

A PRAGMA-SOCIOLINGUISTIC ANALYSIS OF HAUSA INDIGENOUS PERSONAL NAMES IN THE DIGITAL SPACE

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Abstract

This paper investigates Hausa indigenous personal names from a pragma-sociolinguistic perspective, with particular attention to their recontextualisation in online environments. Anchored in a combined pragmatic and sociolinguistic framework, the study adopts a qualitative research design. Data consist of sixteen (16) selected Hausa indigenous personal names employed as usernames and display names on platforms such as Facebook, WhatsApp, and TikTok. Drawing on concepts such as context, speaker intention, indexicality, implicature, and social identity, the analysis demonstrates how meanings of Hausa Indigenous Personal Names are negotiated beyond literal interpretations within cyber-mediated interactions. The findings reveal that, in digital spaces, Hausa indigenous personal names function not only as pragmatic resources but also as sociolinguistic markers of identity construction, group affiliation, and social positioning. While cyberculture reshapes traditional naming contexts, it does not erode their cultural and social significance. Rather, digital platforms provide alternative sites for the reinterpretation, negotiation, and continuity of Hausa cultural identity in the digital age.

Keywords: Hausa personal names; Pragma-sociolinguistics; Cyberculture; Digital identity; Recontextualisation.

Introduction

Personal names constitute an essential aspect of human language and culture, serving not merely as labels for individual

identification but as meaningful linguistic resources through which societies encode history, values, beliefs, and social expectations. Among the Hausa people of West Africa, indigenous personal names are deeply embedded in sociocultural practices and reflect a wide range of contextual factors, including birth circumstances, environmental features, character traits, moral aspirations, and collective experiences. Beyond their semantic and pragmatic functions, these names operate as sociolinguistic resources that index social identities, cultural affiliations, and group membership within the speech community. In this sense, Hausa indigenous personal names do not only convey intended meanings but also signal the social positioning of their bearers and the cultural norms that shape their interpretation.

Such names function pragmatically by conveying meanings that extend beyond their literal interpretations and are understood within shared cultural and situational contexts. At the same time, their interpretation is inherently sociolinguistic, as meaning is negotiated through socially shared knowledge, norms, and identity frameworks. Traditionally, the interpretation of Hausa indigenous personal names is grounded in face-to-face interaction and community-based knowledge systems, where both meaning and social significance are co-constructed through shared cultural assumptions.

However, the rapid advancement of high technology and the emergence of cyberculture have transformed communicative practices and social interaction. Digital platforms such as social networking sites and instant messaging applications have introduced new modes of self-presentation, identity construction, and meaning-making. Within these technologically mediated environments, personal names are increasingly deployed as usernames, display names, and digital identity markers, thereby relocating indigenous naming practices from their conventional sociocultural settings into cyberspace. In these contexts, names become even more salient as indexical signs through which users construct, perform, and negotiate identities in relation to diverse and often heterogeneous audiences.

This shift raises important questions about how the pragmatic meanings and sociolinguistic functions of Hausa indigenous personal names are maintained, adapted, or reinterpreted in digital contexts. While existing studies on Hausa onomastics have largely focused on semantic classification, sociocultural motivations, and historical development of names, limited scholarly attention has been paid to their pragmatic behaviour and sociolinguistic significance in cyber-mediated communication. Similarly, studies in digital discourse and cyber-pragmatics have often overlooked indigenous African naming practices as sites of both meaning negotiation and identity construction in online interaction.

Against this background, this paper examines Hausa indigenous personal names from a pragma-sociolinguistic perspective in the era of high technology and cyberculture. Drawing on qualitative data from sixteen selected Hausa indigenous personal names used on digital platforms, the study explores how context, speaker intention, indexicality, and audience interpretation interact to shape both meaning and social identity in online environments.

Empirical Review

Personal naming systems have long attracted scholarly attention, especially in African contexts, yet the intersection of indigenous names and digital spaces remains underexplored. Muhammad Dikko highlights the cultural significance of Hausa child-naming practices, emphasizing how Westernization and Islamic influences have marginalized pre-Islamic indigenous names, which historically encoded communal identity and historical consciousness (23). Similarly, Labaran underscores the semiotic dimension of Hausa names as social signs, but stops short of analyzing their communicative functions (188). Similarly, Mustapha examines the origin and etymology of ward names in Kano City. He notes that Ward names in

contemporary Kano are derived from eight sources. His study is fundamentally etymological and historical, employing descriptive linguistic methodology. While relevant to Hausa onomastics, it is narrowly focused on toponymy rather than personal names. It thus creates a gap that this research seeks to fill by focusing on Hausa indigenous personal names and their social meanings (127).

