

IDENTITY CONSTRUCTION IN THE PROFILE NAMES OF YORUBA FACEBOOK USERS

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Abstract: *Name or naming is significant in the construction of identity. While studies on online identity constructions have concentrated on examining textual or graphical discourse to reflect identities, identity construction based on profile names has received very little attention. This study examines identity construction in naming among Yoruba Facebook (FB) users. Fifty purposively selected FB profile names were analysed using Castells'(2010) identity construction framework. Four identified identities in the Profile names of Yoruba Facebook Users, namely religiously pious, innovators, football lovers and entertainers were indexed by six linguistic features – hybridisation of orthography (HOO), back formation, blending, compounding, clipping and hypocorism. The linguistic features showed the connection between the linguistic peculiarities of FB profile names and the identity constructed in the social media platform.*

Keywords: Hybridization; Identity construction; linguistic features; profile name; social media platform; Yoruba Facebook Users.

1. Introduction

Language is an essential tool for socialisation. It performs significant functions in the creation and sustenance of human interaction. Beyond its interactional function, language reveals “identities, relationship, power and social status” (Aljarallah, 2017: 11). Identity is one of the creative functions of language. Identity, for this study, is defined as the self-image projected by a person to serve as the link to what the person stands for. Following Wolfram (1991) language can be seen as one of the most powerful emblems of social behaviour and it is often surprising to realise how extensively we may judge a person’s background, character and intentions considering a person’s language and choice of a single word. Similarly, Gibson (2004: 1) avers that “language is the control feature of human identity. When we hear someone speak, we immediately make guesses about gender, level of education, age, profession and place of origin”. Thus, through language use, sufficient information can be deduced about one’s background and social affiliation; and identity can be negotiated through language.

Language use in various contexts and among different classes of people, in recent times, has continued to be shaped by the advancement in information technology. Social media reflects the most prominent advancements in information technology and is often used to refer to what is called “social networking sites.” Jacka and Scott argue that “there is no single recognised definition of social media,” as they

define it as “the set of Web-based broadcast technologies that enable the democratisation of content, giving people the ability to emerge from consumers of content to publishers” (2011: 5). Boyd and Ellison (2007:211) define social network sites as “web-based services that allow individuals to (1) construct a public or semi-public profile within a bounded system, (2) articulate a list of other users with whom they share a connection, and (3) view and traverse their list of connections and those made by others within the system.” Since its advent in the mid-1990s, social media has become a great communication tool. Facebook, Instagram and Twitter (now X) are examples of social (media) networks that have become global communication platforms. These networks provide the user an opportunity to interact and connect with other users around the world, enabling the view that the world is a global village.

The advent of social network sites brings about the distinction between offline and online identities. Social media is viewed, among users, as a place for self-presentation and interactions with one another across the globe. Ilire-Zajmi asserts that social media identity is “an extension of everyday life and cultural change tool” (2015: 331). Though online identity seems to extend from offline identity, online identity is still more consciously constructed because inferences are drawn from the information submitted by users on their profiles. Users present how they want others to perceive and relate with them. Thus, social media users construct and negotiate their identities in their online interactions. As Ilire-Zajmi (2015) observes, “the discovery of identity can include data such as name, age, occupation, location and also information that portrays users in certain ways” (p.332). These social networking sites allow users to participate in profile creation and contribute to “public commentary” – these also revolve around profiles (Boyd, 2006). This gives users the avenue to create and present how they wish to be viewed, which could be through their names, posts and profile contents.

Names often index people’s origin and background. This corroborates Aboh’s (2013) assertion that “names are information packed” (p.9). Hagstorm (2012) opines that “names help us to navigate in social and cultural spheres. Names are not neutral because names are used to identify ourselves and others, to make the world understandable and to create order” (p.85). Names serve both interactional and transactional functions because they are not just means of identification alone; sometimes, they are pointers to the person’s essence. Naming is important in any given human activity. Marwick (2013:355) affirms that “since there are fewer identity cues available online than face-to-face, every piece of digital information a person provides, from typing speed to nickname and email addresses, can and is used to make inferences about them”. In line with this, Alego and Alego (2000) also posit that names are part of the identity discovery data. Names are considered to be invaluable in online discourses, because they might be the only means of self-identification, as against offline discourses in which people could be identified with other physical features. Hagstorm (2012:90) further avers that studying names in the online environment “helps to understand the motives behind the choice – information on naming customs and habits. It helps to understand how people – as users, players and participants – see themselves, their place and position about others”. Thus, names are the main means of self-presentation in both offline and online discourses. Names, that is, profile names in the context of this study, can help users to navigate the online or social media world easily. Thus, a critical investigation of profile names may reveal how identities are constructed and/or

negotiated in online discourses, among which Facebook has the widest coverage and easiest access.

