Onomastics and Translation: The Case of Igbo→English Translation of Chi Names

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ABSTRACT

The reoccurrence of chi or chukwu affixes in Igbo names has both cultural and religious undertones. Be it used as chi or chukwu, both are variations of allusions to a higher being as the Igbo race believes in a pantheon of gods that govern human existence, the highest being Chi. The thrust of this paper is to apply onomastics in the translation of chi names in Igbo. Chi names will be grouped according to the function they perform in Igbo land. Data will be collected from the names of 30 students with chi affixes in the Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka, Anambra State, Nigeria. The data will be classified in five groups according to the nature of the name and the function it is assumed to play in the life of the bearer. The qualitative research method will be used to translate, analyze and explain the data from the anthroponomical, semiotic and linguistic perspectives to show that contrary to the view held in some Western circles that names are obscure and may consist of words that can hardly be interpreted or translated, they, as symbols or signs in Igbo land (or even sub-Saharan African as a whole), are translatable since among the Niger-Congo language family, names have particular psycho-spiritual functions that are expressed through the "signs" that they represent.

Keywords: Anthroponymia, translation, symbol, sign, culture.

INTRODUCTION

According to Richard Coates (2005), Secretary of the International Council of Onomastic Sciences (ICOS), names can be hugely culturally and politically important because when they are used, they pick out a single entity from a crowd. Coates (2005) argues, however, that in the Western world,

many names are obscure and do not consist of words that can be interpreted or translated as they stand. Examples of such names include: Warsaw, Neptune. But could this be the case in a situation where the languages (in this case Igbo and English) belong to two very different language categories? While the Igbo language is of the Niger-Congo family and confined to the South East of Nigeria, the English language is Germanic and of the vast Indo-European family with world-wide spread and influences.

To Coates (2005), nevertheless, and much against the view held in Igbo land, proper names have become meaningless or, at least, they no longer "mean" what they should mean in the same way as ordinary words may make meaning. In other words, if a name appears to consist of ordinary words, it may be difficult to equate what it apparently means with what it can refer to. Coates (2005) uses the example of the place-name County Oak in England which was the name of an oak-tree which stood on a county boundary. The oak died and the boundary was moved, but the name has remained as the name of the community that grew up near where the original oak-tree was. So when the name County Oak is used, the speaker is neither directly referring to the original oak-tree nor is s/he using the meanings of the two words which are still ordinary words of English.

Yet, in situations of language contact (Hausa-English; Hausa-French; Igbo-English; Yoruba-French; Yoruba-English; Swahili-English; Swahili-French; Lingala-French; Sango-French; Xhosa-English; Malinke-French; Ewe-English; Ewe-French; Arabic-French; Arabic-English; Italian-English; French-Italian; English-German; Spanish-French, etc.), code-switching and translation generally occur and give rise to the translation of proper names. As a general translation rule, however, only the following categories of proper names can be translated. They include:

i.   Biblical proper names (Genesis, Moses, Isaac, Peter, etc.);
ii.   Proper names of Greco-roman origin (Spain, England, Italy, etc.);
iii.   Names of geographical locations/countries of colonial origin (South Africa, North America, Algeria, Chad, Columbia, Brazil, etc.);
iv.   Names of historical sites/events (The Great Wall, World War 1, Olympic Games, etc.);
v.   Names and abbreviations of institutions (OPEC, EU, AU, UNO, WHO, etc.); and
vi.   Days of the week/months of the year.

Inasmuch as names in the Western world cannot be said to be the same as other expressions in ordinary language, the perception and practice in Igbo land consider names to be meaningful because the Igbo believe that one's name, especially with a **chi** affix explains one's destiny or situation as it

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generally carries one's hopes, fears, joy, sorrows and grievances in life (Achebe, 1975:96). To translate such names from Igbo to English will certainly allow non-Igbo speakers/readers/listeners to get a deeper insight into the import of such proper names.

