PERSONAL NAMES IN IGBO DICTIONARIES

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Abstract

Marconi (1990) citing Rey-Debove (1971: 88) asserts that "proper nouns are in principle excluded from a dictionary of language". Different reasons for this omission exist in the literature of lexicography (Zgusta 1971: 246, Rey-Debove 1971, e.t.c.), whereas other scholars like Mufwene (1988) argue that there is indeed need for the inclusion of proper names in dictionaries. This paper highlights the lexicographic tradition of inclusion and omission of personal names (a type of proper names) in Igbo dictionaries and dictionaries of other languages. Consequently, three (3) Igbo dictionaries are surveyed in this study, and it is observed that just like in dictionaries of other languages, personal names are not listed as entries in Igbo dictionaries. Finally, it is observed that other lexicographic materials which focus solely on Igbo personal names exist for Igbo.

1.0 Introduction

To name something, as far as human attention goes, is to make it. The unnamed is the unnoticed, and the unnoticed is for cognitive and communicative purposes nonexistent. Willems has stated, "proper names are complex signs with specific linguistic, pragmatic, logical, philosophical, semiotic, historical, psychological, social, and juridical properties, and hence represent a vast interdisciplinary field of study" (2000, 86). Indeed "the ramifications of naming are ... vastly complicated, and [naming] represents a much larger segment of human activity than is usually recognized" (Stewart and Pulgram 1971 cited in Zelinsky 2002: 243). The discipline most concerned with names is onomastics. Different disciplines are connected (trivially or seriously) to the study of names. These disciplines include, anthropology, sociology, business, cartography, genealogy, folklore, history, psychology, religion, orthography and orthoepy, lexicography, literature, linguistics, and philosophy (Algeo and Algeo 2000). Our interest dwells on the latter two disciplines (linguistics and philosophy). In linguistics, a major issue concerns how proper names have been distinguished from common names and the ramification for this distinction. Algeo and Algeo (2000: 267) argue that if lexicography has found a principled basis for excluding proper names from its purview, linguistics has often done so in an unprincipled way, simply by ignoring the data. Yet proper names are a part of language, and a very important part, which require attention. Furthermore, they assert that proper names are also a significant source of other words in the vocabulary by the derivational process of commonization, such as *zipper* from a trademark. Additionally, they opine that a major theoretical dispute in lexicography is whether a dictionary should list only common nouns, leaving proper nouns to the encyclopedia.

Because dictionary users often look for proper names, however, some contemporary user-friendly (or marketing-conscious) dictionaries enter them in their main body; others list but segregate them in appendices of personal names and place names.

This work shall continue in three (3) sections. Section 2.0 shall review literature on proper names, old and contemporary lexicographic tradition of proper names (with a focus on the historical influences, motivations and arguments for the omission of personal names from dictionaries). Consequently, an examination of the lexicographic tradition in Igbo dictionaries is done in section 3.0. Finally, section 4 summarizes and concludes the paper.

2.0. What are Proper names?

Van Langendonck and Van de Velde (2016) assert that the individual use of names may form an important part of the theory of 'onomastics'. Nevertheless, most if not all scholars within the field of onomastics refer to (proper) names, common nouns, though seldom pronouns, without defining these nominal categories. It is apparently left to the speaker to determine what a name is in discourse since grammarians are sometimes said to just make a mess of it. Hough (2016: 22) opines that the study of names, known as 'onomastics', is both an old and a young discipline. Since Ancient Greece, names have been regarded as central to the study of language, throwing light on how humans communicate with each other and organize their world. Socrates, Plato, Aristotle, and others were keenly interested in the relationship between names and referents, and this has continued to be a major theme of both philosophical and linguistic enquiry throughout the history of Western thought.

The investigation of name origins, on the other hand, is more recent, not developing until the twentieth century in some areas, and being still today at a formative stage in others. Theoretical linguists have often treated proper names as the poor cousin of other grammatical categories. It is generally agreed among both linguists and anthropologists (Bean 1980, Akinnasao 1980) that proper names are a universal linguistic category. Some evidence for making a distinction between proper names and common nouns may be found in the context of the animacy hierarchy. So called split ergative languages may exhibit a different case marking system (nominative-accusative) for pronouns and proper names than for common nouns (ergative-absolutive). Nevertheless, as Croft (1990 cited in Van Langendonck 2007: 2) notes, only few data about proper names are available in the linguistic typological literature because "most grammatical descriptions do not include information on proper names."