2. Facebook and Identity Construction

Facebook, a social media platform, is a popular social networking website that was created by Mark Zuckerberg along with four other Harvard college students and roommates. Facebook's membership as of April 2023 is more than 2.9 billion monthly users, making it the biggest and one of the most influential social media websites. Users of Facebook are people of all ages, ethnicities, locations and professional backgrounds. Facebook, launched on February 4, 2004, just like other social network sites allows users to create their profiles with a profile name. Facebook profile names, which could be any desired construction of the user, are expected to be a user's first contact with other users. Users, thus, tend to craft their profile names to encapsulate how they want other users to view them. With its wider range of audience in comparison with others, Facebook, therefore, presents an opportunity for one to explore profile names and their link to identities constructed.

3. Review of Literature

Some studies have been carried out on identity construction. Some have focused on the identity construction of offline (media) discourses (Filani and Melefa, 2014; Gerrig and Banaji, 1991; Lamidi and Aboh, 2011; Osisanwo 2016a, 2016b; Zhao, S, Grasmuck, S & Martin, 2008) while others are on online discourses (Asekun, 2022; Calkin, 2015; Dobrowsky, 2012; Gunduz, 2017; ImmaTubella, 2011; Lamidi, 2016; Osisanwo 2017a, 2017b; Osisanwo and Falade, 2023; Shafie, Nayan and Osman, 2012). Most of the studies on online discourses have examined identity construction from numerous angles. ImmaTubella (2011) considers identity construction on the television and the internet; the study, though considered inconclusive by the author, affirms that the internet has displaced the television in the construction of identity among Catalonians in that it has become central; Dobrowsky (2012) examines the construction of identity on social networks by analysing competences of communication constituted on Facebook.com. Lamidi (2016) examines identity construction in the Nairaland virtual community. The study reveals that members of this community use different modes to carve out their identities and concludes that identity as a concept is interwoven in human relations and that individual identity is inherent in group identity. Most recently, Osisanwo and Falade (2023) consider identity construction and representation in education-centred memes and conclude that memes present representations and identities differently and transform higher education using the online space. All these studies have explored the different ways identities and representations (through shows, posts and memes) are constructed in the virtual space. The current study, however, investigates identity construction in the profile names of Yoruba Facebook users to identify the identities constructed and the linguistic forms used for the constructions. The study is guided by three research questions. (1) What are the linguistic peculiarities of the profile names? (2) How do the constructed names reflect identities? (3) What are the identities constructed?

A major subfield of linguistics that focuses on names is Onomastics. Most research

works in this subfield have concentrated on meaning: Igbo-English translation of chi names (Oluchukwu and Nzuanke. 2014), baby names and family names (Nigro, 2015). Others concentrated on the sociolinguistics and pragmatic interpretation of names, focusing on pet-naming as protest discourse in polygamous Yoruba homes (Odebode, 2012), and anglicised *Abiku* names on Facebook (Odebode, 2013). On examination of these works, it is important to note that naming should not be limited to the investigation of the semantic meaning of names because a name could have a meaning that differs in structure and other (physical) characteristics, that is, the way it is written. Often, a name can have the same meaning as another but might be different in form from the accepted norm or rule guiding how words are written in such a language. Such names might not mean something new, but such a deviant orthography may be a means to an end (Haryorbarme instead of Ayobami). Alego and Alego (2000:265) observe that linguistics has been “ignoring naming as data” for analysis. They view naming “as a social act” and see no reason why it should not be worthy of critical examination in linguistics. Brendler (2012:29) also notes that “name studies have in particular neglected to deal explicitly with the identity of names”, whereas “names go with identities and identities go with names”. In other words, names are symbolic or representative of identities. Djite (2006:6) avers that identity is “the everyday word for people’s sense of who they are”, and name being a part of the identity discovery data, suggests the importance of examining how users, especially Yoruba users of Facebook, use their profile names to construct the identity with which they want to be identified. A proper understanding of this helps one to know that names embody identities, and it is on this basis that this study examines the identity constructed in Facebook profile names, using Yoruba users as a case study.