This is what this study seeks to bring to the fore through anthroponymia which is that aspect of onomastics that studies and explains the meanings, interpretation or translation of names of persons, in this case, chi names in Igbo land. Toponymia, in onomastics, studies the meanings, interpretation or translation of the names of places. Our study, which is purely anthroponomical, seeks to translate/interpret Igbo names with chi affixes into English with a view to bringing out their meanings.

The inductive method will be used to provide a basis for empirical inquiries from primary sources through observation and interviews of 30 Igbo respondents chosen at random (15 young male and 15 young female students of between 17 and 35 years of age) who have names with chi affixes in the Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka, Anambra State, Nigeria. The observation and interviews were carried out almost simultaneously at the locations chosen by the different respondents or groups of respondents. The deductive method will, for its part, provide the study with secondary data to support and/or explain whatever evidence that was drawn from the primary sources. The chi names will be put in five groups, according to the function they perform in Igbo land. The qualitative research method will be used to analyze the data from both anthroponomical, semiotic, linguistic and interpretative perspectives.

Literature review

Though it may be rare to find studies on chi names or their translation, other studies on proper names have been carried out (from Antiquity to date) from different perspectives by different scholars around the world. According to Blanár (2009), Ancient Greek philosophers were some of the earliest to carry out studies on proper names. Aristotle, for instance, distinguished between appellatives and propria. In his review of earlier studies on proper names, Blanár (2009:92-94) highlights proper names as a specific category of language which was defined by the Stoics (Chrysippos and Diogenes of 2nd-1st centuries BC Babylon). He posits that though the Stoics provided the first definition of proper names as designating an individual whose certain meaning is embodied in her/his specific characteristics (individual lekton), it was Aurelius Augustinus who first provided the semiotic meaning of proper names in his theory of signs. This semiotic feat, according to Blanár (2009)

was later expanded by both Dionysios Thrax (170-90 BC), a Hellenist and Aelius Donatus, the Roman grammarian (c 350 AD) who defined a proper name as a sign of individual substance. For instance, Peter, Paul, Homer, Rome, etc. To them, therefore, general names should be signs of general substances as in girl, boy, goat, town, river, etc.

After an exhaustive review of Classical and Medieval studies of proper names in relation to the works of contemporary philosophers, Blanár (2009) sums up their definitions of proper names as over-restrictive if they are considered as elements of the respective onymic systems. He regrets that those philosophers and logicians fail to analyze all the basic classes of proper names like chrematonyms and the descriptive character of toponyms as well as nicknames and concludes that their definition of proper names does not conform to the linguistic definition.

Algeo and Algeo (2000) note that name use is generally central to human and human activity. It is against this backdrop that they consider the interconnections of onomastics with such disciplines as anthropology, business, cartography, folklore, genealogy, history, literature, etc, before focusing on the role of place names.

Other studies like those of Gaher (2006), Zouhar (2004) and Dolnik (1995, 1998), cited in Blanár (2009), tend to conclude that a proper name is a mere denotative symbol, a mental abstraction with no ascribable meaning except the mental picture of the object referred to. Though Pavlovic (1987), Wamitila (1999) and Croft (2009) seem to agree with Gaher (2006), Zouhar (2004) and Dolnik (1995, 1998) that proper names are mere symbols that only facilitate identification and categorization of persons, places or other objects, they add that proper names may also serve as a link between such persons and a given socio-cultural location which accommodates such persons/names as part and parcel of its patrimony. In other words, names generally give their bearer a sense of belonging to a given locality or entity. Unfortunately, in their different studies, Pavlovic, Wamitila and Croft focus on the meanings of names provided in some literary works which only transpose or recreate an author's imagination of what should be/should have been in terms of literary onomastics and characternyms.

Inasmuch as Ajah (2014) does not depart very much from the approaches adopted by Pavlovic (1987), Wamitila (1999) and Croft (2009) in their analysis of the meaning of names from the point of view of fictional onomastics, he, through the study of Tahar Ben Jelloun's works, makes a wider categorization by an anagrammed transformation of names. He goes beyond the ordinary study of names as socio-cultural symbols of identity since he explores other dynamics like revolt that can generate such

rearrangements and transformation of phonemes, letters and syllables in names to produce onomastically culturally unsemantic identity symbols like "Rachid" that is transformed to "Richard", "Khadija" that is transformed to "Katy" and "Abdel" that is transformed to "Adley" (Ajah, 2014:56-57). These transformations relate to transnational/trans-cultural or hybrid patterns that develop from a shock of civilizations; they therefore have no clear cultural content and are thus devoid of any meaning. They are purely and simply fictional.

