

## **Gbari Personal Names: A Communicative Act and Rhetorical Features Analysis**

### **Análise de nomes pessoais Gbari: como ato comunicativo e retórico**

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**Abstract:** This study is concerned with the communicative acts and rhetorical patterns analysis of Gbari Personal Names, henceforth GPN, of the Gbari of North Central Nigeria. Using a small-sized corpus of one hundred (100) GPNs, the study deploys a concatenated framework which adapts and tweaks elements mainly from Austin's (1962) Speech Act Theory and Bach and Harnish's (1979) Mutual Contextual Belief; in order to combine communicative and rhetorical insights on the analysis of GPNs. Data collection consists of drawing a sample from the population of the study using the quasi-formal interview method to obtain information from the respondents from the Federal Capital Territory, Abuja-Nigeria which comprises of three out of the five Area Councils where the Gbari are in the majority namely: (1) Gwagwalada, (2) Kwali and (3) Kuje. Study findings indicates that GPN system is now highly productive. New GPNs which have never been produced can be constructed especially that on the basis of current theophoric Gbari personal names, many Gbari Christians can (re)construct corresponding names either by: a recourse to the system of affixation such as Sokwo-gaa+ She-kwo-nu-che-sayi = Sokwo-nu-che-sayi/Only God gives a testimony. This name, as yet probably not an actual Gbari personal name, like many variations of personal names, are potential Gbari personal names. Also, morpho-syntactic repositioning or shifting of the subject NP (She-kwo) of many Gbari sentence names to either the middle or final positions and/or its replacement with other grammatical classes or even NPs are possible; hence many more GPNs could be generated. Consequently, study indicates there is both a resurgence as well as a decline of GPN; a resurgence due principally to Gbagyi Christians who nearly completely bear all names Gbagyi-personal as well surnames while for Gbagyi Muslims, there is an almost complete obliteration of Gbagyi names.

**Keywords:** Gbari Personal names, discourse-rhetorical patterns, Christianity, Islam, Nigeria

**Resumo:** Este artigo apresenta uma análise de atos comunicativos e padrões retóricos de Nomes Pessoais Gbari, doravante GPN, do Gbari do Centro-Norte da Nigéria. Usando um corpus de pequeno porte de cem (100) GPNs, a metodologia adotada emprega uma estrutura concatenada que adapta e ajusta elementos principalmente da Teoria do Ato de Fala de Austin (1962) e da Crença Contextual Mútua de Bach e Harnish (1979) a fim de combinar insights

comunicativos e retóricos sobre a análise de GPNs. A coleta de dados consistiu em extrair uma amostra da população do estudo usando o método de entrevista quase formal para obter informações dos entrevistados do Território da Capital Federal, Abuja-Nigéria, que compreende três dos cinco Conselhos de Área onde os Gbari são majoritários, a saber: (1) Gwagwalada, (2) Kwali e (3) Kuje. Os resultados da pesquisa empreendida indicam que o sistema GPN é agora altamente produtivo. Novos GPNs que nunca foram produzidos podem ser construídos, especialmente com base nos nomes pessoais teofóricos atuais de Gbari, com os quais muitos cristãos Gbari podem (re)construir nomes correspondentes mediante recurso ao sistema de afixação, como Sokwo-gaa+ She-kwo-nu-che-sayi = Sokwo-nu-che-sayi/Somente Deus dá um testemunho. Este nome, provavelmente ainda não é um nome pessoal Gbari real: assim como muitas variações de nomes pessoais, trata-se de nomes pessoais Gbari em potencial. Além disso, o reposicionamento morfosintático ou deslocamento do sujeito NP (She-kwo) de muitos nomes de sentenças de Gbari para as posições intermediárias ou finais e/ou sua substituição por outras classes gramaticais ou mesmo NPs são possíveis; portanto, muito mais GPNs poderiam ser gerados. Consequentemente, os resultados da pesquisa indicam também que há tanto um ressurgimento quanto um declínio do GPN; um ressurgimento devido, principalmente, aos cristãos Gbagyi que quase completamente são os portadores dos nomes Gbagyi-pessoais, bem como dos sobrenomes, enquanto, para os muçulmanos Gbagyi, há uma obliteração quase completa dos nomes Gbagyi.

