

**THE REPRESENTATION OF THE KASENA CULTURE THROUGH  
KASEM LANGUAGE FILMS**

**By**

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## **DECLARATION**

This is to certify that this thesis is the result of research undertaken by me towards the award of the Master of Philosophy Degree in Theatre Arts, Media Arts Option in the Department of Theatre Arts, University of Ghana, Legon and that no part of it has been represented elsewhere, with all references appropriately acknowledged. I take sole responsibility for any shortcomings that the work may have.

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## ABSTRACT

The film camera is one of the greatest technological inventions the world has ever had. Many countries have used filmmaking as a tool for promoting their culture. Thus, as a result of enculturation, some Ghanaians unfortunately propagate the images they see in these foreign films in theirs. This research, therefore, is an exploration of the content of some Kasem language films such as *Kwara Jei* (2010), *Anemana* (2014), and *Chira Kambia* (2015). The study assessed how the images in these films relate to the Kasena culture in their description and depiction of some traditional Kasena institutions using a qualitative approach with in-depth interviews and focus group discussions as instruments; and Kasem language and cultural experts, film tutors, Kasem language film directors, and Kasena Vora (Soothsayers) as participants. It emerged that there are indeed some forms of misrepresentation in some of the films with respect to issues bothering on the portrayal of Kasena chieftaincy and the Vogo practise among others. The Kasem language film directors also admitted to copying some of their cultural representation from films from Nigeria and other foreign films. This work recommends that Kasem language film directors endeavour to research by contacting heads of traditional institutions, Kasem language and cultural experts to guide them on how best to represent the Kasena culture in Kasem language and cultural films.

## **DEDICATION**

This work is dedicated to my wife Mrs. Sylvia Aketema, for her sacrifices as a mother and mentor of our children while I was away at school. Special dedication and recognition is given to Prof. Thomas Akabzaa and Dr. Samuel Benagr whose support and words of encouragement have spurred me on.

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# CHAPTER ONE

## INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 Overview

There has always been the quest by mankind to discover new ways of doing things. This has led to a series of technological invention across the globe over the centuries. One of the most significant human inventions is the camera. Though there were a lot of attempts to record images, it was not until the late 19<sup>th</sup> Century that the cine-camera was invented. The camera was used to record images for entertainment and later as a tool for promoting the culture and ideology of many countries. This was because, the moving image, had so much power to influence, persuade and create a new form of reality in the mind of the viewer.

David Bordwell and Kristin Thompson (2003) assert that, “the medium of cinema appeared in the mid-1890s, an era when the United States was still expanding into one of the world's major colonialist powers” (p.11). The camera since then has remained one of the most powerful technological invention in human history. The power of the camera to mediate images, represent life in various forms was initially a novelty. Audiences who were used to theatre or live performance were awed by the projected images of normal and every day activities.

According to Bordwell & Thompson, (2003) a lot of the screenings of films were shown at vaudeville houses, amusement parks, small storefront theatres, summer resorts, fairs and even churches and opera houses. The earlier recordings were unedited pieces, yet a lot of people filled the public places and theatres to be entertained. Ken Dancyger (2007) comments that the earliest films were less than a minute in length. They could be as simple as *La Sortie de l'Usine Lumière* (Workers Leaving the Lumière Factory) (1895) or *Arrivée d'un Train en Gare* (Arrival of a Train at the Station) (1895) and George Méliès *Cinderella* (1899) and *A Trip to the Moon* (1902) (p.1).

The art of filmmaking in Africa is a colonial legacy. Kwaw Ansah (2014) in his article, “Ghanaian Cinema: A Historical Appraisal” hinted that colonizers introduced film to Africans and used filmmaking in various forms that aided them in their administrative work such as the levy of taxes, communal work, pest and disease control, and to recruit the colonist for the World Wars (p. 5).

Jim Fara Awindor (2017) in a personal interview revealed that in the late eighteenth century, pockets of missionary-travellers or evangelizing Christians were using-audio visuals; still pictures with accompanying music and sound to teach their adherents the life of Jesus. What this means is that as early as the late eighteenth century African culture was influenced through the film stories presented by the missionaries. Awindor further emphasized that in Ghana, film became widely used in 1948. He stated that, the colonizers used film to teach Ghanaians western culture and how superior European life was to Ghanaian life. Awindor also mentioned that having used film to influence the Ghanaian culture, they realized that they could use film to reinforce their colonial agenda.

The camera as an audio-visual recording tool has evolved over the years. The video camera which was initially for purposes of news gathering was co-opted into video filmmaking. The video camera became cheaper to afford, easy to manipulate and technically friendly. This increased mass production of video films in Ghana and as such, many local language films begun to spring up in the country. These local language films produced in Ghana are predominantly the Akan language films which are made in Kumasi. There are also other films in many other local languages such as Kasem.

## 1.2 Background to the Study

Film refers to recorded images set in motion. The advent of technology has facilitated the creation of animated materials and other computer generated images which could also be termed as moving images or film. Over the years, people have used this tool of filmmaking for many purposes. David Bordwell & Kristin Thompson (2008) state that,

Films communicate information and ideas, and they show us places and ways of life we might not otherwise know. Important as these benefits are, though, something more is at stake. Films offer us ways of seeing and feeling that we find deeply gratifying. They take us through experiences (p. 2).

African traditional culture appear to be suffering from some forms of misrepresentation. In Ghana a lot of people have observed this to be common in the arts; film, music and dance. For instance, the Thursday June 22, 2017 edition of the *Daily Graphic*, reports that a paramount chief of the Essikado Traditional area of the Western Region Nana Kobina Nketsia V has, “blamed the current state of general indiscipline, societal breakdown and proliferation of arms on inculturation [SIC] perpetrated through the dominance of foreign media among the present generation” (p. 60).

The paramount chief said this when the Minister of Tourism, Arts and Culture of the Nana Addo led administration, Mrs Catherine Ablema Afeku paid a courtesy call on him. Nana Nketsia bemoaned the relegation of the rich Ghanaian culture and tradition while foreign cultures portrayed in soap operas and other television programmes some of which depict the use of weapons, had taken centre stage. Nana made the call for the country to return to its old ways of doing things by, “embracing its culture as one of the strongest tools in nation building” (p. 60).

To embrace the Ghanaian culture and using it as a strong tool for national development can be realized in the following ways; expressing ourselves in our local language and culture, teaching our local language and culture in school and portraying our local culture well in film.

For instance, as a tool for cultural expression, countries such as America, Britain, Italy, Germany and the Union of Soviet Socialist Republic (Russia) have used film to resist forms of cultural imperialism of other countries. David Bordwell and Kristin Thompson (1992) noted that, “the government [American government] seeing cinema as propaganda for American democracy assisted film export through Commerce Department initiatives and diplomatic pressures” (p. 374). The filmmakers also represented the American culture and ethos in their films. These American films were exported to rival countries that had less content to fill their screens. Some of these countries such as Germany and France were forced to watch these film whose content was not desirable for their cultural and political development. Though America was banning films from Germany and France, Germany was not in a position to equally ban films from America since the theatres would have little to show.

Similarly, Aseye Tamakloe (2017) in a personal interview disclosed that in Africa, “the Bantu Educational Cinema Experiment showed Africans films that were demeaning to their culture. The films represented Africans as less human and less intelligent. The films did not promote the African culture but promoted the Western and American culture”. As an expressive tool, film is embedded with many key elements such as props, proverbs, riddles and fascinating storylines that are used to entice and appeal to the emotions and the sensibilities of the audience.

Some filmmakers from their cultural background are able to represent their characters well through the costumes, proverbs and traditional institutions. These gives film its power and functional role. The British government, who had earlier on observed the functional role of film in governance and culture, in 1937, asked a British Major, Allen Notcutt to commission a film unit. The main purpose of the film unit as Ogunleye Foluke (2014) was to use film to civilize Africa (p. 4). To the British, Africans had a primitive way of life and they needed to be shown a better culture.

Lizbeth Malkmus and Armes Roy (1991) revealed that in 1939 the Colonial Film Unit which Notcutt was asked to commission was formed. The unit was also used to tell the story of the War with the 'right' propaganda in order to promote the cultural image of Britain (p. 20). Before the establishment of the colonial film unit, entertainment footage came from Britain and America. Most of these were the Charlie Chaplin commercials and comedies. The imperialist were not comfortable with the importation of footage of real life events in Europe and America. The reasons as presented by Manthia Diawara (1992) were that,

They believed distributing commercial films, such as those by Charlie Chaplin, would harmfully introduce Africans to film's powerful means of persuasion. Such films were held to be technically too sophisticated for Africa minds and also damaging because they depicted the negative aspects of European and North American life (p. 1).

Allen Notcutt and George Latham, (1937), stated that, Notcutt who was the founder of Bantu Educational Cinema Experiment in a statement with reference to filmmaking and screening in Africa is quoted to have said:

With backward people unable to distinguish between truth and falsehood, it is surely in our wisdom, if not our obvious duty, to prevent as far as possible, the dissemination of wrong ideas. Should we stand by and see a distorted presentation of the white race's life accepted by millions of Africans when we have it in our power to show them the 'truth'? There is much that is silly and sordid in the life of the West, but white people have other interest than money-making, gambling, crime and the pursuit of other people's wives and husbands; and their life is not entirely lived in palaces, night-clubs, opium dens, and police courts (pp. 22-23).

It would not be acceptable for Africa who, having discovered that there has been distortions and misrepresentation of her culture to be nonchalant. The first to respond to western forms of misrepresentation of African way of life were the African writers.

Tamakloe (2017) reveals that the Novel *Things Fall Apart* by Chinua Achebe was a work piece that responded to Joseph Conrad's novel *Heart of Darkness*.

Mbye Cham (1993) in his article "Official history, popular memory: Reconfiguration of the African past in films of Ousmane Sembène" also intimated that,

Early in this century, in the twenties, thirties, and forties-some African poets and novelist developed negritude and other cognate rallying cries and ideologies as a frame for delving into African past in order to intervene in and alter dominant Eurocentric versions of Africa and Africans (p.23).

One of the Eurocentric versions of the 'Dark' continent as Africa was infamously named by the West and America was that of a people without language and any form of culture. African writers such as, Ngugi wa Thiong'o, Léopold Sédar Senghor, Chinua Achebe amongst others played key roles to ensuring that the African identity and culture is first exposed and documented.

With regards to early filmmaking in Africa by Africans, Cham (1993) again in the article mentioned above, further revealed that

what emerges in recent African film is a radical revision and representation of the African past in ways which not only purge it of imposed European and other foreign remembrances, but which also foreground the relevance of the new reconstructed histories to the present challenges of post-colonial African societies (p. 23).

Carmella Garritano (2013), says that the content of African films was specifically in response to the negative representation of the African and was, "born out of the historical struggle of decolonization and a commitment to represent Africa from an African perspective" (p. 1). This is to admit that there was and still is the negative portrayal of Africa, her people and her culture by people who are either ignorant of her culture or have vowed to subjugate it through the medium of film. The problem here again is that local filmmakers have joined the bandwagon of cultural misrepresentation of their respective cultures.

Melissa Thackway (2003) says that, “when the colonizing nations first began to produce documentary films and newsreels in Africa, they continued to justify the imperial project by lauding the actions of the colonizer and establishing Western lifestyles as the norm. At the same time, they portrayed African beliefs and customs as ‘primitive or backward” (p. 31).

Many indigenous Africans produce films and see them as a popular entertainment. Some of these films excoriate our culture and regard it as barbaric. There should, therefore, be efforts aimed at avoiding the replication of negative Eurocentric images of the local culture of the Kasenas and by extension Ghana’s.

In this case, Thackway (2003) advised that,

the deconstruction of stereotypical representation is not simply limited to reversing existing stereotypes and binary paradigms, even if some directors have produced some equally simplistic and reductive images that position all that is African as good and all that is western as bad. More typically, the process of deconstruction has been about formulating alternative representations about reclaiming the right to represent one’s-self rather than simply being represented (p. 41).

It would be comforting for Kasena filmmakers to, as advised by Thackway to make films which would reflect the rich cultural heritage of the Kasena. This would then help to explicate the meaning of some cultural elements of the Kasena. This way the culture would also be developed. As it stands now, some of the negative things that the colonizer said of us as Ghanaians have strangely found their way in some of the Kasem language films. There is too much sorcery and witchcraft, cult worship, wrong costuming amongst other things.

The rich Kasena cultural institutions such as the Chieftaincy and the Vogu among others are not given their due prominence and proper representation.

Even though there are forms of negative cultural representations by some Ghanaian filmmakers, this is not entirely the case.

Teshome Gabriel (2002), explained in his prelude “Foreword: A cinema in transition, a cinema of change” with regards to filmmaking in Africa says that most of the filmmakers look at what was then in Africa’s past before colonialism with regards to her culture and tradition. They also look at the relationship of contemporary African life to Africa’s past, to its traditions and interrogate issues of the political and ideological institutions imposed by colonial rule and maintained by postcolonial power structures. Gabriel explained that these few filmmakers have questioned the role of men and women in African society, the importance of language and oral narratives, and about the ways in which myths and mythmaking are recast by cinema makers in Africa (p. ix).

So to fight the imposition of foreign and colonial culture, ideology and to alter the negative representation of the Africans, efforts were made by some African Filmmakers to tell the rest of the world about the rich culture of Africa. Kwaw Ansah (2002) in an interview on “The tradition: Pioneering, invention, and intervention” revealed that one of the reasons of making the film *Heritage Africa* (1988) was to give the African an authentic voice and a proper representation of her culture. Explaining the power of film and epitomizing how African audiences were made to feel, Ansah indicated that,

When I was young and growing up, black people in films always played the buffoon roles, and the white people were portrayed as superior; of course, we all enjoyed it. We laughed at the black people. When they rolled their eyes and ran away from the little mouse that they saw, we all clapped. When there was film with white and black people on safari in the jungle, everybody sighed with grief when an enemy arrow happened to kill a white person. But when we saw thousands of black people being mowed down, we all cheered. This illustrates clearly how powerful the film medium is. Those images were created to elicit that kind of response from the African audience. I must say, as a youth I had not matured sufficiently to discern between negative and positives portrayal and the filmmaker’s ideology. It wasn’t until I grew up and began to reassess the image of black people in alien films that I began to realize that I was laughing at myself! I was laughing at my own people being killed and caricatured. Seeing my own values so badly mutilated and

my person so dehumanized, I realized film is by all means a powerful medium (p. 5).

It would be difficult to develop without culture. Kwame Akoto (1992) disclosed that, “nation building is the deliberate, keenly directed and focused, and energetic projection of the national culture, and the collective identity” (p. 10). Nation building and culture are thus inseparable. To develop the Kasena culture, the contribution of the Kasena film industry which is growing every day cannot be discounted. Therefore, the attempts of the Kasena filmmaker to represent well who the Kasena is, and how the various cultural institutions within the Kasena work are essential to the development of not just the Kasena but the country at large.

### **1.3 The Kasenas as a People**

Kasem<sup>1</sup> is a Grusi language that is spoken in Navrongo in the Kasena/ Nankana Municipality of the Upper East Region of Ghana. It is also spoken in Chiana, Paga and other towns in the region and Burkina-Faso. Kasem is a branch of “Gur, which in itself is a branch of the North Volta-Congo set of languages”. Speakers of the language are also found in some parts of southern Burkina Faso.

The early Missionaries<sup>2</sup> helped to promote Kasem as a widely spoken language in Navrongo because of the close affinity it shares with other Kasem dialects in some parts of Burkina-Faso.

Augustine Kazaresam (1975) explains that, based on the Berlin treaty, “France and Britain reached an agreement on the boundary between Ghana and Upper Volta in 1898. By this agreement, the Kasena were divided into two groups, the Kasena in Ghana having Navrongo as their big centre and those in Upper Volta having Pô as their central town” (p. 51). Kazaresam (1975) explained that as Navrongo was close to the border with Pô, which is a town in the colony of France, the

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<sup>1</sup> Kasem is the Language spoken by the Kasena. Kasem is also the singular form of a person who belong to any Kasena tribe or ethic group

<sup>2</sup> Missionaries of Africa also Known as White Fathers

British government saw that it was important to set a military base in Navrongo to curtail any frictions that would emanate.

This gave birth to Navrongo becoming one of the District Administrative Centres of the British. The coming into contact with the colonial administrators in the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century and later the Catholic missionaries influenced the life of the people of Navrongo to a greater extent. Some of them welcomed the foreign religion and its form of cultural practice. Regardless of the influences, the Kasem language and cultural practices in some parts of Southern Burkina-Faso and other Kasena towns in parts of Northern Ghana are almost the same.

Augustine Abasi (1995) affirmed this close affinity of the Kasem language and way of life with other towns when he said, “the Kasena have patrilineal, virilocal, exogamous clans. They live in the Upper East Region of Northern Ghana and in the south of Burkina-Faso” (p. 3). Kasem as a language is widely used for communication in Navrongo chiefly because the early missionaries adopted and used it for evangelical purposes.

Lucas Abadamloora and Joseph Gilleece (ND) in their explanation regarding the location of the Navrongo Municipal in relation to other towns in Burkina-Faso mention that, “Navarro [Navrongo] seems to be the apex of a triangle with Pô and Tiebele as its base. The inhabitants of this triangle call themselves Gourounsi-Youlsi and speak Youlse”. Within this triangle and its surrounding, one would find a greater number of people speaking Nankani (p. 18).

According to Albert Awedoba (2002)

The speakers of the language usually refer to themselves as ‘Kasena’ or *Kasembu*. In the singular an individual member of the ethnic group is **Kaseno** or **Kasem**. They also occasionally refer to themselves as Jogo Bu [jɔ̃ɔ̃ bu] which literally means, ‘child of the loin cloth’, a reference to Kasena tradition mortuary practices for males which make it mandatory for the adult male corpse to be buried girt in sheepskin loincloth (pepela jɔ̃ɔ̃) (p. 17).