The Yoruba are West African people living chiefly in southwestern Nigeria. Igue (1973: 9) sees the term ‘Yoruba’ to be the “association of several subgroups bound to one another by language and tradition”. Yoruba occupies a large area in the southwestern part of Nigeria, extending through Lagos, Ogun, Oyo, Osun, Ondo, Ekiti to Kwara, Kogi and Edo States. The word ‘Yoruba’ is also used to refer to a sub-Saharan language that belongs to the Benue-Congo branch of the Niger-Congo language family. As explained earlier names are information packed in Yorubaland, names are carefully chosen because it is believed that a child’s name can affect a child positively or negatively. The Yoruba attach significant importance to the use of names; this means that names are not just “identification tags, they constitute an integral part of human experience” (Oladipupo, 2014: 66). Names are so important to the Yoruba that they have classes of names which to an extent tell one about the nature of the birth of the child or circumstances, religion, and occupation of the parents or family.

4. Theory and methods

Castells in his identity construction framework asserts that truly, identities are constructed; however, he notes that “the real issue is how, from what, by whom, and for what” (2010: 7) these identities are constructed. Thus, it establishes what has been at the heart of most research on identity. He highlights the different materials from which identities are constructed to be history, geography, and literature among others. Against his assumptions that identity construction is predominantly found in “power relations” contexts, he goes on to identify three

identity-shaping processes from which identities are constructed. They are legitimising identity, resistance identity and project identity. Legitimising identity deals with the reproduction and expansion of already existing ideas or status in society (Castells, 2010: 8). Resistance identity, according to Castells might be the most important component of identity building, which involves contention against already established identities, and project identity encompasses the redefinition of identities. Naturally, identities that start as resistance identity may result in projecting a new identity; thus, leading to a legitimised identity. These identity formation processes are context dependent. This framework helps to adequately view and situate identities constructed in the light of society.

A multi-stage sampling technique was employed to source the data. Purposive sampling was adopted to select fifty Yoruba Facebook profile users whose profile names reflect obvious modifications or extraneous components in their orthography while twenty-two (22) representative profile names were randomly selected for analysis in this paper. The online bio-data details and sensual appeal of the names guided the selection of the profile names in this category after being profiled. The data are qualitatively analysed guided by Castells' identity construction framework and subjected to discourse analysis by examining the constructed profile names, identifying the identities constructed in them and tracking the linguistic pointers to the created identities.

5. Analysis

Four identities were discovered in the Profile Names of Yoruba Facebook users (PNYFbUs): religiously pious, innovators, football lovers and entertainers. The first two identities are characterised by affixation while the identities others are characterised by affixation, blending and hypocorism. The linguistic features show the nexus between the linguistic peculiarities of FB profile names and the identity constructed on the social media platform. These fall within Castells' identity-building process of legitimising and projecting identities. The discussion is taken in turn.

Identities of PNYFbUs	Linguistic peculiarities of the identities	Identity building process
Religiously pious	Borrowing, Compounding and Clipping	Legitimising
Innovators	Borrowing and Compounding	Legitimising
Football lovers	Affixation, blending, hypocorism, borrowing, hybridisation of orthography	Projecting
Entertainers	Clipping, borrowing, hypocorism, hybridisation of orthography	Projecting

Table 1: Linguistic peculiarities in the identity construction of profile names

5.1. Facebook Users as Religiously Pious

Religion is considered an important phenomenon in the contemporary Nigerian society. In Nigeria, different religious sects coexist, and each carries out its activities without major hindrance from the other. The use of language in religious circles cannot be undermined in that each religion's use of language can be

distinguished from another. From the PNYFbUs examined, the following are pointers to users' religious affiliations:

Text 1 – Reverend David Ajiboye

Text 2 – Reverend Mrs Oluwatoyin B Oni

Text 3 – Temiloluwa A. Aliu (Reverend)

Text 4 – Pastor Samson Oluwatobi Odukoya (Reverend Samson light)

Text 5 – Evang Deborah Akinwale

Text 6 – Jolaoso Temitayo Jesuskid

Text 7 – Iyanuolwa Oluwadara (Jesuskid)

Text 8 – Adewole Ola OmoAnabi

Text	Words	Linguistic Peculiarities
Text 1	Reverend, David	Borrowing
Text 2	(Reverend)	Borrowing
Text 3		
Text 4	Pastor, Samson (Reverend Samson light)	Borrowing
Text 5	Evang, Deborah	Borrowing
Text 5	Evang	Clipping
Text 2	Reverend +mrs= Reverend mrs	Compounding
Text 6 & 7	Jesus + kid =Jesuskid	
Text 8	Omo Anabi	Compounding (with space)