Daudu, in his *Structure and Meaning of Fulbe Personal Names*, concludes that every society has its own source of naming its people. Factors such as linguistic, political, economic, social, cultural, and religious would play a central role in giving personal names to a Hausa child like it is obtainable in other tribes (72).

Khalid Guga and Nwabudike Christopher, drawing on Dell Hymes, shows that Hausa indigenous personal names function as sociocultural and semiotic resources that encode identity, moral values, and communal beliefs, while serving as tools for cultural continuity and social positioning. These findings highlight the sociolinguistic and meaning-oriented nature of Hausa naming practices and provide a no basis for the present study, which examines how such socially indexical resources are pragmatically and sociolinguistically reinterpreted in digitally mediated contexts (92).

Cross-cultural studies reinforce the pragmatic potential of names. Samuel Obeng's work on Akan "death prevention names" shows how names perform culturally embedded communicative acts (164). Folashade Idowu's speech act analysis of Yoruba pet names demonstrate that names can convey directives, advice, and social evaluation, highlighting their interactional force (3). Similarly, Patience Mashiri's study of Shona proper names emphasizes social roles in address systems, offering a model for investigating pragmatic-naming interactions in African contexts (93). However, these studies focus on offline contexts, leaving the digital sphere largely unexplored.

Emerging research on naming in cyberspace suggests that digital platforms transform identity construction and cultural expression. Bjørg Reisaeter notes that change in name in immigrant contexts affects self-perception and social interaction in online spaces (112), while

Lynne Brown and Ruth Peers observe that postcolonial language loss and mistranslation impact name preservation, implying challenges for digital transmission of indigenous identities (111). Jean Batoma and Thabo Guma illustrate how names can serve as indirect communicative tools in conflict-laden situations, demonstrating the potential of names as performative acts a principle extendable to online interaction (265).

Despite these contributions, limited attention has been paid to how Hausa indigenous personal names operate simultaneously as pragmatic and sociolinguistic resources in digital communication. To address this gap, the present study adopts a pragma-sociolinguistic framework that integrates pragmatic concepts such as Speech Act Theory, Presupposition, and Implicature with sociolinguistic notions of Indexicality, Social Identity, and community-based norms. This integration enables an examination of how Hausa names in cyberspace not only convey intended meanings but also index social identities, negotiate group affiliation, and sustain cultural memory in digitally mediated interaction.

Methodology

This study adopts a qualitative approach within a pragma-sociolinguistic framework to examine Hausa indigenous personal names as both meaning-making and socially indexical resources in digital contexts. The framework integrates Dell Hymes' Ethnography of Communication, Speech Act Theory, and sociolinguistic concepts such as Indexicality and Social Identity.

Data consist of **sixteen (16)** purposively selected Hausa indigenous personal names used as usernames and display names on Facebook, WhatsApp, and TikTok. These were collected through digital ethnography and non-participant observation of naturally occurring online interactions, with attention to ethical considerations such as anonymity and contextual integrity.

Analysis follows an interpretive procedure: first, examining pragmatic meanings through context, intention, implicature, and presupposition; and second, exploring sociolinguistic functions by identifying how names index identity, social positioning, and cultural affiliation. The analysis is further guided by the **SPEAKING** model within Ethnography of Communication, adapted to digitally mediated environments.

Data Presentation, and Analysis

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A. Fauna-Based Indigenous Hausa Names

Fauna-based names derive from animals that carry strong symbolic meanings in Hausa culture. Animals, birds and insects such as the lion, peacock and scorpion are culturally associated with strength, bravery, endurance, alertness, extravagant plumage and attention-commanding

displays. In indigenous Hausa philosophy, such names are not arbitrary labels but symbolic attributions that project desired qualities onto the bearer. Within cyberculture, fauna-based names provide users with a means of projecting power, resilience, and social presence, making them potent pragmatic resources for online self-representation.