The Kasena are called by a variety of names such as *Yulsi* by the Frafras and Builsa's, *Awuna* by the Grunshie and some others. There are also some group of Kasena referred with the term *Fra* and *Fera*. This term *Fera* refers generally to a group of Kasem speakers whose villages are now in the villages in the Tumu Districts of Ghana and in some parts of Southern Burkina-Faso. Some of the towns and the villages in question include, Pina, Kwapun, Tasia, Nitola, Tanla, Navare, Preta, Leo and several others such as Pô, Tiebeili, Kayaa, Chakani, Koumili and Kampala. Kasenas also dwell in Chiana and Paga which are also important towns in the Upper East region. The Kasem that is spoken in those areas is slightly different in dialect from the Navrongo Kasem. There are pockets of Kasena communities dispersed in major cities and towns in Ghana.

Allison Howell (2010) also hints that,

Although the Kasem language is shared amongst the people of these areas, this does not imply absolute homogeneity, and aspects of the language differ from community to community. [As] a result of cyclical and permanent migration, Kasenas are found in many other parts of Ghana especially in the cities of Kumasi and Accra (p. 5).

Though these villages are scattered around the country Ghana, there are however similarities in cultural practices in their various communities. Since any discussion on the issue of culture could be complex within any given context and can be debated at every line. All the same it would still not be out of place for one to identify issues and key elements of a given culture which needs to be preserved. The dynamic nature of culture has resulted in some aspects of the Kasena culture to be modernized and those which have outlived their usefulness have been discarded. Notwithstanding this, the Kasena still have a rich cultural heritage and practice which needs to be guided for posterity. Key among these elements is the chieftaincy institution, *Vogo*<sup>3</sup>, and other traditional practices.

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<sup>3</sup> *Vogo* or *Voro* is the spirit that is consulted by way of divination to discover mysteries in the life of the client

Awedoba (2000) avers that, the first inhabitants of present day Navrongo were an autochthonous people. They were also troglodytes living in subterranean homes. Awedoba continues that, “the variety of legends that Kasena clans recount usually trace their origins to diffusion centres further north in what is present day Burkina Faso”(p. 16). He added that, the story of an aggrieved hunter who migrated from Burkina-Faso runs through most of the stories.

The legend has it that the hunter quarrelled with his siblings who either did not respect his rights to personal property, such as his dog, or to his right to the chieftaincy of his community which he should have succeeded. Having roamed he arrived at the homes of people who were troglodytes.

He introduced to them how to build houses, as well as the chieftaincy institution to the autochthonous people who hitherto, had no knowledge of it. He then became the first acknowledged priest of the Kwara or the chieftaincy shrine. (p. 16)

Since Kasem language formed the core of the study, brief background information of the language was necessary. Talking specifically about the ancestors of Navrongo and the language they spoke, Awedoba (2000) pointed out that, “in the case of the chiefdom of Navrongo, the migrants who hailed from Zeko in present day Burkina-Faso spoke Nankani” (p. 16). Though Awedoba did not give the language spoken by the autochthonous people, oral literature largely speculate that they spoke Kasem. Currently in Navrongo, though the royal household speaks Kasem, any form of sacrifice to the ancestors is done in Nankani a language which was spoken by their ancestors who founded the Kwara; a symbol of power and authority. Today, the Kwara as mentioned is the symbol of authority that most chief wields in some Kasena society.

Living in the Savanah Zone, the main occupation of the Kasena people is agriculture. They are peasant farmers of millet, guinea corn, beans and groundnuts. The availability of the Tono irrigation dam has fostered commercial cultivation of rice in Navrongo.

The Kasenas also rear animals such as cattle, sheep, goats, guinea-fowls and fowls which supplement the little income that is achieved through peasant farming.

The Kasenas have no recognized kingdoms like the Asante kingdom or the Dagbon Kingdom. However, there exist chiefs of various Kasena towns or villages such as Navrongo, Chiana, Paga, Kayoro, Buru, and Nakong. The Kasena call their chief (Pε)<sup>4</sup>. All these chiefs from their respective towns have a similar culture and speak Kasem as their main language. Each town or village is autonomous and does not exert any control over the other. There are numerous sub-chiefs under the Navrongo chief. There is one symbol of authority; the Kwara. They either wield it or pay allegiance to their paramount chief who wields it.

#### **1.4 Problem Statement**

Ghana is a multilingual country with about 70 local languages all of which are rich in all manner of cultural expressions such as parables, proverbs and other wise sayings, chieftaincy institution, and traditional practices among others. Filmmakers in their bid to propagate these idioms and institutions through the medium of film in the various local languages are not without challenges. Key among these challenges is the observation that there are some inaccuracies in the cultural representation of some of the people depicted in some of these films. And Kasem language films are not an exception.

The Kasem films that use the local language (Kasem) do not in their entirety represent the local culture in areas such as language use, costume, traditional worships proverbs and parables. Though the production of these kinds of films in local language within the cultural milieu of the viewer can be educative, entertaining and informative, the cultural elements in these settings should be

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<sup>4</sup> Pε the name given to a chief in any Kasem ethnic group

given a priority. Hence, it is the contention of this research work that since film is meant to educate, it should be done using the appropriate form of cultural representation.

### **1.5 Objectives of the Study**

The main objective of the study is to assess the cultural elements of Kasena culture in Kasem language films. However, these are the specific objectives:

- I. To explore the content of Kasem language films
- II. To assess how Kasem language films relate to the Kasena culture
- III. To examine the challenges in producing Kasem language films
- IV. To evaluate the contributions of Kasem language films as a tool for development in the local communities.

### **1.6 Research Questions**

In order to be able to work effectively towards the realization of the objectives of the study, the following research questions were posed;

- I. What informs the choice of film stories in Kasem language films?
- II. How do Kasem language filmmakers treat the subject of research in producing Kasem language films?
- III. To what extent can the Kasem language films contribute to the development of the Kasena area?
- IV. In which ways do cast and crew influence the forms of cultural representation in the content of Kasem language films?

### **1.7 Significance of the Study**

The significance of this work cannot be over emphasised. This is because this research is about cultural representation in films with specific reference to the Kasem language and culture. Therefore, the findings will help the Kasem language filmmakers on how to represent the Kasena culture in their films better. Besides, this work could also assist film reviewers and critics with a framework for assessing local films in their bid to measure the impact of local language films in the preservation and representation of our various cultures.

Finally, this study will also serve as an information tool for cultural agencies such as Ministry of Tourism, Culture and Creative Arts, the National Commission for Civic Education and other institutions that need to promote our indigenous culture and language, especially the use of our local languages in films. Other Kasenas whose interest is to undertake research on some of the institutions in the Kasena culture such as chieftaincy, Vogo practices and Kasena worship would also find this useful.

### **1.8 Delimitation**

There are a lot of films produced in the local languages in many parts of the country. There are films made in Akan, Dagbani, Gurune, Ewe and other languages. But this work focused on Kasem Language films. The study did not dwell on the technical components of the films but the cultural representation of the Kasena through the use of their local language.

### **1.9 Organisation of the Study**

This work is in five (5) chapters. Chapter one of this study have general information about film, its importance and how it can be used to persuade and influence the thoughts of people in the area of governance ideology and culture. A general overview of the use of film since the invention of the camera and how the power of film as not just a tool for entertainment but also a medium for the promotion of culture.

Then I gave background information about how film was used in Europe and America and how Africans were represented in early films produced by America and Europe as well as how some Africans responded to these forms or misrepresentations. Moreover, I discussed the history of the Kasena communities in and outside of Ghana and their current geographical location in order to establish who they are and the type of cultural institutions they have since the Kasena people are central to this study.

In addition, the problems that necessitated the study, the objectives and research questions which informed the choice of methods engaged to arrive at the finished work have been stated. The significance of the study and the delimitations has been given. In concluding this chapter, I presented how the entire work has been organised.

In chapter two, I have looked at the empirical and theoretical review of relevant literature. I discussed film from the silent era through to current times, culture, forms of representations and the affects or influences these could have in a film story. In the theoretical discussions, I looked at film and culture so as to put into perspective how a culture of a people can be persevered or altered through film. The theories used indicated that constant exposure of audiences to a foreign culture, or through forms of misrepresentations make the audience cultivate that new form of culture over time.

In Chapter three which is the methodology, I explained the research design, the population used for the study, and why I selected the kind of population used for the study. The data gathering tools used and what necessitated the use of such tools, including the sampling process were also given.

The fourth chapter is a discussion and analysis of the data gathered from Kasena soothsayers, film lecturers, film directors and Kasem language experts with relation to the cultural representation of Kasena royalty, Vogo practices, problems with film marketing and production

and settings at juju scenes. It also captures the background information of filmmaking in Navrongo and that of the film directors, and the synopsis of the films for insight purposes.

The final chapter contains the summary, findings, conclusion, and recommendations with regards to how the Kasena culture can be improved or represented in Kasem language films of the entire study.

## **CHAPTER TWO**

### **LITERATURE REVIEW**

#### **2.1 Introduction**

In this chapter, I interrogate both empirically and theoretically some relevant literature on film, culture and forms of representation. Through the discussion of existing literature, I look at the various forms through which film can be used to enforce and indoctrinate one form of culture and ideals to another, and the role of culture and language in film. I also review varied definitions of film, culture and language as given by different authors, thus giving perspective to the functional role of culture in filmmaking. This has enabled me to put into focus the functional role of culture in filmmaking. Again, I discussed forms of representation and the role it plays in the shaping of values and attitudes of people, 'the silent' era through to current times, the concept of culture, Representation, Language and culture and Film and culture. On the theoretical review aspect, I discuss three media theories on how film can manipulate and influence the culture of a people in order to put this work within a framework.

#### **2.2 Film from 'the silent' Era through to Current Times**

In the silent era; a period where asynchronous sound was used on moving images, actors had to pantomime and the audience must follow body language and subtitles to deduce meaning. Subtitles were often used to introduce new scenes in the film clips that were often shown. Paolo Usai (1996) in the article "The early years: Origins and survival" mentioned that at this silent era, "almost all 'silent' films had some sort of sound accompaniment. The early film shows of this silent era had lecturers who gave a commentary on the images going past on the screen, explaining their content and meaning to the audience" (p. 25).

Film has the power to create an immediate emotional impact, and has the capability of presenting an image so vivid that with only a moment's glimpse, the audiences may carry the memory of a life time.

Augustine Enahoro (2009) also observed that film, "has always been a vital vehicle for articulating and interpreting the realities and the aspiration of the socio-cultural environment" (p. 23). The question has often been asked as to the extent to which filmmakers especially those in Africa and for that matter, Ghana have harnessed this technology to interpret the socio-cultural aspirations of the people. There are various ways through which a character can be projected on screen which would enable the audience to categorize or distinguish them with reference to a particular socio-cultural or geopolitical setting. This is done to give the character an identity, which translates their cultural milieu.

As Malkmus & Armes (1991) argue that the concept of voice and the authority one has over what to say is the starting point of Africa renaissance in filmmaking. They termed this concept of voice as the right to speak and represent themselves. The voice and the right to speak were very minimal during colonial rule. This later changed. Malkmus and Armes explicated that by the mid-1960s,

films made by the black African film-makers have enormous significance in that with them, for the first time, the people of sub-Saharan Africa exercised their right to organize film images and sounds. Hitherto they had been merely objects of Europeans and their cameras, their voices sought only as contribution to the European codification of western traditions (p.169).

Ngugi wa Thiong'o (1993) in his article "Writers' Forum: Language and the Writer" gave two instances where a voice or a language can be denied a group of people. He demonstrated this with examples drawn from the imperialist movie *Kitchen Toto* (1987) which was shot in Kenya. The film story showed the British as peace loving and civilized.

The main life style of the British, their Christian family is shown as calm and docile. The African Mau Mau are portrayed as marauding criminals, murderers and terrorist. In this case, the Mau Mau is denied a voice of their own through a guileful crafted film story. There is no clear explanation or screen time given the Mau Mau to show why they would kill. The British elites are presented as the harmless lambs which are often living in constant trepidation because of the presence of the killer foxes (The Mau Mau).

The film of *Kitchen Toto* (1987) story did not ask the question of the kind of lambs that would evade the den of foxes and deny them land, peace, natural resources and most important of all, the right to rule the self. To give a voice to a people especially of those who are oppressed and marginalized as Ngugi explained further is to give them language. There is a consanguineous relationship among the two. Writing and producing films in Wolof, Akan, Kasem, Ewe, Kiswahili is one of the ways through which the African can, “reclaim their voices and their languages” (Ngugi wa Thiong’o, p. 54). So in its simplistic form, just as voice would afford the African the luxury to say this is who I am, language becomes the medium through which the ‘who am I is expressed’. It is disturbing in most spheres of artistic representation the ways and manner that the African expresses themselves in their voice and language.

Manthia Diawara (2010) pointed out that Sembene’s films and other films produced by a few African filmmakers have in their content, value and voice in the African image (p.24). This Diawara hinted, “is in opposition to Hollywood and colonial cinemas which denied Africans a proper language” (p. 23). Language in film could have a dichotomous meaning. The spoken language of film can simply be Kasem. However, there is also film language. This film language encompasses the various cinematic and artistic tools employed to realize a film story.

Akoto (1992) one of the indigenous cultural enthusiasts, cautions Africans and for that matter Ghanaians on the importance and the need to continually propagate our culture. He stresses that,

Without the sustained and vigorous effort to recover our own unique cultural dynamics, we limit ourselves to the ideational and spiritual constrictions of the very people who are our foresworn enemies. We define ourselves in terms derived of their historical treatises, their economic theories, their philosophical and moral speculations, their spiritual conjectures, their political doctrines and their reasoning process; all of which are culturally and historically determined (p. 10)

Conclusively argued out by Akoto is the need to identify, celebrate and propagate the various forms of our culture in our art work rather than that of the alien ones.

### **2.3 The Concept of Culture**

According to Abraham William (2015), “all events of large significance take place within the setting of some culture, and indeed derive their significance from the culture in which they find themselves” (p. 1) Speaking about the need to promote and develop the African culture, he added that, “our interest in our own culture is not historical or archaeological, but directed towards the future. It helps importantly in solving the question not what Africans were like, but how we make the best of our present human resources, which are largely traditional” (p. 36). To attempt to answer the questions of what Africans were, may take us back to great civilizations in kingdoms of Africa years ago or even to the Stone Age. As it stands now it might be very difficult and debatable pinpointing in exactness what African culture is. It may even be difficult to cut clear definitive lines in smaller cultural units within some societies in Ghana.

All the same, there is still the uniqueness of the everyday traditional life activity which can still be observed, studied and preserved. It is disputable to some extent, the disinterest of Abraham in the historical or archaeological resource as a way of understanding ourselves. In his contestation he mentions that our understanding of Africa culture should not be based on these two factors;

historical or archaeological. We should rather galvanize our current traditional resources and forge ahead.

It could be difficult or even unnecessary for us to go back eons of time to try to discover some aspects of our culture as Africans, Ghanaians or even Kasenas. However, what we see of ourselves today, which forms our daily traditional life activities is guided and to some degree, measured by what we had practiced in the past. Key elements of the African culture that have proven worthy of surviving and giving us our unique identity needs to be promoted. Be it as it may, the Ghanaian tradition of receding to the past, re-examining the whole, and picking what is relevant for development and growth will not therefore in Abraham's argument be necessary.

In most traditional societies in Ghana for which the Kasena forms a part, some issues of traditions which confront the daily institutions are solved through total recall of the past. Sankofa as we have come to accept in Ghana has to a large extent helped enrich our culture as Ghanaians and Africans. It has in some cases shown us the way to progress culturally as a people. In his attempt to explain the concept of culture, Awedoba (2002) admits that the term culture is a concept that defies definition. He mentioned that, "numerous definitions have been attempted.

However, few if any of these have gained universal acceptance or have escaped damaging criticism" (p. 23). He cites Kluckhohn's definition of culture which he says, "consist of patterns, explicit and implicit, of and for behaviour acquired and transmitted by symbols, constituting the distinctive achievements of human groups, including their embodiments in artifacts" (pp. 23-25). This definition cited by Awedoba in the context within which it was used, limits the understanding of culture to the concept of procreation and material elements in the form of artifacts.

Ali Mazrui (1990), on his part posits that one of the important functions of culture is that it provides the basis for identity (p. 7).

This basis for identity could include elements which may not only be artifacts or transmitted symbols but many others. He contends further that it is culture that distinguishes a given society, community, country and an individual from another. Hence, the entire embodiment for which one may attribute a given cultural event to a group of people is through the culture that they practice. The Kasena culture, for instance, and for that matter most cultures in Ghana are not coterminous with state borders. It therefore takes the uniqueness of a cultural expression for one to identify their culture in any given society that they find themselves.

A careful look at the films shown on Ghanaian screens, one may at a glance of a scene in a film, quickly pick up one or two details and conclude that the film is a Nigerian film, an Akan film or a Kasena film. There are instances where this is not applicable at all. It is possible the filmmaker may lack the knowledge of visual representation. The filmmaker may be also be experimenting or creating a science fiction film. In this regard, a total new world is created and a culture invented to suit the given story-line. In films such as the *Lord of the Rings Trilogy* (2001-2003) and *Avatar* (2009), imaginary creatures and settings are created for the purpose of entertainment. So, once you know the culture of the people, it is simple pointing out the traits of a particular cultural practice and ascribing it to a given ethnic group that you know to practice that culture.

Emphasizing on the basic principles for producing an ethnographic film, Karl Heider (1998) illuminates that the film story gives a detailed description and analysis of human behaviour based on an observation that has been done for a period of time. The events of the film story relates to specific observed behaviour of cultural norms which must be understood in their social and cultural context (pp. 6-9).