Table 2: Names and linguistic peculiarities of texts 1-8

One could identify the constituents of the profile names that are actual names of the Yoruba Facebook users (YFUs). For example, in texts 1-8, the names: *David Ajiboye* (1), *Oluwatoyin B Oni* (2), *A. Aliu* (3), *Samson Oluwatobi Odukoya* (4), *Deborah Akinwale* (5), *Jolaoso Temitayo* (6), *Iyanuolwa Oluwadara* (7), *Adewole Ola* (8) are common. The use of 'Reverend', 'Reverend Mrs', '(Reverend Samson light)', 'Pastor', 'Evang', 'Jesuskid', '(Jesuskid)' and 'OmoAnabi', are pointers to religious identity and morphological processes of compounding, borrowing and clipping are evident. These morphological processes further cement and project their religious affiliations. Compounding is the coming together of two root words which can be written together, separated by space or hyphenated; 'Reverend Mrs', 'Jesuskid', and 'omoAnabi' are examples of compounding found in texts 1-8. One example of clipping, which is the deletion of an initial or final syllable of a word, is that of 'Evang'; it involves the deletion of 'list' from 'Evangelist'. The titles and certain names point to the fact that the users use them in a bid to legitimise their identities. Some of the users go to the length of putting these linguistic items in brackets to reproduce and expand their chosen identities.

In text 1, Ajiboye (one who wakes up to meet chieftaincy), depicts a name given to someone from a noble background. This establishes the cultural undertone of naming, while David, being a Biblical name, typifies the religious undertone embedded in naming. The user goes beyond all those to further cement his identity with the inclusion of Reverend in his profile name. This points to a deliberate attempt to establish a special identity for other users by merely compounding the real name with the introduction of an important religious title. This identity goes

further to serve as a constraint to others' interpretation of the user's projected profiles, that is, it would limit the kind of online engagement such a person would be given.

While the affixes in texts 1-7 help to establish and project the YFUs' identities with Christianity, 'OmoAnabi' in text 8, constructs the Islamic identity of the YFU. In the Christian religion, the word 'Reverend' refers to a member of the clergy and a spiritual leader of the Christian church. The literal as well as contextual usage of 'Pastor' within Christianity connotes someone who looks after a flock, or a person authorised to conduct religious worship, and is sanctimonious; one who is also referred to as the shepherd because he or she oversees the congregation and attends to their needs. "Evang" is the clipped form of Evangelist. The words 'Reverend', 'Pastor' and 'Evang' are, therefore, titles and not personal names. However, this has been used by these Facebook users as part of their usernames; these titles are markers of religious identity. That is, they are used to reveal their religious inclination and to reveal to other users that they are not just Christians but leaders in their respective positions to command respect and control the kind of followership and connection they make online. These titles are affixed to their names as a religious identity construction strategy.

Similarly, in texts 6-7, the users' use of 'Jesuskid' is a religious identity marker. The Facebook users in texts 6-7 add 'Jesuskid' to reveal who they are, 'Christians', because of their belief and relationship with Jesus. The use of 'kid' stems from the fact that most Christians see Jesus to be their father. The affix, 'Jesuskid' calls to mind the existence of the gene of Jesus, through what is commonly considered as adoption into sonship among Christians. It is a shared knowledge among the Christian faithful that Jesus is sinless and thus anyone who carries his identity is seen in the same light. The affix 'Jesuskid' therefore projects that the YFUs carry a gene that is sinless. It reveals to other users that these users are not just nominal Christians but those who are pious in their Christian faith.

In addition, the user in text 8 through the affixation of 'omoAnabi' to his name, depicts a different religious identity, the Islamic religion. 'Anabi' is a borrowed word from Arabic that is specifically used for Quranic prophets; therefore, it is commonly used in the Islamic religion. Similarly, 'omo' is the Yoruba word for child, so the user adding 'omo' before the Anabi is to affirm affinity to the prophet. Thus, the user depicting self as 'omoAnabi' is portraying religious identity, not just as a Muslim but as a pious one who carries the gene of the great and pious prophet.