**Palavras-chave:** nomes pessoais Gbari, padrões discursivo-retóricos, cristianismo, Islã, Nigéria.

## **Introduction**

Personal names function to designate people as other name types do to entities, events and places either in the material, cultural and/or the physical world. Naming practices necessarily involves both reality and linguistic (re)creation; a bringing into being another existence. Any personal name truly as much distinguish its bearer as it also indicates the name bearer's essence, thus creating a name-existence identity. Thus, an entity's namelessness implies its nonexistence. Not only is an entity's name but the act of naming it very significant, there is an inscribed institutionally positive sanctioned projected status relation, a power dynamic in naming, in that the namer or the name-giver is invested the authority and power over the named or name-bearer. This is further evidenced by not only the community's acceptance and use of the givenname but its guaranteed sustenance and

relevance. Different societies or even socio-religious units or institutions within the society assigns this power differently. For instance, most patriarchal-oriented or religious societies invest men (relatively older men) most of this authority and power rather than women, while in some religious groups like the Celestial Church of Christ, headquartered in Nigeria, not the father but Prophetesses within the Church are assigned this power to name, who under a trance 'download' the name for children from Heaven!

Names are inseparable from the study of reality. In dealing with the nature of reality, both the scope and also the functions of reference do not escape controversy, so, too, does even the subject of names not escape controversy either. Personal names, we argue, are a peculiar type of speech or communicative act. Cruse (2011) following Searle (1999) seem to have adopted this position since he even asserted that reference is actually a speech act itself. Personal names are not only a spoken-written discourse but a psycho-socio-religious speech act or communicative event with linguo-religious and philosophical connotations.

Thus, personal names and naming practices in every culture is thereby invested with enormous sociocultural, spiritual, and psychological authority and recognitions as names either positively or negatively indexicalise the individual or entity's persona and behaviors. Proper names are also indicative of a people's ways of life and socio-cultural experiences, ideology, and religious outlook. And that it is via an examination of personal names and naming practices, such as of the Gbari nation in this study, that we can establish and explain not only how the people relate with their physical and social environments but also their relationship with Shekwoyi, the Gbari Supreme moral authority who is reputed to have created the world and is now ultimately responsible for all that happens in it.

Personal names may or may not be correlated with its lexical-semantic character, in order words, there may or may not be a parallel between the object indicated by the name and the referent. However, in all cultures, personal names have pragmatic significance and metaphysical presuppositions. As a genre, personal names appear a sufficiently researched area going back almost to the beginning of human creation, with insightful book-length studies like Adler (1978) *Naming and addressing: A sociolinguistic study*; Yonge (1966) *History of Christian names*; Zabeeth (1968) *What is in a name? An inquiry into the semantics and pragmatics of proper names*; Shankle (1976) *American nicknames: Their origin and significance (original work was published 1955)*; Smith (1950) *The story of our names*; Chuks-Orji (1972) *Names from Africa: Their origin, meaning, and pronunciation*; and Stewart (1979) *American given names: Their origin and history in the context of the English language*. While these publications straddle diverse academic disciplines such as psychology, anthropology, religion and linguistics, however, there are as many gaps to be filled as there are insights emanating therefrom.

This study is concerned with the communicative acts and rhetorical patterns analysis of Gbari Personal Names, henceforth GPN, of the Gbari people of North Central Nigeria. The primary motivation behind this research is to generate more systematic data on how GPN are constructed and/or selected, especially in the light of such considerations as the vexed issue of the management of multiple identities politics and the heightened influence of religion especially now in Nigeria. Also, much of the Gbari's oral narratives, personal names inclusive, have not been extensively collected, recorded and processed for preservation and there is an urgent need to document these verbal data. This study aims to redress this gap in African sociolinguistic scholarship. Further, the study investigates how the selection of Gbari

names is balanced with the issue of religion, individuality, diversity, and social connection to navigate the complexly complex dimensions of contemporary Nigerian socio-politics, especially the issue of identity. Particularly, we are motivated to study GPN since the need for researching specialised communication has become increasingly important in linguistics and other ancillary disciplines. We conceive of GPN as a specialised communication. Thus, specifically, we are interested in the study of the communicative act, organization and structure (discourse-rhetorical patterning and genre-specific features) of GPN.

### **The Gbari/Gbagyi/Gwari of North Central Nigeria**

The Gbari are an ethnolinguistic group in Nigeria's North Central States of Niger, Kaduna, Nasarawa, Kogi and the Federal Capital Territory surrounded by the majority Hausa as well as other minorities such as the Koro, Gade, Ebira, Ganagana, Kaje, Bassa, Nupe, Kadara, Kamberi, Dakarkari, Dukawa, and Kamuku. The location of the Gbari, therefore, implies that there are cross borrowings between their cultures and religion and that of the proximate neighbours. Thus, Gbari oral traditions as indeed GPN are facing extinction because aside from being gobbled up by the Hausa language and culture, most Gbari now subscribe to Islam, the religion of the majority of the Hausa. For this study, "Gbari" and "Gbagyi" are used as cover terms for the same people and their lects. Sometimes, too, within Nigerian sociolinguistic literature, the "Gbari" and "Gbagyi" people are referred to as "Gwari". They speak mutually intelligible and cognate dialects and there is the hardly clear cultural difference(s) between them other than that while the latter now pursue Western education; are more widely travelled and accessible, the former live more isolated lives and are generally less interested in the benefits of Western education and civilization. The Gbari lects are grouped under Niger-Kaduna or Nupoid subgroup which under Greenberg's