In Ghana, it might not be difficult pointing out a Dagomba culture from a Kasena or an Akan culture. Though there could exist similarities, the differences in their ways of expression, gives them their unique identity. A foreigner who does not know our culture well may regard the differences in culture as the totality of the Ghanaian culture which is indeed true. However, deep within this myriad of cultural practices, there are unique expressions which identify the different tribes or ethnic groups from another.

Immanuel Wallerstein (1991), in his article 'Culture as the ideological battleground of the modern world-system' understands culture as, "summarizing the ways in which groups distinguished themselves from other groups. It represents what is shared within the group, and presumably simultaneously not shared (or not entirely shared) outside it" (pp. 31-32). In the same vein, the Kasena people living in Ghana have as a group, common things which they share together; traditional institutions, deities' worshipped, common dance, staple food amongst other things. There are instances that some of these practices are 'simultaneously' not shared. In the same Kasena clans, deities and totems vary from clan to clan. Whilst in the same Kasena societies, some may have a chameleon as a totem; others may have a crocodile, a chimpanzee, or a squirrel. This notwithstanding, there are still significant uniqueness in culture among Kasenas within and outside the physical boundaries of Ghana.

Williams Raymond (1986) in his article, 'The Analysis of Culture' defines culture as, "a description of a particular way of life, which expresses certain meanings and values not only in art and learning but also in institutions and ordinary behaviour" (p. 43). There are values in the Kasena culture. Kasenas at a given time may disprove of a particular act by admitting that the act is 'un Kasena like'. They are able to say this based on the values and set standard behaviour that the community expects from each member.

A chief (Pε), an earth priest (Tegatu), a clan head, and the Soothsayer (Voro Tu)<sup>5</sup> who are heads of traditional institutions in the Kasena society are judged by certain values and standards.

Raymond (1986) further explains that an analysis of culture from such a definition is the clarification of the meanings and values which are implicit and explicit in a particular way of life, of a given culture. He added that, “such analysis of culture will include the historical criticism [i]n which intellectual and imaginative works are analyzed in a particular traditions and society” (p.43). The very foundation of this research is to evaluate the intellectual and imaginative work of the Kasena people as portrayed in their films within their given traditions and societies.

Stuart Hall (1997) sees culture as the embodiment of the great ideas that has been thought and said in a society. He adds that it is the sum of the great ideas, as represented in the classic works of literature, painting, music and philosophy (p. 2). As indicated by Hall, culture is expressed in many ways; what the people write and say about themselves in literature, the art works in the form of painting, the forms of music be it recreational music, or incidental music and the way they think. The work of art and literature could indeed express a culture of a people. If this is true in all cases, then many cultures, for which Ghana is a part of, currently produce films and music whose content as many would argue does not represent the culture of the people.

Steady Filomena (2011) in her article, ‘African women: Re-centering the issues for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century’ sees culture as the, “collective pattern of living that conveys the norms and values of society that is handed down from generation to generation” (p.147). She added that culture is, “dynamic, resilient and has positive, negative and neutral attributes” (p. 147). As has been alluded to before, what was arguably the form of African or Kasena culture is not what we have today. Culture as has been defined so far is truly not static.

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<sup>5</sup> Vogo Tu in any person who is possessed by the Vogo through whom the clients consult the Vogo

We may have disregarded and promoted certain aspects of our culture because of the functional role they play in our lives. Kidd Warren and Teagle Allison Kidd (2012) notion of culture as, “customs, attitudes, beliefs, traditions and rituals of a society” (p. 6), fits well with the purpose of this research. Consequently, it was adopted and formed part of my conceptual framework.

## **2.4 Representation**

Stuart Hall, Evans Jessica, Nixon Sean (2013) illustrating on representation in media studies hinted that, “representation connects meaning and language to culture” (p. 1). Representation they added is an “essential part of the process by which meaning is produced and exchanged between members of a culture. It does involve the use of language, of signs and images which stand for or represent things”. As demonstrated by Hall et al, in all the forms of cultural settings, where language is used as a medium of communication, the various forms of signs and images as inherent in the language are easily understood by a fairly large group of people. Members of such cultures accept whatever those signs or images represent. They learn to incorporate these into their lives as they fully become members whose shared understanding of signs and images is made possible through their common language and culture. This is because language alone cannot completely give a definitive meaning of signs and images unless there is a specific culture within which those signs and images are expressed.

For instance, a Kasena who has learnt to speak impeccable Akan would not automatically know all images, signs, emblems and other cultural images within the Akan culture unless they develop the interest of living and developing an understanding of the reasons why certain things appear in the way they appear. Morrissey and Warr (1997) postulate that,

Representation is about much more than how individuals or even social groups are treated in newspapers or on TV. It is about how audiences can be encouraged to identify with certain social and

cultural attitudes and behaviour through the codes and convention of a media product (p. 19).

Moving on, they demonstrated clearly the concept of representation when they mentioned that the media is often questioned in the following way; “how much do they reflect society and how much do they control and influence it (p. 19). At this juncture, it is important to mention that every film be it fiction or non-fiction, and least of all, the propaganda films occur within a particular societal or cultural setting. The filmmaker has a lot of choices on how he wishes to depict events in the settings created.

Representation of film as a key component of the media will look at ways through which the Kasem films made, mirrors the Kasena traditional society and culture. Subsequent discussions that follow have looked at how the film medium can influence and control a given society.

## **2.5 Language and the Concept of Culture**

Language plays a key and pivotal role in the representation of a culture. People within a particular cultural setting are able to communicate, use signs and codes within that given culture because they share in the basic understanding on the use of those codes and signs. Gay, Hall, Janes, Mackay and Negus (2000) see culture as being inextricably connected with the role of meanings in society. Du Gay *et al.* (2000) espoused that culture,

Is what enables us to ‘make sense’ of things. But how does this ‘meaning-making’ work? Partly, we give things meaning by the way we represent them, and the principal means of representation in culture is language. By language, we do not only mean language in the strict sense of written or spoken words. We mean any system of representation-photography, painting, speech, writing, imaging through technology, drawing,-which allows us to use the signs and symbols to represent or re-present whatever exist in the world in terms of a meaningful concept, image or idea (p. 13).

Signs, symbols and costumes are each cultural languages. These cultural languages serve as tools of identification and when used represent a lot of things.

The signs, symbols and costumes speak in a voice and language that is entirely different from our everyday oral form of communication. Film viewers most times understand a foreign film through the visual presentation of story events which is done through the use of the signs, symbols and costume.

Pearson, Nelson, Titsworth and Harter (2011), defines language as a “collection of symbols, letters, or words with arbitrary meanings that are governed by rules and used to communicate. Language consists of words or symbols that represent things without being those things” (p. 58). Hall et al (2013) explain that language is central to meaning and culture. They see language as any system which deploys signs, any signifying system to produce meaning. Language as Hall (1997) posits has always been regarded as an important repository of cultural values and meanings (p. 45).

Hall *et al.* (2013) added that, ‘language is one of the ‘Media’ through which thoughts, ideas, and feelings are represented in culture’ (p. xvii). This is one of the key reasons why I looked at films made in Kasem language since we cannot discount the importance of language in every sphere of human endeavour. From the lens of human relation and development, Mario Pei (1958) views language as the most important tool we use as humans. Pei emphasises further that “it serves as a purpose of communication with our fellow men and without it no coordinated activity is possible” (p. 3). Most languages just like the Kasena language have embedded within them proverbs. Therefore, the ability of actors to be fluent and exercise control over the use of proverbs and expression allow them to not only to communicate better in films stories but have coordinated activities and shared meaning.

Though there are arguably universal symbols and signs that aid in communication, they do not seem to exert much influence on sub-cultural communities.

Red is a universal sign for danger and has mostly been used as such with few exceptions. Kasem speakers would be able to identify music from China, Japan, or any other country as music. This is because they are not ignorant of the components of music.

Players in soccer compliment their colleagues on the pitch by showing them their thumps (Thumping Up). In Kasena culture, thumping up to somebody even without uttering a word is regarded highly offensive. This is much more offensive if the raised thump is accompanied with some insulting words. This may soon change since a new generation of soccer enthusiasts within the Kasena culture has begun using thumps-up more positively in ghetto sports. Much of these presumably are influences from western soccer leagues. Some of the offensive signs and cultural codes within the Kasena society has changed or are changing based on some of the external influences. It could be very difficult to clearly mention what is changing. This is because while some changes are pronounced and visible, others are subliminal and can only be noticed over a period of time. What is difficult to say for which this research is investigating is how that change has manifested itself among the Kasenas more especially in areas that involve representing the self culturally through film.

Hall *et al.* (2013) while referring to the inter relationship between language and culture stresses that people who belong to the same culture share a broadly similar conceptual map and hence must also share the same way of interpreting the signs and usage of language for only in this way can meaning be effectively changed between people. The Kasena people just like other people, share some given codes in the use of their language. They also have rich expressions in their language that might be of interest to the study that I am undertaking. The uniqueness of the self, the common signs and codes coupled with traditional forms of language elements such as riddles, proverbs and parables play a very serious role in cultural identity.

For instance, the 27<sup>th</sup> April to 3<sup>rd</sup> May 2013 edition of the *Weekly Spectator* Mr. Kingsley Obeng, the Eastern Regional Director of the Centre for National Culture, emphasized the role of language when he said, “language is the most powerful tool to develop a country’s heritage”. Speaking at the opening ceremony of the “Nyansapo Afahye” on the theme; Understanding the wisdom in proverbial, poetry and idiomatic expression for language appreciation, he said, “language is the most powerful asset through which one can study and understand the concerns of one’s society, because research has shown that children usually speak their mother’s language”. At the same function, the Municipal Director of Education, Mrs. Docia Abban said, “to keep the nation’s culture, the country must not forget that language is the central point of everything including culture”. She further stated that, “proverbs and idiomatic expressions used in Ghanaian languages enrich and shorten long speeches. It also prevents children from hearing negative statements” (p. 27)

Therefore, to produce a film, one will have to create a given setting that reflects the culture of his people within which the story is told. Bemoaning the seemingly lack of interest in our culture, Yaw Boadu Ayebofoh (2016) expressed his disappointment thus:

When we appreciate the values of other cultures, we would respect and honour practices associated with people. But there are many of us who have not taken the trouble to learn about our own cultures and describe them as primitive or enlightening depending on our evaluation of cultural practices from European perspectives (p. 7)

This European perspective is ill informed by Christian and Islamic traditions and religious practices. Sembène (1993) says “culture is language” (p.74). Sembène argued further out that one cannot effectively teach a culture of a people or use it in literature or any work of art if he or she does not speak the language of such a given group (p.74)

Language is very key and central in every sphere of life. The Kasena worship their deities not in any strange language but Kasem the language of the gods. In the celebration of all forms of traditional festivals where the ancestors and the gods and spirits are invoked, the earth priest and other traditional priest who matter uses the local language to communicate. Language for Okagbue Osita (2009) “is very central to the discourse and politics of identity within situations of enslavement, colonialism, and post colonialism” (p. 203). Salawu (2006) on his part, admonishes that since language plays such significance in culture, “any impairment or erosion of a people’s language, significantly, sign post the death of that people’s culture and, essentially, the essence of their being” (p. 2).

To conclude on the role of language in culture, it would be important to agree with Salawu (2006) in his article, “Paradox of a milieu: communicating in African Indigenous Languages in the age of Globalization” when he argued out that, “culture is more predominantly reflected in a people’s mode of communication. This, of course refers to language because language is the single most characteristic element of a people’s culture” (p. 2).

From the discussions above, the importance of language in the study of a people’s culture can simply not be over-looked. Without language, a society’s culture would be lost. Local language film through which key elements of language are embedded can also play a crucial role in the promotion of a given culture.

## **2.6 Film and Culture**

Film is a medium of communication. According to Marshall McLuhan (1967) “Film is not really a single medium like a song or the written word, but a collective art form with different individuals directing colour, lighting, sound, acting, speaking” (p. 292). Individuals with their artistic knowledge help realize a film story.

The filmmaker has the choice of deciding which way he wishes to communicate to their audience. While some filmmakers perceive filmmaking as a tool for money making and place the commercial aspect of it before anything else, others in many ways aspire to use film to change attitudes, preserve culture and interrogate issues of national concern.

Furthermore, based on what the filmmaker wants to achieve with the art of filmmaking, the filmmaker selects for the viewer, what they want them to see. Most of the viewers are film 'illiterates' and therefore regard every form of the films as popular entertainment. Leo Braudy (1976) criticizes the limiting perceptibility and the illiterate nature of the film viewer when he said that, "too often we accept a film as a window on reality without noticing that the window has been opened in a particular way, to exclude as well as to include" (p. 22). What is included or excluded forms the biases and selectivity of the story teller or the filmmaker, and the intention behind what they are doing.

The stereotypical films made by the West and Europe to denigrate Africa excluded key items; voice and culture. A western filmmaker who has limited knowledge of an Africa ritual whose performance involves total or partial nakedness may be so engrossed in the nakedness so much so that he will not interrogate the meaning and essence of the nakedness in the ritual. If there is even available information on the essence of the ritual ceremony, the filmmaker may choose to deny that information a place in the film. The filmmaker then adds their own voice, gives it a different interpretation and screens it to the audience most of whom may be alien to the culture shown in the film content.

Aside that, in most tropical regions and areas where the weather is sultry, people do not often wear clothe. A lot of that would be seen in the Northern, Upper East and Upper West regions of Ghana.

Though the people there are relatively rich enough to afford clothing, many people even those from other parts of Ghana conclude that the people do not wear clothes because they are poor and uncivilized. They draw these conclusions based on a distant and uninformed observation and study.

Melissa Thackway (2003) provides us with picturesque understanding of trying to represent ourselves. We should not be exerting energy and time trying to counteract the images that were stereotypically produced of us by the West. In this light, representation should not be seen as a binary opposition where the African is seeking vengeance by attempting to represent the West in the negative, but rather, with the power of the audio-visual medium at hand, should be able to, with the example from the cultural ritual above, clearly explain the key essence of the ritual where nakedness is a necessity rather than be seen as a total indecent exposure (p. 41).

Cultural elements in films produced by many African filmmakers had to include a lot of thought provoking themes to the viewer. These learned and Pan-African filmmakers include in their stories, elements we desire as Africans in relation to our cultural practice and growth as a people. It does not mean the aim of the African in representing themselves is to always paint a perfect picture of the African. Renowned African filmmakers such as Dani Kayoute, Souleymane Cisse, and Ousmane Sembene have questioned through film, cultural elements that were perceived to be relevant in the past but have now out-lived their usefulness. In some cases the filmmakers have questioned society on some cultural practices which are seen as an enslavement of the self. The dividing line between the African form of representation and the West is in the mode of representation.

Whereas there is voice, interrogation of cultural elements and detail explication of traditions and norms, the West denies the voice and the subject of interest (Africans) and choose to rather merely observe and record in ways that suit the filmmakers.

Sembène, Mambety, Ouedraogo, and others produced films whose themes were confrontational. Their stories are embedded with a series of cultural elements whose main aim is to awaken the African dream. For them the window of film must be one of decolonization, awareness of the self and development. Ouedraogo as cited by Diawara (2010) has observed that there is the need for the African to produce films that would reflect their image and culture. Speaking about what African film should be, Ouedraogo explained that,

African Cinema is like a window opening to the world, because you have to remember that the people of Africa have long been despised because of colonization. Their culture has been denied, leaving only the culture of the colonizers. So today for me, Africa cinema is what tells the world who we are where we are going and what we want to achieve. In African cinema, we need to look more at ourselves, at our own issues and open up ideas for our children to show them the potential for a more just society, a more responsible society. [T]hey have started pushing cinema and culture in general aside, which is not normal but they want to do so even more, and that will result in even more “negative” priorities. But we can also hope that film-makers cultured people, cinema critics, and everyone who loves travel, the spirit of travel that cinema brings, will do something because nothing is ever achieved without a fight. I think we should combine our efforts and encourage government to understand we cannot have sustainable development without culture.

Many film associations such as Film Producers Association of Ghana (FIPAG), and the Minister for Tourism, Culture and Creative Arts Ministry have bemoaned the poor state under which the country Ghana is portrayed and marketed to the world. Most of these representations are through the music and films that are produced about Ghanaian lives and marketed to the rest of the world. The country Ghana has over the years, battled to ensure that the out-come of their films reflect the culture and aspiration of the people.

Film and television is a potent tool capable of developing the country culturally and economically. The legislative arm of government passed a Development and Classification of Film Bill into an Act.

The Friday 21<sup>st</sup> October, 2016 edition of the *Daily Graphic*, reveals that the act seeks to feed Ghanaian television with Ghanaian movies that are educative, informative and also portray Ghanaian culture (p. 20).

Earlier, on 19<sup>th</sup> February, 2015, the Deputy Minister for Tourism, Culture and Creative Arts of the republic of Ghana during former President John Dramani Mahama's regime, Dzifa Gomashie, urged the film producers to put out a true reflection of Ghana in their films in order to help project the country to the world. The call came at a time when many Ghanaians were and still asking questions of Ghanaian culture and the representation of her image through film. Dzifa Gomashie was speaking at a three-day training programme organized by Film Producers Association of Ghana (FIPAG) with assistance from the Canadian High Commission. She highlighted that sometimes the names of some characters and costumes used in Ghanaian films could help a foreigner assess the country and its values. The Deputy Minister admonished the filmmakers saying,

When you get the opportunity to write a script or stand behind a camera and you don't paint a picture of yourself, but to reinforce the image of another person, what you are doing is building that person's economy against yours. In my village in Aflao, we don't dress as a queen and have beads on our foreheads and so on. But it happens in other countries like India and the rest. If I'm dressing in a film as a Ghanaian queen, it should be a true reflection of what really is so that when the queen mothers in Aflao see me, they can identify with that queen mother character and say oh yes this is us. But if I dress like an Indian queen mother, how would they identify with me? In any case, that is going to influence somebody to purchase that kind of dressing. That is not Ghanaian and by doing that I would be bringing down the Ghanaian economy (p. 15).