Datum1: **Dàge** (Pugnacious / Aggressive)

Pragmatically, Dàge functions as a highly assertive and confrontational speech act through which the bearer constructs an identity of aggression, resistance, and emotional intensity. Pragmatically, the name performs an illocutionary act of self-positioning, where the user deliberately frames himself as someone not easily intimidated. The implicature of Dàge extends beyond aggression to include dominance, readiness for conflict, and interactional assertiveness. It also carries a pre-emptive face-threatening strategy, discouraging interlocutors from engaging in hostile or disrespectful interaction. In digital discourse, the name functions as a symbolic warning signal that shapes audience expectations before any interaction occurs.

Sociolinguistically, Dàge indexes Hausa cultural ideologies that associate controlled aggression with masculine strength, honour, and social credibility. It reflects a social order in which assertiveness is not only tolerated but sometimes valorised as a marker of bravery and protection. The name therefore situates the bearer within a culturally recognised identity category of “strong masculine presence,” reinforcing expectations of dominance, resilience, and emotional toughness.

Within Ethnography of Communication, the setting is digitally mediated interaction where identity is encoded linguistically; the participants include the bearer and a heterogeneous online audience interpreting symbolic cues; the ends involve projecting dominance and deterrence; the act sequence is realised through name selection as a

primary communicative act; the key is aggressive, confrontational, and forceful; the norms reflect Hausa cultural expectations of masculine assertiveness; and the genre is identity signalling in cyber discourse.

Datum 2. **Dawisu** (Peacock)

Dawisu performs an expressive-assertive speech act that foregrounds beauty, visibility, and self-display. Pragmatically, it functions as a self-enhancement act, where the bearer projects social attractiveness and symbolic prominence. Through implicature, the name suggests confidence, pride, and a desire for recognition within social interaction. It also operates as a form of positive face construction, inviting admiration and attention from interlocutors in digital environments.

Sociolinguistically, Dawisu indexes aspirational identity and performative visibility in Hausa culture. The peacock metaphor symbolises beauty, pride, and social distinction, aligning the bearer with ideals of charisma and aesthetic presence. It reflects how identity is socially constructed through symbolic animal imagery that communicates prestige and individuality.

Within Ethnography of Communication, the setting is digitally mediated interaction where identity is encoded linguistically; the participants include the bearer and a heterogeneous online audience interpreting symbolic cues; the ends involve projecting dominance and deterrence; the act sequence is realised through name selection as a primary communicative act; the key is aggressive, confrontational, and forceful; the norms reflect Hausa cultural expectations of masculine assertiveness; and the genre is identity signalling in cyber discourse.

Datum 3: **Kùnàma** (Scorpion)

Kùnàma functions as a warning-oriented assertive speech act that encodes danger, vigilance, and retaliatory capacity. Pragmatically, it performs a threat-indexing act, where the bearer indirectly signals the capacity for harm if provoked. The implicature is not overt aggression but controlled defensiveness, suggesting that the bearer is observant,

strategic, and capable of measured retaliation. It also operates as a deterrence-based identity marker, shaping interactional boundaries in advance.

Sociolinguistically, the name indexes Hausa cultural conceptions of power as something that is both protective and potentially dangerous. It reflects ideologies of controlled strength, where respect is earned through the perceived ability to defend oneself. The scorpion metaphor reinforces cultural associations between vigilance, survival, and masculine protection.

In *Ethnography of Communication*, the setting is cyberspace where symbolic identities circulate; the participants include the bearer and interpretive audiences; the ends involve projecting deterrence and controlled power; the act sequence is realised through symbolic naming as identity framing; the key is cautionary, strategic, and intimidating; the norms emphasise respect for perceived strength; and the genre is symbolic identity construction in digital discourse.

B. Flora-Based Indigenous Hausa Names

Flora-based names reflect the ecological and agrarian foundations of Hausa society. Plants such as the date palm symbolize sustenance, fertility, continuity, and resilience. These names encode a close relationship between humans and the natural environment. When recontextualised in digital spaces, flora-based names allow users to assert cultural rootedness and continuity, positioning indigenous ecological knowledge within modern communicative environments.

Datum 4. Barkono (Pepper)

Barkono performs a strong assertive and expressive speech act that encodes sharpness, intensity, and communicative force. Pragmatically, it functions as an attention-commanding identity act, where the bearer positions himself as outspoken, impactful, and

difficult to ignore. The implicature extends to verbal boldness, emotional intensity, and interactional influence. It also serves as a stance-marking device, signalling readiness to engage forcefully in discourse.