In his study of proper names, William Bright (2003) adopts the viewpoint of anthropological linguistics as applied to personal names and place names among North American Indians. He makes broad-based definitions and classifications of names in terms of ethnic groups and nationalities (ethnonyms), geographical names (toponyms), names of languages (glottonyms) and personal names (anthroponyms), and wonders whether those North American Indian names that embody a description can be considered as proper names. For example, can a term which literally means "man living by the stream" be a personal name? Or can another term which literally means "rock standing by the stream" be a place name? William Bright (2003) further considers the grammatical uniqueness of place names and draws examples from Karuk (California), Creek (Oklahoma) and Nahuati (Mexico).

Overall, though the study carried out by William Bright (2003) seems to share some affinity with ours since it is an apparent search for meaning in the names given to individuals, it, like all the studies reviewed above, however, falls short of the focus of our study which seeks to translate Chi names and explain the foundation and basis on which they are given to individuals in Igbo land (Nigeria).

De Campos (2010) makes a general assessment of strategies for translating proper names in terms of foreignisation and domestication which are closely connected to word-for-word and sense-for-sense translation strategies, respectively. To her, while the former introduces foreign/alien SL vocabulary into the TL text through literal translation, the latter seeks to produce fluent, intelligible TL texts devoid of any SL text colour or flavour. De Campos, however, fails to provide ready applicable examples to illustrate her theoretical postulations.

There is a dearth of studies on Igbo-English or English-Igbo translation of proper names. Nevertheless, there is an abundance of studies on Igbo-English/English-Igbo translation in such other domains as religion, literature, sports, etc. (Munonye, 1966; Emenyeonu, 1977; Okeke, 1993; Eke, 1988, 1994 & 1995; Eke & Ugorji, 1999, etc). These works focus essentially on

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terminology, units of meaning as well as procedure for attaining faithfulness in the translation of sentence between Igbo and the English language. These works clearly go beyond the scope of this study and shall, therefore, not be given space for review here.

Theoretical framework

Different theories will be applied to this study. They include: onomastics, semiotics, linguistics and the interpretative approach to translation. Onomastics is the science of names, their meanings, interpretation or translation. Onomastics may, according to Coates (2005), study:

a.   the history of the names of individuals or of the names within particular social groups or areas with a view to discover their original meanings and establish their social or geographical distributional patterns;

b.   the linguistic devices that are used to create and keep names in circulation as an integral part of the language or languages of the community that uses them;

c.   current patterns and processes of naming, to establish the distribution and popularity of particular names or name-types;

d.   what proper names in general are and what they do (how they are used), in order to refine our understanding of their nature;

e.   the connotations of names, e.g. how, or whether, personal names relate to a peculiar personality or are subject to changes in fashion;

f.   how different names may apply to the same entity, even in the same culture, e.g. in pet-naming or nicknaming;

g.   the practical problems that arise when names are used across linguistic boundaries and how different names may apply to the same entity; for place-names, for example, onomasticians may suggest international and standard usages, and resolve disputes about them;

h.   the naming of persons, places, etc. in second-order worlds such as myth, literature and film, and in supernatural worlds; and

i.   how ordinary words and phrases may become proper names, and vice versa, and/or how they may be used metaphorically or become associated with entities which are not the original thing named.

 For its part, semiotics, developed by Ferdinand de Saussure (1857-1913) and C. S. Peirce (1839-1914) interprets meaning from the complex meaning-relations of surface and deep structures generated by acts and objects (like proper names) which function as "signs" in relation to other signs, intended

to distinguish one object from the other in texts with a cultural undertone. Social semiotics examines semiotic practices (like giving certain proper names to individuals) that are peculiar to a given people, community or culture. Emphasis here is more on the:

-culture of the target audience than on the language of the latter;
- message; and the
-capacity of the target audience to capture the message.

