

Street Names in Calabar Metropolis: A Socio-historical & Sociolinguistic Study

Eyo O. Mensah

*Department of Linguistics and Communication Studies
University of Calabar, Nigeria*

&

David L. Imbua

*Department of History and International Studies
University of Calabar, Nigeria*

The naming pattern of streets in Calabar metropolis reflects the widespread ethnic, cultural and linguistic diversities of the inhabitants of the city. Most ethnic mosaic that occupy the city are either represented or identified by a street's name. In this study, we investigate the archeology and multilingualism of street names in Calabar metropolis. We have also investigated the sources of street names in Calabar metropolis and the conscious street renaming policy of the local government authorities. The basic assumption, however, is that street names in Calabar metropolis mirror the historical development of the city particularly, in accentuating its migration, educational, commercial and religious history.

Introduction

Calabar is the capital city of Cross River State in southern Nigeria. It is located geographically at latitude 04°57' North and longitude 08°20' East. To the North of it are the upper regions of the Cross River, Oban and Ogoja, while to the West are the lands inhabited by the Ibibio and Igbo people. Calabar is bordered on the East by Cameroon and to the South by the estuary of the Cross River, which flows into the Bight of Biafra. Ethnically, the region is regarded as semi-Bantu. The Efik are the dominant ethnic group in Calabar, but two other ethnic units, the Qua and the Efut are essential elements that constitute Calabar in its long history. Under the present day political arrangement, Calabar is within the confines designated as Calabar Municipality and Calabar South Local Government Areas of Cross River State. It is one of the earliest locations in the country to establish contact with the Europeans, particularly, Portuguese and British trade merchants, Scottish Presbyterian and Catholic missionaries and British colonial administrators. Nair (1972) describes Calabar as "... having one of the longest unbroken contacts with Europe of any part of the West African coast". He also contends that Calabar was "a flourishing emporium of trade". Similarly, Ganduno (1970) describes Calabar as "...a Nigerian Rome, from where civilization overflowed into and pervaded the rest of that land between the Niger River and the Cameroon mountain". Fuller (1996) describes Calabar as "Canaan city of Nigeria", Udo calls it "the New York city of Ibibioland and more recently as "a Cross River State metropolis (Akoda 2002) among other designations. Calabar derives its historical fame from its cosmopolitan character, being a crossroad of religion, culture, trade, civilization and administration, it exerts tremendous social, cultural and economic pull on all the societies of the lower-Cross River region and beyond (Uya "Slave Routes" 5). Given this background, Calabar is naturally endowed with equatorial rainforest and agrarian vegetation which attracted early settlers, whose major occupations, such as hunting, fishing and farming, were supported

by these natural resources. The establishment of trade centres and mission schools were largely responsible for the influx of foreign people into the city of Calabar. The peaceful nature of the city which guarantees the security of life and property also encourage emigration into modern Calabar. Presently, the development of tourist destination and activities such as the Tinapa, Marina resort, Calabar museum and the Christmas festival are some of the initiatives that have helped to urbanize and open new vistas of opportunities for people to ‘invade’ Calabar. As the city grows, new roads and streets are constructed and existing ones are expanded to cope with increasingly new challenges. The roads/streets are named as they are being opened up. Their names signal the socio-historical background of the city and reflect its multilingual nature. In the analysis that follows, we trace the sources of street names in Calabar metropolis.

Sources of street names

Indeed, the history of Calabar is replete with waves of human movements, both Africans and non-Africans, who, in various degrees provided the pivot around which momentous and far-reaching historical developments revolved. The aborigines of Calabar took advantage of their geographical location to fraternize with expatriates from various corners of the world. By 1913, the total population of the town was put at 14,000, with 138 Europeans, 30 Asiatics, and a fairly large number of “native foreigners” from other parts of Nigeria and West Africa, who worked for the government or the commercial firms (Nwaka 1990). In a graphic analysis, Akoda (2002) maintains that by 1937, the ancient city of Calabar played host to 173 Yoruba, 176 Hausa, 1554 Igbo, 876 Ibibio, 237 Cameroonians, 74 Bini, and many other ethnic groups. It was the contributions made by these agents of radically different socio-cultural backgrounds that facilitated the growth of Calabar as a metropolitan and cosmopolitan city.

By 1938, about thirty township roads/streets were developed in Calabar. As could be gleaned from the street names, the colonialists who developed these streets/roads named each after a prominent Efik king or trader, missionary (who has made his/her marks on the sands of history), a European, who may have lived and worked in Calabar or any other important land feature (Eni 1998). These are the various sources of street names in Calabar metropolis. In the discussion that follows, we offer a glimpse into the contributions of some of the prominent names that have been immortalized in Calabar streets.