Sociolinguistically, Barkono indexes cultural admiration for verbal sharpness and assertive communication in Hausa society. It reflects social values that associate intensity and expressive boldness with influence and leadership potential. The pepper metaphor symbolises both discomfort and attraction, reinforcing the dual nature of assertive identity.

From the Ethnography of Communication standpoint, the setting is interactive digital platforms such as comment sections and messaging spaces; the participants include the bearer and audiences engaged in discourse; the ends involve asserting presence and influence; the act sequence is realised through naming as identity projection; the key is sharp, intense, and provocative; the norms permit assertive expression as communicative strategy; and the genre is discursive identity performance.

Datum 5. **Dabino** (Date Palm Tree)

Dabino denotes the date palm, symbolising sustenance, fertility, productivity, and continuity in Hausa agrarian life. Pragmatically, Dabino performs an expressive identity act that attributes reliability, productivity, and social usefulness to the bearer. The name enacts an illocutionary force of contribution, presenting the bearer as a source of support and continuity within social interaction.

From a sociolinguistic standpoint, Dabino indexes communal responsibility and intergenerational continuity, values deeply embedded in Hausa social organisation. The name aligns masculinity with productivity and provision, reinforcing social expectations of male contribution to collective wellbeing.

Within Ethnography of Communication, the setting is digitally mediated interaction; participants include culturally diverse audiences; the ends involve projecting reliability and social usefulness; the act

sequence is realised through name selection as identity encoding; the key is supportive and constructive; norms derive from shared Hausa agrarian values; and the genre is identity affirmation in online discourse.

Datum 6. **Gamji** (Ficus Platypus Tree)

Gamji functions as a strong declarative–assertive speech act through which the bearer symbolically constructs an identity of stability, protection, and moral authority. The name carries layered implicatures of permanence, wisdom, and reliability, suggesting that the bearer is not easily displaced, shaken, or morally unstable. Pragmatically, it performs a stabilising identity act, positioning the user as a social anchor in interaction. In digital communication, where identities are fluid and often transient, Gamji operates as a counter-statement of permanence and reliability, implicitly promising consistency in behaviour and discourse.

Sociolinguistically, Gamji indexes elderhood symbolism and communal guardianship in Hausa culture. The tree is culturally associated with shelter, shade, protection, and communal gathering, and thus the name evokes authority, wisdom, and social responsibility. It constructs an identity aligned with leadership and moral guidance, reinforcing respect-based hierarchy in social organisation.

Within Ethnography of Communication, the setting is cyberspace where identity is textually performed; the participants include the name-bearer and a diverse interpretive audience; the ends involve projecting authority and stability; the act sequence is realised through name selection as a first-order communicative act; the key is serious, authoritative, and stable; the norms reflect Hausa respect culture for elders and protectors; and the genre is identity anchoring through symbolic natural reference.

C. Attribute-Based Indigenous Hausa Names

Attribute-based names directly encode personal qualities such as bravery, toughness, or boldness. In Hausa culture, these names function as evaluative statements about character and social expectation. Their use in cyberspace aligns with pragmatic self-positioning, as individuals adopt names that foreground desired traits and negotiate identity within digitally mediated interaction.

Datum 7. **Gwarzo** (Tough/ hardened)

Gwarzo literally denotes toughness, hardness, and resistance, qualities historically valued in Hausa agrarian, warrior, and survival-oriented contexts. Pragmatically, Gwarzo functions as a self-ascriptive assertive identity act through which the bearer claims resilience, endurance, and emotional firmness. The name performs an illocutionary act of self-fortification, presenting the bearer as someone capable of withstanding hardship, pressure, and confrontation. In interaction, the name pre-empts interpretations of weakness and frames the bearer as psychologically and socially durable.

From a sociolinguistic perspective, Gwarzo indexes a culturally dominant masculine ideology in Hausa society that equates manhood with toughness, emotional restraint, and reliability under stress. The name participates in the reproduction of gender norms that value stoicism and physical or moral strength, positioning the bearer within a respected masculine identity category.

Within Ethnography of Communication, the setting is digitally mediated interaction; the participants include users negotiating identity meaning in online discourse; the ends include projecting strength and resistance; the act sequence is embedded in the initial naming choice as identity framing; the key is firm, serious, and confrontational; the norms derive from Hausa cultural valorisation of endurance; and the genre is identity assertion in cyber discourse.

