

## **Name ‘customizing’ among Nigerian youth and its implications on literacy and culture**

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**ABSTRACT** : Name “customizing” is a phenomenon that has recently developed among the Nigerian youth, most especially those in the tertiary institutions and the entertainment industry. The phenomenon involves coining a personalized variant of one's name, (personal, surname, or both). In most cases the customized names are pronounced with English accent. The names customized have no restriction to language, religion and sex. The youth in the tertiary institutions announce the customized forms by printing them at the back of articles of clothing (especially polo-shirts and vests), school bags, notebooks, textbooks and others. The names are re-created in such a way that persons bearing the same name would indicate it differently, and this of course, makes such names look like nonsense syllables. This study investigates this phenomenon among the Nigerian undergraduates. The researcher is interested in finding out, among other things, the morphological principles underlying their formation, and the possible implications of the name on language. In carrying out the study, the researcher used questionnaire and personal chats on his time-line on the facebook to collect samples of the names from the samples of the study population. The researcher's findings reveal among other things that name customizing are motivated by different reasons, that the names are systematically formed and that systematicity shows the innate morphological competence of the youth. The study concludes that while the name customizing reveals the linguistic creativity of the youth, the phenomenon could be a threat to literacy as there is some possibility of carrying name customizing writing conventions into normal everyday writing behaviours. That notwithstanding, product manufacturers could benefit from the techniques of name customizing in naming their products.

**KEY WORDS:** name, customizing, undergraduates, youth, Nigeria

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### **I. INTRODUCTION**

Names are not only a means of identification. In very many cultures names are semantically loaded with some stories to tell and some shared assumptions and expectations of members of the community to reveal. Names provide copious information about their owners, their position in the family; the circumstances surrounding their birth, parental/family situation, family hopes, desires, expectations and aspirations; financial situation; links with departed family members and ancestors, ancestral history and origin and a way of keeping records. Essien (2004) did an exploratory linguistic analysis of Nigerian naming system from Yoruba, Igbo, Hausa, and Ibibio. In the work, the researcher, posited that names mirror grammar of Ibibio language. According to Essien (2004:113), “if one were to collect all Ibibio names, one would have collected a significant part of the grammar of the language. It is therefore possible to learn basic Ibibio through a collection of names”. Mphande (2006:106) supports Essien's observation in the following words “names are the most meaningful lexicon in the vocabulary of any language, and they are an important part of the language inventory”. Geertz (1973) as cited by Akinnaso (1980:277) identifies two extremes and a series of intermediate stages of degree of linguistic complexity and semantic-cultural significance of personal names. On the one extreme are names that do not carry any meaning while on the other extreme are names that are loaded with meaning. According to Geertz (1973), names in some cultures carry meaning while in some names are arbitrarily nonsense syllables making no reference to conceptual or social reality nor express any concrete characteristic of the individuals to whom they are applied

Blount and Sanches (1977), Mehrotra (1980), Oyetade (1995) and Ikotun (2010) have all reported cases of name change as an aspect of language change. To Mehrotra (1980) the socio-cultural norms are never static. They keep on changing and these changes reflect in the naming patterns. Blount and Sanches (1977:vi) touch on socio-cultural dimensions activating such changes and identify factors such as change of social customs, cultural norms, names difficult to pronounce, impact of forces of modernization, influence of new values and ideologies of modern urban civilization, education, secular and democratic thinking, press, cinema, TV and other means of communication with strong tendencies of influence. Ikotun (2013) discusses name change/modification among the Yorùbá and identifies Christianity as its principal activator. Mehrotra (1980:206-207) discusses the

phenomenon of name adoption as an aspect of name change and describes the trends and situational constraints it follows in Hindi vis.

- (a) Dropping the earlier name altogether in favour of the new one. This could be due to such factors as when a person finds his name nonsensical, strange, embarrassing or humiliating, change of religion, a person becoming a monk, rejection of names that by tradition are considered lowly, and development of progressive attitude and thinking.
- (b) Adopting a new name without dropping the earlier one, the use of both being situationally determined. Examples of such names include
  - Name given to a new wife by her in-laws when the bride's name is the same with any of her in-law's;
  - Name a person entering into film industry or artiste bears and in the course of time he becomes to be known by it;
  - Name of a professional criminal bears to protect his real identity.