Though culture is not part of the message, it has a huge influence on the latter and may invariably generate losses in language use, style and aesthetics in the final translation product. This is especially so if the languages involved belong to very different worlds that perceive reality in completely different ways, like the case of Igbo and English. It was perhaps to this kind of context that Georges Mounin (1963), cited in Oye (2014:160), referred when he questioned "Que se passe-t-il lorsqu'il faut décrire dans une langue un monde différent de celui qu'elle décrit ordinairement?"(What happens when one has to describe another world in a language that is different from the one used ordinarily in describing that world ?)

In applying the linguistic theory to this study, we shall focus on the direct (literal) and oblique (transposition and modulation) translation procedures proposed by Vinay and Darbelnet (1995:31). Direct (literal) translation refers to the direct transfer of a SL text into a TL text with exactly the same parts of speech or grammatical category or categories (noun for noun, verb for verb, adverb for adverb, adjective for adjective), as the case may be. Transposition (an oblique procedure) refers to the transfer of message from a SL text to a TL text, using different parts of speech or grammatical categories (noun for verb, adverb for noun or adjective for adverb), as the case may be. Modulation (another oblique procedure) involves a change in point of view or perspective. It includes the following sub-categories: negated contrary or positive for double negative; part for the whole; one part for another; reversal of terms; active for passive; change of symbols; abstract for concrete; cause for effect; intervals for limits; and space for time. For its part, the interpretative approach to translation developed by the Ecole de Paris led by Danica Selescovitch and Marianne Lederer in 1975, seeks to make meaning out of non-verbal sense in a translation process, where sense, as awareness, is external when pre-established linguistic meaning merges with a concomitant perception of reality (Selescovitch, 1976), cited in De Campos (2010:117).

Chi names in Igbo land

The Igbo race (of the South East of Nigeria) is dominated and ruled by a pantheon of gods among which **chi** (god) is the highest**. Chi** in Igbo language is the short form of the word **chi-ukwu** or **chukwu** (Big God) which represents God, supposed to be the highest among the many gods that the Igbo believe in. The god is genderless. There is another God known as **Chineke** or **Chukwuokike** which means the god that creates and lastly the **chi** that behaves like the guardian angel in the Christian religion. This could be either masculine or feminine. This type of **chi** follows the individual around to protect, guide and bring good luck to him/her. No wonder most Igbo names either start or end with **chi** or **chukwu**. To support this, Onukawa (1999:384) says "the Igbo recognize **chi** as their personal God who is responsible for their wealth and prosperity, life and health, success or failure, their fortune and misfortune and all unique and individual characteristics".

Before the arrival of Christianity, **chi** names were given to oracles and shrines according to the works they performed. It was said that the word c**hukwu** originated from **Aro** when the Aro people changed the name of their powerful oracle from **Ibini ukpabi** to **chi** or **Chukwu ukpabi**. According to Nwoga (1984a:36),

The biggest oracle which pervaded Igboland from the 17th century was chukwu (Ibini Ukpabi) of the Aro. When the Aro went into the rest of Igbo land to trade in slaves, they took with them, both for protection and as an additional business, the reputation of their Chi-Ukwu (big chi), thereby elevating Ibini Ukpabi to the status of the last arbiter, the god beyond whom there could be no surer answer to problems. Generally, going "to consult chukwu" in Arochukwu became the highest act of the judicial process and of other problems and situations that required ultimate and drastic solution.

Apparently from that period, **chi** became an integral part of Igbo cosmology. The Igbo as a people or race believe that for a child to excel in life, it will depend on the type of chi he or she came into the world with. In fact a child's life from birth to death, all his successes and failures are attributed to the type of **chi** he or she has had.

The word **chi** is multifaceted and multidimensional with different interpretations as the individual's luck, fate, god, guardian angel, creator, companion, portioned-out-of-life principle, personal life force, individualized providence, daily-identity in the spirit land (cf. Ottenberg, 1958; Achebe, 1975:93-103; Isichei, 1976:25; Echeruo, 1979; Ebeogu, 1983:33; Nwoga, 1984: 33; Nwala, 1985:46; Onukawa, 1999:384). It could be measured through one's character, achievements and ill luck.