Datum 8. **Jarumi**, (Hero, Brave)

Jarumi literally means a brave person or hero, traditionally associated with courage, honour, and social responsibility. Pragmatically, Jarumi performs a dual expressive-assertive act. Expressively, it evaluates the bearer positively as courageous; assertively, it claims moral strength and readiness to confront danger or injustice. The name operates as an illocutionary act of self-heroisation, framing the bearer as ethically upright and socially dependable.

Sociolinguistically, Jarumi indexes heroic masculinity within Hausa moral philosophy, where bravery is tied not only to physical courage but also to moral duty and communal protection. The name reinforces social expectations of leadership, sacrifice, and honourable conduct.

From Ethnography of Communication viewpoint, the setting is online communicative environments; the participants include the bearer and evaluative digital audiences; the ends involve projecting heroism and moral authority; the act sequence is realised through naming as identity declaration; the key is bold, honourable, and valorising; the norms emphasise courage and social responsibility; and the genre is moral identity performance within cyber discourse.

D. Environment and Place-Based Names

Environment- and place-based names draw from physical landscapes and communal spaces, reflecting stability, belonging, and spatial identity. Names referencing rocks or towns encode communal rootedness and collective identity. In cyberspace, these names reassert connections to place and heritage, counteracting the placelessness often associated with digital interaction.

Datum 9. Dutse (Rock)

Dutse functions as a strong stabilising assertive speech act that encodes firmness, immovability, and resilience. The implicature of the

name is that the bearer is emotionally stable, dependable, and resistant to external pressures or manipulation. Pragmatically, it operates as an identity anchoring device, presenting the bearer as someone whose stance remains fixed even in conflictual or unstable interactional environments.

Sociolinguistically, Dutse indexes cultural values of trustworthiness and endurance in Hausa society. The rock metaphor symbolises reliability and consistency, aligning the bearer with expectations of emotional strength and social dependability. It constructs a socially respected identity associated with stability and credibility.

Within Ethnography of Communication, the setting is fluid digital environments characterised by rapid identity shifts; the participants include diverse online interlocutors; the ends involve projecting stability and credibility; the act sequence is enacted through naming as communicative positioning; the key is calm, firm, and resolute; the norms emphasise trust and reliability; and the genre is identity stabilisation in cyberspace.

Datum 10. **Gari** (Town / Community)

Gari performs an affiliative and declarative speech act that foregrounds communal belonging and collective identity. It carries strong presuppositions of shared social space and mutual recognition. The implicature extends to social embeddedness, suggesting that the bearer identifies strongly with a defined community rather than individual autonomy. Pragmatically, it functions as an anti-individualistic identity marker in digital environments.

Sociolinguistically, Gari indexes Hausa communitarian ideology where identity is relational and socially embedded. The name reflects cultural prioritisation of group belonging, shared responsibility, and collective identity construction. It resists the individualising tendencies of digital culture by reinforcing communal attachment.

From Ethnography of Communication, the setting is global cyberspace; the participants include both in-group and out-group

audiences; the ends involve asserting belonging and cultural identity; the act sequence is realised through naming as affiliative positioning; the key is inclusive, collective, and grounded; the norms prioritise communal solidarity; and the genre is cultural identity anchoring in digital communication.

F. Moral and Philosophical Names

Moral and philosophical names express ethical values and communal ideals such as justice, goodness, humility, and service. In Hausa society, these names transmit moral philosophy and social expectations. Their deployment in cyberculture enables users to align with culturally valued ethical positions, using naming as a pragmatic tool for moral and ideological self-presentation.

Datum 11. Nagari (Good / Upright Person)

Nagari operates as a strongly evaluative expressive speech act that publicly attributes moral goodness and ethical uprightness to the bearer. In pragmatic terms, the name performs an illocutionary act of self-idealisation, where the user implicitly claims moral respectability without overtly stating it. Through presupposition, it assumes a shared cultural understanding of what “goodness” means within Hausa moral philosophy. The implicature extends beyond morality to include trustworthiness, social acceptability, and reliability in interpersonal relations. In digital interaction, the name therefore functions as a pre-emptive identity claim that guides how others interpret the user’s online behaviour.

From a sociolinguistic perspective, Nagari indexes dominant Hausa moral ideology in which identity is evaluated through communal standards of goodness, respect, and social responsibility. It positions the bearer within a socially approved moral category, functioning as a symbolic resource for gaining respectability and reducing social

suspicion in online spaces. The name also reflects how moral language is socially distributed in Hausa society, where ethical identity is publicly recognisable and socially consequential.