Van Langendonck (2007: 17) also notes that ever since Antiquity, it has been held that proper names are nouns (or possibly noun phrases). However, few scholars seem to dispute the thesis that proper names are nouns or at least nominal expressions. As to their referential status, proper names function as designators for entities in a broad sense, and since a thing is designated by a noun (Langacker 1987 cited in Van Langendonck 2007: 17), they must be considered nouns from a semantic perspective. The definition of proper names has always been an elusive concept in the study of language. Blanár (2014) defines a proper name as a vocabulary element of a particular language which also belongs to a respective onymic subsystem, thereby acquiring a binary character while noting that proper names are formed (as a secondary plan of a language) with the background of appellative vocabulary. Pulgram (1954) defines a proper name as a noun used . . . in a non-universal function, with or without recognizable current lexical value, of which the potential meaning coincides with and never exceeds its actual meaning, and which is attached as a label to one animate being or one inanimate object (or to more than one in the case of collective names) for the purpose of specific distinction from among a number of like or in some respects similar beings or objects that are either in no manner distinguished from one another or, for our interest, not sufficiently distinguished (cited in Zelinsky 2002: 245). He goes further to assert that "by its very nature, the domain of names is fuzzily bounded." Bean (1980) citing Mill (1889) opines that most philosophers of language agree that proper names, distinct from common names, function to denote particulars, i.e., individuals, entities, or members of classes. She goes further in noting that two fundamentally opposed accounts of how proper names fulfil this function have been debated. On one hand, proper names simply stand for something, but in no particular respect, in the other proper names are shorthand definite descriptions. This first point of view is prominently represented by J.S. Mill who claims that proper names denote the individuals who are called by them; but they do not indicate or imply any attributes as belonging to those individuals (Mill 1889 cited in Bean 1980: 306). To illustrate this point Mill gave an example:

> ...a town may have been named Dartmouth, because it is situated at the mouth of river Dart....If sand should choke up the mouth of the river, or an earthquake change its course, and remove it to a distance from the town, the name of the town would not necessarily be changed. The fact (of being situated at the mouth of river Dart) therefore, can form no part of the signification of the word: for otherwise, when the fact ceased to be true, no one would any longer think of applying the name (Mill 1889 cited in Bean 1980: 306)

For Mill, proper names are attached to the objects themselves, and are not dependent on the continuance of any attribute of the object. Fundamentally, proper names simply stand for their bearer; whether they signify some attribute(s) of the bearer is secondary.

On the other hand, others have argued that proper names do indeed signify, that is, have senses. In this view, proper names denote individuals by functioning as shorthand for, or equivalent to, definite descriptions of their bearers, for example, Aristotle signifies, is short for, 'the pupil of Plato', 'a teacher of Alexander the Great'. A strong argument in support of this view is that a proper name may be used to refer to the same object on different occasions; therefore, the users of the name must have some way of being able to identify the object for which it stands as being the same on multiple occasions (Searle 1969: 167, 168). Additionally, Van Langendonck and Van de Velde (2016: 18) applying to the essence of 'properhood' from a semantic-pragmatic point of view, regard a name as a nominal expression that denotes a unique entity at the level of established linguistic convention to make it psychosocially salient within a given basic level category. The meaning of the name, if any, does not (or not any longer) determine its denotation (Van Langendonck 2007: 125). However, Van Langendonck and Van Verde (2016: 38) conclude that proper names are nouns with unique denotation, they are definite, have no restrictive relative modifiers, and occupy a special place in anaphoric relations. They display an inherent basic level and can be argued to be the most prototypical nominal category. Names have no defining sense. They can have connotative meanings, but this has little grammatical relevance.

Works like Stewart and Pulgram (1971), Zelinsky (2002: 248, 253-258), Van Langendonck (2007: 183-255) and Langendonck and Van de Velde (2016: 33-38) have attempted a taxonomy of proper names. For Stewart and Pulgram (1971) and Zelinsky (2002), proper names can broadly be classified into the following groups:

a. Personal names;
b. Quasi-personal names (as for pets, dolls, ships);
c. Names for things not definitely personified but individualized (e.g., marker stones or trees);
d. Place names;
e. Names of tribes, groups, etc.;
f. Names of institutions and corporations;
g. Titles, i.e., the names of books and other works of art;
h. Brand names, e.g., Coca Cola, Vaseline;
i. Names of events in history, e.g., the Sicilian Vespers, the Renaissance;
j. Names of abstractions not personified, e.g., Stoicism.