Far from the issue of economy as mentioned above, people especially, foreigners form an image of a people through what they see in the films they project.

A people and their culture may be regarded as barbaric and as savage because of the images that they churn out about themselves. Since traditional institutions and the values within those institutions form the basis of culture, the areas of interest that I looked at in the Kasem language films included those traditional institutions. These are the Vogo institution, chieftaincy institution, traditional Kasena worship scenes and Juju scenes. I have through available literature and interviews explored the purpose and functions of those institutions. I identified whether their roles in the films suited or reflected their respective institutions as they exist in the Kasena culture.

## **2.7 Theoretical Framework**

For the theoretical framework, I used three theories for the study. The three theories were selected because, they satisfy the argument that media content for which film is part can influence a people's behaviour, attitudes and culture. This change of behaviour, attitudes and culture depend on how the film is used, how it is presented or represented and how frequent a film image is shown to an individual. The three theories are the Cultural Norm theory, the Cultivation theory and Theory of representation.

### **2.7.1 Cultural Norm Theory**

The cultural norm theory looks at how media content for which film is part shapes the cultural practices of a people. The acculturating process of film content is easy since all manner of people can access it. Melvin DeFleur (1975) referring to television and its content reasons that its content is, "uniquely accessible to persons of all ages and education" (p. 220). He added that in most cases the medium requires no particular skill to read its content (p. 220). The argument posited by DeFleur (1975) that in most cases television content which film is part, requires no skill to read its content is disputed earlier by Marshall McLuhan (1967). He, with reference to film, hinted that we have literate viewers and non-literate viewers.

Whereas the literate viewer is concerned with what messages are embedded in the film work, the background or the world of the filmmaker, the non-literate viewer is often baffled with the technical presentation of story events. McLuhan's (1967) statement was made with regards to how some African audiences received film wholly with little regard to its insidious content. It was observed that they were rather awed by the technical sophistication and see film as a tool for mere entertainment (p. 285).

Though a lot of Ghanaians can access the films shown, because there are no age restrictions; the heterogeneous nature of the mass audience makes them to have different understanding and readings of the content. Film has broken the earlier compartmentalized groupings in society. The groupings more specially were done in age groups and some cases, sex groupings. But now film or television tends to lump all these together and there is little segmentation since everybody irrespective of age and sex can access and watch what is churned out from the medium.

McLuhan (1967), indicated that,

The business of the writer or the film-maker, is to transfer the reader or viewer from one world, his own, to another, the world created by typography and film. That is so obvious, and happens so completely, that those undergoing the experience accept it subliminally and without critical awareness (p.285).

Across various cultures, people have been able to find snippets of external or foreign influence on their culture and this, they argue could be traced to the subliminal and insidious content incorporated in film content by the filmmaker. These are imbibed by an audience who as McLuhan explained are non-literates who lack the critical awareness of the film image. In this case, the filmmaker or writers who are from a different culture or world conceives and writes a film story which gives prominence to their socio-cultural settings. The viewer takes this holistically and begins to accept or is influenced by that given content.

It has been established in some instances that foreign films have influenced a change of a people's culture. Kasena's films do not represent the cultural values of the Kasena culture and may also eventually contribute to a form of cultural change which does not reflect the life of the Kasena.

The Cultural Norm Theory according to Alawode Alayinka (2006) in "Home Video Erosion of Yoruba Greeting Culture" emphasized that mass media, for which film is part, are cultural tools for defining situations (p. 311). Per their role, they achieve and perform one of three things predominantly in their content. One of the roles of the media as given by Alawode (2006) is the ability to represent the cultural norms of a people by promoting and maintaining the standard status quo of existing cultural patterns.

The second function of the media under the cultural norm theory is that, "they represent a variant form of a people's culture and thereby promote and encourage a gradual move towards a change or, put in another way, they create new shared convictions" (p. 311). The third example of this theory emphasizes that the media represent to a people an entirely new and alien culture that is imposing and revolutionary in nature. The new imposing culture has the capabilities of adulterating if not obliterating totally, the original culture of the people (p. 311).

The various local artistic expressions; music, dance, film, dress code and other forms of Ghanaian cultural expression can be seen in the three examples given by Alawode (2006). There are foreign influences on the content of our music and dance styles. Most of our films have western story-lines. The dress code our cast is gradually shifting to a more western form.

The dominant one which is more threatening in adulterating a people's culture is the third example. Films mostly those produced from the alien cultures when imbibed wholly, achieve this third effect. Acculturation has the power of changing the way a people think and behave. It also influences the arts towards a more alien line as explained above.

The remnants and evidence of foreign influence in forms of artistic expression in Ghana is seen in our musical works, diva shows and television content.

### **2.7.2 Theories of Representation**

Peter Morrissey and Sue Warr (1997) discuss two main theories covering representation in the media. One of them, the pluralist model as they mention argues that,

Influence between the media and society flows two ways. In a commercially competitive society, for economic reasons, a media product has to attract customers by reflecting their viewpoints and giving them what they want. It can influence but not dictate. Also, many if not all of its producers-journalist, scriptwriters, photographers, directors and so on-belong to our society and have probably grown up in it and accepted its values (p. 24).

The media customers may not be a homogenous group who hold the same viewpoint. However, content providers are often able to identify an enormous group who hold a particular viewpoint. They become the target audience. Producers then work to satiate their thirst or try to influence them to think and behave in certain ways. The current Ghanaian classification of films into glamour films and local films stems not only from the filmmakers who make the films but also from the people who watch them. This group of audience desires to see certain kinds of films and would spend much to watch them. As film is an economic venture, the producers cannot afford but give them what they want.

The second on the theory of representation detailed by Morrissey & Warr (1997) is the hegemonic model which emphasizes that the ruling class aims at maintaining power by exerting control over every facet of cultural life, the media inclusive. These strong arms use their power for propaganda purposes. They distribute and reinforce their political beliefs and ideologies such as capitalism and communism through it. They try to maintain their status quo. They do this through coveted and disguised way by subtly exerting their influence through the media (p. 24).

### 2.7.3 Cultivation Theory

The cultivation theory explains how media content shapes and influence our values, attitudes and behaviours. Under the cultivation theory, George Gerbner (1967) as cited by McQuail (2005) says that “television is responsible for a major ‘cultivating’ and ‘acculturating’ process, according to which people are exposed systematically to a selective view of society on almost every aspect of life, a view which tends to shape their beliefs and values accordingly” (129). Though this theory made mention of television as a medium, we must in our attempt to understand it, dissect it to study its content.

Werner Severin and James Tankard (2001) explained that though the cultivation theory was first propounded to apply only to television viewing, they now see it as imperative and, “reasonable to explore whether similar processes might take place with the other media” (p. 271). In this regard, a look at the current out-put of television may among other things include; adverts, news, reality shows, dramas, soap operas, and films. Severin and Tankard (2001) hinted that the heavy exposure of viewers to television events causes the viewer to develop or create an illusory perception about the real world. They largely form or cultivate this opinion because of the repetitive and consistent messages that they are constantly exposed to in films. In this view, if a Kasena chief is consistently costumed in an out-fit of an Igbo king or if their traditional worship scenes are regularly adorned with red calico, then some Kasena and non-Kasenas viewers would begin to accept or cultivate this form or representation as normal.

With regards to film which forms the core of my study, Albert Bandura and Richard Walter, (1963) in their submission, earlier on emphasized that,

pictorially presented models are provided in films, televisions, and other audio visual displays, often without the accompaniment of any direct instructions to the observer in fact, audio visual mass media

are, at the present time, extremely influential sources of social behaviour patterns (p. 49).

Though the media always has no direct instructions its images are embellished in ways that would enable it achieve the desired response.

The media content consumer as is captured above, often identify themselves with models whose lifestyle they chose and aspire to be without them necessarily telling the viewer or the audiences to adopt their lifestyles. In their daily encounter with the content of film, they form an illusory belief that the world is indeed the way they see it on T. V.; a world of chaos, violence, riches, love, sex, cultism, fetishism, blackmail and in some rare cases an utopian world. With the proliferation of television channels in Ghana there is need for local content. Most of the film content that feed the television stations is from the local language film industry. Others are Nigerian films and foreign soap operas. The perceived increased in viewership of films suggest the cultivated passion for Akan films, soap operas, and Nigeria films which dominate our screens.

Denis McQuail (2005) expounds that cultivation process is gradual and cumulative in nature and leads to the, “adoption of beliefs about the nature of the social world which conform to the stereotyped, distorted and very selective view of reality as portrayed in a systematic way in television fiction and news” (p. 497). He stressed that the watching of the media content works on the media content consumer in through some steps. He stated that, “it involves first learning, and secondly the construction of a view of social reality dependent on personal circumstances and experience” (p. 497). In this study, it has emerged that forms of representation of cultural values in Kasem language films are being influenced my content of Nigerian films.

## **CHAPTER THREE**

### **METHODOLOGY**

#### **3.1 Introduction**

Having discussed the role, importance and uses of culture, language and forms of representation in film, further steps were then engaged to establish the level of cultural representation in the Kasem language films produced in Navrongo. I engaged a series of methods which enabled me to gather the information needed to understand how the Kasena culture is represented in the three films of study.

The study used qualitative research methods. This included the primary and secondary methods of data collection. The primary source of data included information obtained through interviews whereas the secondary data are sources gathered from textbooks, articles, journals, the internet, newspapers, magazines and other relevant documents. In this chapter, I explain the Research design that was employed and why I choose that research design. It further looks at ethnography as a component of the study. It discusses the Target population and what informed the choice of population.

The Sampling method and reasons for using that method is also explained. The discussions fall under the following sub headings; Research Design, Sampling Process, Population, Target population, Data Gathering tools, and Ethnography as a component of the study.

## **3.2 Research Design**

A research design is an outline that vividly describes how a researcher intends to conduct a proposed study. It shows how data is gathered and ‘analysed’ to achieve the objectives (Parahoo, 1997, p. 142; Polit *et al.*, 2001, p. 167). Therefore this enquiry aims at assessing the extent to which Kasena culture is represented in these films - *Chira Kambia*, *Anemana* and *Kwara Jei* using a qualitative approach.

### **3.2.1 Qualitative Research**

Norman Denzin and Yvonna Lincoln (1994), defines qualitative research as one which engages in the, “collection of a variety of empirical materials - case study, personal experience, introspective, interview, observational, historical, interactional and visual text – that describe routine and problematic moments and meanings in individuals’ life” (p. 2). I used this methodology because I wanted to inquire into the ‘personal experience’ of my research participants with the aim of understanding the forms of cultural representation in Kasem language films. This choice of research approach informed the data gathering tools of In-depth Interviews, Focus Group Discussion, and Participant Observation I used as discussed in 3.6 below.

## **3.3 Sampling Process**

Earl Babbie (1992) mentions that purposive sampling most often referred to as judgmental sampling is the selection of a sample based on the researcher’s knowledge of the population. This is based on the researcher’s judgment and purpose of the study (p. 230). From a preliminary survey of the people of Navrongo I was informed that most of the people who watch the Kasem films are so engrossed in the entertainment bit that they overlook the other aspects of representation which is culture.

An understanding of the specific demography of the population, with relation to what I wanted to achieve placed me in a better position to select the target sample elements using purposive non-probability sampling method.

Kreuger Larry, and Neuman Lawrence (2006) explained that purposive sampling uses the, “judgment of an expert in selecting cases or it selects cases with a specific purpose in mind” (p.211). The final use of purposive sampling they emphasized is, “when a researcher wants to identify particular types of case study for in-depth investigation” (p.211). In the view of Wimmer Roger & Dominick Joseph (2013), researchers use the non-probability sampling method because they want to select subjects based on appearance or convenience or because they seem to meet certain requirement (p. 93).

Tom Kumekpor (1999) elucidated that, “in purposive sampling, the units of the sample are selected not by random procedure, but they are intentionally picked for study because of their characteristics or because they satisfy certain qualities which are not randomly distributed in the universe, but they are typical or they exhibit most of the characteristics of interest of study.” (pp. 135-136). In the case of this study, the elements were sampled based on a criteria I evolved. Since the filmmakers are from Navrongo and their film stories reflect the culture of the Kasenas of Navrongo, I used cultural experts from Navrongo for the Focus Group Discussion. On the part of the Vora that I used for the In-depth Interviews, one of the requirements was that they should have practiced long enough to give detail description of the Vogo institution. The five Vora that I selected have a practice experience between 13 to 32 years.

There were mostly two categories of research participants who as Kumekpor (1999) mentioned exhibited most of the characteristics which were of interest to the study. There are those who are authoritative persons in terms of Kasem culture. They speak fluent Kasem, know much of the culture but have not watched the films. There are some who have knowledge and understanding on the role of culture and language in film but do not speak Kasem. They were the film lecturers. The other group is the Vora who are scattered within some major communities in Navrongo.

Kumekpor (1999) states in summary that non-probability purposive sampling method is used to evaluate the causes of success or failure of any given project. In such cases Kumekpor added, the causes or factors that precipitate to the failure of the project or its successes are investigated and solutions discovered (p.136). From the foregoing discussion, I used the purposive sampling to enable me to evaluate and describe the forms of cultural representations in Kasem language films. This was done through a careful and purposeful selection of research participants and films which enabled me arrive at the findings. The findings would help me conclude on the successes or failures of Kasem language film directors in their representation of the Kasena culture.

### **3.4 Population**

The Kasena Nankana East Municipality is located in the Upper East Region of Ghana with Navrongo as its capital. It is agrarian community with a youthful Population (under 15 years) of 109, 944 as at the year 2010. Out of this, an estimated percentage of the population are rural dwellers, with 48.8 percent as males, 51.2 percent females, 39.2 percent males and a total age dependency ratio of 84.0 (Nyarko, 2014).

### **3.5 Target population**

Though there are a lot of Kasena communities where Kasena films are in circulation, people from Navrongo and its related communities are the main respondents. This is because; Navrongo is the hub for most of the films produced. Having set out to find the extent of cultural representation in the three Kasem language films under study, four distinct groups which formed the population was considered.

The first group was the filmmakers of Kasem language films. I found them to be crucial to the study because they are the producers of the films. They were interviewed on the forms of research they undertake before producing the Kasena films, the challenges they faced in producing Kasem language films and the difficulties in marketing the Kasem language films.

The second target population used was the Kasem language and cultural experts. They as cultural experts were selected because of their ability to point out the forms of representation or misrepresentation in the films. The discussions of the cultural experts after watching the films enabled me assess the extent of cultural representation in the films.

The third group targeted for the study was the film lecturers. Their understanding of the role of film in promoting a people's culture, and enforcing ideologies influenced the choice of their selection. Aside this, their ability to answer questions on how important it is to use the local language in films and further represent ones culture in film was essential for the study.

The last group was the Vora (soothsayers). The need to include the Vora for the interview was arrived at after the focus group discussion. The Kasem Language and cultural experts made some revelation about the practice of the Vora. Based on the revelations made, a questionnaire was constructed. This enabled me engage the Vora in a discussion about the Vogo institution. This is because the Vogo institution features prominently in the Kasem language films.

They were five in number representing Nogsenia, Pungu, Nangalkenia, Saboro and Nyangua communities in Navrongo. These communities are some of the important villages that constitute Navrongo.

### **3.6 Data Gathering tools**

The data collection instruments used included Focus Group Discussion, In-depth Interview, and Participant Observation. They are discussed in the sections below.

#### **3.6.1 Focus Group Discussion (FGD)**

The FGD participants were five in number comprising of the following; a representative of the Navrongo Chief (Navro-Pio), a kasem language and culture Tutor at St. John Boscoss College of Education, a kasem language and culture Radio programme host at Nabina 90.7 FM, Navrongo, a representative of the *Tigatu* (Earth Priest) of Vunania, and a musician who is also a kasem language and cultural expert. Though there are Kasem language experts in Chiana, Paga, Po, University of Ghana, University of Education Winneba, I only used those Kasem language and cultural experts based in Navrongo as I indicated earlier in 3.3 above.

In this discussion, the five participants were made to watch the three films - *Chira Kambia*, *Anemana* and *Kwara Jei*. Using a discussion guide the participants led the discussions and I served as the moderator. There was an assistant who took down responses at the same time record the discussion in audio form. After I sought for and got permission to audio record the discussion. The focus group participants after the viewing helped to explore the content of the films and pointed out areas of misrepresentations. They further discussed and suggested how forms of the Kasena culture should have been represented in the films.

There was the need to do an in-depth investigation of the Vora. This was after it had emerged from FGD that there was more about the Vora and their practice than was discussed in

the FGD. The FGD participants revealed that there were issues regarding the rituals and divination process of the Vora which needed to be verified and argued out from the perspective of the Vora. Based on this, I decided to do an in-depth interview of the Kasena Vora.

### **3.6.2 In-depth Interviews**

One of the tools I adopted for data collection in the field was in-depth interviews. The in-depth interviews were necessary because the study requires of the research participants to give a detailed description of the forms of cultural representation such as Vogo practice, chieftaincy institution, and traditional Kasena worship scenes in the Kasem language films. I sampled filmmakers produced films in Kasem language for the in-depth interview on the description of the Kasena culture and how it is depicted in their films. This enabled me to achieve one of the objectives of evaluating and assessing how well filmmakers represent the Kasena culture in their films. Aside this, the interviews gave me background information of the filmmakers, their choice of stories and what influence those choice of stories. This helped me to understand the kind of research done by the directors on their film stories before production, and the challenges they face during film production and marketing.

The Kasena Vora used for the study were selected on purpose because, one of the purpose is that they spoke Kasem. Another specific reason why I expertly and purposefully chose the Vora from five different communities in Navrongo was because it enabled me to compare their responses to the questions. The five were selected from Nogsenia, Pungu, Nangalkenia, Saboro and Nyangua. These communities are some of the important villages that constitute Navrongo. Moreover, background information about them (Vora) revealed that they have apart from their practice as Vora, initiated a few others, who were believed to be possessed by the Voro spirit. There are some of the Vora who are a year or two old in the practice.