Oyetade (1995:532-533) and Ikotun (2010:172) describe the phenomenon of name anglicization among the younger generation of Yorùbá. According to Oyetade (1995), the phenomenon is used as index of "civilization"

The phenomenon of name customizing is a very recent development among the Nigerian undergraduates and young artistes entering into entertainment industry. Name customizing allows for a bearer of a name to create a personalized variation of the form of the name he or she is known and called. From the point of view of orthography, most customized names look unintelligible and un-name to non members of the study population. The main motivation for the name include among others the need to strategically distinguish self from others bearing the same name, to allow bearer bond with his/her social group and to poke fun at oneself. A rather nice case is the customized name 'Ant', (a type of insect) or 'Gbàgbé' meaning 'Forget' from the name 'Rántí' meaning 'Remember'. Another example is 'Jèdìjèdì' meaning 'Pile' from the name Jedidayah, a muslim name.

The table bellow shows customized names and their real forms.

Customized names	Name called
Turn double, D2	Diméjì
Bholar, Borlah	Bòlá
Beesee, Bee C	Bísí
Doohroduller	Dúróḍolá
Daer	Dáre
Ednut, 2ndey	Túndé
Eroot	Tóóre
Bun	Èbùn
Henytan	Ènìtàn
4lar, Phorlar	Fòlá
Hormorlorlar	Òmòḗḗlá
Gbàgbé, Ant	Rántí
Wand	Wandé, OneD
Nahnah	Hannah
Gace	Grace
Jim Iyke	James Ikechukwu
Halosh	Ṣolá
Xn	Téńí
Jèdìjèdì	Jedidayah
O,yas	Sayò
Viktour, Phiktor	Victor
Chollar, Sholly	Ṣolá
Neeuq	Queen
Rhorlarche	Ròlaké

The idea of name customization is borrowed from mass customization<sup>1</sup>; a business and marketing concept. It is the practice of offering consumers the opportunity to create a personalized variation of initial design of a product to their liking before purchasing it. Gowder J.P.<sup>2</sup>. (2011) defines mass customization as 'Where

customers can tailor a product to their own specification'. To Tseng and Jiao (2001:685), mass customization refers to producing goods and services to meet individual customer's needs with near mass production efficiency. Customization may involve removing text and/or image from the design, altering the image size/orientation/placement, altering the text size/orientation/placement/colour/font, adding text and or images not included in initial design, and changing the layering of design elements. Customization gives a product a unique image and identity, it also presents the consumers among other things, self gratifying psychological opportunity to own something they have had hand in creating. By customizing their names and thereby acquiring new name, as it were, the younger generation seems to be announcing new identity and imagenot just for the present time but also, for the future. To the best of the reseacher's knowledge, the phenomenon of name customizing seems not to have been investigated. In this paper, the reseacher is interested in describing the sources of the customized names, strategies used to coin them. and possible implication it would have on language

## II. SOURCES OF DATA

The data for this work was collected from the students of four tertiary institutions in the South West of Nigeria. Although the schools were arbitrarily selected, the researcher ensured that the tertiary institutions are representatives of the traditional higher institutions we have in Nigeria, *vis*, university, the polytechnic and college of education. Students of the following institutions were subsequently samples: The Polytechnic, Ibadan, Oyo State; Osun State University, Osogbo; Adeyemi College of Education, Ondo; and Lagos State University, Ojo. The instrument of data collection was questionnaire. The researcher also used his time line on the facebook to collect some samples of the names from the study population. The categories of the questions asked include the names the respondents are given at birth and which are used as part of their official names, the names called by friends and peers, the names called at home by parents, siblings and relatives. The sample of the study population was deliberately restricted to youth of Yorùbá<sup>3</sup> extraction. Consequently, the names studied are either Yorùbá indigenous names or names borrowed into Yorùbá through religion. The essence of this is to be able to adequately account for the morphology of the customized names and some other linguistic details in relation to Yorùbá linguistics.