Langendonck and Van de Velde (2016) in their partial taxonomy of proper names outline the following:

a. Personal names
b. Place names
c. Names of months
d. Trade and brand names
e. Numbers
f. Names of diseases and biological species
g. Autonyms

Similarly, Langendonck (2007: 184) uses a cognitive approach in his taxonomy of proper names and conclude that we have four major subclasses, which can be regarded as constituting a cline. First, there is the most important (prototypical) class mostly displaying a clear proprial (refers to a proper noun or a proper name) lemma: personal names, animal names, place names and a few others. Second, there is the category of non prototypical proper names with various kinds of lemmas that underlie appellatives as well as proper names. These compare more or less to the class of so-called 'appellative proper names': names of brands, languages, colors, diseases, and the like. The dictionary entries underlying these categories can be called proprioappellative lemmas. The third and fourth classes are marginal categories that are not constituted by an *ad hoc* proprial or proprio-appellative lemma, i.e., autonyms (metalinguistic names like *bank* in the appositional structure *the word 'bank* ') and nouns with a restricted proprial function, e.g., the second noun in appositional structures of the form *the notion of relator; the element gold,* where we find an appellative lemma. From the foregoing, it is apparent that all the classifications of proper names include and, in most cases, starts with ‘personal names’. We tend to agree with Langendonck and Van de Velde (2016: 33) who believe that personal names are arguably the most prototypical names. Furthermore, the number and types of names that are bestowed on people are highly culture specific, as are the principles that guide the choice of a name. At this point, it would be prudent to state that since ‘personal names’ is the most prototypical of the category ‘proper names’, we shall at intervals use either of both terms to mean the same thing. In the next section, we discuss the different lexicographic positions on the inclusion of names in dictionaries while highlighting the major reasons and argument in the literature.

2.1. Proper Names and Lexicography

Marconi (1990: 77) suggests that proper names enjoy a special status from the lexicographer's viewpoint, and it is usually a negative status because proper names do not

occur in modern dictionaries, or in the main list while citing examples like the English OED, the French Littré 1876, the German Grimm 1854-1960 among others which do not include proper names. There seems to be a general consensus in modern theories of lexicography that dictionaries do not and should not include proper nouns. Most notably, Zgusta (1971: 118, 246) notes that they should be included only in case (a) they have developed into appellatives ("a Don Quijote"), or (b) the dictionary in the making is a dictionary of a dead language, or (c) of a language lacking a long literary tradition. In the latter two cases they should be listed "only with a short indication of the categorial member ship" (such as "family name," "place name," etc.). According to Zgusta, that they represent "an encyclopedic element in the dictionary." Marconi (1990) notes that Migliorini (1961) appears to have correctly represented what still is the state of the art when he stated that "on one thing lexicographers agree at this point: proper names of persons and places should be excluded from dictionaries (or dealt with in special appendices)". Similarly, Grant (2016: 573) reveals that historically, lexicographers have tended to consider onomastic material as beyond the scope of their dictionaries. In the eighteenth century, Samuel Johnson explained in the preface to his *A Dictionary of the English Language* that:

> As my design was a dictionary, common or appellative, I have omitted all words which have relation to proper names; such as *Arian, Socinian, Calvinist, Benedictine, Mahometan*; but have retained those of a more general nature, as *Heathen, Pagan* (Johnson 1755 cited in Grant 2016: 572).

A similar approach was taken more than a century later by James Murray, the first editor of the original edition of the *Oxford English Dictionary* (hereafter *OED*), who explained in his introduction to the first volume that:

> In addition to, and behind, the common vocabulary, in all its diverging lines, lies an infinite number of *Proper* or merely *denotative* names, outside the province of lexicography, yet touching it in thousands of points. (Murray *et al.* 1888–1928 cited in Grant 2016: 572)

Furthermore, Mufwene (1988: 269) maintains that Rey-Debove (1971), for instance, goes as far as to claim that proper names should, more properly, be the concern of encyclopaedias, which provide non-linguistic information, rather than of dictionaries. He believes that one of the arguments adduced in support of the common relegation of proper names to encyclopaedias is the fact that they are normally used in discourse as referential indices, because their referents vary from network to network of interlocutors (e.g., family, friends,

classmates, colleagues). Also, in the case of some languages (particularly those that do not have gender distinctions and a formal number agreement rule between the subject and the verb), one of the most useful pieces of linguistic information that can be provided about a proper name is just 'proper name'. Thus, proper names should, or may, be omitted from dictionaries. Underlying the lexicographic position for the omission of proper names from dictionaries is also the assumption that the speaker's knowledge of proper names is not really part of his/her knowledge of language, or proper names are nouns only in a special kind of way and function as such only peripherally (Rey-Debove 1971 cited in Mufwene 1988: 270).

