

Naming, Identity, and Ethnic Representation in a Tribe Called Judah: A Sociolinguistic Inquiry

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1.Introduction

Nigeria can be termed as the ideal example of a multilingual and multiethnic country with the estimated population of above 200 million inhabitants speaking over 500 languages and representing various ethnic communities (Eberhard et al., 2023). The heterogeneity has ensured that language and ethnicity are the focal point in the sociocultural life of Nigerians with linguistic identity playing a key role as a heritage, cohesiveness, and even a point of contention. The name is not arbitrary in African society in general or Nigeria in particular, but can be defined as a cultural text, with the help of which the identity of the individual, the family, and community is negotiated and communicated (Ogwudile, 2019). To examine language in Nigeria is, then, to examine how the process of naming, speech and cultural representation reflect social realities.

The importance of names and linguistic markers is even more in Nollywood films. Nollywood is not just an entertainment industry, but, as Haynes (2021) has argued, is a cultural arena in which concepts of Nigeria are practiced, bargained and reproduced. Nollywood anticipates the plurality of Nigeria by using ethnic agents like names, accents, and idiomatic phrases, but in doing so, by applying them in a purposeful way; it provides the narratives of unity. Specifically, the stylistic and narrative tool of using names gives clues on how the filmmakers cope with the intricacy of Nigerian identity. As an example,

Abunike and Arinze-Umobi (2024) note that Nollywood movies tend to re-establish ethnic identities with the help of naming, enabling the audience to recognise and criticise sociocultural affiliations. This rebuild places the film in the realm of identity negotiation where the names of characters do not represent an identity but serve a communicative purpose that addresses cultural affiliation. *ATribeCalled Judah*, a 2023 blockbuster directed by Funke Akindele, is particularly an interesting case study of these dynamics. The main protagonist, *Jedidiah Judah*, is painted as a matriarch whose five sons, namely, *Emeka*, *Adamu*, *Shina*, *Pere*, and *Ejiro*, carry names that unambiguously point to the three principal ethnicities in Nigeria and minority affiliations. In writing *Emeka*, one cannot help but recognize the Igbo cultural allegiance, and this is further strengthened by the fact that the character at times uses Igbo-based English syntactical constructions. The Quranic acoustics of *Adamu* place the figure within Hausa-Muslim cultural identity whilst *Shina* is archetypal Yoruba, full of urban masculinity and survivalism in Lagos. The Niger Delta is symbolised with the name *Pere*, symbolising the Ijaw and wider South-South cultural identity, and *Ejiro* rounds the symbolic circle by being an Urhobo/Delta. In unison, the names reflect the conscious attempt of the movie to dramatize the diversity of the Nigerian nation by using onomastic names of the characters.

The sociolinguistic significance of *A Tribe Called Judah* is that these names are not used improperly as ethnic labels but as cultural scripts which determine how audiences perceive them. As an example, as *Emeka* is talking, his Igbo linguistic rhythm prefigures Eastern Nigerian sensibilities, and Yoruba street register of *Shina* is the symptom of the hardships of the Lagos youth. The name and accent of *Pere* remind the cultural identity of the Niger Delta, as a region that is commonly linked to resource and marginalization. The film exposes the contradiction of the Nigerian society by putting these speech repertoires in the same family: difference within unity. Since Adedun (2010) has demonstrated in his sociolinguistic work on Nollywood movies, the juxtaposition of multiple codes with different linguistic codes in one story demonstrates the hybridity of Nigeria linguistically and the power relations, particularly with regard to English and Pidgin as an intermediate code.

In addition to linguistic performance, the sociocultural burden of naming in the movie concurs with the general African ideas of names as bearers of meaning. The Igbo tradition follows that tradition of names being the narratives of their family experience, beliefs, and anticipations (Ogwudile, 2019). The Yoruba culture, on the same note, considers names as spiritual and historical connotations, which are given out during naming and which denote the fate of a child (Ogunyemi and Johnson, as cited in Yoruba cultural studies). Through this kind of names ingrained in the cinematic text, Nollywood entertains, educates, and maintains cultural awareness. In this respect, *A Tribe Called Judah* represents what Haynes (2021) explains as the work of Nollywood to make national narratives on the ground, in which films define

identities at the group level in a way that the state cannot normally accomplish.

Notably, the politics of representation that are revealed through the selection of names in the film points to unity amid diversity. The Judah family, which is divided by poverty and societal shame, is used as a symbol of the whole Nigerian nation: fractured and yet united by adversity. Here, language and naming is used as a cinematic means of imagining national cohesion. The fact that the sons of *Jedidiah*, the characters in the novel, have the names representing the ethnic majorities and minorities in Nigeria symbolically rebels against ethnocentrism, addressing the audiences to perceive identity as plural and still inclusive. Therefore, the movie concurs with Hult (2023) concerning the fact that media-in this case, Nollywood- is a powerful actor mediating the destiny of the indigenous language and ethnic identity.