### 1.2. Sources of customized names:

Our analysis in this paper is based on the name or form of the name the bearer is generally known and called by members of their social group<sup>4</sup>. Such name could be a single name or combination of names. In a situation where the customized name is derived from one name, the name is either a surname or a personal name. On the other hand, where the customized name is coined from a combination of names, the names could a combination of the bearer's surname and his personal name. or a combination of a set of personal names.

#### *Customized names derived from one real name*

Name called	Customized form
Àbíké	Harbikeh
Désólá	Desawlar
Kòmóláfé	Chormolarphe
Tóbi	T boy
Wálé	Wahley
Yòmí	Yomex

#### *Customized names derived from a set of real names*

Name called	Customized form
F̀lákẹ̀ Itùnú	4lar i2nu
Tóyìn Bello	T bells
Oláléyẹ̀ Bólánlé	Olly-B
Jókẹ̀ Sómẹfun	Joke somefun
Dámílólá Sàlàkó	Damsal
Bímbólá Adébáyò	Bimbay
Táiwò Fàṣolá	T-Fash, Teepharsh
Nífẹ́mí Bánkólé	Niffy-Banks
Dámílólá Wùmí	Dammy Wummee
Láńre Dàńbírí	Eldee
Tòsìn Ọ́jọ	Tosyn Oj

**Variation**

Individual linguistic strategies employed in name customizing vary. As a result, there are different customized variants of the same name. The following are examples.

Name called	Customized form
Adékúnmi	Hadeykunmmy, Hardeykunmie, Kunmi
Báyò	Baryor, Bayur, Bayour, Bayus, Bhayo, Yoba
Dayò	Dayour, Dayor, Dayur, Dahyour
Dèjì	Dj, Dejavu, Deejeje, D-2, Jedi
Désíre	Desire (as English word), Daisy
Dọlápò	Deepee, Dorlarpor, Dorlahpur, Dollyp
Fisáyò	Phesayor, Phesayour, V-say
Gbémisólá	Gbemmy, Gbemmie, Gemmy, Bemmie,
Moyò	Mohyor, Moyor, Mhoyor
Àbíké	Harbikeh, Bike, Bik, B-Kay, Harbyche
Désólá	Desawlar, Dhesawlah
Kòmóláfé	Chormolarphe, Cormolagh, Lave Komo, Mackom
Tóbi	T boy, Tobbie, Tobby, T-boi
Wálé	Wahley, Wahllington, Whalleh
Yòmí	Yomex, Yormmie, Yommy, Yomyom, Yom.

**Strategies for customizing names.**

The youth use several strategies to customize their names. The key strategies are spelling strategies: respelling, reverse spelling, spelling swapping; transcription, truncation, mathematical symbolization, conversion, interlingual translation, lexicalization of abbreviation, initialism, blending, affixation reduplication. There are also combination of these strategies

**Respelling strategy**

This strategy involves substituting a letter or sequence of letters representing a particular sound with another letter or sequence of letters whose pronunciation resemble the substituted segments. In some cases a letter may be doubled or another letter added to it. The following patterns are attested in this study.

Oral vowel	Substituted forms	Some examples
a	har, ha, ah, ar, al, er, ae	Harlarbal (Àlàbá), Hadedaeer, (Adédára),
e	eh, ey, ay (koreday)	Kourehday, (Kóredé), Hadeylekay, (Adélékè), Dheley, (Délé), Heyneharphe
ẹ	he, e, ey	Henitan, (Ènitàn), Ehyitorpeh, (Èyítópé), Phemmy. (Fẹmi)
i	e, y, ee, ie, hi	Phesaryor, (Fisáyò), Routymee (Rótímí), Rotymie, Hiffeh (Ìfẹ)
o	o, ho, ol, ou	Kolföh, (Kòfó), Houllu (Olú), Holludaerey (Olúdàre)
ọ	hor, hur, ur, or, our, aw, o	Horlawsur (Ìlòsòò), (Hurmollaryour) (Ọmọlayò)
u	ue, ui, uh, ooh	Dooroh (Dúró), Shuelley (Súlè), Aduik (Àdùkẹ)
<b>Nasalize vowels</b>	<b>Substituted forms</b>	
an		Henytan (Ènitàn)
en		
in	yne, yn	Tosyn Tousyne (Tósìn),
on	-----	
un		Phunmy (Fúnmi)
<b>Consonant</b>	<b>Substituted forms</b>	