Interestingly, Marconi (1990: 78) believes that proper names used to be in dictionaries before they were taken out. In an attempt to answer the question of when and why proper names stopped appearing in dictionaries, he notes that before 1700, 77% of the dictionaries had proper names in the main list, 23% lacked them or kept them separate; after 1700, 37% had them, 63% lacked them. It should be added that, among 39 dictionaries which lacked proper names before 1700, 6 were phraseologies (thus closer to conversation manuals than to modern dictionaries), and 8 were "methodic" (arranged by semantic field rather than alphabetically). On the other hand, of 18 dictionaries later than 1700 which did have proper names, 8 were English; and English lexicography was generally retarded with respect to the dominant trends of European lexicography. Marconi maintains that in the 16th, 17th and even early 18th centuries there was a market pressure in favour of proper names in dictionaries. Consequently, most lexicographers, succumbed to such pressure, so that most dictionaries had proper names in the main list, and some of those which lacked them added them in later editions (p.83). Consequently, he opines that the reason for the subsequent omission of names from dictionaries was twofold. First, the exclusion of proper names from dictionaries was a prerequisite for the emergence of the modern encyclopaedia, because as long as proper names occurred in the dictionaries' lemmaries it was particularly hard to separate core knowledge about words which could be regarded as constitutive of linguistic competence from additional information which could be seen as "factual," or "non-linguistic" (the information that cats are animals as opposed to the information that Manx cats have no tail). This is because proper names were glossed by mostly "factual" information. Secondly, proper names were the victims of the emergence of meaning as the crucial business of dictionaries. Earlier dictionaries (from the beginning of the Christian era until late 17th century) were not much concerned with "giving the meaning" in the sense in which modern dictionaries are, or think they are. As soon as preoccupation with meanings became prominent and that was an effect of the ideational theory among other factors proper names had to go, because it seemed clear

that, even if they had meanings, such meanings were not easily accounted for along the methodological lines which were, at that point, established (Marconi 1990: 87,88).

On the contrary, Mufwene (1988) addresses the question of whether or not proper names deserve as much to be entered in the dictionary as common nouns and other kinds of lexical units. He refers to a *dictionary* as a compendium of information about lexical units as *linguistic signs* while maintaining that dictionaries have treated proper nouns in three different ways:

1. omit them, except for those that are also used as common nouns or parts thereof (e.g., *Venus, Venus's comb),* or define these common-noun uses and thereby possibly refer to the particular individuals or circumstances which have led to such derivative uses, as in the *Oxford English Dictionary* (OED, compact edition 1971), in *Webster's Third New International Dictionary of the English Language Unabridged* (1961), and in most French dictionaries;
2. include them as a bonus at the end of the dictionary and A) identify as briefly as possible some famous individuals or places they name (e.g., *'Einstein, Albert,* German-born physicist, became Am. citizen (1940), received Nobel prize (1921)', or *"Aristotle...*Greek philosopher') as in *Webster's New Twentieth Century Dictionary* (WNTCD 1979), or B) specify whether they are male or female names and indicate their pronunciations (e.g., *'Amy* (f.) ['eimi]') as in Hornby's (1963) *Advanced Learner's Dictionary of Current English;*
3. include the most common ones (native and non-native) because they are also lexical units/linguistic signs, and provide, among other things, some linguistic information about them (e.g., 'John1 (j^n). A masculine given name...'), as in *The American Heritage Dictionary of the English Language* (AHD 1969) (cf. Mufwene 1988: 269).

Crucial to his argument for the inclusion of proper names is his position on the status of proper names as linguistic signs. He insists that proper names and their derivative adjectives are linguistic signs. Thus, they are constrained in the same way as common nouns and the adjectives which are derived from them. Additionally, he affirms that their usage presupposes the same kind of linguistic knowledge that is required to be able to use common nouns, regarding, e.g., pronunciation, spelling, grammatical number, gender, and delimitative possibilities. So far, we have highlighted the various motivations and arguments for and

against the inclusion of proper nouns in contemporary dictionaries. In the subsequent section, we observe the trend of omission of proper names in three major Igbo dictionaries and argue that there is indeed need for their inclusion.