Having pre-empted the overlap of names, language and identity, *A Tribe Called Judah* offers a rich site in examining the ways in which Nollywood reflects and shapes the multifaceted sociolinguistic environment in Nigeria. The background to the multilingual identity of the Nigerian people has been described in this introduction and the use of naming and ethnic

identifiers by Nollywood in this context. As shall be seen in the following analysis, naming in this movie is not accidental but, in fact, a representational tactic that dramatizes diversity as well as unity in the modern Nigeria.

1.1 Research Problem

Nigeria is among the most multilingual nations of the world, as over 500 languages and several ethnicities are united under a single state (Bamgbose, 1991; Igboanusi, 2017). Such diversit

renders identity formation by language and naming a decisive aspect of daily life. The naming of characters and the ways they talk are not aesthetic decisions in specifically Nigerian films, especially Nollywood, but cultural identifiers that indicate the larger sociolinguistic truths. Nigeria has a plural ethnic representation in *A Tribe Called Judah* (2023), whereby the names of the characters (*Emeka* Igbo, *Adamu* Hausa, *Shina* Yoruba, *Pere* Ijaw, and *Ejiro* Urhobo) and the accents they use, greetings, and even the instances of their code-switching, present that image. The movie depicts the process of identity bargaining in terms of language and the importance of cohesion in spite of diversity. These results in the research problem: How do names and ethnic speech markers in the film make identity and reflect sociolinguistic realities of Nigeria?

1.2 Research Questions

In order to alleviate this issue, the research questions assist the study as follows. All the questions are aimed to reflect a particular aspect of language usage and identity formation within the movie.

- **What is the role of names of characters in *A Tribe Called Judah* in terms of cultural and ethnic backgrounds?** The interpretation in this case is the symbolic and cultural meaning of names in the Nigerian society and the way in which they are employed in the movie to code specific ethnic identities.
- **What is the contribution of linguistic indicators (accents, greetings, proverbs) to identity construction?** This question examines how the speech styles of the characters, e.g.,

expressions, bring into the limelight their ethnic origins and play the role of sociolinguistic opposition.

- **What does the film do to negotiate unity in diversity using naming and language?** The question will look at how *Judah* family as a microcosm of Nigeria explains how it is possible to coexist despite ethnic boundaries even in the face of the tensions presented by linguistic differences.

1.3 Objectives of the Study

Any research undertaking will have clear objectives that establish what the research is aiming to accomplish. The objectives are oriented towards unpacking the linguistic and cultural implications of the naming and speech in the film since this work targets *A Tribe Called Judah* as a cinematic text that recreates the multilingual and multiethnic identity of Nigeria. The aims also correspond directly to the already stated research questions.

Particularly, the study aims at:

- **Look at the ways in which names of characters in *A Tribe Called Judah* are indicative of culture and ethnicity.** This will entail an evaluation of the symbolic meaning of the names *Emeka*, *Adamu*, *Shina*, *Pere*, and *Ejiro*, and demonstrating how they reflect the ethnic plurality of Nigeria.
- **Evaluate how linguistic signifiers like accents, greetings and proverbs are used to build character identity.** The consideration will be put on speech repertoires that index cultural belonging and establish authenticity in portraying ethnic identities.

the use of native greetings and idiomatic

- **Inquire how the film negotiates unity in the face of diversity by naming and language use.** This shall show how Nollywood through this film produced a microcosm of Nigeria where cultural differences can exist on the basis of a unified narrative of survival and endurance.

2. Literature Review

2.1.Sociolinguistics of Naming in African Societies

Naming in African cultures transcends providing a mere means of identifying individuals; it is an entrenched sociolinguistic habit which is historically informed, systematically and ideologically mediated as well as historically and culturally recalled. It is stated that Igbo names in general, and Igbo names specifically, are cultural, philosophical and spiritual carriers where parental wishes, community lives or divine recognition is coded (Nkamigbo 2019). Such a view can be traced to Finnegan (2012) who wrote that most African oral traditions incorporate symbolic and historical meaning into cultural practices, including naming, and thus, names are living texts that represent the worldview of a people.

Correspondingly, personal names are selected among the Yoruba based on the situation around birth and descent. According to Oduyoye (2001), names like *Yetunde* (mother has returned) or *Babatunde* (father has returned) are used to indicate beliefs on reincarnation, but names like *Oluwatobiloba* (God is great), signify spirituality. Hausa people have a strong influence of naming by the Islamic religion, which is usually based on Arabic and on the Quran (Yakubu, 2015). Religious affiliation and cultural belonging is indicated by the selection of names such as *Aisha*, *Musa* or *Adamu*.