classification belonged to the Kwa language sub-group and are therefore Niger-Congo and Niger-Kordofanian. However, with Kay Williamson's (1989) classification of New Benue-Congo, Gbari lects are grouped as Nupoid, New Benue-Congo, Volta-Congo, Atlantic-Congo and Niger-Congo same again as under Blench's (1987) classification where they are classified as Nupoid.<sup>1</sup> The Gbari are famed mountain dwellers and farmers; an ethnic group very accommodating of strangers and generally regarded as non-violent people who are widely known from ancient times for their tradition of shoulder-carrying loads. The flora and fauna of Gbari country are thus significant to both the production and dissemination of the oral narratives as well as GPN sourced from the Gbari people's agriculturally based economy, traditional-oriented democratic governance as well as their extended family-oriented culture, traditional religion as well as Judeo-Islamic traditions, etc.

As a community of practice, the Gbari Nation of Nigeria is bound both by geography and ideology; thus, the understanding and analysis of Gbari Personal Naming System, GPNS; and of its' uniquely Gbari psychosocial and linguo-stylistic personal identification labels expressed as public communication is very crucial and significant to limning Gbari culture.

Although the Gbari culture of personal naming is a product of bound geographic space; at present, the Gbari culture could be said to have undergone heavy historical processes as to have separate units of the Gbari Nation now has become a community of slightly differing ideological practices in North Central Nigeria. So, how does one analyse such a culture of Gbari personal naming that is now defined more by varying religious and social practices? To study such a culture as the Gbari culture, Lindquist (2007:274-275)

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<sup>1</sup> Gbari lect is also classified as Niger-Kaduna or Nupoid. Nupe, Gade and Ebira are three other languages in the Nupoid group. See Kay Williamson (1989).

proposes an approach she calls “ethnography of rhetoric” (hereinafter EOR). The operative words in the EOR approach, according to Lindquist, are ‘ethnography’ and ‘rhetoric’. She defines ethnography as the discipline which takes the fieldworker to “natural settings for insights into the productive tensions . . . that make up the larger narrative,” and ‘rhetoric’ as that aspect of communication which offers the language analyst “a heuristic domain” with the “potential to conceptualize links between motive, agency, and social effect”. We contend that while EOR could be a method uniquely suited to studying a culture such as that of the Gbari Nation in Nigeria that is anthropological and ideological, there are still gaps that the application of this approach has created. Again, this study seeks to plug such gap in scholarship.

### **Functions and types of Names in Gbari Naming Practices**

There have emerged two main views of names: names as meaningless constructs, little more than assigned labels and, names as associational meaningful constructs which Cruse describes as being “function abbreviated descriptions” (2011: 394). However, writing on the function of names, Bardis (1972:101), citing Hertzler, asserts that names perform various functions, amongst which are: first, they identify, signify, or denote something; second, they assign the named entity to a meaningful classification; third, they become part of a person in all cultures; and fourth, they facilitate the named entity’s manipulation, since the entity is no longer secret or fugitive.

Similarly, Schneider (2009) also conceives of two similar views of names: names as carriers of identity or names as arbitrary labels, although a description aligned to both a philosophical and sociological perspective. Hertzler and Schneider’s conception of names and their functions apply to the Gbari naming practices as this study would indicate. Thus,

while it is or may be easy to identify the important roles and significant functions that Gbari names serve in human communication, paradoxically, Gbari names are, however, much more difficult to analyse and classify. Language is the building block in the construction of (personal) names and is very invaluable to naming practices and there is a particular rhetoric underlying naming as a manifestation of specific cultures. Therefore, studying both personal naming practices such as that of the Gbari of Northern Nigeria, and the rhetoric of their names mean taking a look at how it views the world.

Amongst the Gbari, the naming practice is deemed as a cooperative event with rhetorical goals: the purpose of Gbari personal name may entail several rhetorical goals: instruction, correction, exhortation, proclamation, and encouragement. As with most African communities, the Gbari view their personal names as not only sacred but as a mysterious combination of human effort and divine inspiration. The socially constructed boundaries between the mind, body, and spirit, and between the human and the divine are blurred in the name act via the enacted cooperative act between the name-giver, a man or woman, and the divine, who is largely unseen. The name-giver, through the name communicative acts, participates with the Holy and draws listeners into the same experience, thereby fostering religious experience and forming the community's religious identity.