Letters		
b	bh,bb	Bhorlar (Bólá) Dhebbollar (Débólá)
d	dh, dd	Dhedgy, (Dèjì), Harddeyhi (Àdeyí)
f	ph, v, ff	Phemmy (Fémi), Hiffeh, Iveh (Ìfẹ)
g	gh,gg	Harllagga (Alága) Gboyegha (Gbóyèga)
gb	g,b	Gemmy, Bemmie (Gbèmí)
h	-	-
j	jh, dgy	Jhid (Jídé), Jhorkeh (Jòkẹ) Dhedgy, (Dèjì),
k	kh,q,c,kk	Khunley (Kúnlé) Bouquilar, Bucholar, Bukky (Bùkólá)
l	ll	Houllu.(Olú)
m	mm. mh	Phemmy (Fémi), Mhoyor (Moyò)
n	nn. nh	Enny (Eniqlá) Nhyny (Níní)
p	pp	Poppy (pópólá)
r	rh, rr	Larrah (Lara), Rhemmie (Rèmí)
s	ss.	Pheyhissarrah
ş	ch,s,sh	Shegzy, Chegun (Ségun), Sholly (Şólá)
t	th.	Thommy (Tómilólá), Thorpeh (Tópé)
w	wh,	Whaley
y	yh	Yhinks

The pattern described above is a sensitivity to and mimicry of the English orthography. In English, it is possible for a letter or sequence of letters to represent different sounds. For instance, the digraph *gh* represents the sound /f/ at the end of single-syllable single-morpheme words, such as *cough* (pronounced /kɒf/ in many dialects of American English). At the beginning of syllables (i.e. the syllable on-set), the digraph *gh* represents the sound /g/, such as in the word *ghost* (pronounced /gɒst/ or /gəʊst/). Again when representing a vowel, the letter 'y' in final positions represents the sound 'ee' in words which have been borrowed from Greek. However, the letter 'i' is usually used to represent this sound when used in non-Greek words. Thus, the word **myth** (pronounced /mɪθ/) is of Greek origin, while **pith** (pronounced /pɪθ/) is a Germanic word. Both words rhyme and the 'y' and the 'i' perform the same function. It is their origin which alters the representation of the sound in written English.

#### a. Reverse spelling

This process involves reversing the spelling of a name. In this process, the last letter of a name becomes the first letter, followed by the second to the last letter in that order. Examples are given below.

Name called	Customized form
Tade	Edat
Toore	Eroot
Tunde	Ednut
Sayò	O'yas
Dayò	O'yad
Fatimah	Hamitaf
Mutiat	Taitum

#### b. Segment swapping

This strategy involves re-arranging the letters or syllables of a name to create a new name.

The following are examples.

Name called	Customized form	Unit swapped
Dare	Daer	Segment <i>r</i> and <i>e</i>
Hannah	Nahhan	Syllable <i>nah</i> and <i>han</i>
Tóbi	T-boi	Segment <i>o,b, i</i>

#### c. Interlingual translation

This method involves literal translation of the meaning of a name in the source language to another language. Instances of use of this strategy relate to translation of Yorùbá name to English. The following are examples.

Name called	Customize form
Adùṅlọ́lá	Switney, Swtoney
Ọ́lá	Wealth
Diméjì	Turn Double, Turn Two
Dayọ	Turn Joy
ìfẹ́	Love
Oyinlọ́lá	Honeywealth

### Truncation

Some literature on morphology may refer to this process as clipping (cf. Ndimele, 2003) or shortening. (cf. Stockwell, R. And Minkova, D (2001)) Truncation is a process in which the relationship between a derived word and its base is expressed by loss of phonetic material. The process may take any part of a word and throw away the rest. The use of the process to customize name is idiosyncratic as any part of a name can make it to truncation. It is however systematic because any segment smaller than a syllable is ruled out as shown in the data given below