It is the view of Onukawa (1999:385) that the Igbo started giving **chi** names to their children from the 19th century. While Christians believe that the **chi** or **chukwu** in the names of their children represents God in heaven and the guardian angel, pagans attribute theirs to their gods. This has not changed anything in terms of the functions of **chi** in one's life. For a child to be great, his or her **chi** must be a great one. When a child is lazy, not succeeding or getting everything wrong or negative, his/her **chi** is said to be paramount to that. No wonder in Things Fall Apart, Achebe (1958:40) insinuates that whenever there was poor harvest, the Igbo people will blame the god of harvest, Ifejioku, and start to appease him for a fruitful harvest in the next farming season. In a nutshell, one may visualize an individual's **chi** as his/her other being in the spirit world which complements his/her terrestrial being, since nothing exists in the physical world without first being formed in the spiritual world. It is the spirit world that governs the physical world.

When death snatches an important personality from a family, the family only takes solace in **chi** by saying "**o chi ya kwetaraí**" (it is his destiny), which means that if his or her **chi** had refused, death would have been powerless. Others could say "o ka ya na chi ya siri wuo" (it is the way he or she agreed with his or her god). That is why Achebe (1975:96) says if you want to know how life has treated an Igbo man, a good place to look is the names his children bear, because these generally carry his hopes, his fears, his joy and sorrows, his grievances against his fellow humans, or complaints about the way he has been used or misused by fortune…"

Igbo→English translation and explanation of chi names

As noted above, **chi** names in Igbo are mere expressions that maybe taken as an adage (Ifesinachi → Everything is from God), a dictum/an aphorism (Ifeanyichukwu → there is nothing beyond the power of God) or a metaphor (Chibundu → God is life). In translation practice, such cultural expressions (adage, dictum, aphorism, metaphor, etc) are generally rendered by their corresponding equivalents in the target language, drawing from the target cultural experience. In such cases, losses may become evident in the source language style and aesthetics with only the central message and the local cultural flavour being retained in the target language. According to Lederer (1994:68), in the translation of such texts with a deep cultural undertone, "C'est la signification de ces mots qui est traduite plutôt que le référent auquel ils renvoient". (It is the meaning of these words rather than the referent that is translated).

Let us see how this notion is applied in the translation of Igbo **chi** names.

Chi names and their functions

Chi as the great giver of gifts or manipulator of destinies
(A1)

Full Igbo name	Chi diminutive used as name	Gloss
1. o bu chi ji oke m	Chijioke	It is God that holds my destiny. It is my portion from the gods.
2. o bu nke chi m nyerem	Nkechinyere	It is my God who gave him/her to me/My gift from God
3. o bu chi m nyere m ya	Onyinyechi	It is God's wealth It is God's portion for me. Everything is from God.
4. o bu aku chukwu nyere m	Akuchi	
5. o bu oke chukwu nyere m	Okechukwu	
6. ife nile sina chi	Ifessinachi	

Note that almost all the names begin with the introductory form "o bu" (it is). The adoption of the diminutive tends to take something away from the original meaning. For instance, in (1), the diminutive "Chijioke" without the first person possessive adjective "m", becomes "it is God that holds destiny" as different from "it is God that holds my destiny". The change in meaning results from a modulation that shifts from the particular to the general. This applies to 2, 3, 4 and 5 above. Only 6 (ife nile sina chi/Ifessinachi) captures its complete meaning and comes out in the TT English translation as a word-for-word translation since "ife nile" (noun) means "everything" (noun) "sina" (verb + preposition) means "comes/is from" (verb + preposition), and "chi" (noun) means "God" (noun). Therefore, the Igbo diminutives **chi** names as "signs" or "symbols" under "A1"above can be translated/represented (Lederer, 1994:68) in the English language as follows:

(A2)

Chi diminutive used as name	English Translation of "sign"
Chijioke	Destiny
Nkechinyere	Mine
Onyinyechi	Gift
Akuchi	Wealth
Okechukwu	Portion
Ifessinachi	Godsall

Chi as the controller of life or the essence of existence

Chi is the most significant of the essence of existence Echeruo (1979:20) claims that "**chi** of the Igbo is probably one of the most complex theological concepts ever devised to explain the universe". Among all the gifts in the world, life is paramount. This importance attached to life is reflected in many names depicting life as given by the Igbo to their children.