### **Theoretical Framework**

An integrated framework is deemed best suited for this study. This framework would adapt and tweak elements from Austin's (1962) Speech Act Theory and Bach and Harnish's (1979) Mutual Contextual Belief; in order to combine communicative and rhetorical insights on the analysis of Gbari personal names. The suitability of this model is informed by the fact that it can be applied to the analysis of personal names across different cultural contexts.



Personal names in terms of purpose, style, composition, and execution bears many resemblances to communication and/or academic writing, although it may not be rigidly described as strictly communication. Names, like sermons and/or academic writing, generally would necessarily involve reader-hearer orientation, name topic development, name topic support and meta-discourse.

The organizing principles of the Austinian and Bach and Harnish's approaches are based on the twin concepts of 'Speech Acts' and 'Mutual Contextual Belief' is adopted for this study. The idea of a speech or communicative act owes its origin to Austin's (1962), *How to Do Things with Words*, where he proposed that communicative utterances or sentences do more than just describe states of affairs in the world; and that some sentences cannot even be tested for their truth properties. He also postulated that sentences can be used to perform actions which he called the illocutionary act. The fulcrum of Austin's theory is that the social and linguistic contexts of language use impact utterance meaning. Austin's theory establishes a distinction between what he labels 'constative utterance' and 'performative utterance'. According to Austin Constantives constitute only one part of a meaningful utterance and are utterances/statements that can be either true or false. On the other hand, performatives, have no truth value such that when a performative utterance is made, one has already engaged in an action, a speech act. Applied to names or naming practice, for instance, when a namer says to a group of people gathered for baby's naming or christening by the parents, "I name you Mohammed Ahmed Ibn Ndache", a speech act has already been performed by the utterance. Thus, Austin by his theory carefully makes the distinction in language use between the speaker's speech (saying something) and act (doing something). Austin also stated a condition that a performative has to meet to have the desired

effect: it must meet some certain social and cultural criteria which he labelled Felicity Conditions. Personal names are, therefore, necessarily performatives with explicit and/or implicit meanings. Further Austin differentiates between locutionary, illocutionary and perlocutionary acts. Locutionary act (is the production of meaningful utterances). Illocutionary act constitutes the act performed in saying something. Austin also proposed a taxonomy of illocutionary speech acts based on each fulfilling a specified condition. He isolated five, which he named (i) verdictives, (ii) excersitives (iii) commisives (iv) expositives, and (v) behabitives.

Verdictives: are evaluative of truth; they are typified by the giving of verdicts, presenting of evidence, reasons, or verdictives estimates, etc. Personal naming, we believe, are acts which could be said to belong broadly to such classification, and they may be generally reckoned as appraising human situations, and giving and establishing ‘facts by the namers or even outrightly defending certain positions on their human situations etc. An example of Yoruba personal names oriented on verdictives is Mofiyinfo luwa/Mofaramoluwa/Boluwatife/Oluwatimilehin (English gloss: I give glory to God/I rely upon or depend on God/This is how it pleased God/God who is my support/dependence).

Excersitives: is the act of exercising powers, rights, or influence, conferment of order, giving directives, urging, advising, warning, etc. to decide or advocate particular actions on the receiver of the communication. Again, Yoruba personal names such as the Fiyinfo luwa (glossed in English as Give thanks to the Lord) are utterances and actions of the namer could be said to belong to this sub-classification.

Commissives: are typified by acts as promising, pledging, vowing, swearing, etc which commits the namer and subsequently the speaker of the personal name to a particular action, for example, amongst the Yoruba of Western Nigeria the personal names Monijesu/Moyinoluwa/Oluwayemisi would be glossed in English as ‘‘I have Jesus-to always follow/I thank Godwho has made me glad/God has honoured or beautified me.’’

Expositives have to do with such acts as affirming, denying, emphasizing, or illustrating, etc. which elaborates on the namer and speaker’s view, for example, the affirmative unisex personal names amongst the Yoruba of Western Nigeria: Oluwaseyifunmi/Oluwafunmilayo/Ilerioluwa (English gloss: Thus has God blessed me/God has made me glad).

Behabitives have to do with regulation of behaviour and attitudes such as applauding, deploring, felicitating, congratulating, condoling, cursing, challenging, giving of apologies, etc. Personal names which are oriented towards this line provide reactions to the behaviour of others (in many cases those who sneered at the seeming barrenness of either or both of the parents in the face of a long wait for a child. For example, ‘Ekundayo/Erikanmi’ as a personal name in Yoruba may be glossed in English as ‘My pains have turned to gains/I am the new testifier’.

According to Austin, the Perlocutionary act is concerned with the force or effects of the act of saying something. This is–and has always been– the traditional concern of rhetoric of names and naming practices, in other words, it is the site for studying the effect(s) of naming language on the audience.