The most important source of street names in Calabar is through the early missionaries influence. The coming of the missionaries, particularly the Scottish Presbyterian and Catholic missionaries to Calabar marked a turning point in the spiritual emancipation and physical development of the people and city of Calabar. Rev. Hope Waddell was one of the pioneers that brought Christianity and education to the Efik people of Old Calabar. He was born in Dublin, Scotland in 1804 of humble parentage. In 1925, he was accepted by the Scottish Missionary Society (SMS) for a training that was expected to equip him for the propagation of the gospel. In 1829, he was ordained by the Edinburgh Presbytery in the United Secession Church (Nyon: 1), and sent by the SMS to Jamaica as a missionary (Waddell 15). In February 1930, he established a station in Cornwall (or Mount Zion Estate), North-West of the Island, and gave his entire life for the preaching of the gospel, producing a congregation of 1200 persons (203).

When a combination of factors, including the abolition of slave trade, and the willingness of Old Calabar kings to embrace Christianity and welcome the missionaries convinced the Presbytery, which met in Goshen in 1841 that the Christian religion should

be taken to Old Calabar. Waddell enthusiastically offered himself for that service in defiance to the terrifying stories that were told about the West Coast of Africa. The Presbytery that met in Hampden, Jamaica in 1844 and the parent Presbytery that met in Scotland in 1845 unanimously supported the decision that Waddell should head the projected Old Calabar Mission. He arrived Old Calabar in April, 10, 1846 with other members of his team and began work immediately, though conscious of the challenges of his mission, he was able to thread where lions feared (Akoda and Imbua). Waddell's message found receptive ears and hearts among some people and before long, Efik interpreters including the famous Young, Archibong, Duke, Henry Cobham, Bassey Offiong, and Adam Duke were co-opted into missionary service. Apart from tremendous religious tasks, Waddell played a vital role in the educational development of Calabar by establishing schools which were against the wish of the people. Typical of Waddell were the inducements he gave to pupils to keep them regularly in schools (Nyon 14).

Waddell was a force to reckon with in the early development of the Efik language. The first attempt to evolve a writing system for the Efik language was carried out by him in 1847 with the publication of his *A Vocabulary of the Efik or Old Calabar language*. This work, which was revised in 1849 contained lists of words and phrases, grouped according to their meaning in Efik. It was in this publication that the first set of symbols used in writing Efik was invented (Mensah and Offiong 2003). He also carried out the first grammatical description of the Efik. These efforts resulted in the subsequent translation of the Bible into Efik, a feat that promoted literacy in the Efik language and facilitated greatly the task of evangelization of the people. In the same vein, he contributed immensely to the scholarly study of Calabar. His *Twenty nine years in the West Indies and Central Africa* and several journal articles are invaluable materials in mirroring epochal events in Old Calabar before and during the Missionary era.

History speaks eloquently of Hope Waddell as a remarkable missionary and educationist, who served God and humanity with great commitment and dedication. He was driven by the passion of serving mankind with compassion. Besides teaching and preaching, he did substantial good work to make the people happier and more comfortable. Due to his priceless legacies, he was still fondly remembered several years after he was compelled by poor health to quit the Calabar Missionary fielding in 1858. Today, Waddell is remembered through the *Hope Waddell Training Institution* and *Hope Waddell Avenue* that have been named after him.

. After Hope Waddell left Calabar, Mary Slessor became a worthy replacement that filled the vacuum left behind by Waddell's exit. Acclaimed to be destined to be one of Nigeria's most famous Christian personality, Slessor arrived Old Calabar on September 11, 1876 and met a well structured Presbyterian establishment which had set up primary schools and other training facilities as well as church communities. When the founding of the Calabar mission was creating a stir throughout Scotland, there came into a lowly home in Aberdeen, Scotland a life that was to be known far and wide in connection with the enterprise. Mary Slessor was born on December 2, 1848 in Gilcomston, and described as having 'a soft voice and loving heart'. She was raised a Presbyterian by her mother, from whom she derived her enthusiasm for the Calabar Mission endeavour.

Slessor's missionary enthusiasm was given a boost by the death of David Johnstone in 1874. In 1876, she applied to the Foreign Mission Board of the United Presbyterian Church of Scotland, and was accepted as a missionary following the successful completion of her training. On her arrival in Calabar, Slessor discovered that though the Duke Town Missionaries have recorded some successes as was seen in the establishment

of a school, hospital, orphanage, and a chapel at the station, a number of evil practices were still being perpetrated by the natives. Slavery was still rampant despite its feigned abolition, the killing of twins, women or slaves meant nothing to the people, and people accused of witchcraft were compelled to eat *esere* beans, which must eventually kill them. . Twin children were traditionally regarded as evil signs and agents of doom. They were killed immediately at birth, their mothers banished into the evil forest and their fathers had to appease the gods of the land for the ‘sacrilege’. These were the practices which Slessor attacked in Calabar. She persuaded the people to stop the killing of twin children as well as the killing of wives and slaves of prominent men at the burials of such men since they cannot help such men in the next life (William 86).