Such a sociolinguistic richness is brought

out in *A Tribe Called Judah*, where the names of the sons, *Emeka* (Igbo), *Adamu* (Hausa), *Shina* (Yoruba), *Pere* (Ijaw/Niger Delta), and *Ejiro* (Urhobo), serve as indexical signs of ethnicity. According to Agyekum (2006), names are a semiotic code, which identifies people with their sociocultural environment. The film

authoritatively incorporates through foregrounding of these names in its title and story several ethnic strands into a unified tale of Nigerians.

2.2.Identity, Language, and Ethnicity

In the Nigerian sociolinguistic background, language and ethnicity are closely intertwined in which more than 500 languages are present (Eberhard, Simons, and Fennig, 2022). According to scholars like Bamgbose (1991), multilingualism in Nigeria cannot be merely a linguistic phenomenon; it can be a socio-political phenomenon since the use of a language can imply ethnicity, class, and the accessibility of power. Consistent with this, Lawal, Akindutire and Adegbosin (2025) emphasize the negotiations of identities among Nigerians, as they consistently make linguistic choices based on the Social Identity Theory by Tajfel and Turner (1979), where people were assumed to derive a part of their identity based on their group membership. Language is, thus, used as the marker in ethnic boundaries. As an example, the greetings such as *Ẹ káàsán* (Yoruba: good afternoon) or *Ina kwana* (Hausa: good morning), used in Nollywood movies will instantly place a character into a cultural context. The same applies to accents:

the intonation of Igbo English accent that is thick or the Hausa accent on intonation in English tends to index belonging. The trend is apparent in *A Tribe Called Judah*. The speech habits of *Adamu* (reserved Hausa), *Shina* (streetwise Yoruba), and *Emeka* (assertive Igbo) all affirm ethnicity, and Fishman (1972) is correct when he argues that language is not merely about communication, but about who speaks a certain language to whom and at which time.

In Nigeria, where colonial English still serves as the dominant language in the lives of people, Nollywood has emerged as a platform, by which indigenous speech patterns demand cultural articulation. This is particularly vital given what Blommaert (2010) terms as super diversity wherein the linguistic resources available in multilingual societies is always overlaid and refigured. This is demonstrated in the movie: despite the fact that English is used in *A Tribe Called Judah* as lingua franca, ethnic names, greetings, and intonations introduce identity markers in speech, emphasizing the importance of the unity being negotiated in the context of difference.

2.3.Ethnicity within Nollywood Film

Nollywood is a place where a bargaining of cultural and ethnic plurality has always taken place. As it has been observed by scholars like Haynes (2016), the Nollywood films often utilize stereotypes, yet also reconstruct the ethnic relations, presenting the inter-ethnic interactions. In others films, tension is seen - Yoruba and Igbo business fights or Hausa and Southern cultural misinterpretations. In other cases, they emphasize collaboration and hybridity, and support the national motto of Unity in Diversity.

Nnabuike, Orji, and Ezekwelu (2024) emphasize that indigenous languages in

Nollywood are not only used as a means of cultural identity, but also as a means of authenticity, as audiences tend to believe that linguistic fidelity is more realistic. This understanding is depicted in *A Tribe Called Judah* where despite the English hegemony, names of ethnics and the rhythm of speech preserve cultural roots. Conversely, Ugochukwu (2016) demonstrates that to Nollywood viewers in diaspora, the films act as cultural bridges, and allow Nigerians living in other countries to re- identify with their culture using language and other cultural symbols. Therefore, the Nollywood films not only maintain ethnicity but also recast the Nigerian nationhood. In *A Tribe Called Judah*, the fact that sons of other ethnic groups are intentionally added to the film series dramatizes the inter-ethnic solidarity of one family unit. Instead of presupposing conflict, the film postulates cultural difference as complementary, which is in line with the dynamic project of narration of Nigeria that Nollywood has undertaken.

2.4.Multilingualism and Cultural Diversity within the Nigerian Cinema

The Nigerian cinema is flourishing on multilingualism. According to the arguments of scholars like Adejunmobi (2015) and Barber (2018), Nollywood is a hybrid in its core (combining English, Pidgin, and local languages so that the movies can be liked by both national and foreign audiences). Nnabuike et al. (2024) use the Language Vitality Theory to posit that Nollywood still maintains minority languages by providing a visibility even in the subtletiness, and thus does not lead to the erosion of language.

Similarly, Akindutire and Adegbosin (2025) demonstrate that Nollywood is a mirror of the multilingual Nigeria where characters can alternate between codes and change to the appropriate one based on the situation. This type of code-switching indicators is not only a measure of bilingual competence, but also of social positioning, solidarity or exclusion. This is an indication of the Markedness Model of Myers-Scotton (1993) that implies that speakers alternate between the codes that indicate linkages or identities.