From the foregoing, it is deducible that one's linguistic choice has a way of revealing to people one's religious identity. In texts 1-5, the use of 'Reverend', 'Pastor' and 'Evang' reveal the users' likely identity and the ideology underpinning their linguistic choices. These are pointers to their belief and the strategy used is more on legitimising identity. Similarly, in texts 6-7, the users portray the identity of someone who has an affinity, that is, kinship by adoption to Jesus. Also, in text 8, the use of 'omoAnabi' instead of 'omoWoli' reveals the person's affinity to Islam instead of Christianity. Therefore, for instance, the choice of 'Reverend' instead of 'Imam' is a pointer to the user's ideological stance which buttresses what has been explained in the literature that identity constructions usually have ideological underpinnings.

5.2. Facebook users as innovators

The PNYFbUs in this category see themselves as innovators - these people

construct identities of pioneers or groundbreakers in the projected field of study.

Text 9 – Einstein IfeoluwaBolarinwa

Text 10 – Oladele Olusegun Karlmarx

Text 11 – Olubanji Engels Oluwole

Text 12 – ObisesanAdedamola Socrates (Mr. Socrates)

In texts 9 – 12, it is clear which names are the real names of the users based on their language and region: *Ifeoluwa Bolarinwa (9)*, *Oladele Olusegun (10)*, *Olubanji Oluwole (11)* and *Obisesan Adedamola (12)*. Also, in the formation of the profile names, the user in text 10 makes use of compounding effectively to legitimize his identity as that of Karl Marx to reproduce it in the minds of other users. The PNYFbU in text 9 reveals the attachment of Einstein to the Yoruba name, Ifeoluwa Bolarinwa. This user, though a Yoruba man, portrays himself as Einstein. The users in texts 10-11 see themselves as communists and socialists. The user in text 12, Obisesan Adedamola, added ‘Socrates’ which is a Greek name to his Yoruba name as part of his profile name. The addition of the names of these notable figures in the PNYFbUs is an invocation of the greatness, exploits and qualities of such figures to construct the identity of innovators.

The PNYFbUs examined above are with linguistic choices which project the identity which they portray. In text 9, the YFU projects the identity of a scientist, especially a physicist by using the name, Einstein. YFUs in texts 10-11 therefore legitimise identities of communists and socialists with the use of the names ‘Karlmarx’ and ‘Engels’. The users’ choice of ‘Karlmarx’ and ‘Engels’ reveal them to be who those people are in their generation; thus, bringing themselves to be at par with these people. In text 12, the YFU legitimises his identity as a thinker or a philosopher by the name ‘Socrates’. The user, Obisesan Adedamola, adds Socrates to expand his own identity not only as a philosopher but as a moral one.

5.3. Facebook Users as Football Lovers

The common feature of the PNYFbUs in this group is that of users who love sports, especially football. Football is one of the games that is largely followed and cherished across the globe, including Nigeria. The manifestations of this are seen in texts 13 – 17.

Text 13 – Akinlabi Philip Pogba

Text 14 – Adeyemo Sanchez Ayodeji

Text 15 – Hadeybessy Messi

Text 16 – OzilAyodinho (Harlayour)

Text 17 – Dammy Baba Thiago Dammy

Text	Words	Linguistic Peculiarities
Text 13	Philip, Pogba	Borrowing
Text 14	Sanchez	
Text 15	Messi	
Text 16	Ozil	
Text 17	Thiago	
Text 15	Hardeybessy	Hybridisation of Orthography
Text 16	Harlaryour	Hybridisation of orthography
Text 16	Ayodinho	Blending
Text 17	Dammy	Hypocorism (altered form)

Table 3: Names and linguistic peculiarities of texts 9-17

In the PNYFbUs 13-17, the names ‘Akinlabi Philip’ (13), ‘AdeyemoAyodeji’ (14), ‘Hadeybessy’ is the variant of ‘Adebisi – the crown reproduces (15), Ayo (Joy) from Ayodinho (16) and Dammy, a variant of Dami (17) are all common names. The linguistic peculiarities identified in texts 13-17 are borrowing, hypocorism, blending, and hybridisation of orthography. Ayodinho is an example of blending – it involves joining two words as one but one or the two loses a part. In the example in text 16, there is a blend of Ayo and Ronaldinho; ‘Ronald’ has to be removed from Ronaldinho to get the blend of Ayodinho. Dammy in text 17, as seen in the table, is an example of hypocorism, which means a pet name; it could be a shortened form of a personal name or an altered form (addition of certain suffixes at the end of the shortened form of names).