After a brief stay at the Mission station, a new station was opened for Slessor at Old town. Her days in Old Town are remembered for the treatment of the sick, teaching of the Bible, visiting neighbouring areas for counseling. Her good rapport with King Eyo Honesty was of reciprocal benefit to both of them. King Honesty often asked Slessor for advice in dealing with white merchants, and she in turn asked the King for help in working with the natives. Slessor was very successful in Old Town and in line with her principle of “anywhere provided it be forwarded”, she decided to carry the gospel further to Okoyong, where the people reportedly valued only three things; guns to have power, chains to keep slaves and liquor to dull their minds. In defiance to the warning that she will die if she penetrated Okoyong. Slessor in 1888 boarded the grandest canoe (owned by King Eyo Honesty) in Old Calabar to Okoyong (William 88).

She was able to positively influence the people, and the natives trusted her absolutely. From long distances, they brought her their problems, and unfailingly, she strengthened them out. By her self-sacrifice and greatness of character, she earned the devotion of thousands of natives among whom she became everybody’s mother. In 1898, four of her adopted children Janie, Alice, Maggie and Mary followed her on furlough to Scotland. Mary Slessor did much in grooming and cultivating people who in various ways became society and humanity. She died on January 13, 1915 at the age of 67. Her remains were buried at Ikot Obong, Use Ikot Oku in the present day Itu Local Government Area in Akwa Ibom State with a colossal granite crucifix overlooking the tomb. Policy makers in Cross River State did the minds of many when one of the most strategic streets in Calabar, *Mary Slessor Avenue* was named after her. The contributions of Slessor to the emancipation and spiritual and physical repositioning of Calabar is not just outstanding, they are indeed legendary. Humanity may sooner or later forget her deeds, but history will not forget her.

Another Presbyterian missionary that touched the lives of the Calabar people greatly was Samuel Edgerly. He was a native of England, who went to Jamaica as a young printer. The mercy of god having arrested and converted him, he became a teacher in the Mico Charity, Montego Bay, and afterward in connection with Hope Waddell taught at Mount Zion School first, and by his own desire followed hope Waddell’s missionary team to Old Calabar. In Calabar, Edgerly did great works in the advancement of the religious and educational landscape of the city. He is particularly remembered for the preparation of the curriculum and very useful teaching materials which laid the foundation for effective teaching in those early days. Edgerly became popular through his economic empowerment schemes for young girls. He established a catering and home management school where girls, who were unable to attend formal schools, were taught trades. It was Edgerly who introduced printing in Calabar, following the establishment of the Duke Town School in 1846, which he administered. The technique of casting single metal

letters which could be assembled together to form a continuous text, was a rear experience to the Calabar people who had no idea of how literature reaching Calabar from Europe were produced. The establishment of a lithographic printing press under the charge of Edgerly gave boost to missionary education. Magazines, tracts, newsletters and general reading materials, some of which were produced in the Efik language, added impetus to learning. As the pioneer headmaster of Duke Town School, Edgerly encouraged and motivated children in Calabar to attend school against the will of their parents. He was admirably committed to the affairs of Duke Town School and was later joined by Hugh Goldie, William Anderson (both ministers) in 1847 and 1849 respectively.

Samuel Edgerly died in May 1857. *Edgerly Road* is his memoriam in Calabar. Hugh Goldie, his missionary colleague and staunch supporter of his educational effort, presented the following eulogy in his honour and memory:

Mr. Edgerly was a man of ardent temperament and partook of the excellencies and failings of those thus constitutionally moulded. Where conscience demanded, everything was forgotten, but the principles to be asserted or the duty to be discharged. In the Mission, from its commencement, he has not failed to endure hardship as a good soldier of Christ. No man was more susceptible of kindness or more ready to confer a favour (Goldie191).

The Revd. Hugh Goldie equally accomplished great exploits in Calabar, deserving the immortalization of his name on the sands of time. Goldie showed genuine enthusiasm in investigating people, language and culture of Old Calabar region. He learnt and spoke Efik, and from this vantage position, his description of events in Old Calabar are claimed to be better informed. He was instrumental to the translation of the Bible into Efik. In 1862, he compiled a *Dictionary of the Efik language*, which was the first work on lexicographic study of any African language. Goldie is also reputed to have attempted some grammatical description of Efik, which stood the test of its time. He published a *Memoir of King Eyo VII of Old Calabar* in 1894, and received the call to glory in August, 18, 1895 (Aye 134). *Goldie Road* is named after him

The Revd. William Anderson also made impressionable landmark in promoting missionary and educational activities in Old Calabar, where he impacted positively on the lives of the people. Today, he is immortalized by naming *Anderson Street* after him in remembrance of his good works.