3.0 Personal names in Igbo dictionaries

This section focuses on how personal names have been treated in Igbo dictionaries. For the purpose of this study, three dictionaries were used. They include the Igbo dictionary by Echeruo (2001) which was revised and reprinted in 2003 (the edition used for this work), Igwe's (1999) dictionary and Kay Williamson's (1972) dictionary of Ọ̀nị̀chà Igbo which was edited and published as a manuscript by Roger Blench in 2006. The motivation behind the choice of these three dictionaries are two-fold. First and foremost, they are the most recent dictionaries of the language which in itself represents the current lexicographic tradition in the language. Furthermore, they are also the most comprehensive dictionaries of Igbo till date. The system of tone-marking introduced by Green and Igwe (1964), which uses only two tone-marks (low and downstep) has been employed in this paper. The next paragraph shall highlight some primary features of the three dictionaries used for the study. Subsequently, how each dictionary has treated personal names shall be focused on. In doing so, we make a case for the inclusion of personal names while revisiting vital arguments against their inclusion in contemporary literature.

On the nature of these dictionaries, a few observations can be made. Echeruo (2003) includes an English-Igbo finderlist and although it aims to be comprehensive (the Igbo-English section is pages 3-175) and does not identify with a specific dialect although locations are occasionally marked after particular lexical entries. His dictionary marks the subdotted vowels with a diaeresis, thus *ụ* appears as *üi*, tones are marked with bracketed symbols following the word, thus (HL). Downstep, rising and falling tones are not marked. Also, the dictionary is virtually without scientific names or cultural vocabulary. Igwe (1999) on the other hand, does not include an English-Igbo finderlist despite being very comprehensive (the Igbo-English section is pages 1-845) and draws on many dialects with particular emphasis on Central dialects. In the dictionary, vowels are marked with subdots as in Williamson (1972). In Williamson (1972) and Igwe (1999), the low, downstep, rising and falling tones are marked leaving the high tone unmarked. Additionally, this dictionary contains limited scientific names and technical vocabulary. The most striking feature of Igwe (1999) is it uses a very wide array of consonant symbols for aspiration and nasalisation that are distinctive for some Igbo dialects. This is evident because it includes words from many

dialects. Chukwuogor (2020: 189) observes that "Igwe (1999) comprises 845 pages, whereas Echeruo (2001) consists of 283 pages. Clearly, both dictionaries are not of the same size with Igwe (1999) being the larger dictionary with obviously more entries and possibly more examples. Echeruo (2001), while being an Igbo-English dictionary, also contains an English-Igbo index. This, in itself, represents a brief English-Igbo dictionary, in which the English equivalents of the headwords in the (main) dictionary are listed, and their Igbo equivalents provided. Igwe (1999) on the other hand does not have an English-Igbo part." However, both Echeruo (1997) and Igwe (1999) have many more headwords than Williamson (1972) because the dictionary tends to include all derived forms under a single headword whereas Echeruo and Igwe list derived forms as separate entries.

In order to fully understand how these dictionaries have treated the addition of personal names as headwords, it is prudent to first examine the comments in the front matter with regards to personal names in these respective dictionaries. Based on this, Igwe (1999: LVII) confirms the exclusion of names with the comment "personal and place names are not listed but occur in illustrative examples...names of plants and animals are limited to what was available at the time of making the dictionary." Judging from the foregoing, the dictionary excludes personal and place names as dictionary entries but uses them as examples. However, other proper names appear in the dictionary albeit sparingly. In the front matter of Williamson (1972), there is no comment on personal names or even place names. Similarly, Echeruo (2003: xii) makes no mention of personal names as entries in the dictionary but highlights the need for an established standard method of writing personal and place names. However, these three dictionaries possess a few proper names in their entries.