No doubt, the Austinian Speech Act theory is insightful and its application to data has yielded very rich intercultural communication and linguistic results. However, paradoxically,

applied to the understanding of human communication, it has opened up as many gaps as it has attempted to close up. For example, as there is infinitely no end to the number of communicative or speech acts that personal names may perform, the taxonomy of Austin could certainly not explain several more performative personal names or even naming practices. What more J.L Austin could neither formalize his theory nor grow his ideas of a speech act before his death. J.R Searle, Austin's student, subsequently worked at developing Austin's idea. Searle's development of the idea of Austin led him to propose a four-pronged approach to the processes involved in a speech act: the utterance acts which is synonymous with Austin's locutionary acts in his *How to Do Things With Words*, (this has to do with the uttering of words) the propositional acts which, according to Searle in his *Speech Acts*, has to do with the content of the utterance and involves referring and predicating, the illocutionary acts which is the most important concept in the speech act theory and which involves the acts performed by the utterance such as the act of promising, questioning, commanding and stating, etc. Searle's interpretation and adoption of this act is perfectly in sync with Austin's original conception and use of the term illocutionary,

Searle similarly completely appropriated Austin's perlocutionary acts, which he equally used to refer to the effects of the illocutionary acts of the speakers on the hearers. Searle seems only to split Austin's locutionary acts into what he described as (i) utterance acts and (ii) propositional acts. The split might itself be unnecessary since these processes occur together and do not work in isolation from one another.

The Speech Act Theory of Kent Bach and Robert M. Harnish (1979) lays emphasis on intention and inference from which the audience in a communicative act infers the illocutionary force in speech acts. The theory provides a schema through which one

understands the processes. Bach and Harnish argue that before communication, the speaker has something in mind; there is an intention. The belief is that the hearer should recognize this intention to have the understanding of the acts via mutual contextual beliefs, MCBs.

Thus, MCBs are the mutual beliefs of the context between a speaker and his hearer, which facilitates the inferential process. The inference expected to be made or made by the hearer in a communication does not so much depend on what the speaker says as it does on the contextual knowledge shared commonly by both the speaker and hearer in discourse (15).

Thus, Bach and Harnish contend that the act of conversation or interactional talk has to involve an inferential process. Inference is the activity performed by a listener- interpreter in drawing conclusions that are not explicit in what is said. It is the act or process of deriving a conclusion based solely on what one already knows. This is why Levinson (1983:13-14) views inferences as meaning components which are context dependent. The simple logic in inference is moving from what is known to the unknown. According to Wales inference is “the deductive process through which something is worked out or made explicit in terms of what is unspoken or unwritten” (248).

Bach and Harnish put forward the Speech Act Schema, SAS, to represent the pattern of the inference a hearer is intended to follow or follows in order to identify the illocutionary act performed by the speaker. This constitutes their account for the performance of speech acts. The SAS is supposed to represent only communicative illocutionary acts because conventional intentions rather than illocutionary ones have to be fulfilled in order to execute conventional illocutionary acts. In other words, when the relevant convention is satisfied (1979:108). The SAS involves not only the meaning of the sentence or what is said but also mutual contextual beliefs (MCBs), especially the general mutual beliefs peculiar to the

communicative situation. The general mutual beliefs in particular are presumptions on which the hearer relies, subsequent to inferring the speaker's illocutionary intention. They simply represent the conception of the communicative situation shared by the interlocutors and constitute the very conditions of possibility of the communicative exchange. Bach and Harnish (1979: 7-12) suggest three presumptions that facilitate communication between speaker (S) and hearer (H). These mutual beliefs "are shared not just between S and H but among members of the linguistic community at large" (1979:7). Below is an application of these presumptions:

Linguistic Presumption (LP): The mutual belief in the linguistic community, CL, that the members of CL share L, and that whenever any member S (speaker) utters any E (expression) in L (language) to any other member H (hearer), H can identify what S is saying, given that H knows the meaning(s) of E in L and is aware of the appropriate background information

The mutual belief held by the name-giver and the audience is apparently in Gbari in this investigation, and it presupposes that the speaker and the audience are both familiar with the language and are largely able to speak it correctly. The same presupposition holds true for the communication between the name and the general audience.

Communicative Presumption (CP): In Bach and Harnish's (1979) framework, an act is communicatively successful as soon as the hearer (H) recognizes the speaker's illocutionary intention. Therefore: "the intended effect of an act of communication is not just any effect produced by means of recognition of the intention to produce certain effects on (or in) the hearer."

To buttress this claim, Bach and Harnish point out that indirectness, for instance, may have a perlocutionary effect such as protecting the hearer's feelings or making him/her

suspicious. Also, they consider perlocutionary effects to be beyond the scope of communication because “there is no limit to what can result from speech acts” (1979:17).