(B1)

Full Igbo name	Chi diminutive used as name	Gloss
7. o buru na chukwu kwe ndu ga-adi	Chikwendu	If God agrees there will be life
8. o bu chukwu **bu** ndu	Chi**bu**ndu	It is God that is life.
9. o bu chukwu **di** ndu	Chi**di**ndu	It is God who is alive.
10. o bu chukwu **ji** ndu m	Chi**ji**ndu	It is God that holds my life.
11. o bu chukwu nwe ndu	Chinwendu	It is God that has life.
12. Ndu sina chukwu bia	Ndusinachi	Life is from God.

In 7, the conditional "o buru na" and the modal + auxiliairy "ga-adi" are left out of the diminutive (Chikwendu). Though the original name carries a general message, the final diminutive product "Chikwendu" (God agrees to life) also keeps that general tone. Inasmuch as the copula "bu" (to be) in 8, "di'(to be present/available) in 9 and "ji'(to hold) in 10 make for changes in the meaning of the names, 8 (o bu chukwu **bu** ndu or it is God that is life), 9 (o bu chukwu **di** ndu or it is God who is alive) and 11 (o bu chukwu nwe ndu or it is God that has life) are general statements that remain unchanged even with the final diminutives, "Chi**bu**ndu", "Chi**di**ndu" and "Chinwendu", respectively. But in 10, the first person possessive adjective "m" is eliminated in the final diminutive product to generate a modulation that shifts meaning from the particular "ndu m" (life + my, that is: noun [ndu] + possessive adjective [m]) to the general "ndu" (life [noun]). The case of 12 (Ndu sina chukwu bia) is a general statement like the cases of 8, 9, and 11, where the diminutive (Ndusinachi) does not affect the message contained in the original "Ndu sina chukwu bia" since "sina" (that is verb [comes/is] + preposition [from]) takes care of the loss of the verb "bia" (to come) in the final product. Note the transformation from "chukwu" (big God) in the original statement (Ndu sina chukwu bia) to "chi"(God) in the final product (Ndusinachi). Of course, both "chukwu" and "chi" in Igbo translate "God" in English. Therefore, the Igbo diminutives **chi** names as "signs" or "symbols"

under "B1"above can be translated/represented (Lederer, 1994:68) in the English language as follows:

(B2)

Chi diminutive used as name	English Translation of "sign"
Chikwendu	Godsagreement
Chi**bu**ndu	Godslife
Chi**di**ndu	Godalive
Chi**ji**ndu	Lifeholder
Chinwendu	Lifeowner
Ndusinachi	Lifegiver

Chi as all powerful or strength or omnipotent
The Igbo strongly believe in an all-powerful, all mighty and omnipotent God. A supreme being with enormous powers who never fails. This could be likened to the Greek god, Zeus. The Igbo believe that one can only move in relation to his/her **chi**, so one's successes and failures are attached to his/her **chi**.

(C1)

Full Igbo name	Chi diminutive used as name	Gloss
13. o bu chukwu bu ikem 14.o dighi ihe kariri chukwu ime 15. o bu chukwu mere nke a 16. o bu chukwu kariri dibia 17. o bu aka chukwu mere ihe a 18. o bu n ike nke chukwu	Chibuike Ifeanyichukwu Oluchukwu Chikadibia Akachi Ikechi	It is the Lord who is my strength. There is nothing too hard for God to do. It is God's work/It is God who made this. God is greater than any charm/power/native doctor. It is the hand work of God. It is by God's power.