In the hybridisation of orthography, there are two different combinations of the English and Yoruba orthography. The Yoruba orthography follows the C-V or V-C order while English has the C(CC)VC(CCC) structure. Thus, one would expect that the former features characterise the orthography of PNYFbUs. However, texts 15 and 16 show a deviation from the expected system. Yoruba writing system is considered transparent such that there is a one-to-one correlation between the letters of a word and what is pronounced while English orthography is considered opaque in that there might not be a one-to-one correlation between the letters and what is pronounced. Text 15, “Hardeybessy”, which is a variant of Adebisi (crown reproduces or increases), is at variance to the Yoruba pattern. Alphabetically, “Hardeybessy” has a cvc-cvc-cvccc pattern, while “Adebisi” has a v-cv-cv-cv pattern. Also, text 16, Harlaryour, with the alphabetical pattern cvc-cvc-cvvc is a variant of Alayo (one who possesses joy), with the alphabetical pattern v-cv-cv. Orthography-wise, the constructed names are neither English nor Yoruba, whereas, at the level of semantics, they are Yoruba names. It can be classified as an example of an inter-language. It is a combination of the Yoruba and English writing systems, thus resulting in a hybrid. There is a consonant cluster typical of the English writing system, yet the names still mean the same as the ones without the diluted features. These result in interlanguage, the word belonging to neither English nor Yoruba. These users are projecting a new identity for themselves by using the morphological processes to create a new form of name which is neither English nor Yoruba, through hybridisation of names.

The PNYFbUs in text 13 involve the attachment of the name ‘Pogba’. Paul Labile Pogba is a French professional footballer who played for Manchester United (a club in the English Premier League) and the French national team. His name became a household one in Nigeria due to his record-breaking transfer fee of £89.3 million to Manchester United in 2016. In text 14, the user uses ‘Sanchez’, the name of a player. Alexis Alejandro Sánchez is a Chilean professional footballer who played for Manchester United. He was said to be the most expensive Chilean player of all time. It is also fashionable among football fans to identify with specific football clubs, among which they choose their favourites. Thus, from texts 13 and 14, it is deducible that the YFbUs, Akinlabi Philip Pogba and Adeyemo Sanchez Ayodeji, respectively, are staunch supporters of the Manchester United Football Club, where Paul Pogba and Alexis Sánchez, respectively are their favourites. In text 15, the YFbU uses the name of Lionel Andrés Messi Cuccittini popularly known as Messi, who is a record seven-time Ballon d’Or award winner. He is an Argentine professional footballer who played as a forward for the Argentine national team and

Barcelona, popularly known as Barca (a Spanish football league team). Messi has been a dominating figure in the football professional game for over a decade now and he is still thriving; he spent almost his entire career at Barcelona, before moving to Paris Saint-Germain, and most recently to Inter Miami.

The user in text 16 combines Ozil and blends with 'dinho' from the popular Brazilian footballer, 'Ronaldinho' together with his name, 'Ayo'. Mesut Özil is a German-born professional footballer associated with the German national team and Arsenal FC (an English Premier League club). He plays mostly as an attacking midfielder, though sometimes can be played as a winger. Ronaldo de Assis Moreira, popularly known as Ronaldinho is a Brazilian former professional footballer and ambassador for the Spanish club, Barcelona. He played most of his professional career at European clubs Paris-Saint-Germain, Barcelona and Milan as well as for the Brazilian national team. He played mostly as an attacking midfielder but often deployed as a winger or forward. He was well-known for his technical skills and creativity due to his agility, pace and dribbling ability, as well as his overhead kicks and accuracy from free kicks. The user in text 17 uses 'Thiago'. Thiago Alcántara do Nascimento, simply known as Thiago, is a professional Spanish footballer who plays as a central midfielder for the German club, Bayern Munich and the Spanish national team.

From texts 13-17, the following names are used as pointers to the users' identity as football lovers: 'Pogba', 'Sanchez', 'Messi', 'Ozil', 'Ronaldinho' and 'Thiago'. These are the names of well-known and well-paid footballers. With these names, the users depict the identities of sports lovers and can also be that the users are trying to reveal that they are also footballers that have the same skills as the players whose names they have attached to their profile names. The Facebook user in text 16 goes further to construct a name new from the blend of his name and Ronaldinho, 'Ayodinho'. This is not just a bid to show that he loves football but to portray the identity of a Brazilian, because Brazil is regarded as the home of football. Nigerians, being football lovers, it is not strange to see the YFbUs portray their identities as footballers or football lovers even through their profile names. This is also to show their allegiance to the footballers whom they consider as their role models and in turn, the football clubs they support.

