	14%	47%	6%	14%	47%	0%	27%	27%	27%	74%
60+	17	9	8	6	11	0	9	0	7	0	0	7	0	0	5	0	7	10
		52%	48%	36%	74%	0%	52%	0%	42%	0%	0%	42%	0%	0%	30%	0%	42%	68%

Legend:

N = Number of respondents

B = Batonu name

M = Muslim name

O = Both (Batonu and Muslim name)

Starting with respondents within 10–19 age bracket, table 1 shows that 14 (47 %) of them are known by Batonu names within the community compared to 16 (53 %) of them who are known by Muslim names. This figure is incomparable to 2 (7 %) respondents known by Batonu names and 28 (93 %) known by Muslim names, outside the community. Only 1 respondent (4 %) claims to be known by Batonu name at school compared to 29 (96 %) others. The next column shows that none of the respondents uses only Batonu names on certificate(s); 18 (60 %) use only Muslim names whereas 12 (40 %) use both Muslim and Batonu names on certificate(s). Among the respondents, 1 (4 %) used only Batonu names in primary school; 24 (80 %) used only Muslim names and 5 (16 %) combined Muslim and Batonu names, just as 1 (4 %), 20 (67 %) and 9 (30 %) use only Batonu, Muslim and both names respectively, in secondary school. The trend is also reflected on wedding cards / almanacs of Batonu couples as 3 (10 %) respondents claim they were likely to see only Batonu names, compared to 27 (90 %) respondents who favoured Muslim names. This also applies to respondents within 40–60+ years age bracket.

Table 2

Decline in Batonu Given Names

Age	Number of respondents	Batonu birth name	Muslim birth name	Parents with Batonu name	Parents with Muslim name
10–19	30	15	25	14	30
20–29	25	20	25	18	25
30–39	19	11	18	11	18
40–49	15	9	15	9	15
50–59	15	12	14	13	14
60+	17	9	13	11	13

Table 2 shows the extent of decline of Batonu naming practices by juxtaposing the bestowal of Batonu and Muslim names at birth. The table shows a decline in the bestowal of Batonu names — a practice that favours Muslim names. For instance, among respondents within 10–19 age bracket, 15 said they were given Batonu names at birth, compared to 25 respondents who were given Muslim names at birth. Similarly, 14 respondents claimed their parents have Batonu names, while all 30 respondents said their parents have Muslim names. In addition, out of the 25 respondents between the ages of 20–29, 20 agreed to be bestowed Batonu names as against all 25 respondents who said they were given Muslim name at birth. Like the respondents within 10–19 years old, 18 of these respondents agreed that their parents have Batonu names, while 25 said they have a Muslim name. The situation is akin to those observed in other age brackets as illustrated in the table.

End of table 3

Age	N	LR	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H
		G.	5 33 %	1 6 %	7 47 %	4 26 %	3 20 %	8 53 %	5 33 %	9 60 %
50-59	15	Ex.	4 27 %	12 80 %	2 13 %	7 47 %	9 60 %	3 20 %	5 33 %	3 20 %
		VG.	9 60 %	2 2 %	4 27 %	7 47 %	5 33 %	5 33 %	7 47 %	7 47 %
		G.	1 6 %	0 0 %	8 54 %	1 6 %	1 6 %	7 47 %	3 20 %	5 33 %
60+	17	Ex.	7 42 %	12 70 %	4 24 %	10 60 %	9 52 %	3 18 %	4 24 %	7 42 %
		VG.	8 48 %	5 30 %	5 30 %	6 36 %	8 48 %	7 42 %	9 52 %	7 42 %
		G.	2 12 %	0 0 %	8 48 %	1 4 %	0 0 %	7 42 %	4 24 %	3 18 %

Legend:

- N = Number of respondents
 LR = Level of responsibility
 Ex. = Excellent
 VG. = Very Good
 G. = Good
 A = Political patronage
 B = Religion (Islam)
 C = Discrimination
 D = Employment / Education
 E = Satisfaction
 F = Insufficiency of Batonu names
 G = Orthography
 H = Paganism / Idolatry

Table 3 presents the estimates of the reasons for the shift in the naming practices in the community in general. Eight factors / reasons identified in the literature and from interview and observations in the study area were tested on the people. The letters A, B, C, D, E, F, G and H represent each of them (cf. Table 3).

Table 3 shows that on the aggregate, individual beliefs and aspirations have major bearing on personal naming practices. For instance, those within 10–19 years age bracket want to identify themselves with role models and mentors and satisfy their dream of education or better living conditions, just as religion and political patronage were the reason given by respondents whose age falls within the 20–50 years group.