Within Ethnography of Communication, the setting is digitally mediated platforms where identity is constructed without physical interaction. The participants include the name-bearer and a diverse audience who interpret moral cues based on cultural knowledge. The ends involve establishing credibility and moral trust. The act sequence is realised through name selection as a first-order communicative act of moral positioning. The key is positive, respectful, and value-oriented. The norms are derived from Hausa communal ethics that prioritise good character. The genre is ethical self-presentation in online identity performance.

Datum 12. **Adali** (Just / Fair Person)

Adali encodes justice, balance, and fairness in Hausa moral philosophy. Pragmatically, Adali functions as a declarative moral stance, through which the bearer claims commitment to fairness and impartiality. The name performs an illocutionary act of ideological positioning, aligning the bearer with justice-oriented values. From a sociolinguistic perspective, Adali indexes moral authority and ethical competence. The name situates the bearer within respected moral categories, often associated with leadership, arbitration, and trust.

Within Ethnography of Communication, the setting is online discourse communities where opinions and identities are constantly negotiated. The participants include the bearer and audiences engaged in evaluative interpretation. The ends involve projecting fairness and ideological integrity. The act sequence is the immediate adoption of a morally charged identity label as interactional framing. The key is principled and authoritative. The norms reflect Hausa expectations of justice as a social virtue. The genre is ideological identity signalling within digital communication.

G. Strength and Endurance-Based Names

These names foreground resilience, persistence, and survival, traits central to Hausa cultural identity. They often function pragmatically as identity markers in social interaction, projecting confidence and social expectation. In cyberspace, users employ these names to signal personal attributes or social persona, performing acts of self-assertion and respect in digital discourse.

Datum 13. **Gwarzo** (Tough/ hardened)

Pragmatically, Gwarzo functions as an assertive self-ascriptive speech act through which the bearer claims toughness, endurance, and emotional resilience. The name performs an illocutionary act that projects strength and reliability, shaping interlocutors' expectations by pre-emptively positioning the bearer as capable of withstanding hardship, conflict, and responsibility. As a naming choice, Gwarzo reduces interpretive ambiguity about the bearer's disposition, foregrounding firmness and resistance to vulnerability as core identity traits.

From a sociolinguistic perspective, Gwarzo indexes culturally valorised Hausa masculine ideals rooted in agrarian labour, warrior ethics, and communal survival. The name reinforces gendered norms that associate manhood with physical and psychological toughness, emotional restraint, and dependability. Its use reproduces dominant cultural ideologies of masculinity and social respect, positioning the bearer within a socially recognised framework of strength and endurance.

Within Ethnography of Communication, the setting is high-interaction digital space where identity must be immediately legible. The participants are users engaged in online negotiation of meaning. The ends include projecting dominance and resilience. The act sequence is realised through name selection as a pre-communicative

identity act. The key is firm, controlled, and serious. The norms derive from Hausa cultural valuation of endurance. The genre is identity reinforcement in cyber interaction.

Datum 14. **Jatau** (Red / Fierce / Bold)

Jatau pragmatically functions as an intensifying assertive speech act that amplifies emotional strength, boldness, and presence. The name performs an illocutionary act of self-projection, foregrounding intensity and fearlessness as defining traits of the bearer. By invoking colour symbolism and emotional force, Jatau pragmatically heightens the bearer's interactional salience, framing him as energetic, confrontational, and unwilling to retreat in social exchanges.

Sociolinguistically, Jatau indexes Hausa cultural associations between intensity, courage, and masculine vitality. The name reflects affective dimensions of masculinity in which emotional force and assertiveness are culturally legitimised. It reinforces social ideologies that associate male identity with boldness, expressive power, and readiness for challenge, thereby shaping how the bearer is socially evaluated.

From Ethnography of Communication standpoint, the setting is digitally competitive environments characterised by rapid interaction. The participants are the bearer and an audience interpreting symbolic identity cues. The ends include visibility, dominance, and interactional influence. The act sequence is the immediate identity signalling through name choice. The key is intense, energetic, and confrontational. The norms favour assertiveness and expressive force. The genre is digital identity amplification and performance.

H. Communal and Relational Names

Communal and relational names emphasize kinship, lineage, and social belonging. Such names foreground collective identity over individualism, reflecting the communal orientation of Hausa society. In cyberspace, their use functions as an affiliative act, positioning the

bearer within a network of social relations and cultural continuity despite the individualized structure of digital platforms.