Presumption of Literalness (PL): To infer what a speaker says, the hearer depends also on the PL. The hearer should know when the linguistic communication, CL of S (the speaker) is within or without the bounds of literalness, and if the speaker is speaking non-literally, the hearer should not only acknowledge it, but should also be able to understand what such speech means. He/she should have a mastery of the acts in the speaker’s non-literal language.

The non-literal language involves the use of indirect speech acts. The mutual belief in the linguistic community CL that whenever any member S utters any E in L to any other member H, if S could (under the circumstances) be speaking literally, then S is speaking literally. (1979:12).

General Mutual Contextual Beliefs: Mutual Contextual Beliefs, MCBs, can be regarded as knowledge shared by the participants in their conversation. As Botha opines, these beliefs help the audience to understand and interpret the speaker’s utterance in the naming narrative and include shared social and cultural knowledge, knowledge of relations between two parties, knowledge of specific speech situations (1979:71). According to Yules (1985:85-87), MCB’s also generates background knowledge such as schemata, frames, or scripts and religious knowledge, social norms, practices, rules, etc.

This communicative act and rhetorical features analysis applied to a corpus of Gbari Personal Names is intended to offer a clear view of the description of communication and patterning in the universe of the Gbari people in its naming operations, internationalisation efforts and development.

## **Methodology**

The study is a sociolinguistic survey research involving drawing a sample from the population of the study using the quasi-formal interview method to obtain information from the respondents. The study area of the research is the Federal Capital Territory, Abuja-Nigeria which comprises of three out of the five Area Councils namely: (1) Gwagwalada, (2) Kwali and (3) Kuje. Data consisting of a small-sized corpus of one hundred (100) Gbari personal names (GPN) was collected from both primary and secondary sources. The secondary data was sourced from books, press briefing, websites, media houses, and government publications. The primary data, on the other hand, came from the sampled survey of names and their English glosses or translations from the respondents across (3) three Area Councils of the FCT under study. For the purpose of this study, we classify Gbari personal names into two: General, axiomatic or philosophical names which are expressions of truth about life, their world, death, belief, etc. and theophoric names which makes references to God. To avoid replication, wherever the same meaning was achieved by different Gbari names, only one of such was used. Therefore, for the actual study, about 89 Gbari personal names were analyzed.

### **The Communicative Act and Rhetorical Features of Gbari Names**

This study of Gbari personal names is grouped with respect to the following rhetorical criteria: (a) the aim of the names-discerned via the Gbari construct and consequently, the English glosses and (b) the arguments used in the names. Thus, a Gbari name is a socio-religious and philosophical communication or an address conferred on an entity by a name-giver- or his/her representative-in order to convert an audience to a belief system as well as alter their behavior to a cause, using predetermined persuasive techniques. Simply, a Gbari name would be a ‘dialogic engagement or conversation’ between the name-giver and the



audience. Therefore, crystallized, a Gbari name combines the religious, sociolinguistic; poetical and the rhetorical in a unique way; perhaps much more understood than as specific instances of religious writing. Moreover, the Gbari personal name is a genre of undeniable importance in the shaping of the Gbari mind. The following Gbari Personal Names and their corresponding English glosses are presented in Table 1 below:

	<b>General Gbari Names</b>	<b>English Gloss</b>
1	Zab-wo-tada	Disliked by someone
2	Ye-y-edu	Love is the greatest
3	A-da-m-ilo	Rejoice
4	A-gba-da	Happy
5	Za-hom-wu-lo	That which someone desires but no way.
6	A-shii-lo	If you hate me others will like me
7	Za-gba-yi	A meek or humble person
8	A-ye-lo	There are people that like me/a person
9	A-fa-ga-mi	Leave it for me
10	A-da-mi-yi-du bhehotolon	God is watching
11	A-za-homu-che-lo,	Someone's wish
12	Dna-che-lo	I didn't believe you will backstab me
13	A-lo-ri	Examine someone's character carefully
14	Shab-mi-mu	The enemies wish will never be granted
15	Za-za-wo-da	Pleasant to behold by every body
16	A-zam-wan-wo-sai	Everybody grows in his/her time
17	A-chi-beb-wa-ye	Focus on/ look in your front
18	A-nyi-lo-lo/Za-su-wo-sa	The world is yet on/ Everyone one reaches his time
19	A-ta-si	Priceless/Some gifts you can't buy.
20	A-be-lo	Progress
21	Za-mai	Father
22	A-yin-da	Enjoyment of the world
23	Za-zhi-wor-mi	Doing what fulfils you
24	Ga-mi	Given me
25	Za-da-du	Two good heads are better
26	Zak-wai	Elder
27	Zar-mai	I love my own
28	A-ta-go-za-wa-yin	We should love one another