A Tribe Called Judah is the one that rings well with this scholarship. The movie is clever enough to make use of English to reach out to everyone but uses accents, names, and references to culture as a source of diversity. The language of the characters, which is not necessarily spoken directly, builds a symbolic picture of Nigeria where different groups live in the same house. This film technique reiterates the larger cultural purpose of Nollywood: it does not eliminate the linguistic distinction but rebranded it as a resource in the creation of the shared narrative of the Nigerian people.

3. Theoretical Framework

Two theory approaches that are closely interrelated, namely, Social Identity Theory (Tajfel and Turner, 1979) and Ethnolinguistic Vitality Theory (Giles, Bourhis, and Taylor 1977), inform the current study. These two frameworks will be used to interrogate the way names and language practices serve as an identity and belonging marker in *A Tribe Called Judah*.

3.1 Social Identity Theory

According to Tajfel and Turner (1979), people base their self-concept partly on social groups in which they are members. Such groups can be built on ethnicity, religion, language or nationality. SocialIdentityTheory therefore underscores

the symbolic resources, e.g. names, accents and greetings, where membership in groups are indexed. In *A Tribe Called Judah*, the names *Emeka* (Igbo), *Adamu* (Hausa), *Shina* (Yoruba), *Pere* (Ijaw), and *Ejiro* (Urhobo) are not concepts but identifiers of ethnic affiliation. By giving this naming, it is evident that the film predetermines the sociolinguistic truth of the fact that Nigerians are always working on identity in the context of ethnic membership. The theory thus offers a valuable insight into the way the *Judah* family exemplifies the presence of several identities but at the same time presents the impression of family.

3.2 The Ethnolinguistic Vitality Theory

According to Giles, Bourhis and Taylor (1977), Ethnolinguistic Vitality Theory clarifies the possibilities of a language group to preserve its identity and visibility in a society that is larger in terms of population. The factors that define this vitality are demographic strength, social status and institutional support. Vitality in Nollywood is quantifiable through the means by which film-makers consciously emphasize accents, greetings, proverbs, and other speech markers that strengthen cultural particularity. The ethnic identities are visible and glorified in *A Tribe Called Judah*, through the effective application of various linguistic repertoires, including Igbo exclamations and Yoruba greetings, Hausa intonations, etc. The movie thereby describes the role of Nollywood as the medium of keeping Nigeria in its ethnolinguistic plurality and perpetuating the discourses about unity.

Individually, these two theories give a strict structure of analysis of intersection of naming, language, and ethnic identity in Nigerian cinema. The symbolic role of names and speech as part of the group belonging is explained by the Social Identity Theory, whereas the role of these linguistic practices as the means of preserving and reflecting the ethnic diversity in the film is illuminated by the Ethnolinguistic Vitality Theory.

4. Methodology

4.1 Data Source

This paper uses the Nollywood movie *A Tribe Called Judah* (2023), created by Funke Akindele, as the main source of data. The movie offers an extensive sociolinguistic terrain since it shows a multiethnic family whose members are named and speak in a manner that marks their different cultural backgrounds.

4.2 Data Type

The paper gives attention to the linguistic and cultural aspects incorporated into the movie. In particular, the focus is placed on the names of characters (e.g. *Emeka* - Igbo; *Adamu* - Hausa; *Shina* - Yoruba; *Pere* - Ijaw; *Ejiro* - Urhobo), verbatim dialogues, greetings, and other ethnic speech markers like accents, idioms, and proverbs. These types of data are necessary in analyzing how language and identity construct intersect with the context of the cinema.

4.3 Method of Analysis

The analysis follows a descriptive sociolinguistic approach which aims at exploring how names are used as indicators of cultural and ethnic affiliation. Further, discourse analytic scheme is used to examine language usage in exchanges between characters with special interest paid to phonological aspects, pragmatic

routine (greetings, exclamations), as well as culturally marked expressions, e.g. proverbs. Lastly, the exegesis is guided to the reception of how the names and speech practices in the film are responses to the sociolinguistic realities of Nigeria and negotiate the tension between ethnic pluralism and solidarity in the film.

Analysis

5.1 Naming and Ethnicity

Character design and Onomastic

indexicality: The names of the five sons would be employed in *A Tribe Called Judah* as the main semiotic signs indexing different ethno cultural roots and social life stories. The movie announces diversity more than once, prior to characters uttering a single word, in the form of names as shorthands/shortcuts to sociolinguistic demands that the story subsequently either fulfils, complicates or redeems through action.