Revd. Father (later Bishop) James Moynagh was born on April 25, 1903 at Loughduff, Ireland. He was ordained Priest on June,22, 1930 and led a group of Irish Priest to Calabar in the same year to assist the Holy Ghost Fathers in the evangelization of the Cross River Region. On arrival in Calabar, Moynach became key player in the consolidation of the influence of the Catholic Church in Calabar (1934), Ogoja (1938), and much later Ikot Ekpene (1963). An imposing memorial plaque in the missionary activities section of the Calabar Museum reads thus:

“Revd. (Dr.) Moynach, first Bishop (Emeritus) of Calabar, founder of many primary schools, vocational and secondary schools, including hospitals in South-Eastern Nigeria. He was a moving force behind the expansion of the Roman Catholic Mission Church in the Calabar hinterland”

Above all, Moynach encouraged and financed the training of local clergy. He had faith in the ability of the local Christians and he motivated vocation into Catholic priesthood. We read in the LINEAMENTA that:

It was through the instrument of Monsignor James Moynach who had the courage and vision to recommend him to the Vatican that Fr. Ekanem was consecrated Bishop in 1945. He became the first indigenous Bishop not only in Nigeria but in the whole of Anglophone West Africa. This was followed by appointment in 1966 of Fr. Brain David Usanga, as Auxilliary Bishop of Calabar. In Ogoja Diocese, Young Fr. Joseph Edra Ukpo was consecrated Bishop in September 1971, barely six years after his priestly ordination.

After a meritorious service, Moynach resigned as Bishop of Calabar on February, 5, 1970. He died on June, 1985 as Bishop Emeritus of Calabar, Nigeria. No one doubts the fact that the story of the Catholic Church in the Cross River Region is incomplete and questionable without reference to the great endeavour of Bishop James Moynach. As poignantly revealed in the above documents, the success story of the Catholic Mission in Calabar dates back to 1930, when a group of Irish Priests led by James Moynach came to Calabar (Ryan 208). Due to his great deeds, Bishop James Moynach has been immortalized in Calabar with the *Bishop Moynach Avenue*.

John Beecroft was born in 1790 near Whitby. He was a forerunner of British Imperial expedition in West Africa; both in his personal enthusiasm and his systematic intervention local politics. Between 1830 and 1832, he was the British Acting Governor of Fernando Po. In 1836, he ascended Cross River 120 miles from Old Calabar. Beecroft was the British Official, who received the Presbyterian missionaries in Fernando Po in April, 1846. He escorted and introduced them to King Eyamba of Duke Town on April, 10, 1846, when the Warree anchored at the mouth of Calabar River (Noah 106). On June 30, 1949, he was appointed British Consul to the Bight of Benin and Biafra. He was the brain behind the establishment of Court of Equity, which made the Efik businessmen hostages to British firms as they lost all rights to determine the terms of trade in their own local markets.

Of all British consuls in Old Calabar, none was intimately known and deeply respected as Beecroft. He traveled widely in the Cross River Region and acquired an unrivalled knowledge of the area. Calabar chiefs solicited his assistance in various expeditions up the Cross River. It was through his efforts that the Ibibio and Ogoja people were brought under British influence. In 1862, he presided over the election of a successor of King Archibong and thereby assumed the role of a kingmaker in Calabar without any challenging his credibility to do so (Noah 99). He signed treaties with local chiefs and threatened those who were unwilling to obey his orders with gun-boat invasion. Beecroft died on June, 10, 1854, and was buried in Fernando Po. The activities of John Beecroft and other imperial agents after him such as Hutchinson, Hartly, Hewett, Johnstone, and Anesly exerted tremendous influence in the region. Streets in Calabar are named after some of these forerunners of the Protectorate government in the Cross River region. Prominent streets in this regards include the following: *Beecroft Street, Hewett Street, Johnstone Street, Anesly Street, Macdonald Street, Mayne Avenue, Egerton Street, Duncan Street, Fenton Street, Macgregor Street* and *Hart Street* among others.

A number of streets in Calabar have been named after schools that were established by missionaries; *St. Patrick's College road, St. Mary Street and Convent Street*. Interestingly, these are all Catholic Mission Schools and each school is situated along the respective street named after it. St. Patrick's College was the first to be established in Calabar in 1934. The school has contributed to the enhancement of human resources and capacity building in all areas of human endeavours aligned with the founder's strategic objectives and priorities. The all boys' school administered under stern Catholic discipline and rectitude has provided a platform for the education of Nigerians and foreigners who have made and are still making their imprints in all facets of the development of the Nigerian State. The school also hosts a prominent Catholic Church Parish.

The St. Mary primary school and the Convent primary, which are also Roman Catholic Mission Schools, were established in 1950 and 1952 respectively. These schools have provided the girl children strong moral orientation and disciplined foundation in the quest for quality standard and quality assurance in education. This principle is borne out of the realization that quality is at the core of any Catholic Mission educational system.

A few streets in Calabar are named after nationalists, freedom fighters, politicians, former military Heads of State and Governors: *Azikiwe Street, Herbert Macauley Street, Nelson Mandela Road, Victor Akan Street, IBB (Ibrahim Badamosi Babangida) road, Murtala Mohammed Highway, Kizito Attah Road, Dan Archibong Road and Clement Ebri Drive..*

Streets in Calabar metropolis have also been named after places such as cities, towns and villages within and outside Calabar: *Calabar Road, Lagos Street, Eket Street, Onitsha Street, Oron Street, Ibiono Street, Itam Street, Ibesikpo Street, Aba Street and Bogobiri Street*.