Name called	Customized form	Comments
Èbùn	Bun	Initial part of the original name thrown away
Fáṣọ́lá	Fash	The end part of the original name thrown away.
Jídé	Jid	The end part of the original name thrown away
Lémibóyè	Lembo,	The end part of the original name thrown away
Olùwáseun	Wase	The mid part of the original name retained
Rántí	Ant	The mid part of the original name retained
Pópọ́lá	Pop	The end part of the original name thrown away
Gloria	Glo	The end part of the original name thrown away
Yínká	Yink	The end part of the original name thrown away
Yéwándé	Yewa	The end part of the original name thrown away.
	Wand	Initial part of the original name thrown away

In some cases too, truncation may involve selection of non-adjacent segments of the real name while the remaining segments are thrown away. The products of this process may resemble initialisms or acronyms (see Ingo Plag, 2002).

Name called	Customized form
Tijááni	Tj
Tinúkẹ́	Tk, Tnk
Bọ́lájí	Bj
Oore-ọfẹ́	Ref
Kẹ́híndé	Ken

From the data given above, while the truncated forms of the names Tijááni, Tinúkẹ́, and Bọ́lájí look like initialisms, that of Oore-ọfẹ́ and Kẹ́híndé look like acronyms.

### d. Blending

Ndimele (2003) defines blending as a morphological process of creating a new word by combining parts of two or more already existing words in the same language. According to Diri (2002), such parts could be syllables or lesser units. In name customizing, blending involves creating a new name from a set of two (rarely three or more) names by arbitrarily taking a part of one name and joining it to a part of another name. The following are examples.

Name called	Customized form
Bím-bọ́l-á-Adé-báy-ọ	Bimbay
Dám-il-ọ-lá-Sál-à-k-ọ	Damsal
Shadé-Sal-udeen	Shasal
Seun Aníkúlápó	Sean

In some instances blending may involve retaining the initial letter of the first name and joining it to a part of the second name and vice versa. The following are examples.

Name called	Customized form
Dàpò Oyèbànjí	D'banj <sup>6</sup>
Bánkólé Wellington	BankyW
Tóoyìn Bello	T-Bell

#### e. Reduplication

Oyebade (2007: 247) defines reduplication as “an affixation process that copies material from the stem unto the affix. The copied material could be everything in the stem (and therefore full reduplication) or some of the elements in the stem (thus, a partial reduplication). The instances of reduplication process in this study is full reduplication. However, the process involves first all shortening the initial name to one or two syllables and then fully reduplicate the shortened form. Consider the following data.

Name called	Customized form
Shadé	Shasha
Joseph	Jojo
Yemí	Yemyem, Yeeye
Túndé	Tuntun
Jedidayah	Jèdíjèdí

#### f. Conversion

An instance of conversion attested in this study is what the researcher classifies as inter-language grapho-semantic conversion. The process involves converting, a word in language A (with distinct meaning) into a word in language B (with different meaning) based on the graphological structure of the word. For example, the spellings of the name **Désire** ‘born into favour’ resemble the spellings of the English word ‘desire’. As a result of the similarity, the name **Désire** is customized as **Desire**. Other examples are the following.

Name called	Customized form
Fúnshò “Given to cater for”	Fun show
Jóké	Joke
Jóké Sóméfun	Joke some fun
Mákindé	Man-kind

#### g. Initialism

Initialism is a special type of word creating strategy. It involves forming a new word from the first letter of each of several words denoting a single concept and pronouncing the letters of the word individually. It is observed that the youth also employ Initialism in customizing name. The following are examples.

Name called	Customized form
Kóláwọlé Kẹhíndé	K K
Táírù Kóládè	T K

#### h. Lexicalization of abbreviation

This strategy involves turning initialism and initialism-like truncated forms into lexical items.