29	A-zo-zo	Things are hard/Hard times
30	Zo-ba-da	Two are better than one
31	A-ye-do	Love others
32	Zo-zo-kpe-wo-mi	Everybody knows his/her own mind
33	A-to-da-mi-sha-won,	Don't Listen to what people say about me
34	Sai-aku-si-she-mi/Yi-kpe-ama-na-iye (shortened Sai-aku-si or Kusi)	Only in Heaven shall we know the righteous
35	A-ye-lo	Love
36	Fa-za-wa-li	Leave everyone to his/her conscience
37	A-da-mi-lo/ A-gba-da-lo	I am happy/Happiness
38	A-fa-je-mi	Let's comfort one another
39	Za-za-wo-da	Everyone to his/her thoughts
40	A-ku-mi-shi	Patience
41	Za-ma-uwo-sa-yi	You'll grow in your own time/At your own pace
42	Shemi-ye	Just the way I wished (it)
43	Sha-wo-mi	This is how I feel
44	Aw-ye-tu	Hope
45	A-za-gbi	What people said
46	A-da-gba-gy-ilo	Joy in the life of Gbagyi people/Gbagyi are happy
47	She-na-wa-zah/A-ta-wo-shek-wolo	God feels differently from the people
48	A-ka-kp-alo	The writer
49	O-sa-na-si	The time has come/My time has come

Hence, as the data visualized in Table 1 above are some general Gbari names indicating some of the axiomatic or moral and philosophical values subscribed to by the people. Also, the Table indicates that a Gbari personal name is a socio-religious and

philosophical communication or an address conferred on an entity by a name-giver-or his/her representative-in order to convert an audience to a belief system as well as alter their behavior to a cause, using predetermined persuasive techniques. Simply, a Gbari personal name would be a ‘dialogic engagement or conversation’ between the name-giver and the audience. Therefore, crystallized, a Gbari personal name combines the religious, sociolinguistic; poetical and the rhetorical in a unique way; perhaps much more understood than as specific instances of religious writing. Moreover, the Gbari personal name is a genre of undeniable importance in the shaping of the Gbari mind.

Therefore, the effective and communicative Gbari name-giver must focus upon the logos or appeal to the reason or logic of the name; the pathos or the name audience’s emotions and sentiments as well as the ethos-the namer or rhetor’s own authority and credibility. These interrelated aspects of the oral-written personal name communication must be at sight in order to best get the meaning of the name message across. Thus, a Gbari personal name is a socio-religious and philosophical communication or an address conferred on an entity by the name-giver-or his/her representative- in order to convert the audience to a belief system as well as alter their behavior to a cause, using predetermined persuasive strategies. Simply, a Gbari name would be a ‘dialogic engagement or conversation’ between the name-giver and the audience.

Table 1 indicates that the following can be surmised:

- i. Nearly all Gbari personal names are verdictives such names as A-ye-lo/There are people that like me; Za-za-du/Two good heads are better than one; D-n-che-lo/I didn’t believe you will backstab me are evaluative of truth; while names such as Fa-wa-za-li/Leave everyone to his/her conscience; A-shii-lo/If you hate me,

others will like me typify the giving of verdicts, and Gbari names like Sai-aku-si-she-mi/Only in Heaven shall we know the righteous are the peoples typical way of presenting of evidence, while names as A-fa-je-mi/Lets comfort one another illustrates the peoples group reasoning etc.

- ii. The phono-morphological structures exhibited by the sampled Gbari axiomatic/general personal names are indicated by the use of a dash (-). Clearly all Gbari personal names are polysyllabic.
- iii. From the morphological structure of the sampled Gbari axiomatic personal names and even more from the semantics of the names, we can conjecture that there might not be a limitation to the (re)creation of Gbari personal names. Simply, that the morpho-phonemics and/or syntactic and semantic system of Gbari personal name formation is very productive. Quite rarely would variation be highly implausible.
- iv. Gbari Muslims generally either do not bear or use their Gbari names any longer. This was attested to by the many respondents who professed that as Gbari Muslims, their naming practices are now at variance with their people's culture and tradition, now being more preeminently pro-Islamic-oriented. However, study findings have indicated that whether as Muslims or Christians, majority of Gbari people are now more inclined to having and using at least one Hausa name, mainly as family name/surname. This is in tandem with the proximate social, cultural, geographical and religious realities of the Gbari peoples. The Gbari nation is nearly completely bordered by Hausa speakers, thus, the inclination to

gain some social advantage would lead to not only Gbari speakers being bilingual speakers of Gbari and Hausa but also being bicultural.