5.4. Facebook Users as Entertainers

Entertainment includes music, dance, storytelling, and games. The PNYFbUs in this group reveal the users as entertainers – drummers and disc jockey (s). Most of them usually use the title 'DJ' in front of their real names or nicknames or stage names.

Text 18 – KolawoleTejustickzTejumola

Text 19 – Oluwaseunfunmi Sticks (sticks)

Text 20 – Sticks Dhammy Drumz Daniel (dhanmydrumz)

Text 21 – Ayanda Olalekan DJlakeside (DJ Lakeside)

Text 22 – Dj Slim Tea

In the PNYFbUs in text 18-21, the common names are '*Kolawole Tejumola (18)*, '*Oluwaseunfunmi (19)*, '*Dhammy, a variant of Dami (20)*, and '*Ayanda Olalekan (21)*'. The YFU in text 18 bears Tejumola Kolawole, however, he adds 'stickz' which is a hypocorism from the drumstick, a stick used for playing the drums, especially drum set (a collection of drums and other percussion instruments designed to be played together). The users in texts 19-20 answer Oluwaseunfunmi and Dami

respectively; similarly, they add 'sticks' a clipping of drumsticks to their PNYFbUs. In text 21, the user bears Ayanda Olalekan but has added the title DJ to his nickname 'Lakeside' which is a popular nickname for those who bear 'Lekan'. Similarly, the user in text 22 is a DJ; however, this user does not use his real name but a nickname which emanates from his physical appearance 'Slim' while 'Tea' can be a coinage from his name which begins with 'T'.

Text	Word	Linguistic Peculiarities
Text 18	Stickz	
Text 20	Dhammy	Hypocorism
Text 21	Djlakeside	
Text 19	Sticks	Clipping
Text 20	Drumz	Clipping
Text 20	Dhammy	Hybridisation of Orthography

Table 4: Names and linguistic peculiarities of texts 18-20

From texts 18-20, the PNYFbUs show themselves as drummers from the prominent use of 'sticks' and 'drumz'. Adding these words to their profile names serves as a means of identity and showing other users who they are. The PNYFbUs in texts 21-22 show themselves as disc jockey(s). Through their profile names, their identity is enacted and projected to other users. This in a way is to constrain or to advertise what they do to influence the kind of people that interact with them. Peculiar to the name in text 22 is the fact that the user does not use his real name but something unique to his physical feature 'slim'.

6. Conclusion

The data in this study reveal the linguistic peculiarities of the profile names and the identities constructed. It is discovered that the names have four of them embedded in their constructions, including hybridisation (the mixing of the English and Yoruba orthographic features), morphology (the use of back formation and blending) and hypocorism. The analysis reveals that the commonly constructed identities in profile names of Yoruba Facebook users are FB users as religiously pious, FB users as innovators, FB users as football lovers and FB users as entertainers.

Thus, this study concludes that a name is sufficient as a means of identity. Hence, it agrees with Lamidi (2016) to further posit that identity as a concept is interwoven in human relations. In human relationships or interactions, identity is emphasised. There will always be a need for identification, and this is reflected in how Facebook names have become a means to project users' identities. Unlike Osisanwo and Falade (2023) who focus on how identity is projected through memes, concluding that education-centred memes present representations and identities differently than other kinds of memes and transform higher education using the online space, the present study avers that identity constructions via the online spaces are not only meme-based, but they also manifest in the profile names of Yoruba Facebook users. Therefore, the findings serve as a pointer to what people do with their profile names, whether consciously or unconsciously. The study will serve as a guide to those who are not aware. Castells simply considers 'project' as a strategy of identity building, this study sees 'project' as a bundle of strategies which can be

decomposed. Therefore, this study finds hybridisation, morphological manipulation (back formation as well as blending) and hypocorism as strategies that project identities. Thus, this study reveals that identity construction is embedded in the profile names of YFUs. Furthermore, it reveals that the YFUs have deployed language as constitutive of social identities, social relations and systems of knowledge and belief to substantiate and linguistically construct identities, including religion, innovator, entertainment and sport. The construction of identity in our data explicates the construction of meaning and relationships beyond physical space to virtual space.

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