Emeka (Igbo): *Emeka*, playing the role of a firstborn and one who works as a salesperson in a mall, is named in such a way that her name is instantly a pointer to south eastern (Igbo) allusions. This indexical hint is extended in the film by the use of biography, his father, *Kalu*, impregnates *Jedidah* and disappears, and *Emeka* is left to be raised by his grandmother- an Igbo kinship structure that emphasizes matrifocal strength. His sacrificing of his job and his taking care of the health of his mother solidify the disposition of *Emeka*; he is diligent, responsible, and sacrificial. This burden of the youngest son transposes to the expectations of the audience in relation to the name: *Emeka* is the moral weight and the practical planner of the family reaction to the crisis (e.g., the dialysis/operation funding quandary of N18 million plus N400,000 weekly). The name therefore defines a character that is responsible on

the basis of the Eastern family morals without stereotyping him.

Adamu(Hausa/Muslim): Adamu indexes Northern/Hausa-Muslim identity, reinforced by the backstory that his father *Bako* is a native of Kano and that the refusal of the *Bako* family to accept *Jedidah* can be explained by religion-cultural factors (she was not Muslim). *Adamu* is, vocationally, a security guard--a profession through which the narrative prefigures his discipline, restraint, and peacemaking; he is always brought in to mediate when siblings quarrel. Although it seems that the storyline about the robbery develops, the impulsiveness of the brothers is restrained by the guarded pragmatism of *Adamu*. The name and the biography thus co-create a Northern identity of duty and composure as opposed to aggression, inverting a classic movie cliché.

Shina (Yoruba): *Shina* is a Yoruba male name. The character is presented as a mischievous scoundrel with a comic touch, his father *Lekan* who used to tutor the older children of *Jedidah* and then ran away. The name *Shina* gives the viewer the impression that we are about to encounter Lagos-style city roughness, and the story delivers on that: resilient, talkative, physically assertive, and often the diesel that fires things to happen in scenarios of neighborhood conflict (e.g. when *Papa Michael* slaps *Jedidah*, *Shina* is one of the first to get things underway). However, the movie does not allow an easy interpretation; *Shina* has humorous timing and the devotion to his mother complicates the tag of thug, encoding him as a warrior whose machismo conceals the tenderness.

Pere(Ijaw/Niger-Delta): Pere nominates

Ijaw/South-South attachments and comes in as a petty thief/pickpocket, occasionally dandyishly dressed (e.g. the note regarding mixed-green hair). Though the name suggests the invoking of expectations of coastal identity, *Pere* is deployed in the narrative to explore the theme of marginality and improvisation: he steals not to act wickedly but to survive, and is shown throughout to show a place-based courage when the existential crisis of the family becomes crystalized. The arc of *Pere* explains how a stigmatized mark of onomasticity (the thief) is re-contextualized in the moral economy of filial piety and collective risk-taking in the course of the heist.

Ejiro (Urhobo/Delta): *Ejiro* is mapped to Urhobo/ Delta identity and is portrayed as the youngest born, a painter and a self-style lover-boy who has girlfriend Testimony. The story relates him to the playfulness of youth, the romantic jesting, the sensuality, and it is also catalytic: when *Jedidah* watches *Papa Michael* assault his wife, *Ejiro* calls the tribe-- the first explicit instance in which one name signals the formation of a multiethnic alliance. The arc of *Ejiro* dramatizes the baby of the house trope and demonstrates that initiative and responsibility are not the preserve of the firstborn.

The names, as a cluster, offer cartography of Nigeria- Igbo, Hausa, Yoruba, Ijaw, Urhobo- within one matrifocal household. The onomastic approach of the film to ethnic signaling balances role differentiation (planner, peacekeeper, enforcer, hustler, catalyst) with plot pressure (illness, poverty, moral threat), to reorient those roles into collective action.

5.2 Speech Patterns and Accents

Character work and indexical speech:

In addition to names, belonging is also consistentl

voiced in the film: intonation contours, lexical selection and register changes are used to create belonging as well as trigger stance (serious vs. playful; conciliatory vs. confrontational).

The speech styles of the brothers are not fixed caricatures but situationally adaptive and in many cases change across scenes and interlocutors and display overlaying identities.

Igbo-flavored English of Emeka: The scenes at work and discussion with his family place Emeka in a more formal register-pacing, chose words- this is consistent with a mall sales professional who needs to appear competent to his bosses (in particular, his former boss, *Chidokie*). Increase in stakes (job loss, dialysis budgeting, heist planning) leads to Igbo rhythmicity, which is a stricter cadence and emphatic stress, meaning urgency and power, in English in *Emeka*. The linguistic gravitas is taken to correspond with the firstborn responsibility in the way his speech acts (instructions, appeals to reason) classify him as de facto coordinator.