Those that I interviewed have a practice experience between the ages of 13 and 32. By this year range of practice they had met the requirements I was looking for.

### **3.6.3 Participant Observation**

Participant observation as the name implies is a data collection instrument that allows a researcher to observe and engage the people of the area of study while participating in their activities. This helps the researcher to be able to formulate sample guidelines and interview guides (Dewalt & Dewalt, 2002). According to Schensul, Schensul, and LeCompte (1999), participant observation is the "the process of learning through exposure to or involvement in the day-to-day or routine activities of participants in the researcher setting" (p. 91).

As a Kasena, I have basic understanding of Kasem language and culture. I have also taught the Kasem language and culture for some time. This experience that I have, coupled with the other methods employed in the research helped in bringing out credible data. This is because an understanding of the Kasenas and some aspects of their culture through personal experience, interviews, questionnaire and written literature enabled me to analyse the findings obtained.

I have witnessed the activities of the Vora (soothsayers) in my community for close to 20 years. During funerals, and the pouring of libation I have discovered the types of worship scenes that the Kasena have. I also have a faint idea about the types of costume worn by chiefs and the Vora (soothsayers) during durbars. All these played a key role when I structured the questionnaire and the guide for the focus group discussion.

In summary, this approach allowed me to collect data, using In-depth Interviews, Focus Group Discussions (FGD), and Participant Observation. Through the interviews and personal observations I surveyed some Kasem language film directors, and the Kasena Vora and how they practiced.

The data was transcribed and coded into thematic areas which describe the opinions of the participants in how the Kasena culture is represented in the three selected films indicated in 3.6.1 above.

### **3.7 Ethnography as a Component of the Study**

Ethnography involves the study that leads to an understanding of the lores and culture of a given people. The understanding of ethnography forms the basis of this study.

Creswell (2013) explains that ethnography is used if, “there is the need to describe how a cultural group works and to explore the beliefs, language, behaviours and issues facing the group” (pp. 93-95). Sarantakos Sotirios (2013) also observes that ethnography has often been seen as a science of cultural description. In this view of Sarantakos, the study of a given culture in order to describe and interpret the culture is ethnography. Sarantakos went on to add that, “ethnography is a description and interpretation of a culture or social group or system, the study of cultures with the purpose of understanding them from a native point of view” (pp. 218-219).

Researchers like Patrick McNeill & Steve Chapman, (2005) point out that the purpose of ethnographic approach to research is to, “describe the culture and life style of the group of people being studied in a way that is as faithful as possible to the way they see themselves and to the social contexts in which their behaviour occurs” (p. 89). What is studied in this research as per what McNeill & Chapman (2005) mentioned is how the representation of the Kasenas in their films ‘faithfully’, describe their culture and lifestyles. It is also to view the Kasem films and how they bear semblance to the socio-cultural context of the people of Kasena.

Many have argued that anyone who intends to carry out this kind of research must have to stay with the people for a relative long time. This is not always the case. Yegidis Bonnie, Weinbach Robert, Myers Laura, (2012) emphasize that ethnographic research is primarily a descriptive one

which uses a combination of quantitative and qualitative research methods to answer questions about individuals within their social context (p. 181). Yegidis et al (2012) concluded that ethnography also seeks to, “understand the beliefs, attitudes, values, social roles, social structures, and norms of behaviour in social environment” (p. 182).

Furthermore, ethnography as explained by Yegidis *et al.* (2012) can be viewed in two methodical approaches and perspectives; the emic and the etic. The emic perspective refers to that of the insider who is indigenous to the group being studied. This perspective they added is, “an experiential one based on an individual having been socialized to daily living in the culture and participating fully in all its psychosocial aspects” (p. 182). The etic as espoused by Yegidis *et al.* (2012) on the other hand refers to an outsider seeking in-depth knowledge about a culture of a group of people. In some communities people are not always willing to give information to a researcher simply because they are outsiders.

However, in this case, the ethnographic approach as part of my research design suited well for the study. For instance, during the interview with the Vora, I was able to get easy access to the Vora because I spoke Kasem and most of them by introduction knew me and my family. This is beside the fact that I was accompanied during the interview by an uncle who is a regular client of the Vora. In some cases only limited information would have been revealed to any researcher. This is affirmed by Hennink Monique, Hutter Inge & Baily Ajay (2012) who contend that the emic approach is often very key in most research approaches. They explained that one may not be welcomed or be allowed to observe particular religious practices, community meetings, political discussions or other activities because they are considered outsiders (p. 184). Being outsiders may simply mean those who are not of that ethnic group. It could also be used in reference to members of the ethnic group but have not been initiated or ratified.

In my situation I was taken to the divination rooms of the Vora where he explained to me the functions of each item used for the divination. Because I am a Kasena, some were even ready to allow me consult the Vogo to have a feel of what it entailed. This openness given me by the Vora was only possible because, the Vora saw me as their fellow Kasena desirous of understanding their practice.

## CHAPTER FOUR

### SYNOPSIS OF THE FILMS, DISCUSSIONS AND ANALYSIS OF FINDINGS

#### 4.1 Introduction

The preceding chapter looked at the research design deployed to generate adequate and reliable data. From the data gathered, some initial understandings emerged. The multi-method approach to data collection and the participants' inputs resulted in a good volume of data that needs careful analysis and discussion for the multiple meanings to be clearly appreciated. This chapter is specifically devoted to that. After processing and treating the data, the broad themes that emerged is discussed here in greater detail. The shortlisted films for the study constitute an important component of the data gathering process. Therefore, to offer an effective discussion on them, I find it necessary to provide synopsis of all the three films. This is because the synopsis would give an idea about the kind of story content the films have.

In this chapter, I shall give general background information of filmmaking and the background of the filmmakers in Navrongo, themes and story content of the Kasem language films and synopsis of the films *Kwara Jei*, *Chira Kambia* and *Anemana*. This is necessary because it will inform us of who the filmmakers are, their level of education and the kind of film training they had, and of course, the common themes that characterized their film stories.

#### 4.2 Filmmaking and Pioneer Filmmakers in Navrongo

Before the advent of filmmaking in Navrongo, the people entertained themselves through radio broadcast programs. Kasem was one of the languages that was used as a medium of communication of government projects and also for sensitization. The Adult Education Departments of the Non Formal Education often dramatizes most programmes on air through URA Radio.

The Kasena people were not actively involved in production of television content but were recipients of its images which were for its functional purpose; entertainment and news. Later with the influx of cheap and accessible Digital Versatile Disc (DVD) players from neighbouring Togo, the Kasena Market in Navrongo was flooded with many pirated Nigerian video cassettes. This made some Kasenas to watch films. With the advent of video technology Kasenas who were stage and arts practitioners, began to produce their own films in the Kasem language such as the following personalities.

Firstly, Victor Awo is a teacher by profession. His reputation as an actor and comedian in Navrongo dates back to the days when he was a teacher trainee at the Saint John Bosco's College of Education formerly the Saint John Bosco's Teacher Training College. He carried the college's performance troupe to almost every part of the Upper East region. He mentioned that, "the Bolgatanga Catholic Social Centre was often filled to capacity whenever we performed there". Awo indicated that he had belonged to two drama groups. The one at Saint John Bosco's Teacher Training College and another at home known as Pacific Stars Drama Group. The aim of both groups was to educate their audience. Awo explained that their drama contained a lot of themes. Most of the performances he said were for students so,

When we are going to a school, we pick themes on how to get one self-educated as students and how to excel academically. So we had themes for educational successes for schools. Our themes differ when we are meeting adults, family people and intellectuals. We could talk on marriage, child delinquency, and child molestation and those things that were significant to the development of the community.

Awo upon completion of his teacher education, moved to the Asante Region where he was engrossed in learning the art of filmmaking.

His high level of proficiency in Akan language made him to play several roles in Akan films. Awo with regards to how he got into filmmaking revealed that:

At Mampongten, I had taken a radio course. One day, on my way home, I chanced on a film crew on a production. I asked that I wanted to join them. They agreed. The production house was West Africa Movie Association. I also acted on stage at the Kumasi Cultural Centre. I later went to join Miracle Films. So when I was acting in one of the Akan films; *Abroni Beyea* I spoke my language in it. When I spoke Kasem and this popular film came out, Kasenas were enthused about that statement. The Kasena people were arguing that it was theirs and others said no. The phrase was *Afia n gu ne* (Afia you have killed). So, I said to myself if Kasenas could see themselves in films, are enthused about their language in films I would make a Kasena film. So I spoke to the Kasena Nankana union in Kumasi who mostly congregate in Christ the King Catholic Parish in Kumasi. After a series of meetings and rehearsals, I came out with *Ambichonɔ*.

When '*Ambichonɔ*'(2010) which literally means (My Heart or My Love), was released, he gained a high level of reputation not only in a film story that spoke about love between the lower and upper class, but his attempt to reach his native Kasem speakers through film. Awo added that he was able to sell a lot of copies of the film in Navrongo, Chiana, Paga and other Kasena communities in Pô, Tiebele and Ouagadougou. Having opened the doors and showed how viable it was to venture into filmmaking, a lot of other people also attempted to tell their stories in Kasem.

Secondly, Kwara Hansel Elliot popularly known as *Bagu Boɔo* (They killed a goat) in the Kasena film industry is one of the film directors and producers in Navrongo. According to him, he got into filmmaking because of the interest he had for the arts.

I have much love for the arts whether film or music. So I learnt a little about filmmaking and during that time that I went into filmmaking I realized there was no one making films in Kasem. As film is one of the things to educate the general public on so many things, I took it upon myself to start my film production and I started Tafari Film production which currently I am the CEO of it.

Hansel in 2008 was in the central region and working with an NGO called Star Black Foundation. It was a theatre group who are into stage performance and filmmaking.

According to him, the filmmaking was not as effective as the theatre performance. He added that he was taken under the tutelage of certain South African in Ghana by name Jomo Hutaa. “He taught me everything. He introduced me to filmmaking and I followed him as an ordinary actor. Later when he realized I was good, I became his assistant director, camera person and production manager on so many scripts”. When Jomo Hutaa travelled to South Africa, Hansel also came to the Upper East. Having realized there was nothing like a vibrant Kasena film industry, he tried to start it in his own way. As of 2008 he had only completed Junior High School but as the group collapsed, he went back to Senior High School. When he completed he realized that the passion for filmmaking was still there and he started TAFARI film production in 2011.

Kwara went on to indicate that, “my first film is titled *Wekeim* (2011) (The will of God)” *Wekeim* was produced in English. As they did not have money to push the film they sold it only in Paga and Navrongo. According to Kwara, the response they got from the people was that the film was nice. He explained that the Kasena people were not happy that they made the film in English. He mentioned that the Kasenas had explained that Asantes have their own films in their own language, Fantes have their own, Frafra have their own and Dagbani people who dominate in terms of filmmaking in the three regions of the north also have their own. They registered their displeasure that for the first time that a Kasena is producing a film he was not feeling proud to do it in Kasem but in English. Aside this, Kwara said,

the market women I encountered told me that the Nigerian movies that are sold here in Navrongo are very cheap and the quality of pictures are higher than ours so if we continue to do our films in English then they will prefer to buy the Nigeria films which are also in English.

Thirdly, Stanislav Farouk Abdul Karim is also a native of Navrongo. He studied film directing at NAQUADUS film school in Accra in 2005. He has work experience and has worked with HM Films and Rush Multimedia in Accra.

From these film and multi-media companies, he acquired his knowledge in film directing, editing and art direction. After completing acting school in 2006, Farouk started movie making in 2011. His first movie is titled *River goddess* (2011), *Lost in Narnia* (2012) and *Chira Kambia* (2015).

In summary, the background of the filmmakers give information about who they are, how they acquired their training as filmmakers and if this has had an influence on how they treat the subject of representation in Kasem language films.

#### **4.2.1 Kasem Language Films and Kasem English**

One of the core areas of this study is to look at the advantages of making films in the local language. Hence, research participants were asked questions regarding the use of the English language in films as against the local language. Awo stated that “my language is my language. I would continue to do films in Kasem. When somebody brings a script in English and ask me to do it for them I would. But mine for now is to make films in my language; Kasem. I just have to do it better. Kasem is the easiest”. He added that the actors feel natural and real in their expression. There are some of the things in Kasem that they cannot express in English more especially the proverbs. The language is very rich. There are some of these proverbs you cannot find in English.

If you attempt to translate it into English you might end up spoiling the proverb. This is because; we have our African way of doing things; reacting to things. They feel comfortable and they deliver better when it is in their local language. Stanislav Farouk Abdul Karim and Hansel Elliot Kwara shared a contrary view. They argue that it is easier to do their films in English than in Kasem. They mentioned that they cannot write in Kasem and what they do in Kasem language films is to first write in English and translate into Kasem during rehearsal. This is tedious. They mentioned that in the translation one word in English may take a whole sentence or phrase to explain into Kasem.

Farouk concluded because he writes in English and translates into Kasem, “the words sometimes lose their taste and essence and what one would say in a phrase in English would require sentences to say in Kasem.”

Tamakloe (2017) mentioned that “for English and local language films the prospects are great. In local language films the actors express themselves well. We can do our films in our local language and sub-title or dub them”. She mentioned that she has not seen films from northern Ghana but a lot she has seen from Kumasi. Tamakloe (2017) intimated that, there are some that are really good and there are some that are bad in terms of cultural representation. As a personal observation, she argues that some of our local language filmmakers do not pay attention to details. “I do not think some of them are aware how far film travels. I do not think some of them even know their own culture. When it comes to research some filmmakers do not score very high marks in this area. And so how do you give what you do not know? Surely there would be a place that you would represent and because film travels far, you would have misrepresented your people and everybody within that culture.” Tamakloe (2017)

Awindor (2017) in his opinion would prefer the local language films if they are done well and done professionally. He said “the Italians are doing it in their language; the Spaniards have their own in their language. So our own local language will allow us to tell our stories well. The actors can live their roles well in the films.”

#### **4.2.2 Themes and Story Content of the Kasem Language Films**

Some of the common themes in the films talk about the insatiable greed of man as reminiscent in some Kasena families. Problems of inheritance as in *Kwara Jei* (2010), wickedness as in *Adanɔɔno* (2013), and rivalry among co-wives in marriage such as *Chira Kambia* (2014).

According to Awo issues trending in society such as forced marriages, child molestation, more especially the one that has to do with orphans form the key content of his movies. In *Sadiro* (2011) (Home Plunderer), he spoke about waywardness of children. Awo observed that in most Kasena houses, “when parents are working hard to give the children the best, you see them misbehaving”. *Nyɔɔro Tera* (2010) spoke about bad blood between siblings because of inheritance and property. *Aswa Doe Pɛ* (2013) talks about those chiefs who take advantage of their people. They seizing their land, their women, and giving favour to people for their personal gains. Awo concluded by mentioning that he made the movie *Pusinɲa* (2014) (Wickedness), when a Kasena couple who had come from America were poisoned to death. They were philanthropist and why they would be killed in their village in Navrongo indicates sheer wickedness.

Kwara argued that he sees a lot of things wrong in our society. Issues from families and personal experiences are enough for him to develop themes for his film stories. The themes are mostly on greed, jealousy and wickedness. Some of the movies he intimated are to make the general audience laugh an example is *Abongbe di Addi* (2012). Abongbe and Addi admonishes parents be mindful of the fact that their children know the evil things they do in secret. Kwara in conclusion stated that

The Kasenas tell me they like my movies because, they see themselves and their daily problems in the films I produce. I always have something true to say about them and have something that would make them laugh. My stories are to educate the general public on how life should go and for us to trust in God. All are life stories.

According to Gariba Ibn Ridwan, chieftaincy issues more especially from royal homes have generated a level of animosity amongst families. *Kwara Jei* has a theme of evil machination of men and the extent to which they would go to get power. “We have to use the tool of filmmaking to change the many problems facing our communities” Gariba stated.

*Chira Kambia* spoke about how juju men, witches and wizards have created chaos and hatred in families. On the theme of *Chira Kambia* Farouk revealed that somebody told him that story. It was a friend's experience and as a filmmaker he adopted it into the film *Chira Kambia*. "When we take stories as writers we have to add and subtract to make it a good story. People do not believe in the existence of witches maybe because of the influence of Christianity but believe me they do exist" Stanislav Farouk Abdul Karim said.

Having watched a lot of Nigerian films, I observed that most of the content of the Kasena films made a prototype of Nigerian story-lines. The stories could be as simple as *Kusini* (2012) whose story-line is highly predictable or *Kwara Jei* (2010) and *Adanɔɔno* (2013) which is complex and aspires to tackle issues of tradition and culture. Though the elements of culture may vary from ethnic group to another, there still abound some similarities in cultural elements within or outside any given ethnic group. Salm and Felola (2002), justified this when they explained that;

Though there are as many different types of traditional religions in Ghana as there are ethnic groups there are also basic similarities. The most fundamental trait to all Ghanaian traditional religions is the belief in a hierarchy of spiritual beings that are responsible for the human condition. At the top of the hierarchy is the Supreme God, followed by the lesser gods, ancestors, witches, diviners and all other spiritual powers, some of which are life-enhancing and others which are life damaging.

The traditional Kasena worship ladder has a hierarchical order. In most of the films the hierarchical order of forces are often accused or sought after for protection and to cause harm and damages to individuals. These individuals might just be seen as enemies with unlimited ambitions and must be dealt with. The forces are also invoked for their infinite mercy and protection in all forms of their endeavour.

### **4.2.3 Synopsis of *Kwara Jei*, *Chira Kambia* and *Anemana***

*Kwara Jei* (2010) is a fictitious story. It has a lot of sub-plots. Pe Alagezula (Ernest Atanga) is the chief of lamyerane Tio. He adjudicates a lot of cases. He has two younger brothers. Alagepaare (Martin Alaho) feels he deserves the chieftaincy. This is because their late father had told him he would be chief after he joins the ancestors. As things would have it, the Kwara chooses Alagezula to be chief. Realizing that he cannot be chief anymore, Alagezula resorts to evil ways to insuring that one of his sons gain the chieftaincy.