Other streets are named after predominant natural or man-made resources (or features) found along such streets: *Palm Street, Spring Road, Diamond Hill, Offiong (moon) Square, Inyang (river) Street, Esuk (beach) Street, Akai (forest) Street and Garden Street*. Palm Street is reputed as the longest street in Calabar spanning a length of about 4 kilometers. We discovered that the resources in these streets that take their names are no longer to be found there. Historical accounts, however, have it these resources were in abundant stocks to attract such names for the respective streets. A few streets take their names after public institutions: *Barracks Road, Navy Road, Museum Road, NITEL Road, UNICAL Hotel Road and Mount Zion Road*.

Streets in Calabar have also been named after prominent Efik and Qua kings and individual founders or families, who were the earliest settlers that developed such streets: *Eyamba Street, Ephraim Street, Ndidem Usang Iso Road, Jebes Street, Asi Ekong Street, Edim Otop Street, Okoro Agbo Street, Eta Agbo Street, Oqua Street, and Essien Etim Offiong Road*. In some cases, particular members of the same family, usually royal families may establish a clan and name the street such clans after members of the family: *Adam Duke Street, Yellow Duke Street, Bassey Duke Street, King Duke Street and Queen Duke Street*. Others are: *Elijah Henshaw Street, Thomas Henshaw Street, Magnus Henshaw Street and Richard Henshaw Street*. We also have *Ewa Ekeng Street, Nsa Ekeng Street, Effanga Ekeng Street and Inyang Ekeng Street*. In the same vein, streets may be named after a lineage system that founded a settlement: *Ikot Ishie Street, Ikot Ansa Road, Ikot Effanga Road, Ikot Eneobong Street, Ikot Omin Street, Ikot Efa Street, Ikot Nkebre Street and Ikot Abasi Edem Street*.

Streets in Calabar are also named after some Efik deities. These include: Anansa Road and Esiere Ebom Street. Immortalizing these deities is a reflection of the peoples' deep rooted traditional belief in the powers of these gods who are looked upon as the source of strength and success in life. Others street names clearly reflect the ethnic constitution of the city into Efik, Qua and Efut. Such streets include: Obutong Road, Atakpa Street, Big Qua Street, Ediba (Qua) Road, Nyakasang Street, Anantigha Road, Uwanse Street, and Efut Abua Street among others.

The multilingualism of street names

Street names in Calabar metropolis rightly mirror the multilingual nature of the city. Mensah and Offiong (2004) have conducted a survey on the language situation in Calabar, in which they identified English, Nigerian pidgin, Efik as the languages of wider communication. Ekin, a dialect of Ejagham spoken mainly in Calabar Municipality is a dying language, which is undergoing deliberate revival and resuscitation. Usakedet is the language of the Efut people. This language is extinct and traces of it can only be found in personal, street and place names in the areas it was hitherto spoken. In the discussion that follows, we examine the relevance of these languages to street names in Calabar metropolis.

English is the most widely used language in the city, particularly in government circles, education and the mass media. The early contact of the Efik with the British supercargoes, colonial administrators and Scottish missionaries brought about the need for English-based communication, which was paramount for intercultural understanding and friendship. It is important to stress that the learning process was mutually complementary. While the Efik were learning to speak and write in English, the English, particularly the missionaries were learning to speak and write Efik, given the combined benefits of promoting evangelism, recruiting interpreters and winning the minds of the people. The overwhelming use of English was in force up till the post independence era, where we failed as a nation to fashion a robust and elaborate language policy to promote the indigenous languages side by side with English. In Calabar today, which is a microcosm of the enlarged Nigerian society, English is the official language of administration, which affect every facet of mainstream development. Given the socio-economic importance of English, streets in Calabar metropolis have been named after English concepts and personal names, mostly those of colonial administrators and missionaries as we can see in 1 and 2 respectively:

- 1 (a) White House Street (named after the seat of power in Washington)
- (b) Foster Street
- (c) Diamond Hill
- (d) Punch Street
- (e) Palm Street
- (f) Target Road
- (g) Barracks Road
- (h) New Airport Road

- 2 (a) Mary Slessor Road
- (b) John Stone Street
- (c) (Hugh) Goldie Street
- (d) (Samuel) Edgerly Road

- (e) William George Street
- (f) Hope Waddle Avenue

The Efik language is a predominant indigenous language in Calabar metropolis. The language has a history of reputable literacy since in the 16th century. The missionaries helped to reduce the language into writing and together with some colonial administrators and foreign linguist research extensively in the language. The Efik people attracted the supercargoes and missionaries into Calabar through wide-range interest in slave trading and the bid to stop obnoxious traditional practices like the killing of twin children and the administration of poisonous Esere beans to people who were accused of witchcraft. Street names that represent Efik are mostly names of kings (or queens) or founders of Efik clans such as:

- 3 (a) Basse Duke Street
- (b) Adam Duke Street
- (c) King Duke Street
- (d) Queen Duke Street
- (e) Ephraim Street
- (f) Thomas Henshaw Street
- (g) Richard Henshaw Street
- (h) Magnus Henshaw Street

Street names in Calabar have a further linguistic implication by reflecting the structure of the indigenous languages of the Calabar people, that is Efik. We have street names like:

- 4 (a) *Kusak (Do not laugh) Street*
- (b) *Kufre(anglicized Kooffreh)(do not forget) Street*
- (c) *Ayatmo (It hurts them) Street*
- (d) *Nsemo (I am looking at them) Street*

The first and second examples are clearly negative imperative sentences, which consist of the negation marker *ku* with the corresponding verbs, *sak* 'laugh' and *fre* 'forget' respectively. The last two cases are instances of simple declarative sentences with the SVO structure, which is the conventional word order in Efik. The prefixes A and N are the respective personal markers which function as the subjects of the verbs *yat* 'hurt' and *se* 'look'. *Mmo* 'them' is the object of the verb.

Ekin is a dialect of Ejagham spoken by the Qua people in Calabar. Historical sources (Nair 1972 and Jeffrey 1935) have traced the Qua people as the first settlers in Calabar. They mostly occupy the hinterland. Their language has received very little study and literacy over the years. Only the passing generation has impeccable command of Ekin. The most of the youths are learning it as L3 after Efik and English, as part of a revivalist campaign on the language. Every speaker/learner of Ekin also speak and understand Efik fluently but nor vice-versa. This is as a result of the overbearing influence of Efik on the language and culture of the Qua people, given the effect of intertribal marriage and cultural assimilation. Ekin is represented in Street names such as:

5. (a) Eta Agbor Road
- (b) Okoro Agbor Street

- (c) Eyo Aikpo Street
- (d) Ediba Road
- (e) Eteta Ita Street
- (f) Eyo Eta Street

These are mainly names of founders of the respective settlements named after them. In the case of Ekin, we have the following types of sentences as street names:

- 6. (a) Nyakasañ (Street) - 'a place no one desires to go'
- (b) Edim otop (Street) - 'a muddy place'
- (c) Aboñ Aseñ (Street)
- (d) Mekenge (Street)

The Usakedet language was the original language of the Efut people in Calabar South. The language is extinct today. The last known speaker of the language died in 1998. Though the language is still being spoken in parts of Southern Cameroon, no efforts have been initiated by its speakers in Calabar South to resuscitate it. Today, the owners of that language speak Efik as their L1, and also adopt a greater part of the Efik cultural heritage. A handful of Usakedet names can be found in street names such as:

- 7. (a) Ekondo Street
- (b) Uwanse Street
- (c) Abua Street
- (d) Ebuka Street
- (e) Ita Odionka Street
- (f) Anantigha Road

The meaning of these forms could not be ascertained even with the last living speaker of the language. This language died without literature, orthography or grammar, which indeed is a colossal loss to humanity. The Nigerian Pidgin is the only language in Calabar metropolis that is not represented in a street name. This however, does not undermine its relevance in the commercial and social life of the city. Mensah and Offiong (2004) have extensively catalogued the rising profile of Nigerian Pidgin in Calabar metropolis. So far, we have shown how street names are a reflection of the language situation in Calabar metropolis. In the following discussion, we consider the impact of street names in other languages in Calabar on the indigenous languages in the city.

In all, eight languages are used in the naming process of streets in Calabar. The name may either mirror lexical items from a language, or represent a town or city where a particular language is predominantly spoken. The Hausa language spoken mainly in Northern Nigeria and adjoining countries like Chad and Niger, is represented by such street names like Sabon Gari (new town) and Bogobiri (a name of a tribe in Sokoto State, which is the seat of the Caliphate in Nigeria). These are Hausa settlements in Calabar, where they live communally. A long history of trade relations in kola nuts, palm oil, hides and skin have been sustained between the Hausa and Calabar traders. This bilateral co-operation has made it possible for stints of Hausa words to be found in the lexicon of Calabar Pidgin, a variety of Nigerian Pidgin:

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- 8(a) aboki - '(a) friend'
 (b) mallam - 'mister'
 (c) sanu - 'general greeting'
 (d) okusa - 'a Hausa person'
 (e) suya - 'roasted meat'
 (f) lai lai - 'never'
 (g) Haba? - 'What? (an exclamation)'
 (h) wayo - 'deceit'

The Yoruba language is replicated in such street names as Yoruba Lane and Lagos Street. This is another small bonded group that has made its mark in the commercial life of Calabar. They are mostly traders who deal in electronics and pharmaceutical products. As a result of the long contact between the Yoruba and Efik, traces of Yoruba words have gained currency into the vocabulary of the Efik language (Efik is the predominant indigenous language spoken in Calabar metropolis), and Calabar Pidgin. Such words include:

- 9(a) ogi - 'maize pap'
 (b) akara - 'bean cake'
 (c) mai-mai - 'moi-moi'
 (d) gra-gra - 'intimidate'
 (e) kpa-kpa - 'how be it'
 (f) alafia - 'enjoyment'

Unlike the Hausa people with a well-defined clustered settlement, the Yoruba in Calabar live in isolated settlements and mainly worship in a common Aladura Church. The Igbo language is represented by street names such as Onitsha Street and Aba Street. Onitsha and Aba are major trading centres and towns in Anambra and Abia States respectively, and the commercial nerve centres of Eastern Nigeria. The Igbo have a long history of contact with the Calabar people generally; they were the earliest 'native foreigners' to have penetrated the Cross River Region and established renowned commercial empires or what Noah (1980) called 'trade emporium' in Calabar. As a result of this influence, a handful of Igbo words have passed into general currency into the lexicon of the Efik language. Such words include:

- 10(a) osusu - 'monetary contribution'
 (b) utasi (derived from utazi) - 'a kind of vegetable'
 (c) obioma - 'a mobile tailor'
 (d) nyakiri - 'deceit'
 (e) ekporoko (derived from okporoko) - 'stock fish'
 (f) okirika - 'fairly used cloths'
 (g) utere (derived from udere) - 'vulture'
 (h) udari (derived from udara) - 'cherry fruit'
 (i) afu - 'currency'
 (j) toro - 'currency'

An important feature of this direction of borrowing is that the words are made to copy the phonological pattern of the source language (Igbo), with minor alteration in spelling to conform to the phonotactics of Efik.

The Ibibio language, which is represented by streets named after important Ibibio towns like *Ibiono Street*, *Itam Street*, *Ibesikpo Street*, *Uruan Street* and *(Oku) Iboku Street*. The Ibibio are the closest neighbours to Efik, and Ibibio and Efik languages are mutually intelligible. Before the creation of Akwa Ibom State in 1987, the two people shared a common language and culture, though there were intense agitations by the Ibibio to bring their language to reckoning. With the state creation, the linguistic gulf was widened, as the two people begin to see themselves as being linguistically diverse and culturally heterogeneous. Given the long socio-cultural relationship that exists between the two ethnic conglomerations, a stint of Ibibio forms and expressions is found in the vocabulary of Efik. These are:

11(a) ibohoke	-	‘except’
(b) alalok	-	‘a commercial cyclist’
(c) akauke	-	‘a commercial cyclist’
(d) amauke	-	‘an armed robber’
(e) oboñ owo	-	‘an elderly man’

Other language groups that are represented by street names in Calabar are the Oron and Eket people of Akwa Ibom State. They are represented by streets like *Oron Street* and *Eket Street* respectively. Oro and Ekid, which are the respective languages of these people have been said to be dialects of the Ibibio language (Essien 1990), but the speakers of these languages have always maintained that they speak distinctly unique languages from Ibibio, in response to the universal declaration of linguistic rights, which expresses its faith in fundamental human rights. There is a unidirectional degree of intelligibility between speakers of these languages and speakers of Efik or Ibibio. The speakers of Oro or Ekid speak and understand Ibibio or Efik perfectly well but not vice-versa.

Street renaming policy

There have been conscious street renaming (and renumbering) policy initiated by the two Local government authorities that constitute the Calabar metropolis. The primary purpose of renaming streets in Calabar has the desire to honour political leaders such as presidents, governors and other reputable political office holders. Former presidents like Murtala Mohammed and Ibrahim Babangida have had streets renamed after them. Former governors of Cross River State like Dan Archibong and Clement Ebri also have street as immemorial in Calabar. The renaming of streets after these figures is in appreciation of their impacts and legacies on the social wellbeing of the people, while they were in power. The need to reflect the changing political situation has also justified the street renaming policy of the local authorities. When there was a global agitation for the apartheid regime to end in South Africa, and the release of political prisoners like Nelson Mandela, a street in Calabar was named after this hero in solidarity with the global condemnation of his continued detention. These outcries culminated to his eventual release from prison and ultimate ascension to the political leadership of his country.

The renaming of streets like Marian Road and Spring Road after Ndidem Usang Iso and Essien Etim Offiong respectively were ways of projecting the cultural history of the Qua nation and the Essien Town people in Calabar Municipality. Usang Iso is the longest

serving Qua king who has been on the throne, while Essien Etim Offiong was the founder of the Essien Town.