Apart from 13 where there is a modulation that shifts meaning from the particular (as indicated by the first person possessive adjective "m" in "ikem") to the general with the elimination of the possessive adjective "m" in the final diminutive product "Chibuike" (God is strength), the others (14, 15, 16, 17 and 18) are all general statements whose diminutives tend to be mere interpretations of the original general statements. For instance, 14 (Ifeanyichukwu) can be translated as "Thing not impossible for God". From the point of view of structure, the above translation cannot stand because it

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lacks one of the basic elements (verb) of a proper structure. Taken as such, the name "Ifeanyichukwu" and its translation may not have a ready equivalent in English; they are rather "signs" that generate a message within the Igbo cultural context as coined from the sentential original "o dighi ihe kariri chukwu ime". The same explanation applies to the coinages in 15 (Oluchukwu), "God's work" from "o bu chukwu mere nke a"; in 16 (Chikadibia), "God is greater than fetish" from "o bu chukwu kariri dibia"; in 17 (Akachi), "God's hand" from "o bu aka chukwu mere ihe a"; and in 18 (Ikechi), "God's power" from "o bu n ike nke chukwu". Therefore, the Igbo diminutives **chi** names as "signs" or "symbols" under "C1"above can be translated/represented (Lederer, 1994:68) in the English language as follows:

(C2)

Chi diminutive used as name	English Translation of "sign"
Chibuike	Godstrength
Ifeanyichukwu	Godswill
Oluchukwu	Godswork
Chikadibia	Great/Greatness
Akachi	Godshand
Ikechi	Godspower

Chi as the one that gives favor, good luck, prosperity
Against the backdrop of their belief that one cannot go beyond his **chi**, the Igbo started giving their children **chi** names that depict what they want their children to be in life. It is like preempting the **chi** to do what the parents want the child to be because they are helpless but hopeful.

(D1)

Full Igbo name	Chi diminutive used as name	Gloss
19. o bu chi o ma m	Chioma	It is my my God of good fortune/good luck.
20. o amara chukwu mere m	Amarachi	It is the favour that God has done for me.
21. o chi n' eme ogo a	Ogochukwu	It is God who is doing this favour.
22. chi gi mmara mma	Chimma	Your God is kind/Lucky one.
	Chidiogo	It is God who is generous.
23. o bu chukwu di ogo	Chinemeze	It is God who makes a King.
24. o bu chukwu n'eme eze		

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In 19 (o bu chi o ma m) which literally translates as "it is my favour/good luck from God", the diminutive "Chioma" eliminates the first person possessive adjective "m" (my) and consequently modulates the phrase to shift meaning from the particular to the general because "Chioma" simply means a God of good fortune or good luck. Similarly in 20 (o amara chukwu mere m) which translates as "it is the favour that God has done for me", the dative "m" (in this case) is eliminated to modulate the phrase, shift meaning from the particular to the general with the diminutive "Amarachi". In 22 (chi gi mmara mma or your God is kind/lucky one), the second person possessive adjective "gi" (your) is eliminated in the diminutive "Chimma" to modulate the phrase and shift meaning from the particular to the general. In 21 (o chi n' eme ogo a) or "Ogochukwu" (it is God who is doing this favour); 23 (o bu chukwu di ogo) or "Chidiogo" (It is God who is generous); and in 24 (o bu chukwu n'eme eze) or "Chinemeze" (It is God who makes a King), the names/signs are more general statements. Therefore, the Igbo diminutives **chi** names as "signs" or "symbols" under "D1"above can be translated/represented (Lederer, 1994:68) in the English language as follows:

(D2)

Chi diminutive used as name	English Translation of "sign"
Chioma	Fortune/Goodluck
Amarachi	Favour
Ogochukwu	Favour
Chimma	Lucky
Chidiogo	Generous
Chinemeze	Kingmaker

Chi as one's guardian angel, companion, and glory
The Igbo believe that there is a spirit being that is attached to every child from birth. The spirit is said to play the specific role of following the child as the latter's guardian angel, avert any possible danger and to play with him or her. That is why when a one-day old baby smiles, the Igbo believe that s/he is playing with her/his **chi**. This is evidenced in the following names.