Hausa intonation and restraint of Adamu: The speech of *Adamu* has a less aggressive rhythm and a lower tone, which falls into his role as a peacemaker. However, in confrontational situations (e.g., the family feud; the uproar in the neighbourhood following the violence of *Papa Michael*), he lowers the atmosphere, not by long harangues, but by short and monosyllabic ones. The impact is two-fold: his Northern accent sounds loud without pomp, and his economical discourse exercises power by being composed, not authoritative.

The Yoruba street lingo and bravado of Shina: The language of *Shina* is the most

performative: snappy remarks, inflections of the street, and willingness to move to physical action. In the scenes of the neighbourhoods, defending the honour of *Jedidah*, gathering the dangers of *Pere*, *Shina* in speech plays the roles of mockery and a direct attack, switching between the spirit of mocking and the spirit of fierce conflicts. This hybridity with style (one-liner comedies that interlace with his aggressiveness) softens his profile of a hoodlum and is consistent with the Lagosian tropes of wit as a technology of survival.

South-South/Pidgin repertoire of Pere: The interactions of *Pere*, particularly pick pocketing and hustling, are tilted towards Nigerian Pidgin and a South Southern accent of urban speech. His Pidgin shrinks social distance and permits quick rapport with actors of the informal-economy and signals street competence. In the process of family planning, *Pere* tends to go along with the demand of the clarity *Emeka* seeks, switching over to more conventional English. The alternation is an indicator of his two-fold commitments: devotion within (family) and dexterity without (streets).

The slang of Ejiro and the urban Nigerian English: In Testimony *Ejiro* speaks a colloquial, flirtatious, playful register that pre-empts the identity of youth. When it comes to crisis, the same voice expresses initiative instead of mischief, such as when he calls his brothers together following the attacks on *Jedidah* and when he donates his manual labour to attract money. The tone is maintained (though pragmatic function is changed (banter to mobilization)) and is such that the film renegotiates youthful slang not as a liability, but as an asset.

Foil, antagonist speech and sociolinguistic

foil: The character of *Chidokie* (president of C&K Furniture) is loud half-literate Igbo businessman whose English is good but struggling and whose personality is effervescent. His speech is penned to

create humour and threat at the same time - malapropisms and bluster, but a cadence, which suggests impunity (money laundering, VVIP cash). The foil of *Chidokie*, idiolectically opposed to the measured clarity of *Emeka*, dramatizes a conflict between ethical work and corrupt capital, both of which are articulated by different Igbo-indexed versions of the Englishes.

Micro-moments that bind the repertoire:

Throughout the heist arc, the movie orchestrates code-adaptive collaboration: the speech of *Emeka* is given direct, *Adamu* speech given calm, *Shina* speech given street-lingo, *Pere* speech given Pidgin, *Ejiro* speech given youthful. Intra-family multilingualism of the brothers becomes an asset and not an obstacle.

5.3 depiction of Unity in Diversity**Dispersed identities of functional kinship:**

The structuring crisis in the narrative - the kidney disease of *Jedediah* (and the crunch financial mathematics of reimbursement) - transforms five variously socialized sons into a task coalition. The very first textualization of the title is the triggering event (the assault of *Papa Michael* and the immediate call of *Ejiro* to the brothers), which transforms a disorderly list of names (*Emeka*, *Adamu*, *Shina*, *Pere*, *Ejiro*) into one self-designating noun phrase - the tribe called Judah. Kinship language is thereby operationalized.

Economic precarity as unity: The film creates unity not as an abstract form of unity, but as a reaction to structural scarcity: de-employment (*Emeka*), security work at low-wages (*Adamu*), informal economies (*Shina* and *Pere*) and gig/art labour (*Ejiro*). The brothers understand that it cannot be resolved by the crisis using any repertoire, moral, linguistic, or economic. They hence construct a combinatory competency: the planning of *Emeka* + the discipline of *Adamu* + the force of *Shina* + the networks of the streets of *Pere* + the energy of *Ejiro*. It is here that the sociolinguistics of the film is made political economy in other ways: diversity is not ornamental; it is functional.

Heist as an allegory of coordinated

pluralism: It is an ethically gray decision to rob the VVIP dollar stash of the ex-boss, and the movie is not trying to cleanse it up ethically; but on paper, the sequence is an allegory of plural resources mobilized towards a single purpose (saving the mother). The camera gives the chance to show the role synergy because of the extended mall robbery scene (that some viewers may find to be excessively long). The dropped phone hint (*Adamu*) and the resultant beat (the scene when *Nse Ikpe-Etim* is questioned) serve to add some suspense, although the bigger dramaturgical point is to explore if unity can survive the emergent risk. This is possible because literally every brother ethno-indexed personality is reused as a competence node.