Tables 1 and 2 reflect apathy in the use of Batonu names in formal and informal contexts despite most respondents who claimed to have been bestowed Batonu names at birth (cf. Table 2). Batonu names seem to be regarded as nicknames, and therefore used mostly in informal contexts. One also notes that the apathy is generational. For instance, it is difficult to situate or identify the age bracket or generation in which the shift from Batonu personal names to Muslim names began. It seems the preference for Muslim names keeps growing with every successive generation, while Batonu names keep declining.

Tables 1 and 2, however, show some iota of hope especially among the current generation (i.e. people between the age of 10–40), as some of them combine Muslim and Batonu names in school and on certificate(s). The problem, however, as is evident from personal interviews and observation, borders on motivation. For instance, (i) most of them are/were either coerced by teachers or mentors to do so, or (ii) most of them do so to avoid false identification that do arise when more than one person bears the same Muslim name, unfortunately, (iii) most Batonu names taken under these conditions (i. and ii. above) are limited to lineage and order-of-birth names (cf. appendix B); (iv) there are instances where a name is symbolically borne to reveal the bearer's dynasty or lineage: these lineage names are a source of pride to their bearers who are aware that such a name is exclusively borne by royalty or "missionary royalty."

6. Remote Causes of the Shift

Information gathered through the questionnaire, participant observations and oral interviews, indicate the following, among others, as the remote causes for the decline of Batonu personal naming practices.

6.1. Religious Inclination

Before their conversion to Islam, the Batonu people practiced their traditional religion and had taken names based on their world view at the time. These traditional names were derived from their environment or nature phenomena, kings and princes, circumstances of birth, and names of idols and modes of their worship (see appendix A). On embracing Islam, the people not only abandoned these names, but regarded them

unappealing and inconsistent with their new found faith. Religious inclination has hitherto affected the resurrection of traditional Batonu personal names and Batonu personal naming practices in general.

6.2. Rigid Naming Practice

The traditional Batonu personal naming principles are more practical or empirical than idealistic. The fact that the naming practice is a natural necessity stands against the common practice of expressing wishes, admiration, faith, appreciation, etc. through names as now commonly practiced in most African cultures. In traditional Batonu culture, names appeared as reflections of a community's lifestyles, historical, socio-political and spiritual institutions which were passed down for generations (see appendix A). This rigid naming practice impedes the appearance of new calques and neologisms (cf. appendix B).

6.3. Tendency to Conceal Social Strata

To an average Batonu, bearing a traditional Batonu name other than lineage or royal name means to announce that one is not of royalty. In other words, dynasty or lineage names help identify the social status of the name's bearer. Thus, apart from religious affiliation, Muslim names play another intrinsic role: a religious personal name is used in those spheres where non-royal and royal could share the same personal names, since people who are not from royal lineage are excluded from bearing royal names. Meanwhile, order-of-birth names, serve in traditional surroundings, although it was observed that most Batonu princes and princesses would rather stick to their dynasty or royal names than bear order-of-birth names or any other Batonu names (cf. appendix B).

6.4. Political / Socio-economic Drives

As a sociolinguistic phenomenon, personal names are not just linguistic forms but identity markers. Due to geographical proximity with the Hausa / Fulani ethnic group who bear mostly Muslim names themselves, for Batonu people, Muslim names serve as channels of integration with the Hausa / Fulani people. Again, the Batonu people see Muslim names as stamps for socio-economic and political breakthrough owing to the dominance of the socio-economic and political landscape of Nigeria by the Hausa / Fulani. In Kwara state and northern Nigeria with predominantly Muslim population, bearing a Muslim name could facilitate employment, appointment, business, and education. Batonu history has it that Batonu princes and kings had married Hausa / Fulani women and had had their children named Hausa / Fulani names, which are retained in the original forms or integrated into the Batonu culture as dynasty or royal names. Appendixes A and B show some Batonu dynasty or royal names which have their roots in the Hausa / Fulani names.

7. Implications of the Shift

From the combination of methods used in his research, particularly oral interview, observation and questionnaire, the following implications of the shift in naming practices among the Batonu are observed.

7.1. Typonymic Restriction

One of the implications of the shift is the typonymic limitations in the bestowal of Batonu names. In traditional Batonu, personal names were modeled according to experiences, nature, traditional, and spiritual institutions. Thus, names were derived from circumstances of birth, order-of-birth, names of idols and their modes of worship, the physical and cosmic environment, occupations, cultural events, illustrious guests and friends of dynasties, warriors, distinguished princes, princesses, queens, and kings. These typonymic principles are today moribund leaving mostly order-of-birth and dynasty-related names (cf. appendix B).

7.2. Decline in Specialized Knowledge

The shift has also caused depreciation in specialized knowledge of the Batonu culture. Most Batonu people, especially the current generation, know little or nothing about their culture. Most of them are unaware of Batonu dynasty names, Batonu spiritual institutions and Batonu personal names, except those that are still being used. Decline in specialized knowledge also extends to meanings as they are most likely to recall linguistic forms than provide the meanings (cf. royalty / dynasty-related names in appendix A).