In Table 2 below we present theophoric Gbari personal names headed with ‘She-kwo’, or God indicating the religious views of Gbari Christians:

	<b>Theophoric Gbari Personal Name</b>	<b>English Gloss</b>
50.	She-kwo-yemi-lo	God Loves me
51.	She-kwo-ny-na	Man of God
52.	Sokwo-gaa	Only God gives
53	She-kwo-nu-che-sayi	Testimony
54	She-kwo-bami-zhyin/Shimibua	God held me
55	Apa-she-kwo-bho	Remembered by God
56	She-kwo-ta-ya-waza	God does not leave or abandon His own
57	She-kwo-sa	God's time
58	She-kwo-gaza	God's gift for me
59	Shoko-yadu	God's own best is the sweetest/most fulfilling
60	Shek-pe-ye	God is all-knowing
61	She-kwo-lo	God is real (to me/us)
62	She-kwo-inya	God's own property
63	She-kwo-ye-chenu	God's express will
64	She-kwo-duza	God is greater (than them)
65	She-kwo-ku-zhe-gami	God has done me well
66	Sheko-lo	God is real
67	She-kwo'aga	God has given this
68	Sheko-k-bolo	God remembers/ knows
69	She-kwo-nu-ga-za	It is God who gives one his/her own
70	Sheko-gaza	God gives/God's pleasant gift
71	She-kwo-nya	God's own
72	She-kwo-bedu	God is awesome/God is great
73	Shewo-ta-wusa	God owes no man notices
74	She-na-wa-zah/Atawo-shekwo-lo	The way man feels isn't how God feels about me
75	Awo-she-kwo-yid-na	Let us fear God

76	Nya-kwa-da-she-kwo	That which pleases God
77	She-kwo-nu-gna-nyi	It is God who apportions the world
78	She-kwo-sha-wye	God sees/God's eye is on it
79	She-kwo-nu-zhisu	God is King
80	She-kwo-ta-bwa-ban/Tabwaba	God does not err
81	She-kwo-ta-ya-zan	God does not forsake
82	She-kwo-yi-gbe	God's own mouth/God's will
83	She-kwo-nu-ga-za-wa-sa	It is God who gives anyone his/her portion
84	Da-ga-yi-lo	God Almighty exists
85	She-kwa-bma	It is God who saves/helps
86	She-kwo-kpe-lo	God knows
87	Bya-skek-wo/Byanyikwo	God''
88	She-kwo-nya-du	God's own is the greatest
89	She-kwo-nu-zhi-bo	It is God who does everything

Table 2 above indicates that the following can be surmised:

- v. The phono-morphological structures exhibited by the sampled Gbari theophoric names are indicated by the use of a dash (-) as illustrated above
- vi. That, nowadays, it is only amongst the Gbari Christians that there is a greater resurgence or revivalism of Gbari personal names, especially names with creative morphological reconstructions with 'She-kwo'-highlighted in bold-, the Gbari term for God, being nearly always the morphological headword in all the Gbari personal names such as Shekwo(ye)milo/God loves me, She-kwo-nu-ga-za-wa-sa/ It is God who gives or allots one his/her portion, etc.



- vii. From the dataset of Gbari personal names, we can only find few instances of Gbari names with ‘She-kwo’ as the head word embedded within the morphological structure of Gbari personal name such as Awo-she-kwo-yid-na/ Let us fear God in item 75, Table 2, or even occurring as the final suffix of Gbari personal names, such as Bya-skek-wo, item 87, Table 2
- viii. As the theophoric Gbari personal names demonstrate, we can conjecture that there might not be a limitation to the re-creation of Gbari personal names. Simply, that the morpho-phono and/or syntactic and semantic system of Gbari personal name formation is very productive and variation would not be highly implausible.

### **Conclusion**

Gbari personal naming system is now highly productive. New Gbari personal names which have never been produced can be constructed. For instance, on the basis of examples 50 to 89 on Table 2 especially these current theophoric Gbari personal names, many Gbari Christians can (re)construct corresponding names either by:

(1) A recourse to the system of affixation such as Sokwo-gaa+ She-kwo-nu-che-sayi = Sokwo-nu-che-sayi/Only God gives a testimony. This name, as yet probably not an actual Gbari personal name, like many variations of personal names, are potential Gbari personal names.

(2) Also, morpho-syntactic repositioning or shifting of the subject NP (She-kwo) of many Gbari sentence names in item 50 to 89 to either the middle or final positions and/or its replacement with other grammatical classes or even NPs, many more Gbari personal names could be generated.

(3) Further, the study demonstrates that particularly favoured by Gbari people are ‘sentence-names’, mostly containing either an axiomatic attribute or ascription or a divine name or an invocation of God. To identify these names in terms of the lexical elements that make up the names, these personal names are not exactly dithematic but they could be developed into hypocoristic short-forms, which often turn out to be monothematic.

We have not sampled metaphorical Gbari personal names with connotations of animals, plants, mental attitudes, office, profession, or trade.

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