First Alagezula consults Asangaduku a traditional priest to help him gain the chieftaincy. The traditional priest warns that his children were never going to be chiefs. With this revelation, Alagepaare urges the traditional priest to find a way out. He promises to help Alagepaare out. On his second visit, the traditional priest offers sacrifices to Asangaduku and gives some medicine to Alagepaare. He was however, not to speak to anybody or respond to any form of greetings or have any verbal encounter with anybody. Any form of verbal response to any form of greetings or actions would make him die out of leprosy. Quick tempered Alagepaare heads for home with his killer charms. Mid-way through his journey home, he bumps into Yaaradaga (Ridwan Ibn Gariba) a drunk and younger brother of the Tegatu. Yaaradaga seems to know everybody's secret.

He becomes offensive towards Alagepaare calling him names. He retorts forgetting the warnings of the traditional priest. Having violated the order of Asangaduku, he goes for poison from a neighbour with the intention of killing the chief's wife who is heavily pregnant. For him, killing the pregnant wife will take out the chances that she might give birth to a son. He then consults the Vogo to find ways of inheriting the chieftaincy. The Vogo warns him to stop the evil steps he was following. He poisons the chief's wife but somehow, she still delivers a boy much to the anger of Alagepaare.

He takes the baby to thugs so that they will kill him. As the thugs prepare to club the baby to death, the spirits of the land stuck. The thugs run away and the baby survives. In the story, the chief features prominently. The Vogo also played a key role in the film. There is also Asangaduku who destroys and does all the evil things for Alagepaare. How chieftaincy, Vogo, Asangaduku, and Alagepaare are cast in relation to the Kasena culture will be looked at.

In the film *Chira Kambia*, Wepia (Ridwan Ibn Gariba) is married to two wives. The first wife is Wesoeamo (Gladys) and the second one is Kasia (Diana Amamiyadi). Their house is one of a hell and torment. Kasia the younger wife makes life a living hell for Wepia and her co-wife Wesoeamo. Wicked Kasia is desperate for a child but resorts to evil ways and spiritually terminates any pregnancy Wesoeamo conceives.

Kasia visits a fetish priest Kudalabibi (Achana Kofi) to have her own child. Kudalabibi having made his incantations is transported to the spiritual realm where he meets Kamulumul (Isabella Pwadura) and consults with her. Kamulumul gives Kudalabibi a potion to drink. Afterwards he the fetish priest should sleep with Kasia. A child would be born and shall be named Baaga-ajwa. Kasia who has lost the ability of conceiving because of an illegal abortion, had intercourse with Kudalabibi and gives birth to a girl child. The girl is named Baaga-ajwa as instructed by Kamulumul.

Baaga-ajwa grows up and becomes the terror of the village. She initiates some girls into witchcraft. Together, they torture, kill and destroy. Her mother Kasia also resorts to evil ways to make life unbearable for Wesoeamo. Seeing that Wesoeamo was pregnant again, she goes for a charm to kill her and their husband. This is because the husband Wepia had insulted Kasia's mother. Wesoeamo realizes that her miscarriages are not normal and consults a pastor (Ezekiel Adiwojei). After the prayer she goes home.

The initiates of witches and their leader Baaga-anwa of the Kamulmul coven attack Wesoeamo in her sleep but fail. Kasia also tries the potion for miscarriage on her but fails. She however succeeds in killing their husband Wepia through poisoning. Kasia quickly accuses Wesoeama for the death of Wepia. This is because Wepia died after eating food from Wesoeamo. The case is reported to the police. Wesoeamo is arrested. As she is led away by the police officer, the pastor steps in. He requests to say a prayer to prove the innocence of Wesoeamo.

As the prayer is said, Baaga-anwa the leader of the witches and daughter of Kasia confesses, turns into a horrible creature and disappears. Kasia too becomes mad, confesses as the person behind the numerous miscarriages by Wesoeamo, using a love potion on her husband so that he can love him alone and finally killing him. The police arrests Kasia and takes her away. Anemana is the eponymous hero of the film. Anemana (Nabona Joe) is an orphan who lives with her grandmother Anuwe (Azegwala Wopwolo) in the outskirts of their village. The people of the village accuse Anemana and her grandmother for the practice of witchcraft. They accuse Anemana for killing both parents with the aid of her grandmother. The village members despise Anemana and he lives the life of an out-cast. Princess Kapwojo (Banagwani Hilda) spots Anemana sitting dejectedly under a mango tree. She falls in love with him and asks that he become her friend. He agrees to the proposal. Two suitors from America and Canada approach the royal house-hold to marry Princess Kapwojo.

The suitors then personally approach her but she did not agree to their proposal. Chief Atudiko (Dedongogara Abaapa) together with the queen asks their daughter to choose from the two suitors who she would want to marry. Princess Kapwojo informs them she has her own boyfriend whom her heart is filled with. The parents ask her to introduce her boyfriend to the house-hold and the elders.

Anemana and her old gnarled and blind limping old lady go to the palace to declare their intention of marrying the queen. Everybody is shocked. They beat them out of the palace.

Few days later, the princess falls sick. The situation gets worse and treatment from herbs are not helping. Two elders are sent to consult the Vogo. The Vogo reveals that anybody who brings a liri kugu (a root elixir) from the forest marries the princess. Young men with the intention of marrying the princess go into the forest. Anemana hears the news and joins them. The Vogo Tu leads the suitors to the entrance of the forest. He fortifies them, forewarns of the dangers of their voyage and bids them farewell. A lot of the young men succumb to death through a series of spiritual battles with evil spirits in the forest. Anemana survives. He succeeds in bringing the elixir to the royal household. The princess gets well and they marry.

I have discussed filmmaking in Navrongo and the training that the filmmakers have. I have also given the synopsis of the films to put into the perspective the content of the films. The Vogo institution is very prominent amount Kasena tradition and culture. This institution features prominently in the films used for the study. The Kasem language and cultural experts discussed extensively these institutions pinpointing the forms of representation in the films. The Kasena Vora were also interviewed and they gave an in-depth description about their practice as Vora (soothsayers). The views of the focus group participants and that of the Vora who were interviewed are presented in the following headings below; why people consult the Vogo, rituals by the client before the Vogo, rituals by the Vogo Tu before divination, divination items, invigorating the Vogo spirit, costume of the Vogo Tu, and rituals after the consultation.

### **4.3 Why People Consult the Vogo**

In traditional Kasena culture, there is the belief in the existence of God (Wε) who is a Supreme Being. God the Supreme Being in Kasena tradition has a wife by name Katiga (Earth).

Ancestral spirits and other lesser gods are also part and parcel of Kasena traditional worship system. There are other strong spiritual forces which reside in humans, trees, rivers, rocks and enable them to cause havoc to fellow humans, animals and plants. These include the spirit of sorcery, witchcraft amongst others. In Kasena culture, nothing is regarded an accident and questions regarding any misfortune are investigated.

Reasons why the Kasena consult the Vogo would not be far from the reasons why a Christian and a Moslem attend the church and the mosque. Kondayeri Felix<sup>6</sup> mentioned that seeking the services of the Vogo is similar to an individual seeking spiritual help or guidance from an Imam or an ordained priest or pastor. Akampusi Wilfred<sup>7</sup> revealed that the Kasena rely mostly on the Vogo to find out the cause of any misfortune that might have befallen their families. This could range from sickness to death, or loss of property or poor harvest. Akampusi added that cases where someone drowns in water, lost in the forest, the Vogo is consulted to ascertain whether they are dead or alive or if special sacrifices are to be made to appease an offended spirit. In the Kasena Vogo practices, just like Nukunya (2001), with regards to Lobi divination process alludes that there is the “notion that by the proper manipulation of certain special objects, it is possible to foretell the future, discover the unknown or interpret events” (p.61). The divination process and the reason behind the consultation of the Vogo by the Kasena are similar to that of the Lobi’s. Awiah Saboro<sup>8</sup> revealed that the accoutrement of the Vogo could range from all forms of bones of animals and birds, household materials, charms, amulets, amongst a host of others. They manipulate these things to arrive at a finding.

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<sup>6</sup> Host, Kasem Language and Culture Programs, Nabiina FM, Navrongo.

<sup>7</sup> A Ghanaian Language and Culture Teacher at Vunania Junior High School, Navrongo and a Representative of the Earth Priest (Tegatu) of Vunania.

<sup>8</sup> A Vogo Tu (Soothsayer) from Saboro, Navrongo.



**Fig 1.1** Objects of consultation of the Vogo in the film *Kwara Jei*



**Fig. 1.2:** The manipulation of the objects during consultation in *Kwara Jei*

Akurugu Apaabem and Apana Chichuru<sup>9</sup> on their part explain further that the Vogo when consulted could reveal any form of evil that is yet to befall a family and further give reasons why such an issue will happen. For any revelations made the client goes away to, make sacrifices to appease any of the spirits that has been angered or has been wronged.

Apaabem, continues that if a baby or a child cries all night for no apparent reason, the Voro would have to be consulted. Sometimes the ancestors who have a message for the household would be pinching the child. As the child is been pinched it cries, the father goes to consult the Vogo. The Voro would reveal to the father what has gone amiss in the house and propose what to do. The other Voro interviewed hinted that the clients consult them to find reasons for their sickness, as was indicated in the film *Anemana* when the elders consulted the Vogo to find out the kind of sickness that princess Kapwojo was suffering from.

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<sup>9</sup> Soothsayers from Nangalkenia and Nogsenia respectively.

Apaabem, Saboro and Tamgwamse Avongo<sup>10</sup> disclosed that the Vogo could also be consulted when there is a poor harvest, premature death of a relative and any other misfortune. When the client's solution is discovered they go home to perform whatever sacrifice or ritual that is advised by the Vogo.

In the interview, one other commonality that emerged from the Voro was that, a client may come with a need from the Voro. An example of one of such was given by Awiah Saboro. Saboro mentioned that one may seek redemption after offending an ancestor or a neighbour in ways that have serious implication. This person comes to the Vogo and request for ways that can make them come out of the situation. When their wish is done, they come back to thank the Voro with whatever gift that they had earlier on promised.

Meyer Piet (1991) 'Divination among the Lobi of Burkina-Faso' explains that "wild animals may speak with human voices to someone in the bush or transform themselves into a piece of iron" (pp. 90-91). If a mystery as this occurs in the life of the Kasena traditional believer, they would go to the Voro for answers.

Similarly, Apaabem explained that when he was young, a hunter who had trailed a bush pig for a long time to kill but could not came to his father, a Voro for assistance. The client from Vunania promised he would bring to the Voro the hind leg of the bush pig and a cock to thank the Voro should he kill it. When his father had shown him the rituals to do, he followed them and after killing the bush pig brought to the Voro what he had promised.

It was observed that in the Vogo scene of *Anemana*, the clients walked backwards as they entered the hut to do the consultation. This, the participants agreed was uncharacteristic of Kasena Vogo rituals. Clients do not enter to consult the Vogo by walking inside backwards.

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<sup>10</sup> Soothsayer from Nyangua

Weguri Joseph<sup>11</sup> mentioned that it is in juju shrines that clients may be instructed to walk backward. To therefore walk backwards into the divination room is suggestive that the Kasena Vogo is one of such juju or fetish shrines that people consult to destroy their enemies.

Apaabem pointed out that it would be highly offensive to walk backwards into the divination hut. He added that, “if you give your back to the Voro, it will also give its back to you”. The Vogo giving its back to you Apaabem added meant that the Vogo would not respond to the client. In this case, though the clients walk with their backs inside the divination hut as was seen in the film *Anemana*, they still got a response. What this means is that, the director had no knowledge about how a client should approach the divination hut of a soothsayer for consultation.

In *Kwara Jei* the focus participants observed that money was given to the Vogo Tu before the consultation. This, the focus group participants mentioned that it was not proper. The Vogo Tu only takes the consulting fee only after the divination or after the way has been cleared for divination. Having consulted with the Vogo Tu, the client would be told to do a lot of things. Sacrifice to a deceased father or ancestor among other things. The participants agreed that the Vogo Tu as was represented in *Anemana* did depict the Kasena culture in certain areas. For instance, the Vogo told the clients that what is causing the illness of princess Kapwoŋo would be better cured if an elixir is brought from the forest to treat her. They added that the soothsayer can tell someone of their fate, destiny and tell them their totem whether that totem is a bird or an animal. It can further tell you where to get an elixir for a particular treatment.

The Voro were asked if one could consult the Vogo to kill or destroy somebody, the answer from all responses was no. To kill a human being, maim or destroy them in whatever form is to render the Voro powerless.

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<sup>11</sup> Cultural expert and representative of Navro-Pio (Navrongo Chief)

To make it a new again requires serious rituals that are difficult to perform. From this it emerged that the Vogo Tu was well represented in *Kwara Jei* when he had refused an offer to kill Alagezula the brother of Alagipaare who is a chief. Awiah Saboro, Chichuru and Avongo revealed that a lot of clients have actually approached them to kill some people for them but the Vogo turned them away.

#### **4.3.1 Rituals by the Client before the Vogo**

In the film *Anemana*, the two persons who went to consult the Vogo told the Vogo Tu the reason why they had come before they started with the divination. All five participants in the focus group discussion agreed that it was proper that they inform the Vogo Tu of their intention before the divination. They agreed that within the tenets of the Kasena culture that is what is normally done. All the Kasena Vora who were interviewed substantiated this. They affirmed that the client seeking answers from the Vogo spirit must clearly state what they seek from it before they start the divination. The focus group participants stated that the divination scene in *Kwara Jei* where Alagipaare went to find out ways that would enable his children claim the chieftaincy was sudden and that proper process was not followed. What they saw the Soothsayer did was to throw a piece of tobacco cake to the ground before they started the divination.

They agreed that divinations amongst Kasena communities differ and rituals before the divination may also vary from community to community. The diviners may not also be equal in terms of spiritual prowess. Joseph Weguri mentioned that there are some of the diviners who have the power to “See”. They would without any soothsaying, tell the client what issues they have and further provide a solution to their problem. So we have soothsayers who are seers and some who have to divine before they tell the client what they seek.

During the interview with the Vora they explained that they are not seers. This view is contrary to the view expressed by Joseph Weguri that so some of the Vora are seers. The Vora added that just as we have quacks in every religious order, they too have some. These quacks of Vora are able to pass through other evil means and obtained power for their use. They are forcibly initiated and can 'see'. They are the kind of people who can event without divination know that one is evil. In the case of the traditional Kasena Voro Tu, it is only the Voro spirit that can sack a client from the divination room. Saboro hinted that a man was stung by a scorpion in his divination room and another suddenly screamed out loudly during divination and ran out of his hut This Saboro revealed are indications that the client had an evil mind. The Vora revealed that the most common way to know a client is evil is when the divination stick pushes their consultation items away during divination.

In the divination scene in the film *Anemana*, as depicted in Fig 1.3 in the next page. The participants observed that one of the elders chosen to do the consultation with the Vogo wanted to greet and was told by his associate that clients do not greet before the consultation. They stressed that within the Kasena divination practice of consulting the Vogo, this was culturally right. In Kasena divination process clients do not greet the Vogo Tu when they enter first to consult. Greeting is done when clients are done with the divination.



**Fig. 1.3:** The Vogo Tu with his clients in the film *Anemana*.

Tamgwamse Avongo mentioned that the reason why clients do not greet before divination is that, they treat the subject of consultation as an emergency. He added that, “when we have an emergency and go to the hospital we do not waste more time on greetings but when our solution is discovered, we can greet”.

When I asked the Vora about the rituals that a person would undertake before consulting the Vogo, Akurugu Apaabem explained that before the client leaves home, they first inform their deceased father or ancestors by way of sacrifices. Apaabem stated that client appeals to them to accompany them into discovering the truth to enable them protect their name and family. As they leave home, they would have with them, any of the following; tobacco cake, millet, money, sheanuts and kenaf seeds. In all the tobacco cake which is important of all could be accompanied with any of the items.

When the client gets to the Vogo, they remove their sandals and hat and enter the hut. Apaabem and Saboro revealed that even if the chief of Navrongo should enter to consult the Voro, they must remove their hat. They would then sit down, tell the Voro of their reason for which they had come to consult the Vogo.

#### **4.3.2 Rituals by the Vogo Tu before Divination**

One of the participants by name Akampuse mentioned that before the client would start the consultation process, the Vogo Tu would ask for permissions from the spirits and the ancestors to tell him or her whether the divination should go on or not. This is through the following: The Vogo Tu has some medicine in a Kwara (a horn of an Animal). They would first eat some and then smear the objects of divination; the divination stick, and whiff some on the divination accoutrements that would be poured out from the skin of a goat or sheep. Then the two stones that the divinations stick points at are also smeared with the medicine.

The stones are then thrown down and the way they fall would suggest whether the divination can go on or not. They would then tell the client based on how the stones have fallen that the day is a good one or a bad one. If the day is good divination can then continue. The other participants corroborated this but added that sometimes a client goes to the Vogo to find out the kind of sickness that a relative is suffering from. Whilst on their way, the person may die. The Vogo Tu having thrown the stones may look at the way the stones fall and conclude that there is no need to proceed. Instantly the client would be informed of the death of the sick relative. Here then, it becomes useless to continue the quest of finding out what kind of sickness a person is suffering from and what treatment to propose.

Mary Azubam<sup>12</sup> and Weguri in the focus group discussion explained that in other Kasena communities, pieces of dried tobacco are thrown into every corner of the hut in which the divination takes place. The Vogo Tu invites the spirit of the ancestors and the spirit of the Vogo to help them in finding what the client seeks. They would extol the Vogo to make their findings as clear as day and bring out the undiluted truth. This was not shown in the divination scenes in all the films.