7.3. Lexical reduction

Personal names contribute greatly to the sustainability of the lexicon of a language. Part of the implications of losing personal names is inadequate word stock which could result in lexical borrowing and code-switching. In addition, properly documented personal names could foster language revival in cases of language loss or death. Therefore, part of the Batonu lexicon is some of the traditional names the people have jettisoned and also those that have lost both form and meaning.

8. Conclusion

The shift in Batonu personal naming practices, as seen from this study, could be said to have emanated from a rigid personal naming cultural practice rooted in religious belief and also from apathy caused by political / socio-economic drives. The apathy is not natural as the study has proven. It all began in the late 16th century when the people, who were predominantly idol worshippers, first embraced Islam. Their world view changed vis-à-vis their consciousness as they came to find their indigenous names

paganic and inconsistent with their new found religion. By way of response, generations upon generations abandoned Batonu names for Muslim names. This, coupled with civilization and survival, made the people maintain Muslim names till the present; thus making it arguably impossible for Batonu names to be close or equal to Muslim names in usage. Some of the implications on Batonu culture are typonymic restriction, lexical reduction and decline in specialized knowledge of Batonu personal names.

As a means of revitalization of Batonu personal naming practices to a level commensurate to that of Muslim names, the study postulates what could be called “weak” version of the “open reversal” strategy. Reclaiming Batonu personal naming practices from what we have seen in this study would require an approach that would not only expand the roles or uses of Batonu names to domains where Muslim names are now predominant, but also encourage the creation of neologisms and new calques by altering those aspects of traditional Batonu naming practices considered loathsome on religious grounds (e.g. idol and nature veneration), while retaining religious-friendly aspects for creating Islam-friendly Batonu names. As was pointed out in Table 3 above, religious affiliation, political patronage and better living conditions emerged top in the reasons for shift. Therefore, refining the loathsome aspects of Batonu naming practices would benefit the Batonu culture and ensure that the most powerful factor — religious affiliation — would hardly be an issue. Thus the study calls this strategy or approach the “weak” version of “open reversal.” The “weak” suggests that it is not intended to usurp, but to encourage non-sentimental conscious effort to employing necessary measures for indigenous cultures (names) restoration, as their foreign counterparts would do. Under “reversal by syncretism,” it seeks to elaborate the vocabulary of Swahili, so that Arabic words are borrowed and aligned with the Swahili language. This strategy “evens up” Arabic and Swahili usage with east Africans, where Swahili is predominantly spoken. This approach could be adopted for the Batonu people and similar cultures and, if implemented with a clear conscience, would help not altogether but to a large extent, to rescue the endangered Batonu personal naming practices. Furthermore, the strategies could curb some of the restrictions imposed by religion as to choice of Batonu personal names by facilitating the construction of Islam-friendly Batonu names for use in all domains, and also the use of Muslim names in accordance with beliefs and aspirations.

Typology of traditional Batonu personal names

1. Lineage names

1.1. Royalty / dynasty related

Male	
Morayara	Sanno
Mako-gbasi	Gunu
Sesi	Kooto
Lafiaru	Kilishi
Koraru-gbaso	Sime
Tosu	Tamu
Yaru	Kora

1.2. Missionary related

Male		
Maane	Taruwere	Toure

2. Order-of-birth names

Order	Male	Female
1 st child	Woru	Yoon
2 nd child	Sabi	Bonna
3 rd child	Bio	Bake
4 th child	Boni	Buyon
5 th child	Sanni	Daado
6 th child	Tori	Beru
7 th child	Woru-mere	Yoon-mere
8 th child	Sabi-mere	Bonna-mere
9 th child	Bio-mere	Bake-mere
10 th child	Boni-mere	Buyon-mere

3. Circumstance of birth names

3.1. Nature related

Male	Female	Meaning
Worusua	Yoonsua	“born on a road”
Woruduaru	Yoonduaru	“born near a river”
Worugura	Yoongura	“born while it was raining”

3.2. Royalty related

Male	
Goono-Yerima	“first son of the throne”
Kwada	“last son of the throne”
Sinabio	“second son of the throne”

3.3. Festival related

Male	
Gaani	“born during Ganni festival”

4. Idolatry names

4.1. Idol related

Male	
Yeruma	“a river god”
Kirikuba	“a carved idol”
Naa	“a sacred tree”
Geisaramo	“a sect known for cowry worship”
Kituru	“a rain god”

4.2. Worship / veneration related

Male	
Deru	“a kind of river worship”
Shinagura	“a kind of wood worship”
Wuru	“a kind of tree worship”
Gobire	“a kind of cowry worship”
Wurugura	“a kind of rain worship”