(E1)

Full Igbo name	Chi diminutive used as name	Gloss
25. o bu chukwu nnonyere m	Chinonye/Chinonyelum	It is God that is my companion.
26. o bu chukwu du m eje	Chidimeje	It is God that is my guardian.
27. o bu ife nke chukwu	Ifechukwu	It is the light of God.
28. o bu chukwu m nnonso	Chinonso	It is my God that is near.
29. o bu ugo chi m tunyere m	Ugochukwu	It is the precious nature my God put in me.
30. o bu ebube chi m nyere m	Ebubechukwu	It is the Glory that my God gave me.

On the whole, the names under this category come out more as statements or declarations. They are all full sentences with subjects + verbs + predicates. This makes their translation in English literal and simple since the translations generate the same subject + verb + predicate elements. As noted elsewhere above, and as can be seen in five (25, 26, 28, 29 and 30) of the six texts under "E1" above in Igbo and their English translations, most of the names in their original forms are personalized with the first person possessive adjective "m" in Igbo or "my" in English to denote the particular. However, to produce the diminutive that forms the generally used Igbo name, the text is modulated from the particular to the general, thus creating a shift in meaning even in the final translation in English. In 29, we note the double use of "m" as the first person possessive adjective (my) and dative (me), respectively. This does not affect meaning as seen above. Therefore, the Igbo diminutives **chi** names as "signs" or "symbols" under "E1"above can be translated/represented (Lederer, 1994:68) in the English language as follows:

(E2)

Chi diminutive used as name	English Translation of "sign"
Chinonye/Chinonyelum	Companion
Chidimeje	Guardian
Ifechukwu	Light
Chinonso	Godsnear
Ugochukwu	Precious
Ebubechukwu	Glory

CONCLUSION

This study which is based on a combination of the onomastic approach and the semiotic, linguistic and interpretative theories of translation sought to highlight the importance of Igbo chi names within the Igbo cultural context and establish whether such proper names are translatable in the English language or any other language for that matter. This study became necessary because from observation and the opinions expressed by some Western scholars, a proper name is seen more in terms of a symbol or sign that makes no meaning beyond the concept it represents at a given time. Thus, to investigate the veracity or not of such opinions within the socio-cultural context of sub-Saharan Africa, this study chose the Nnamdi Azikiwe University in Awka, Anambra State, Nigeria (West Africa) which has a predominantly Igbo-speaking population as its sample area. 30 Igbo students of both sexes with chi names were sampled. The data so collected were analyzed, using the qualitative method.

From the analysis of the corpora at our disposal, it was discovered that **chi** or **chukwu** names in Igbo are generally statements or declarations with clear grammatical "subject + verb + predicate" structure that makes them translatable into any language. The translation process itself tends to always tilt towards semiotics and modulation since the names represent symbols and/or signs with messages whose meaning may be lost if not interpreted and translated against the backdrop of the Igbo SL text. In some cases, literal translation is used as a procedure to make meaning.

As has been seen, Igbo chi names, nay sub-Saharan African names have meanings that play a role in the lives of their bearers. For reasons of convenience or superstition, some individuals may want to carry along their "native" names with the meaning (s) they convey into a westernized context. This can be done through translation because, as this study has demonstrated, such names cannot be discarded as meaningless. In some of the translations in the study, the products of such translations do not sound like known names in English. In fact, some of them (Godsagreement, Godstrength, Godsall, Godclose, etc) are very distant from such known catalogued English names as John, Joseph, Peter, etc. Yet, put in context, they still come close to those English names that were formerly given to people in relation to their profession (Potter, Goldsmith, Farmer, etc.), their origin (John of York, Paul Southgate), their nature (Sage, Cool, Smooth, Fine-face), etc. From the point of view of semiotics, therefore, and irrespective of how the translated versions of the names sound, if the bearers of such names decide to use them as translated in English, they certainly will be at liberty to do so because

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names are generally mere symbols or signs that represent and/or identify their respective entities in relation to other entities that may bear other signs, symbols or marks of identification within a given cultural context.

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