Maternal centripetal force: *Jedediah* is coded as the ethical hub (prayer scene; anointing photographs; advocacy in the neighbourhood, e.g. helping the pepper business of *Linda* and the abuse of *Papa Michael*). Her body will be the location of

the national allegory in the film: a dying yet strong mother around whom different constituencies have to convene, bargain, and compromise. This is staged linguistically when the divergent accents/registers of the brothers come together in scenes of care, strategy, and crisis management the diegesis does not eliminate the vocal timbre but only synthesizes their voices.

Ethnic fundamentalism: The movie saturates every of its ethnically indexed characters with incompatible good:

- The Igbo firstborn is not just acquisitive, slick, he is self-sacrificing and ideological.
- The Hausa son is not such a depiction of apathy; he is emotionally stable, morally there.
- The Yoruba hoodlum uses his wit and bravery in the protection of the weak.
- The South-South pickpocket invests street know-how in the common good.
- The Delta youngest child is not only having fun and romances but becomes a citizen whose initiative is civic.

In this manner, the film dispels the fallacy of ethnicity as destiny. Identity tells action but it does not define action; under stress the characters rewrite their ethnic scripts to find common cause.

Hostile and institutional critique: The character of *Chidokie* focuses on the criticism of the impunity of money. His ham-actorly English and flaunting affluence (dollar cache, VVIP room) is a stereotyped system where graft out-shouts the efficiency. The film implies that monolithic, extractive power needs to be checked by plural, responsible speech, by pitting the polyphonic speech of the *Judahs*, ethically overloaded, against the monologic speech of *Chidokie*, the braggadocio who is full of himself. Unity in this case is not only intra-family harmony but rather counter-hegemonic.

Resolution: the societal definition of tribe. At the conclusion, the term tribe is resemanticized as an ethnographic term to

become a dynamic ethical community. The ethnic and linguistic diversity of the brothers is not problem/solution but problem-as-solution: it is the difference between them that allows them to create complementary capacities. The movie thus expresses a film thesis: plurality Nigerian care and accountability form the organization of Nigerian resources are a resource, and not a liability.

5.4 Synthesis

In onomastics (names), phonostylistics (accents), pragmatics (greetings, stance, code choice), *A Tribe Called Judah* plays at the multi-lingual ethics: the voice of identity is tried, checked and re- said in an attempt to survive as a collective. The unity in diversity that is being modelled in the text is not a sentimental one but a technical one, a repertoire of opposing skills and voices, which work together in harmony through filial love and mutual risk. By so doing, the movie provides an abnormally clear response to the sociolinguistic question it posits itself: names and speech do not simply reveal who the *Judahs* are; they facilitate what they are capable of doing- collectively.

6. Findings and Discussion

6.1.Names as Symbolic Indicators of Ethnicity and Cultural Diversity

Among the main conclusions of this paper is the fact that *A Tribe Called Judah* utilizes names as symbolic identifiers of ethnicity and that they also carry cultural connotations beyond simply identifying with a particular group of individuals. The names of both brothers are clear indicators of their ethnic races and origins. Indicatively, *Emeka* is a clearly Igbo name, which not only portrays his heritage but also demands accountability, especially in terms of being the first born. *Emeka* in the film portrays the

stereotypical Igbo qualities of being strong and industrious because he takes the position of the breadwinner of the family after the death of their father. Likewise, *Adamu*, a name that has Hausa and Islamic connotations, indicates his origins in the North, discipline and reserved nature. The scene with *Adamu* resolving conflicts calmly versus *Shina* genetic Yoruba aggressive behaviour, which is more confrontational, in the movie, highlights several interactions between naming and perceived character traits.

Shina (Yoruba), *Pere* (Ijaw) and *Ejiro* (Urhobo) among others are some of the names that emphasize the fact that Nigerian ethnic backgrounds were united in one family. Such naming systems reflect the socio linguistic environment of Nigeria, in which individual names tend to be coded in personal names in terms of culture, ethnic identification, and even religious orientation (Owolabi, 2012). The diverse names of the brothers in the film are not only names but they also serve as storytelling devices that warn about the multi-vocality of the Nigerian federation.

6.2. Variations in Language and Identity Formation

The other important observation is that the speech patterns, accents and linguistic codes consolidate individualities in addition to forming the general cultural puzzle of the family. Occasionally, the English intonation of *Emeka* is of Igbo colouring, a faint sign of his south-eastern birth. The fact that he switches into Igbo idioms whenever he is giving advice to his younger brothers is an indication of the bond between language and identity. On the other hand, *Adamu* exhibits the Hausa intonation and speech rhythm in English, which is an indication of the sociolinguistic uniqueness of the north. Indicatively, he uses greetings that are

Hausa-influenced in a scene, which highlights his ethnicity and, at the same time, as a Muslim.