**Samples of Batonu personal names
(from documents collected during the research)²**

	Surname	First name	Other name
1.	Abdullahi	Abdulhamid	
2.	Abdullahi	Nasirudeen	
3.	Abdul-momini	Idris Sabi	
4.	Abdulmunini	Salamat	
5.	AbdulRaheem	Habibat Bona	
6.	Abubakar	Aminat	
7.	Abubakar	Ahmed	
8.	Abubakar	Yusufu Bonni	
9.	Abubakar	Musa	Bio
10.	Abubakar	Khadijat Yon	
11.	Abubakar	Monsurat	
12.	Adamu	Khadijat Bake	
13.	Adamu	Jamilah Bake	
14.	Adamu	Abdulgafar	
15.	Ahmed	Aliyu	
16.	Ahmed	Suleiman	Bio
17.	Ahmed	Mukhtar	
18.	Ahmed	Ishiaq Dodo	
19.	Alhassan	Jibril Sabi	
20.	Alhassan	Jibril Sanni	
21.	Alhassan	Halidu <u>Taruwere</u>	
22.	Alhassan	Abubakar	Sabi
23.	Alhassan	Ibrahim	TAKU
24.	Alhassan	Abdulwahab <u>Taruwere</u>	

² Names in bold letters are based on “order-of-birth” principle; royalty lineage names are in capital letters; missionary lineage names are underlined.

Appendix B

	Surname	First name	Other name
25.	Aliyu	Bilikis	
26.	Aliyu	Ibrahim	
27.	Halidu	Muslimat Bake	
28.	Haruna	Abubakar Boni	
29.	Husseini	Balikis	Maane
30.	Ibrahim	Idris SAWE	
31.	Ibrahim	Mukaila	
32.	Ibrahim	Moshood GUNU	
33.	Idris	Kamaldeen Woru	
34.	Ishiaq	Sufiyah	
35.	Issa	Yusuf	Bonni
36.	Kazeem	Barakat	
37.	LAFIA	Ibrahim	
38.	Mohammed	Alhassan	
39.	Mohammed	Abdul-gafar SESI	
40.	Mohammed	Ibrahim	Sabi
41.	Mohammed	Abbas	Yakub
42.	Musa	Kalimat Buyan	
43.	Musa	Adamu LAFIA	
44.	Saidu	Uzaifat GUNU	
45.	Salihu	Abubkar	
46.	Salihu	Abibat	
47.	Suleiman	Najeelat	
48.	Umar	Mariam	SANNO
49.	Umar	Abubakar YARU	
50.	Usman	Talibat	
51.	Usman	Mudashir	
52.	Yakub	Adama	GANDUGI
53.	Yakubu	Ahmed	Musa
54.	Yakubu	Zakar Bio	

Appendix B

	Surname	First name	Other name
55.	YARU	Umar	
56.	YARU	Moh'd	Amin
57.	Yusuf	Umar	
58.	Yusuf	Salamat YARU	
59.	Yusuf	Kamarudeen LAFIA	
60.	Yusuf	Haruna	

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ТРАНСФОРМАЦИЯ ПРАКТИК ЛИЧНОГО ИМЕНОВАНИЯ В КУЛЬТУРЕ БАТОНУ

Контакты проживающего в Нигерии народа батону с арабскими торговцами и миссионерами, начавшиеся еще в XVI в., привели к принятию батону ислама, что существенно изменило его жизненный уклад. До принятия народом ислама каждый ребенок батону получал имя, мотивированное порядком рождения, принадлежностью к королевскому роду, обстоятельствами рождения, профессией родителей, связанное с обозначением природных явлений и пр., причем это имя использовалось как в сообществе, так и за его пределами. Сегодня эта традиция уходит в прошлое, так как большинство представителей батону при рождении получают исламские имена. В настоящей статье рассматриваются

указанные изменения в принципах личного именования у народа батону. В качестве косвенных причин этих сдвигов называются религиозный фактор, чрезмерная строгость традиционной системы личного именования, тенденция скрывать социальный статус, а также социально-экономические обстоятельства. Изменения в практиках имянаречения привели к значительному сокращению реально используемого традиционного именника, что является одним из симптомов общей утраты батону их культурных корней и исконной лексики языка. Признавая тот факт, что восстановление традиционных практик именования батону практически невозможно, авторы предлагают две стратегии ономастической и культурной ревитализации — «нестрогая открытая реверсия» (*weak-open reversal*) и «реверсия посредством синкретизма» (*reversal by syncretism*), — способные обеспечить хотя бы частичное возрождение традиционного именника батону.

К л ю ч е в ы е с л о в а: язык батону (барива, баатонум), нигеро-конголезские языки, практики личного имянаречения, антропонимия, мусульманские личные имена, социо-ономастика.

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