In Igwe's dictionary, the following proper names are listed as entries: names of Gods like, *Abịààmà* (the bringer of good), *Chi* (god, guardian deity, goddess; fate, fortune; doom; providence), *Chinèkè* (God, God-and-Creator), *Chukwu* (God, Great God), *Òkwè* (deity), *Ekweñsu* (Satan, Lucifer, god of misfortune; the devil; and evil person, deciever, misleader, tempter), *Òrìsà* (God; the Great God), *Òsebùlùụ̀wà* (the Great God), *Ògwùgwù* (a god believed to impart life), *Òselogbūè* (God); day of the week like, *Otùngaozī* (Saturday); and market days like (*Èk'e, Oriè, Àfọ̀, Ǹkwọ*) which make up the Igbo week. Also, the place name *Òwèrè* (Owerri) is listed as entry after stating that personal and place names would be omitted. In addition to the market day names (*Èke, Oriè, Àfọ̀, Ǹkwọ*) and names of Gods like *Chi, Chinèkè, Chukwu, Ekweñsu, Chinèkè, Òlìsà, Ògwùgwù* (described as a goddess of fertility; in some areas, god of fire and iron), and *Òsebùlùụ̀wà*, Echeruo's dictionary has more proper names like, *Ahïajökü* (Yam god; New Yam festival), *Àní/Àná/Àlà* (Earth goddess),

Èbù (name of a river goddess), *Ǹgụ̀mà* (name of a goddess dressed as a guard at the entrance to an Mbari shrine), *Ǹjọkụ* (Yam God), *Ọ̀bàsị̀* (God, or supreme god), *Udo* (god of smallpox), *Ụ̀kpabị̀* (name for God, or Supreme Being), *Ụmụnè* (god of family peace), *Agwụ̀* (deity, god of madness), *agwụ̀ ǹsì* (god of evil(poison);patron spirit of quacks and fortune tellers), *Akpụ* (a god or deity to which the Akpụ tree is dedictated), *Ama* (god; spirit), *Àmadị̀hà* (god of thunder), *Ekè* (the deity that allows fate, otherwise known as the creator God), *Èrù* (the god of wealth), *Igwe* (name of the Sky God). The dictionary lists the following personal names: *Àrị ǹzè* (but for the grace of...; thanks to...) and, *Jìde ọfọ* (be innocent, be guiltless; claim innocence 'before god and man'). It is important to note that in both dictionaries, Igbo personal names are frequently used in the examples and not as headwords or sublemmas. It suffices to say that both dictionaries contain little to no proper names.

Unlike Echeruo and Igwe's dictionaries, Williamson's dictionary contains considerably more proper names, including personal and place names. In Williamson's dictionary, the following place names are listed: *Àba* (Aba), *Àràbà* (Asaba), *Ọ̀nị̀chà* (Onitsha), *Enugwū* (Enugu), *Ọka* (Awka), *Òwèlè/Òwèrè* (Owerri), *Ọ̀bà* (name of a town), Ugbokō (name of a town in Bendel State), *Ùkè* (name of a town and its market), *Afrịkà* (Africa), *Àlàhambrà* (name of a particular small market in Onitsha, now replaced by Ọchàǹjà), *Ǹrì* (settlement of Nri, founded by Nri son of Èrì, and its people; {more loosely} people who claim some kind of relationship with Nri). Just like in the other dictionaries, this dictionary also lists names of gods like *Àgbàtà* (a god), *Udō* (very powerful divinity), whose worship is controlled by the Ọbịọ clan and before whom a king-elect of Onitsha must perform various rituals) as well as similar entries found in the other dictionaries used for this study. It is noteworthy to observe that Williamson's dictionary contains more personal names than any other dictionary of the language. Personal names listed in the dictionary includes but not limited to the following: *Agụnyego* (name for a child believed to be an ọgbañje), *Agbàlà* (male name), *Àgbàtà* (male name), *Àgbọ̀mmā* (female name), *Deì* (name of one of the founding fathers of one of the nine quarters of Onitsha), *Ebō* (male name; short for *Ebōzinam*), *Ngọzi* (male and female name), *Àda ị̀bà* (female name), *Ekwu tọ̀sị̀* (female name), *Ụ̀ba* (male name), *Ọ̀bị̀àgèèlìàkù* (name for a girl born into a wealthy family), *Ǹdìdì* (personal name), Ǹnọ̀dụ (shortened form of the name *Nọ̀dụlụm* or *Nọ̀nyelụm*) and *Ọ̀fọ* (male name). In addition to listing over 80 personal names, Williamson's dictionary goes further to indicate not just the meanings of the names, but the usage of the personal names based on gender.