Old names	New names
Akim Road	IBB Road
Eta Agbo Road	Kizito Attah Road
Fosbery Road	Nelson Mandela Road
Marian Road	Ndidem Usang Iso Road
Mary Slessor	Victor Akan Street
Spring Road	Essien Etim Offiong Layout
Taylorhood Street	Kooffreh Street
MCC Road	Anansa Road
Victor Akan Street	Mary Slessor Road
Odukpani Road	Murtala Muhammed Highway
White House Street	Dan Archibong Street
First Avenue	Clement Ebri Crescent
Second Avenue	Emmanuel Edem Crescent
Marian by MCC Junction	Efioete Junction
Mayne Avenue	Inyang Nta Henshaw Avenue

The practice of street renaming has never gone down well with the old and passing generation. These citizens view the policy as a deliberate attempt to distort and rewrite history. Streets like Akim and Eta Agbo, for instance were significant to the migration, socio-economic, and ethnolinguistic history of the Qua nation and renaming such streets directly implies hijacking the achievements of the forbearers and founders of these settlements. This school of thought believes that new names have less relevance than old ones; hence, they still refer to streets by their old names. For the new generation, particularly the youths, the practice has been to use the new and old names interchangeably. There is acceptance of the new names, though not in its entirety as the old ones are still relevant and respected. There are a few instances where the new street names are outrightly rejected. Cases in point are Mayne Avenue, MCC and Eta Agbor which have been renamed Inyang Nta Henshaw Avenue, Anansa and Kizito Attah respectively. The reason for the rejection is that the new names are either too long, unfamiliar or that the local authorities did not act in public interest when it chooses to rename the streets. This brings to fore the question of consultation with stakeholders before streets are renamed. The historical owners, landlords and inhabitants of a particular street ought to be an important part of the decision making process before any policy on street renaming is implemented. Again, the local authorities should have compelling reasons to justify the action of renaming streets to avoid unnecessary controversies, and gain public goodwill.

Conclusion

In this paper, we examined the historical and linguistic significance of street names in Calabar metropolis. Street names are pointers to the historical development of the city, which has given it a cosmopolitan outlook. Street names also reflect the linguistic diversities of the different ethnic nationalities that inhabit the city. Sources of street names have been traced to the early contact of the Calabar people with alien missionaries,

colonial administrators and traders. Some indigenous street names are those of kings, queens, famous people and founders of settlements, while other are a reflection of the people's cultural history and belief system. In few instances, street names can also mirror the grammatical structure of the indigenous languages of the Calabar metropolis. We have also examined the justifications for renaming streets and the controversies that usually greet such policies. Our generalization is that street names offer the inhabitants of a city more than ordinary locations and addresses; they provide a window to the city's multilingual orientation and historic past.

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Appendix: Some Street Names in Calabar

Diamond Hill	Punch Street	Okoro Agbo Street
Bassey Duke Street	Bedwell Street	Ishie Street
Adam Duke Street	Harcourt Street	Mary Slessor Road
Orok Orok Street	Amika Utuk Street	Victor Akan Street
Calabar Road	Murray Street	Atu Street
Etata Ita Street	Gibson Street	Jebs Street
Abua Street	Barracks Road	King Duke Street
Queen Duke Street	Academy Street	Otop Abasi Street
SPC Road	State Avenue	Fenton Street
Eta Agbor Road	Big Qua Road	Palm Street
Goldie Street	Maple Street	Onitsha Street
Aba Street	Ebuka Street	Mbukpa Road
Ekondo Street	Afokang Street	Iboku Street
Atimbo Road	Lagos Street	Adak Uko Street
Etim Edem Street	Anesly Street	Mt. Zion Road
Nelson Mandela Street	Azikiwe Street	Yellow Duke Street
Ekpo Abasi Street	Efut Street	Musaha Street
Foster Street	Beecroft Street	Umo Orok Street
FGGC Road	Ullman Street	Webber Street
Ededem Street	St. Mary Street	Old Ikang Road
Eket Street	Essien Street	Old Odukpani Road
Ibiono Street	Orok Ene Street	Odukpani Road
Edibe Edibe Road	Esuk Utan Road	Egerton Road
Wilkie Street	William George Street	Macdonald Street
Ephraim Street	Nsisuk Street	Mcgregor Street
Odwyer Street	Eyo Edem street	John Stone Street
Mary Magdalene Street	Hawkins Road	Bishop Moynach Avenue
Shanahan Street	Thomas Henshaw Street	Edgerly Road
Anating Street	Ambo Street	Murtala Muhammed H/Way
IBB Road	Richard Henshaw Street	Hope Waddle Avenue
Ediba Road	Magnus Henshaw	Archibong Eso Street
Douglas Avenue	Ekeng Iwatt Street	Essien Etim Offiong Layout
Atekong Drive	Inyang Ekeng Street	Anansa Road
Duke Town Close	Edim Otop Street	Mayne Avenue
Unical Hotel Road	Ayatmo Street	Bogobiri Street
Abong Aseng Street	Marina Road	Sabon Gari Street
Nyakasang Street	Marian Hill	Uwanse Street
Eyo Aikpo Street	Ekorinim Road	Ndidem Usang Iso Road
Okon Inok Street	Eyo Ita Street	Inyang Street
Nsemo Street	Akai Street	Eyo Etta Street
Target Road	Chamley Street	Dan Archibong Street
Old Marian Road	New Airport Road	Harbour Road
Edet Edem Street	Atamunu Street	Kooffreh Street
Dr. Dean Street	Ibesikpo Street	Atakpa Street