Apart from what is mentioned above, the Vora revealed that the Voro Tu takes some medicine in a horn of a cow and smears it in the space between the big toe and the index toe. After this, all the divination equipment and accoutrement that they use are also smeared with this medicine. The Vora indicated that this medicine is very potent as such it wards off from the divination hut evil spirits such as witches, wizards, animals who turn into spirits and ghost. This medicine the Vora hinted is applied when the first client of the day come into the divination hut. After wards, it is not applied when subsequent clients of the day visit. In *Kwara Jei* when Alagepaare visited the Vogo, there was already a client in the divination hut which implied that the Voro Tu had earlier on applied the medicine. So when the Voro Tu did not apply the medicine as Alagepaare entered his hut this was okay.

Looking at the scene in *Anemana*, it was important that those rituals be performed since the two clients sent by the chief were the first to enter the consulting room. After smearing the accoutrement with the medicine, the Vora added that the Voro Tu then breaks the dry pieces of the tobacco cake brought by the client and throws them into every part of the inside of the hut. As they throw the dry pieces of tobacco, they invite the ancestors and spirit of the Vogo to come help them

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<sup>12</sup> Kasem musician and culture expert

reveal the truth that the client seeks. The cultural experts also agreed to this. This practice was however, only seen in the divination scene of *Anemana* but not in *Kwara Jei*.

One of the Vora Apaabem who had a contrary view about using the tobacco of a client to summon the spirits argued that to invite the spirits to come help in the divination process, he does not always use the consulting items from the client but uses his own tobacco millet. He revealed that a client may bring consulting items that are defiled and to use them and invite the gods and spirits before the divination is corrupting the gods and spirits in advance. Apaabem's view was different from those raised by the focus group participants and the other four soothsayers.

The Vora revealed that when they summon the spirits, the divination stones are then thrown. When they fall all tails or all heads, it means two things to the client. The client can go and be ridiculed by society or that the client can go and expect goodness and blessing. When it is head and tail, the day is clear for divination. In all the three scenes of the two films, the casting of the stones to clear the way for divination was not done.

### **4.3.3 Divination Items**

Contrary to earlier discussion by the focus group participants that Vora do not take money, it emerged from all five Vora who were interviewed that they take money as part of the consulting items. They mentioned that initially the form of money used for the consultation was cowries. This was money used for all forms of transactions in Kasena communities of old. Now they receive real cash. The most important of all the consultation items is the tobacco cakes. Others are millet, maize, and kenaf seeds. The Voro Tu does not charge fees. And if one were to come even without any consultation item, they would be allowed to continue. Those without consultation items would just pick a stick, or a stone to follow a spiritual formality.

#### 4.3.4 Invigorating the Vogo Spirit

Azubam revealed that the spirit of the Vogo is treated like a human being. The Vogo Tu heaps a lot of praise on the Vogo. She added that this is to strengthen the Vogo spirit and to give it the motivation to rise up to the challenge of revealing the hidden truth or the needs of the client. The participants mentioned that, the Vogo Tu, to awaken the spirit of the Vogo challenges it to the task of fulfilling the desires of the client. They may address the Vogo saying, the all-seeing eye of hidden truths, one who see beyond the depths of the sea, one who tells of the fall of a man before he smells it and one who have redeemed themselves at all times by revealing the impeccable truth of the universe. Akanpusi added that the Voro Tu would then say, “come to my rescue. Please redeem yourself and me. I work for you. Let not the client call me a liar”. This was done only in one divination scene in Anemana.

After this, the Vogo Tu then drum, or flute to awaken the Vogo spirit. Womoni Kozambana revealed that to flute, drum, or sing depends on what kind of artistic skill the Voro Tu had before then becoming a Voro attendant. He Kozambana was a drummer before becoming a Voro Tu and so he always drums to praise his Vogo spirit. Apaabem explained that the singing, fluting and drumming is to motivate the Vogo spirit, the ancestors of the Voro Tu and that of the client to come and reveal the truth for the client. After this, the client with his thumb and fore finger forms a loop around the divination stick. The Voro Tu shakes the rattle and the spirit of the Voro leads the divination.

The focus group participants revealed that the invigoration of the Vogo spirit is an important ritual that cannot be over-looked. They however, mentioned that in *Anemana* the soothsayer tried to do the praise singing of the Vogo but it was not properly done. The participants mentioned that the throwing of pieces of tobacco in all parts of the divination hut, the invigoration

of the Vogo spirit and throwing of stones to predict whether the way was clear to divine or not were not given a proper representation of the Vogo. They agreed that the scenes were done in haste, the divination too sudden and without the due observation of the cultural practices of the Kasena in relation to the Kasena divination practice.

A consequence of this kind of misrepresentation the participants added is that first Kasena audience who do not know their culture would be misled into believing that what they see in the Kasem language culture is their true cultural practice. Aside this, having informed the participants that the film director of *Chira Kambia* Abdul Farouk had sold about twenty (20) copies of the film to a Kasena native in United Kingdom, they raised concerns that people in UK who would watch the film will be misinformed about the Kasena cultural practices.

#### **4.3.5 Costume of the Vogo Tu**

Akampusi mentioned that the Vogo Tu wears a loin cloth or a triangular Kasena pant made of hard cotton material. They call it Jɔgɔ. They may also slung a sheep skin around their shoulders. The items Akampusi mentioned was corroborated as the traditional Kasena divination materials by the Vora during the interview with them. Apana Chichuru and the other Vora mentioned that painting of the eyes or any part of the body is not representative of the Kasena culture. The participants added that in these current times only a few people wear the loin cloth or the sheep skin during divination.

The costume for the Vogo as given by the Kasena Vora are the red cap, neck beads, loin cloth (triangular pant also known as the jɔgɔ ) a sheep or goat skin. The Vora affirmed what Kondayeri mentioned during the focus discussion that Kasena Vora of old used to wear these costumes. Now the Vora mentioned that it is optional to wear some of the costume mentioned. The Vora hinted that they only get to wear all the costume such as the red cap, neck beads, loin cloth,

ship skin, bracelets and anklets once and that is in the day of their initiation. Afterwards they can chose to wear all of those costume or some of them. They mentioned that currently one can wear the red cap, bracelets and anklets for protections during divination with a client. All the Vora mentioned that there is no painting of any part of the body as it was done in the film *Anemana* and other divination scenes as shown in Fig. 1.4 below.



*Fig. 1.4* The Voro Tu in his regalia in the film *Anemana*.

Since the Voro in *Anemana* and *Kwara Jei* were cast in Kasena land of old, the full costume as mentioned which are not in the films should have been used.

#### **4.3.6 Rituals after the Consultation**

After divination the clients then greet Voro Tu. In the film *Anemana* this was done. In *Kwara Jei*, this was not done in all the two scenes. The client having done with the greetings goes out and washes their hands. The Vora mentioned that it is very important to wash ones hands. This is because divination is an interaction with the spirits. The medicine that is used to smear the divination tools connects the client to the spirits. If the client does not wash their hands, they suffer consequences such as; forgetting all that was revealed to them by the gods before the get home.

Also, if client who does not wash their hands meets an evil person on the way and shakes hands with them all which had been revealed to them would be forgotten. Aside this, the client would always misplace anything they touch while at home.

This last bit of washing of hands was not discussed by the focus group participants but mentioned by the five Voro who were interviewed. The washing of the hands was not represented at all in the Voro scenes of all three films used for the study. I have presented the views expressed by the Kasena Voro and the focus group participants regarding how the Kasena Voro who feature predominantly in Kasem language films can be represented.

An interview was also conducted for four Kasem language film directors. Two of the directors have produced two of the three films used for the study. Two others were interviewed even though their movies are not part of the study. The reason why I interviewed these other two is because they have done quite a number of Kasena films and were able to give areas of cultural misrepresentations in some aspects of the films. The discussions are presented under the following sections; Set design of Juju Scenes, Costuming of royals and observance of cultural rules in Kasena palace, Manners and traditional rules in a Kasena palace.

#### **4.4 Set Design of Juju Scenes**

The setting in the juju scenes were looked at from the perspective of the directors and what informed their choice of set design. The participants at the focus group discussion also looked at the juju scenes in relation to traditional Kasena worship scenes. At the focus group discussion, it emerged that the tying of red calico at the traditional shrines and the painting of some parts of the body of the traditional priest is not representative of a Kasena traditional priest and their place of worship. They stated that the traditional Kasena shrine would have stones, pots and bones. Blood and feathers of sacrificed animals would be seen on the pots, stones and bones.

Most of the gods that Kasena worship are either indoors or outdoors. Kasenas also worship trees, rivers, and rocks. When the directors were asked why they depict their traditional priest in such manner, they had varied reasons. Stanislav Abdul Farouk mentioned that, “sometimes we have to do what is already there”. Farouk admitted that the juju scenes in *Chira Kambia* are not the traditional Kasena scenes. He added that the film was done for a wider audience than that of Navrongo. From this perspective, it reveals how commercial interest on the part of directors impacts the form representation in film. Farouk was, however, quick to add that, he had no time to set up a typical Kasena shrine for the film. The actors are often in a haste to go and if one wants to depict a typical Kasena shrine, he would have to sacrifice time and money.

Awo and Kwara attribute their inability to properly represent the Vogo scenes and other juju scenes to technical challenges. They explained that in scenes that feature the Vogo and other traditional Kasem worship scenes, lighting is a challenge. Most of the Kasena traditional worship places are always indoors and if one is going to represent the culture as such, one should have the lighting equipment and be able to light professionally. Kwara mentioned that he does not always do well in shrine scenes because of time constraints and sometimes the actors get bored and are in a hurry to leave. The same concern of technical challenges, lack of time which makes it difficult to depict traditional Kasena scenes were expressed by the other Kasem language film directors Farouk, Awo and Ridwan.

The general comments from the focus group discussion with regards to the juju scenes of the Kasena films is that, what is depicted is a prototype of Nigerian films. Hansel admitted that, they also study from Nigerian movies to improve content. So this goes to affirm that there are forms of cultivation of media content by film directors and audience which plays a critical role of enculturation.

To learn the technical skills from telenovelas produced in Brazil, Mexico and others may not be as harmful as imbibing elements of their culture in our local content. This is the concern raised by many including chiefs and the Minister of Tourism, Culture and Creative Arts.

#### **4.5 Costuming of Royals and Observance of Cultural Rules in Kasena Palaces**

Under this section, participants were made to observe the costuming of the Kasena royalty as shown in the films *Kwara Jei* and *Anemana*. Their observations were that, in *Anemana*, the representation was poorly done. They however, mentioned that in *Kwara Jei* the costuming was average since they could find some amount of royal costume in the characters. Beyond the costume that the royals wear, the participants discussed how a chief or a royal would act in the presence of his subjects and vice versa. The discussion that follows focuses on the costumes and representation of a chief in Kasena custom, representation and costuming of Kasena princesses and queen mothers and the observance of cultural rules in the Kasena chief's palace.

During the focus group discussions, the research participants mentioned that the chiefs of Navrongo and the entire Kasena land are in ranks. This translates in their dressing. They revealed that we have red chiefs and black chiefs. Red chiefs wear red caps and black chiefs have black caps. We have Pwa<sup>13</sup> Kadwe (Sub-chiefs). These Pwa Kadwe are also in ranks. What distinguishes a chief from his subjects is that, the type of cap that he wears not everybody can wear it within his area of jurisdiction. His neck beads are red and round. His bracelet which is flat and round must look different from all others. His type of smock must distinguish him from all other chiefs and elders. He must have a whisker preferably one from the tail of a horse.

The chief should also have a walking stick. Sometimes he wears up to three or more smocks which make him outstanding among all subjects and sub-chiefs.

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<sup>13</sup> Pwa is plural form of chief in Kasem language.

Where he sits must be different from all his elders. His sitting place be it on logs or a skin is an elevated place, his feet resting on a skin. A chief does not involve himself in any form of argument or discourse in the palace. What he does is to table a motion through his linguist for the elders to discuss. They mentioned that in *Kwara Jei*, of the two chiefs presented Pε Alagzula's, chieftaincy is better depicted. He has a red cap on his head, has whisker and walking stick, and royal beads around his neck. Pε Alagzula spoke through his linguist and there is utter silence as he speaks. Where he sat too is a bit elevated than that of his subjects. In *Anemana*, they mentioned that the chief apart from the black cap on his head and the whisker he held, he did not look any different from his elders. The participants argued that the shed that Pε Atudiko in *Anemana* sat in was a pito shed. All the other elders and visitors to the chief palace sat at the same level as the chief. The participants mentioned that the chief should have been elevated higher than anyone else. In conclusion of the representation of the Kasena chiefs, Kondayeri mentioned that,

every dressing is done to conform to a certain setting. If it is current times, it might not reflect what was done in Kasena-land of old. Now, all elders of the chief must wear smocks. But for instance if it is a flash back to Kasenas of long time ago, then such things which were done in the olden days would be brought forth to differentiate between the past and the present. This is to show a time distance of 200 years ago.

Kondayeri also declared that since Atudiko was a Kasena chief of long ago, the elders of the chief must have slung over their bodies the skin of animals. The chief and elders of old must also have loin clothes around their waist. They must also have their walking sticks. One other observation that was made during the focus group discussion was the way and manner in which the royal princess and queen mother was depicted. With reference to the film *Anemana*, they observed that the costume of the princess and queen mother represent more of what they see in Nigerian films. They mentioned that in olden times, the tusk of an elephant was carved and used as bracelets for

rich women and royals. Azubam commented on the costume of the princess in the film *Anemana*. She explained that the costume is not representative of a Kasena royal princess. Azubam went on to remark that it was important and mandatory that she be costumed in our local traditional cloth, the smock. Have a small whisker not a big one like the one that she carries in the film. The princess should have a piece of smock tied on her hair because she is a princess.

#### **4.6 Manners and Traditional Rules in a Kasena Palace**

There were some comments and observation made with regards to certain representation that were deemed to be insulting to the royalty of any Kasena chieftaincy. The participants registered their displeasure on the way those issues were presented. The issues include manners of suitors in royal house of Pε Atudiko and the love affair between Anemana and the princess. Most of the mannerism and gestures that were observed as misrepresentative of the Kasena tradition were mostly in the film *Anemana*. This had to do with the way and manner in which visitors conducted themselves in the presence of the Kasena chief depicted in the films under study.

In the instance that the observation was made, suitors who had sought the hand of the royal princess Kapwoŋo (Banagwani Hilda) were deemed to have behaved untraditionally. According to Joseph Tangwam<sup>14</sup>, any suitor who comes to seek the hand of the royal princess in marriage would not have to do that in the presence of the chief. There were two suitors in the film *Anemana* one from Canada and the other from USA. They shook hands with the chief. The participants mentioned that it is wrong to directly shake the hand of a chief. Joseph Weguri revealed that, if one were to bump onto a Kasena chief anywhere, it would be wrong for them to shake his hands much less in his palace. With regards to the dowry that was paid by the suitors in the form of physical cash, the participants stated that to dowry a woman in Kasena culture with money meant

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<sup>14</sup> Is a Kasem Language and Culture Tutor at the St. John Boscos College of Education, Navrongo.

that the suitor was buying a commodity. Because of this reason, it is a taboo in Kasena custom and tradition to dowry women with money. As was presented in the film *Anemana*, the dowry prize in the form of money was given to no less a person than the chief. Weguri also observed that it was wrong for the chief to even receive suitors. The participants agreed that it is only the elders who would have received the suitors and later inform the chief.

Other omissions and blunders committed at the chief palace which the participants saw as culturally insulting was when the Canadian suitor told the chief and the elders about their mission before offering greetings. This, the participants agreed is totally out of place. They stated that you can deny the Kasena food and it would be okay but greetings no. Weguri mentioned that when going to a chief's house some items must be sent alongside to greet the chief. Nobody goes to the Kasena chief's house to seek for redress or ask for something with empty hands. All the participants agreed that in greeting the elders in the palace of chief Atudiko, the suitors should have used tobacco cakes, and cola for the greetings. They revealed that in other instances, when a person goes to greet the chief, what is used to approach the elders who sit for him in matters such as asking for a person's hand in marriage is cola, tobacco cakes, a guinea fowl and a cock. Weguri hinted that the cock is used to prepare food for the chief the guinea fowl is for the first wife of the chief.

Tangwam also indicated that it was appropriate and representative of the Kasena culture when in one of the scenes in *Anemana*, the chief sat down with his daughter and wife to inform them about the suitors who are seeking their daughter's hand in marriage. The beauty of it Tangwam added, was when the chief relayed the intention of the suitors to his wife who in turn relayed it to their daughter. He explained that this portrays the Kasena value of women having strong roles to play in the marriage of their daughters.

The other participants added that women serve as counsellors of on the right choice of suitors. Therefore, if the chief's wife fails to convince princess Kapwojo (Banagwani Hilda) on the right choice of suitors, then she would lay a complaint to the father who would discuss the matter with the elders on the marriage of their daughter. The participants revealed that the chief should have discussed about the daughters marriage inside the house but not at the shed where cases are adjudicated.

To better understand and evaluate the challenges that the Kasem language directors faced during productions, I asked them questions relating to the following headings;

#### **4.7 Problems during Production**

The directors stated that during the production stage, the actors disappoint them a lot. This is because; there is usually less commitment to the production. This affects the production a lot. The directors would have to spend more money and time shooting a film that would have taken less money and time to complete. Though the actors were not formally interviewed, one of the Kasem language films actors and a Kasem language, Tangwam, emphasized that they are not often paid to partake in the production. He explained that the directors sometimes feed them on location, provide them with transport but no payment often made. The actors come late to the location, some of the actors also abandon the production midway and this has a serious effect on the productions out-come. The director must have to put the production on hold, do a quick audition, and rehearse with the new character before production can continue.

Awo highlighted that it is a young industry hence bound to face such production challenges. He added that finance is key in the production of Kasem films. And stated for instance that during his productions he often has to feed the cast and crew but the transport they catered for themselves. So finance is one of the major challenges.