Name called	Customized form	Customized form
Lanre Danbiri	L.D	Eldee
Bólájí	Bj	Beejay
Tínúkẹ	Tk	Teekay
Táírù Kóládè	T K	Teekay
Tóbi	Tb	Teebee
Kóláwọlé Kẹhíndé	KK	Kaykay
Jóláádé Gbóyèga	JG	Jaagee

**i. Mathematical Symbolization**

Mathematical symbols is referred to as sign representations relating to or used in mathematics. This style of customizing names is of different dimensions. Basically, the process involves customizing a name by combining mathematical and arithmetical symbols with letters. The following are examples.

Name called	Customized form
Fọlá	4lar, 4la
Jùwọ̀n	J1
Tẹ̀ní	Xn, Xny, Xnie, Xnee
Tutù	2-2
Kọ̀láwọ̀lé Kẹ̀hindé	$K^2$ , K-square.
Diméjì	D2
Àdió	Ad10

From the data given above, the following patterns are evident.

- The use of numeral to represent a syllable that has phonic similarity to that numeral in Yorùbá. From the examples given, **Fọ** (in Fọlá), **wọ̀n** (in Jùwọ̀n), **Tu**, **tù** (in Tutù), sound like pronouncing arithmetical figures **4,1**, and **2** respectively.
- The use of Roman figure to represent a syllable that has phonic similarity to that figure in Yorùbá. **X** is the Roman symbol for figure 'ten'. **Tẹ̀** (in Tẹ̀ní) is perceived to have some phonic similarity to the pronunciation of the word **ten** at least at the onset.
- Use of number to represent word. The full form of the name **Diméjì** is Ọ̀ládíméjì "Wealth has become two/double". The word **méjì** "two" is represented by the numeral **2**.
- The use of numeral to represent a sequence of letters or syllables that graphologically resembles numerals. From the data given, the last two syllables in the name **Àdió** look like figure 10.
- The use of mathematical symbol or word representing a multiple of a sign. Example:  $K^2$ , K-square.

**j. Transcription**

This method involves writing customized names in phonetic convention. The following are examples

Name called	Customized form A	Customized form B
Abimbola	Bembo	\`bembo:\`
Adebanjo	Banjo	\`bændzəu\`
Bankole wellington	BankyW	\`bæŋki`d.bliju:\`
Busrah	Bushrat	\`busræt\`
DamilolaSalako	Damsal	\`dæmsl\`
Désiré	Desire	\`di`zaiə\`
Omoboboola	Bobby	\`bɒbi\`

From the table presented above, the customized form **A** is the orthography representation of customized names while customized form **B** is the phonetic representation.

**k. Affixation**

Name customizing using affixation process involves prefixing or suffixing a letter, or a sequence of letters or a seemingly pronounceable unit (which may or may not have meaning in the language) to a part of an original name. In some cases the affixical item may resemble English affixes. The essence of such process is to make the customized name sound as English words. The following are some examples.



Name called	Customized form	Affixed segment
Yínká	Yinks	<u>s</u> surffixed to <u>Yink</u>
Bùkólá	Bukky	<u>y</u> surffixed to <u>Bukk</u> following respelling
Olá	Olly	<u>y</u> surffixed to <u>Oll</u>
Yomí	Yormex, Yommex	<u>ex</u> surffixed to <u>Yorm</u> <u>ex</u> surffixed to <u>Yomm</u> following respelling
Dúpé	Dupzy	<u>zy</u> surffixed to <u>Dup</u>
Dàpò	Dapson	<u>son</u> surffixed to <u>Dap</u>
Láńre	Lanny	<u>y</u> surffixed to <u>Lann</u> following respelling
Wòle	Wosco	<u>sco</u> surffixed to <u>Wo</u>
Fẹ̀mí	Femoo	<u>oo</u> surffixed to <u>Fem</u>
Sẹ̀yí	Seyustic	<u>ustic</u> surffixed to <u>Sey</u>
Mákindé	Makinson	<u>son</u> surffixed to <u>Makin</u>
Kòmóláfẹ̀	Mackom	<u>Mac</u> prefixed to <u>Kom</u>

(a)