Shina uses his Yoruba accented Pidgin and urban language to represent the Yoruba as a street-cunning person. His sarcastic jokes and fast puns fit into the tradition of Nollywood's making Yoruba characters expressive and humorous. *Pere*, however, speaks mostly Niger Delta Pidgin, which is characterized by its own rhythm and the use of words and places *Pere* squarely in the linguistic ecology of the oil-rich Delta. Lastly is *Ejiro*, the playful lastborn who talks in a mixture of youthful slang and urban Nigerian English, as Nigerian youth cultures are hybrid. Together, these speech forms depict what Bamgbose (1991) defines as the linguistic pluralism of Nigeria in which the various forms of language are in coexistence and liberalization in the daily communication.

6.3. Unity in Diversity Representation

The most significant discovery, perhaps, was how the film *A Tribe Called Judah* reflects the ideal of unity in diversity that Nigeria could have. However, despite the fact that their names, ethnicities, patterns of speech are different, the five brothers create solidarity in their joint fight against poverty and systemic oppression. The fact that they have decided to engage in a heist, which is also ethically dubious, is a representation of a united stand which goes beyond ethnicity. Their different linguistic repertoires do not interfere with communication in the scenes in which they are plotting together and, on the contrary, they enrich the voice of the family as a whole.

The film thus mirrors the socio-political dream of Nigeria to celebrate unity by the cultural pluralism, and it is all encapsulated in the national motto: Unity in Diversity. As Haynes (2016) writes, Nollywood sometimes serves as a reflection of the Nigerian society, as it plays ethnic hostility but also provides the stories of reconciliation and unity. An excellent example of this role portrayed by *A Tribe Called Judah* is that common issues (poverty, marginalization, and the need to survive) can unite people more than ethnic segregation.

6.4. Intercultural Competency and Solidarity

Lastly, the film may be said to propagate intercultural understanding indirectly through emphasizing the virtues that each of the characters brought into the family unit. The survival in the family is determined by the industriousness of *Emeka*, the discipline of *Adamu*, the wit of *Shina*, the street skills of *Pere* and the resilience of *Ejiro* as a young girl.

Instead of being a conflict source, they use this diversity as a tool of adaptation. This

representation highlights the fact that Nollywood has a cultural mediating effect, bargaining the problems and possibilities of the plural society in Nigeria.

In this respect, *A Tribe Called Judah* carries the sociolinguistic approach of Fishman (1999), who asserts that language is not only a means of communication, but also a means of identity, values and social integration. The film also shows how ethnic linguistic identity can be maintained by each brother at the same time as they are working towards a unified family objective, which is achieved by keeping the ethnic cultural group within the national unity.

7. Conclusion

This paper has explored sociolinguistic aspects of naming, language use and ethnic identity in *A Tribe Called Judah* and how the movie is placed within the wider context of the Nigerian cultural pluralism. The discussion showed that the role of names in the movie serves as a symbolic signifier of ethnicity and cultural heritage showing the multi-dimensionality of Nigerian identities within one family. *Emeka*, *Adamu*, *Shina*, *Pere*, and *Ejiro* are not only used to name individual characters, but also serve as code to cultural pasts, social norms and religious identities. The paper also established that the language varieties and speech patterns play a vital role as identities, and the accent, intonation or code-switching patterns used by each character is indicative of his ethnicity. The Igbo-infused English of *Emeka*, Hausa-infused intonation of *Adamu*, Yoruba street language of *Shina*, Niger Delta Pidgin of *Pere*, and urban slang of the young *Ejiro* all help to create a picture of a highly diverse linguistic ecology of Nigeria. These discrepancies, however, do not divide the family; on the contrary, this enhances the dynamics of communication through which the depth of diversity as a coexistence possibility can be depicted. In addition to the identity of a person, the movie also emphasizes the theme of solidarity in diversity, portraying how similar agonies such as poverty, similar agonies such as poverty, marginalization, and the survival struggle can make people unite despite their ethnic differences. This story is a reflection of the national dream of Nigeria to become united in spite of heterogeneity of ethnic and linguistic backgrounds.

The film supports the idea that shared objectives are not always limited by cultural or language borders as it uses the collective action of the brothers as *A Tribe Called Judah*.

Concerning its contribution, the research shows that Nollywood is a rich location to study sociolinguistics, and the results of the study can be used to understand how names and language varieties package identity and negotiation of belonging in a multicultural society. It also emphasizes the contribution of Nollywood to improving cultural discussion on unity in Nigeria, and how films can serve as the means of intercultural communication.

Lastly, the Nollywood implications are enormous. The industry can not only entertain; it can also make socio-political discourses of identity, diversity, and cohesion. Nollywood can remain a place of encouraging national integration and retaining the diversity of Nigeria, as well as maintaining Nigerian language and cultural traditions, by making ethnic identities more nuanced and encouraging solidarity between people of different cultures.

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