Based on the brief discussion of these three dictionaries' treatment of personal names, it is apparent that there seems to be no form of consensus on whether personal names should

or should not be included in Igbo dictionaries. It is quite difficult to argue whether the current situation is a positive or detrimental one for the language. However, one can easily deduce that more of the Igbo lexicographers have opted to exclude information on personal names from their dictionaries. Plausible reasons for this choice have been highlighted in the literature and we believe that in the case of Igbo lexicography, instead of omitting personal names from dictionaries, they should indeed be included as entries. In support of this position, we give three reasons why this should be case. The first and probably the most important reason why personal names have been excluded from most Igbo dictionaries is related to the nature of the language at both the morphological, syntactic and semantic level. On the structure of linguistic forms in the language, the lexicographer would be faced with the choice of including all derived forms under a single headword or listing derived forms as separate entries. The implication for this would in turn affect the inclusion of Igbo personal names as they are mostly derived. However, this is not to say that there are no compositionally formed names in the language. Dwelling on the value of personal names in dictionaries, some scholars opine that personal names are arguably less useful to the lexicographer than either place-names or surnames. As Kitson (2002: 99) notes, even as far back as the Anglo-Saxon period, such names often lacked lexical meaning, and when 'combining elements to make whole names, associations of elements were far more important than any idea of through-composed meaning'. Akinnaso (1980: 275, 276) argues against his position that in the modern era, personal names are usually semantically opaque, and hold no intrinsic information about their bearers by stating that it typifies the European conception of the semantic content of personal names. He goes further to assert that a personal name can have semantic content and reflect real world knowledge especially in Africa, India, China, and several Oceanic communities where personal names signal various forms of socio-cultural information. It goes without saying, that Igbo clearly falls into this category. So, the argument that personal names are not relevant in dictionaries because of their semantic content ought not apply to a language like Igbo.

Furthermore, we find another reason supporting the inclusion of personal names in Igbo dictionaries in the dictionary-encyclopaedia dichotomy. Over the years, one of the arguments for the removal of personal names from dictionaries was "personal names belong in an encyclopaedia and not dictionaries." Although current linguistic theories note that the distinction between dictionary knowledge and encyclopaedic knowledge is quite fluid and fuzzy, we do not intend to continue this debate. However, it is prudent to point out that no encyclopaedia currently exists in the language. So, it sounds illogical to say the reason for the

omission of personal names from Igbo dictionaries is to include them in an encyclopaedia of the language. Even if that were the case, would it not be more productive to include them first until an encyclopaedia of the language is produced? Mainly because, this conforms with the development path of quite a number of European dictionaries and encyclopaedias. It is also important to note that part of the problem stems from the nature of the current dictionaries in the language. This is a consequence of the fact that the current dictionaries in question are not only general purpose and bilingual, but they fail to specify the target audience or prospective users of the dictionaries.

Finally, we also believe that since most of the current dictionaries place no clear emphasis on borrowed words, there is need to augment the lack of information with personal names. Consequently, this can give an insight to etymological and historical formation of certain nouns. Additionally, this can only be a boost towards the maintenance of the language which many claim to be potentially endangered.

4.0 Summary and Conclusion

Van Langendonck (2007: 3) confirms that intuitively, proper names seem to show a kind of *ad hoc* status. This is already clear from the fact that, as a rule, proper names are missing in ordinary dictionaries. In the previous sections, we showed how this position came to be and the different arguments therein. Furthermore, after examining three Igbo dictionaries, we noticed that two (Igwe and Echeruo's dictionaries) contained very little onomastic material, whereas Williamson's dictionary listed considerably more proper names. Based on this, we argue that in spite of the reasons for omitting personal names in Igbo dictionaries, the semantic content of Igbo personal names, the lack of encyclopaedias in the language and the need to preserve and promote the language are sufficient reasons for their inclusion. Writing just after the completion of the first edition of the *OED*, Allen Mawer (1930) reflected on how much work in the field of English lexicography still remained to be done. Quite apart from the likelihood of new words or earlier examples of words already known being found in texts as yet unprinted or even unknown, there are a large number of known sources which remain as yet almost entirely untapped. One of those sources is to be found in place-names . . . Another rich mine which is as yet almost entirely unexplored is that of personal names (cf. Grant 2016: 573). Evidently, this seems to be the case in Igbo lexicography. Hence, we tend to agree with Grant (2016) in noting that regardless of whether or not 'proper' names ought to be included in dictionaries, a major disadvantage of this

general trend towards the exclusion of onomastic material from consideration is the loss of much valuable information which could be gleaned from these 'thousands of points'.

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