Since the disappointment from cast and crew has a financial burden on the production, and this could equally influence the forms or cultural representation.

There are also cost implications in costuming the Kasena royal house-hold, the Vogo and the traditional worship scenes. If there are financial constraints during production, the directors would just have to quickly do anything to represent any of the Kasena traditional. According to Abdul Farouk, he was able to create better traditional scenes in his film *River goddess* because he and the cast were ready to sacrifice and there was money. He added that, “I am an art director and was able to build a Kasena traditional shrine” In *Chira Kambia*, Farouk explained that both cast and crew were cash trapped and time was against them so they had to do most of the traditional worship scenes under trees.

#### **4.8 Marketing of Kasena Films**

Most of the marketing of Kasena films take place in the outskirts or the villages around Navrongo. Paga, Chiana and other towns in Burkina-Faso also serve as marketing centres for films. The film directors said that in the marketing of their films, the Kasem film retailers do not often help them most.

The retailers and some of the producers pirate the films produced. When I told the director and producer of the film *Chira Kambia* by Stanislav Karim Abdul Farouk that I bought his film at a price of GH¢ 12 he was shocked. He stated that, “I give the CDs to the retailers at moderate prices. I give them at GH¢ 5 and they are selling it at GH¢ 12 then I say wow. When the movie is good the people want it but sometimes when you do not have people to support you, you are likely to fail”. He added that after releasing the movie, the crew let him down. Most of them wanted their faces to be out there and so after releasing the movie, they all backed out. He had to do the publicity and marketing alone.

Kwara also revealed that the Kasem film industry though challenging is profitable if one were to dedicate time to the production and marketing. “I bought a car from the proceeds of my art work”. He added that more needs to be done in the film industry.

The Kasena film directors indicated that though the market for their films is not large because of the small nature of the Kasena community they are, however, always able to make gains in some towns and communities in Upper East such as Navrongo, Paga, Chiana, Manyoro. Also, they sell their films to consumers from other nearby places like Burkina Faso, Po, Tseibele, Jaaro, Sonjo, Kayaa and Ouagadougou.

Indeed, since time and money seem to be the panacea for good films, then if there is no pirating and high cost of films from the retailers, the producer may be able to make more money from their production. This would enable them feed cast and crew, get good actors, real locations and the proper costume that would empower them to represent the culture of the Kasena properly. Through this, there would be a cycle of progress in because the consumers of the films would have their culture better represented in the Kasena films.

In conclusion, this chapter discussed and analysed the data gathered. The next chapter is chapter five and I shall discuss the summary, findings, conclusion, and recommendations.

## CHAPTER FIVE

### SUMMARY, FINDINGS, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

#### 5.1 Introduction

This chapter summarizes the discussions, and findings of the research I undertook which was to investigate forms of representation in Kasena culture through Kasem language films. I started the study by giving a general background information on film which served as a door to the understanding of the use of film in time past and the present. The discussion looked at how Ghana and by extension Africa were represented in early films. The reasons and consequences of such forms of representation were also discussed through the lens of some African writers and filmmakers. I used three films *Chira Kambia*, *Anemana*, *Kwara Jei* which by far are the Kasem language films which has elements of the Kasena culture in my investigation process. The form of cultural representation portrayed in these films was the point of reference through which the methods for the study was designed.

#### 5.2 Summary of the Study

This work was comprised of five chapters. In chapter one I discussed general information about film, its importance and how it can be used to persuade and influence the thoughts of people in the area of governance ideology and culture. A general overview of the use of film since the invention of the camera and how the power of film as not just a tool for entertainment but also a medium for the promotion of culture. I also discussed how film was used in Europe and America and how Africans were represented in early films produced by America and Europe as well as how some Africans responded to these forms or misrepresentations. I went further to tackle the history of the Kasena communities in and outside of Ghana and their current geographical location in order to

establish who they are and the type of cultural institutions they have since the Kasena people are central to this study. I then stated the objectives and research questions which informed the choice of methods engaged, the significance of the study, and the study delimitations has been given as well as how the entire work was organised.

Chapter two, is both empirical and theoretical review of relevant literature. I discussed film from the silent era through to current times, culture, forms of representations and the affects or influences these could have in a film story. In the theoretical discussions, I looked at film and culture so as to put into perspective how a culture of a people can be persevered or altered through film. The theories used indicated that constant exposure of audiences to a foreign culture, or through forms of misrepresentations make the audience cultivate that new form of culture over time.

In Chapter three which is the methodology, I explained the research design, the population used for the study, and why I selected the kind of population used for the study. The data gathering tools used and what necessitated the use of such tools, including the sampling process. The fourth chapter is a discussion and analysis of the data gathered from Kasena soothsayers, film lecturers, film directors and Kasem language experts with relation to the cultural representation of Kasena royalty, Vogo practices, problems with film marketing and production and settings at juju scenes. It also captures the background information of filmmaking in Navrongo and that of the film directors, and the synopsis of the films for insight purposes.

The final chapter contains the summary, findings, conclusion, and recommendations with regards to how the Kasena culture can be improved or represented in Kasem language films.

### **5.3 Findings of the Study**

The study revealed that there are indeed forms of misrepresentations in some Kasem language films. It also affirmed that when one's own culture is relegated to the background and foreign

cultures are adopted and used in the arts; Music, Dance and Film, that foreign culture is eventually promoted to the detriment of the local culture. Finally, this research work also ascertained that some of these Kasena filmmakers face a myriad of challenges in their quest to produce these local films. Most importantly, their inability to study the culture of the Kasena people or consult Kasena culture experts on certain key aspects of Kasena culture before they portray it, has in doubt, gone a long way to hamper their proper representation of Kasena culture very well in their films.

#### **5.4 Conclusion of the Study**

This study sought out to achieve the following objectives using Kasem language films: To assess the extent to which the Kasena culture is being represented in Kasem language films, establish or explain how culture, language and forms of representations in films could acculturate another form of culture, then identify some of the challenges that confront the Kasem language film directors, and finally assess the extent to which the Kasena culture is represented on Kasem language films. I focused my study on three films - *Chira Kambia*, *Anemana*, and *Kwara Jei*. Media audience cultivate a certain habit by accepting in totality the content of what they watch.

So if a Kasena culture is misrepresented and screened a couple of times to a given audience they accept the image as a true reflection of that culture. In this regard, having observed how the Kasena culture is represented in Kasem language films, Kasem language and cultural experts were engaged to discuss how some common cultural practices such as the Vogo, Chieftaincy, traditional worship scenes and traditional costumes are represented or misrepresented.

The Kasena Vora (soothsayers) was also interviewed. This was necessary after the Kasem language and cultural experts have made some observations about the Vogo practices. Some of the claims that emerged from the five (5) participants at the focus group discussion were corroborated by the Vora (soothsayers).

The five (5) Vora who were interviewed gave in-depth information about the Kasena Vogo practice which helped to explain the forms of representations in the Vogo scenes of the Kasena language films.

To identify the challenges that militate against forms of representation in Kasem language films, the Kasem language film directors were interviewed. They were four in number. Out of the four, two of them have produced the two films out of the three films used for the study. Since they are the producers of the films, they were able to give out issues that the cultural representation of the films. Key amongst them is the issue of enculturation. The film directors admitted that it is easy to create a prototype Nigerian juju scene. They admitted that foreign films influence their forms of cultural representation since they learn some things from them. The study has been able to engage four distinct groups of research participants. They included the film lecturers, film directors, Kasem language and culture experts and the Vora. Their discussion revealed that there are forms of misrepresentations in Kasem language films.

Three things, language, culture and representation formed an integral part of the study. I discussed how culturally, as Africans we were denied a proper representation. Available literature which expounded on reasons why the voice of the African was denied in the early Eurocentric films is discussed. Two film lecturers from the National Film and Television Institute (NAFTI) were interviewed. Apart from giving background information of film in the World, Africa and Ghana, they further explained how filmmaking can be used to adulterate a given culture, promote an ideology and propaganda.

Finally, the Kasem film industry is one of the promising film industries in Ghana. The industry has employed a lot of people. It has entertained many more who are both Kasenas and non-Kasenas. Culture is a very critical and an important asset.

It gives every individual their unique identity. It is important that members of our various communities in Ghana aspire to ensure that film which is very powerful be used in ways that promote the local culture.

Therefore in the quest to entertain ourselves and earn income from our talents and skills, the Kasena should not forget that their culture and identity is very essential to their being. No one will promote the Kasena culture if they do not put measures in place to ensure that their own culture which gives them the unique identity as a people is protected. This is because when one's own culture is relegated to the background and foreign cultures are adopted and used in the arts; Music, Dance and Film, the consequence is that, gradually that foreign culture is promoted to the detriment of the local culture. In this regard, detail attention should be paid when representing oneself in film.

### **5.5 Recommendations**

The study recommends that there should be a form of training for filmmakers on the importance of portraying the Kasena culture well in Kasem language films. I recommend that film productions houses in all Kasem speaking areas be grouped into cartels. With the formation of these cartels, film lecturers, should then meet them and discuss with them the importance of promoting ones culture and representing it well through film. The National Media commission and other regulatory bodies should also make it a point to meet these cartels and deal with the general concerns of misrepresentation in local film content. The commission should further explain forms of enculturation from foreign films.

Kasem language film directors who have forms of Kasena culture that they want to represent in their films should make it a point to consult the Kasem language and cultural experts and the

custodians of the various cultural institutions within the Kasena ethnic group to enable them do a proper presentation.

Since the Kasem language and culture is one of the approved languages for learning in Ghana, there should a renewed passion in the teaching and learning of the Kasem language and culture in levels of the educational structure. This would equip any Kasena who would want to represent the Kasena culture in the arts more especially in film to do so with ease. Through this the language and culture would be developed and promoted.

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## **APPENDIX A:**

### **Interview Guide for Film Lecturers**

**UNIVERSITY OF GHANA - LEGON**

**SCHOOL OF PERFORMING ARTS**

**DEPARTMENT OF THEATRE ARTS**

**TOPIC:**

**KASEM LANGUAGE FILMS AND THEIR REPRESENTATION OF THE KASENA  
CULTURE**

### **INTERVIEW GUIDE FOR FILM LECTURERS**

Dear Sir,

It would please me a lot if you grant me an interview on the history and use of film in the world African and Ghana. I would also need your expert opinion on the role of film in the development of a country especially in the area of culture. The purpose of the study is to interrogate issues of cultural representation in films produced in Ghana. The main emphasis is on the local language films. This would help a lot in my study of the Kasena people of Upper East and how they portray themselves culturally in films.

1. Tell me about yourself
2. Why did you get into film studies and practice?

3. What challenges do you face daily in the area of studies and practice?
4. How do you tackle those challenges?
5. In what way is film study important to us as a country?
  - a) Are we as a country aware of this importance?
6. The West made propaganda films to denigrate Africa. What was Africa's response to this propaganda?
  - b) Has Africa been successful in their response?
  - c) What challenges do we face in producing our own stories?
7. Why was Gold Coast film unit set up?
  - a) How did Ghana benefit from the film unit?
8. What role did Kwame Nkrumah play in the film industry?
  - b) What would you say is the industry during and after the reign of Nkrumah?
  - c) What went wrong?
9. How has the invention of video changed the face of the film industry?
  - a) What problems did the video give us?
  - b) What prospects did the video give us?
10. What is the role of culture in the development of a country?
11. How can we use film to develop the culture of Ghana?
  - a) Do you see a representation of our culture in the Ghanaian films made?
  - b) What factors in your view influences the forms of cultural representations in local language films?
12. What would you say language is?
  - a) What is the functional role of language in culture?

- b) In what way is the use of local language in films beneficial?
13. What are the advantages of producing films in the local language?
- a) What challenges would one face in producing a local language film?
- b) When offered a choice to produce in a local language or English which would you prefer?
14. How would you describe the content of the local language films in Ghana?
15. What factors influence the content you have just described?
16. Which ways can we further develop the local language film industry?
17. What general observation or views do you have about the local language films?

## **APPENDIX B:**

### **Interview Guide for Kasem Language Film Directors**

Dear Respondent,

It would please me a lot if you grant me an interview on the history of filmmaking in Navrongo. I also seek for your candid opinion on the state of filmmaking in Navrongo and how you as filmmakers represent the Kasena culture in the Kasem language films you produce.

1. Tell me about yourself
2. How did you come into filmmaking?
3. How long have been making films?
  - a) Give me the titles of your films and years of production?
4. What are the themes of your films and what informs the choice of those themes
5. Tell me about the number of movies made so far?
6. Why do make your films in Kasem but not in English?
7. How easy is it to make movies in Kasem?
8. Which of your films have representation of the Kasena culture?
9. Did you consult make any consultation before representing that aspect of the Kasena culture in the film?
  - a) Who did you consult?

10. How easy was it to represent the culture in film?
11. Which place do you have the largest market for your films?
12. What challenges do you face in marketing and production of the Kasena films?
13. How have the marketing of the films developed your life and that of Kasenas?
14. When offered a choice between English films and Kasem language films which do you prefer?
15. Give reasons for the choice made?
16. What general observation, comments, and suggestions to have about Kasem language films?

## **APPENDIX C:**

### **Interview Guide for the Soothsayers**

1. Please tell me about yourself?
2. How long have you been a Vogo (soothsayer)?
3. How did you ever come to be a Vogo?
4. In what ways are your services sought for in the community?
5. What common issues confront most of your clients?
6. Can someone consult the Vogo for evil purposes?
  - a) Can someone consult the Vogo to kill maim or destroy a fellow person or their property?
7. Before consultation what rituals or formalities is a client supposed to do?
  - a) What is the importance of such rituals?
  - b) What are the consultation items that a client brings?
8. What rituals or formalities are done by the client after the consultation?
  - a) Why is it necessary to observe such rituals?
9. What rituals or formalities are done by you before a client starts the consultation?
  - a) Is it accepted for a client to walk backwards into the divination hut?
  - b) What will happen if a client walks backwards into the divination hut?

10. What rituals or formalities are done by you after the consultation?

11. What are the traditional divination accoutrements?

12. What roles do they play and why are they important?

13. Do you paint any part of your body during consultation?

14. What is the costume of the Voro?

a) Give reasons why the Vogo Tu uses such a costumes?

## APPENDIX D:

### Participants Consent Form

#### PARTICIPANT CONSENT FORM

Name of Researcher- Joseph Aketema

Institute -University of Ghana

Dear Sir,

I am Joseph Aketema, a graduate student of Master of Philosophy - Media Arts, of the Department of Theatre Arts, School of Performing Arts, College of Humanities, University of Ghana, Legon. I am writing my thesis on the topic: *The Representation of the Kasena Culture through Kasem Language Films.*

Having participated in an interview about the representation of the Kasena Vogo practice on Tuesday, June 6, 2017, I write to seek your consent in using your full name and your opinion and views expressed about the traditional Vogo practice.

I hereby reiterate here again that, this work is purely for academic purposes and I do not intend to use the information you provided for any profit gain. Therefore, by signing your name, you forthwith grant me full permission to use all the views you expressed during the discussion in enhancing my study.

Thank you once again for your cooperation.

Name of Participant... AKURUGU... APAA BEM

Signature/ Thump.....  


Contact... 055 33 54 714.....

**PARTICIPANT CONSENT FORM**

Name of Researcher- Joseph Aketema

Institute -University of Ghana

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Thank you once again for your cooperation.

Name of Participant.....*AWIAH SABORO*.....

Signature/ Thump..........

Contact.....*024 0120888*.....

**PARTICIPANT CONSENT FORM**

Name of Researcher- Joseph Aketema

Institute -University of Ghana

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Thank you once again for your cooperation.

Name of Participant.....*Apana Chichuru.*

Signature/ Thump.....

Contact.....

**PARTICIPANT CONSENT FORM**

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Institute -University of Ghana

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Thank you once again for your cooperation.

Name of Participant. *Women Kozambana*

Signature/ Thump.....  


Contact.....

## PARTICIPANT CONSENT FORM

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Institute -University of Ghana

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Thank you once again for your cooperation.

Name of Participant... TANGWAMSE AVONOO

Signature/ Thump.....  


Contact... 0505965691

## PARTICIPANT CONSENT FORM

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Having participated in the focus group discussing on Thursday, January 19, 2017, I write to seek your consent in using your full name and your opinion and views expressed about the representation of the Kasena culture in the three Kasem language films namely *Kwara Jei* (2010), *Anemana* (2014), *Chira Kambia* (2015).

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Thank you once again for your cooperation.

Name of Participant.....Azubem Mary

Signature.....

Contact.....020278248963

**PARTICIPANT CONSENT FORM**

Name of Researcher- Joseph Aketema

Institute -University of Ghana

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Thank you once again for your cooperation.

Name of Participant..... PWOANWUJI JOSEPH WEGURI

Signature..... 

Contact..... 0244984303 / 0207933797

**PARTICIPANT CONSENT FORM**

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Institute -University of Ghana

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I hereby reiterate here again that, this work is purely for academic purposes and I do not intend to use the information you provided for any profit gain. Therefore, by signing your name, you forthwith grant me full permission to use all the views you expressed during the discussion in enhancing my study.

Thank you once again for your cooperation.

Name of Participant.....JOSEPH K. TANGWAN

Signature.....Tangwan

Contact.....0242564447 / 0200280825

**PARTICIPANT CONSENT FORM**

Name of Researcher- Joseph Aketema

Institute -University of Ghana

Dear Sir/ Madam,

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Thank you once again for your cooperation.

Name of Participant.. *Wilfred A. Akampuse*

Signature..... *[Handwritten Signature]* .....

Contact... *0501013253/0543752309*

**PARTICIPANT CONSENT FORM**

Name of Researcher- Joseph Aketema

Institute -University of Ghana

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Thank you once again for your cooperation.

Name of Participant..... *Felix Kondayire*  
Signature..... *Felix Kondayire*  
Contact..... *0246363999, 0200725842*