**ome implications of name customizing on language.**

The phenomenon of name customizing may have immediate and long time implications on language, most especially the indigenous languages. The immediate implications is going to be felt on literacy. Name customizing is capable of complicating literacy. Evidences abound from the data presented in the work where phonological and orthography rules of Yorùbá are violated. For instance, Yorùbá marks tone, on syllable, it does not tolerate consonant cluster, and a word in Yorùbá does not end with consonant. In the data presented, the customized forms are not tone marked, graphemes **o** and **ẹ** are not subdotted in the customized names, and different letters are arbitrarily used to represent a given sound. For instance, the use of double consonants: *rr* as in *Larrah*, double *mm* as in *Khemmy*; substitution of English letter *q* for Yoruba *k* as in *Bouquilar* instead of *Bùkólá*; English *ph* for Yorùbá *f* as in *Phemmy* instead of *Fẹ̀mí*; and *ch* for *k* as in *Chemmy* instead of *Kẹ̀mí*; introduction of the consonant *r* after a vowel which is characteristic of English orthographic convention: *or*, *ar* as in *Phesayor* and *4lar* respectively instead of *Fisáyò* and *Folá* are clear demonstrations of endangerment of literacy in Yorùbá.

On the long time implication, what starts innocuously as name customizing may, in some years to come, suppress the cultural values of name. The situation may arise once a customized name has stucked. For instance, the real name of **D'banj**, a popular Nigerian singer, song writer, and harmonica is Adedàpò Oyèbánjò. Throughout the entertainment world today the bearer is known as D'banj. The whole information content of his real name identifying him as a Yorùba, whose mother is a princess and the father a prince<sup>7</sup>, is suppressed.

**III. CONCLUSION**

This research work has examined the phenomenon of name customizing among the Nigerian Youth and the linguistic creativity employed in customizing the names. The creativity could be employed by product manufacturers in branding their products. However the phenomenon could be a threat to literacy as there is some possibility of carrying name customizing writing conventions into normal everyday writing behaviours. Not only that, once a customized name has stucked, it could potentially suppress the information load of the original name.

**Notes:**

- [1] The concept of mass customization is attributed to Davis Stans in Future Perfect (David Stan, 1996). It was then further developed by Joseph Pine in his book, *Mass Customization: The Frontier in Business Competition*, 1993.
- [2] Gownder is the Vice President and Director at Forrester Research, USA.
- [3] Yorùbá is a language spoken in Nigeria. Although there is no official document giving the exact figure of Yoruba speakers in Nigeria, going by the population figures given for the thirty six states and the Federal Capital Territory, Abuja, in the Federal Republic of Nigeria Official Gazette (2009), the language would appear to have about thirty nine million mother-tongue and other tongues-speakers in Lagos, Ekiti, Ogun, Ondo, Osun and Oyo states and parts of Kwara, Kogi and Edo states in the country. It also has a substantial number of mother-tongue speakers in Togo and Benin Republic where it is a national language. The language also has a sizable number of speakers in Ghana, Ivory Coast, Liberia and Sierra Leone. Beyond Africa, it is spoken in Bahrain in Brazil, Argentina, Cuba, West Indies and America. It is the sixth most

spoken language in the world (Fafunwa, 2008). In Nigeria, Yoruba together with Hausa and Igbo constitutes between 60 - 70% of Nigeria's population (Bamgbose, 1992).

- [4] Such name could be a reduced form of a longer name . For instance, the name 'Yòmí' could be a reduced form of 'Olúwáyòmí' or 'Ògúnyòmí' .or 'Olórúnyòmí' .
- [5] Yorùbá has seven oral vowels (a, e, ẹ, i, o, ọ, u); five nasalized vowels (an, ẹn, ọn, in, un); and eighteen consonants (b, d, f, g, gb, h, j, k, l, m, n, p, r, s, Ẹ, t, w, y). The **o**, **ẹ**, and **Ẹ** are not subdotted in name customizing. This creates ambiguity and for substitution of **e** for **ẹ** and **o** for **o**.and **s** for **Ẹ**. The customized names are also not also tone marked. These probably suggest poor knowledge of the orthography of the language by the younger generation of Yorùbá.
- [6] D'banj and BankyW are popular Nigerian musicians of Yorùbá descent
- [7] Adédàpò means *crown has joined together*. The import of the name is that the child is carrying a double royalty: the father being a prince and the mother, a princess.

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