Datum 15. **Dangari** (Child of the Town / Community)

Pragmatically, **Dangari** functions as a strong affiliative and declarative identity act through which the bearer positions himself as an integral member of a recognised community. The name performs an illocutionary act of social alignment, foregrounding collective belonging, loyalty, and communal responsibility over individual distinction. By invoking shared space and ancestry, **Dangari** pragmatically presupposes common cultural knowledge and mutual obligation between the bearer and interlocutors, shaping interactional expectations of cooperation, accountability, and respect for communal norms.

From a sociolinguistic perspective, **Dangari** indexes the communitarian orientation of Hausa society, where identity is constructed relationally through kinship, locality, and shared social experience. The name reflects indigenous ideologies that privilege collective identity and social embeddedness, reinforcing masculine expectations of civic responsibility, social representation, and loyalty to one's community. Its usage reproduces social structures that value communal solidarity and indigeneity.

Within Ethnography of Communication, the setting is global digital space where users construct identity beyond physical locality. The participants include both in-group and out-group audiences interpreting cultural signals. The ends involve asserting rootedness and collective identity. The act sequence is the adoption of a relational identity marker as communicative positioning. The key is inclusive and affiliative. The norms emphasise communal solidarity. The genre is cultural identity anchoring in digital interaction.

Datum 16. **Zābiya** (lady with sweet with a beautiful/ melodic voice)

Zàbiya pragmatically functions as an evaluative expressive act that attributes vocal beauty, auditory appeal, and communicative elegance to the bearer. The name performs an illocutionary act of positive aesthetic evaluation, positioning the bearer as someone whose voice carries emotional and social value. This pragmatic force shapes interaction by associating the bearer with pleasant speech, persuasion, and emotional resonance.

Sociolinguistically, Zàbiya indexes gendered aesthetic norms in Hausa society that associate femininity with vocal softness, melodic speech, and verbal grace. The name reflects cultural ideologies linking women's voices to social harmony, performance, and emotional expression. It also highlights the social importance of voice quality as a marker of identity and social worth.

From Ethnography of Communication point of view, the setting is audio-visual digital platforms such as voice notes, livestreams, and video-based interaction. The participants include the speaker and audience interpreting vocal and symbolic cues. The ends involve projecting aesthetic identity and communicative appeal. The act sequence is identity signalling through name selection aligned with vocal performance. The key is pleasant, expressive, and soft. The norms reflect gendered expectations of speech aesthetics. The genre is performative identity construction in cyber-mediated communication.

Discussion and Findings

The analysis reveals that Hausa indigenous personal names function as meaningful linguistic resources that go beyond simple identification. The examined names demonstrate strong pragmatic and sociocultural functions, encoding values such as bravery, resilience, morality, and communal belonging. Names such as Gwarzo, Jarumi, and Jatau pragmatically project toughness and courage, while moral names like Nagari and Adali express ethical ideals and social approval. These names therefore operate as performative acts through which identity and social expectations are communicated.

Another important finding is that Hausa personal names index cultural meanings drawn from the natural and social environment. Fauna- and flora-based names such as Dawisu, Kùnàma, Dabino, and Gamji symbolically associate the bearer with qualities such as beauty, vigilance, productivity, and protection. Likewise, place and communal names such as Dutse, Gari, and Dangari emphasize stability, belonging, and collective identity. This demonstrates that Hausa naming practices reflect a worldview in which identity is closely tied to nature, morality, and communal relations.

The paper further shows that these indigenous names remain meaningful in digital environments. When used as usernames and online identifiers, the names are recontextualised as tools for digital identity construction and social positioning. Users employ them to project strength, visibility, cultural rootedness, or moral authority in online interaction. This indicates that rather than diminishing traditional naming practices, cyberculture provides new spaces in which the pragmatic meanings of Hausa names are maintained and adapted.

Conclusion

This paper demonstrates that Hausa indigenous personal names function as dynamic pragmatic and sociocultural resources that encode identity, moral values, and communal belonging. The findings show that these meanings persist even within technologically mediated environments where names are strategically used to construct digital identities and maintain cultural continuity. The paper therefore highlights the adaptability of Hausa naming practices and underscores the continuing relevance of indigenous linguistic traditions in contemporary cyberculture.

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