

**THE SOCIOLOGICAL ASPECTS OF THE APPELLATIONS IN THE  
ASOGLI STATE IN THE VOLTA REGION OF GHANA**

**BY**

**CHRISTOPH KWESI AMEKPORDI**



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## DECLARATION

I, Christoph Kwesi Amekpordi, declare that apart from the relevant ideas, quotations and references from both published and unpublished works of other people used in this work which have been duly acknowledged, this thesis is my original work and it has been submitted neither in part nor whole previously for the award of a degree anywhere else.

### Candidate

.....

Christoph Kwesi Amekpordi



.....

Date

### Supervisors

.....

Prof. Alan S. Duthie

.....

Date

.....

Rev. Dr. Alex K. Dzameshie

.....

Date

## DEDICATION

To my son, Kelvin Keli Amekpordi. Your coming into this world was really an inspiration. You are loved beyond imagination, son.



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## ABSTRACT

The African has been a creator, performer and a lover of verbal art for centuries. He has created and handed down (orally) to successive generations an organic library of songs, poems, narratives, proverbs, riddles and many other oral literary forms, such as appellations. In our African societies, appellations, as well as many other oral literary forms, do not only show their aesthetic qualities and values through their literary devices, but also they contribute in the moral up-bringing of the African child, and play some other important roles in the field of language and culture. The role of the genre in socio-cultural development of the people of Asogli cannot be overemphasized. In this study, I use Sapir-Whorf linguistic relativity hypothesis to discuss the sociolinguistics of the appellations in the Asogli state in the Volta region of Ghana. Appellations can be said to be identifying word or words, by which someone or something is called and classified and distinguished from others. The research is aimed, among others, at tracing the source of the appellations, bringing to light the meanings of the appellations, and find out the spiritual connotations and beliefs surrounding them. It is also important for this study to identify the place of these appellations in the lives of the people of the Asogli state. Having drawn data from all the traditional areas that make up the original Asogli state, I carefully analyzed it, using descriptive method. It has been found out that, most of the appellations emanated as a result of the Ashanti-Asogli war, and the migration of the Ewes from Dɔtse. Careful examination of the meanings of the appellations also revealed that, to some extent, the worldview of the Asoglis are influenced by their appellations. Again, I

observed that some of the appellations are backed by beliefs and the spirits of the land. The spirits are normally invoked by the mention of the appellations.

## CHAPTER ONE

### INTRODUCTION

#### 1.0 GENERAL INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND TO STUDY

The role of language in the development, conservation and transmission of culture from one generation to another, in our societies, cannot be over-emphasized. “The contexts in which we learn languages, the manner in which we use them, and the extent to which they help or hinder us in achieving our goals are culturally mediated” (Duranti 2001: 1). Sapir (1929b: 207 as cited in Foley) acknowledges the close relationship between language and culture and maintains that they are “inextricably related” so that you could not understand or separate one without adequate knowledge of the other. There is, therefore, the need to blend the study of language and culture in order to understand the vital roles that language plays in various societies.

We also need to go beyond the study of grammar of a language and venture into the world of social action where words are embedded and constitutive of specific cultural activities, such as story-telling, proverbs, drum language, use of appellations, among others,” in order to understand the roles that languages play in our lives (Duranti 2001: 1). According to Duranti, oral literature, which encompasses ethnography of speaking, is one of many disciplines dedicated to the study of the use of languages and language faculty in these and many other activities that make up the social life of individuals and communities.

Among the terms coined for oral literature are: unwritten “literature,” “orature,” “folk literature,” “primitive literature,” and “popular literature.” It is defined as “those utterances, whether spoken, or recited, whose composition and performance exhibit to an appreciable degree, the artistic characteristics of accurate observation, vivid imagination and ingenious expression” (Nandwa and Bukenya 1983: 1).

According to Sunkuli and Miruka (1990: vii), “the African has been a creator, performer and a lover of verbal art for centuries. He has created and handed down (orally) to successive generations an organic library of songs, poems, narratives, proverbs, riddles and many other oral literary forms” including appellations. As observed by Yankah (1983), “the inter-generic use in Africa of what is often called “praise” is largely attributable to the tremendous role strong appellations, often called “praise names,” play in African oral discourse in general and in poetry in particular.” Appellations, as well as many other oral literary forms, do not only contribute to forging and sustaining our cultural practices and social structures, but also they play some other important roles in the study of linguistics. Besides being an expression of the soul of the African, these poems (appellations) testify to his oral craftsmanship.

In our Ghanaian society, every ethnic group has its own appellations. These appellations can be said to be identifying word or words, by which someone or something is called and classified and distinguished from others (Colins 2002). “They are praise names given to both human and supernatural beings, in order to stress their royalties and their aristocratic powers, as well as their achievements as warriors, kings, chiefs, hunters, leaders and other dignitaries in societies”

(Finnegan 1970: 111). This way, the people of Asogli state are identified and praised with the following words (appellations):

<i>Ho ka Akorli, wo meka Hoawo tɔ o</i>	Ho delves into others' secrets but others cannot delve into Ho's secrets.
<i>Hoawoe! Asorgliawoe! Ewedukɔwoe!</i>	The people of Ho, the people of Asogli, the Ewe citizens.
<i>Ɖɔtsɛawofe Tenu, Asorgliawo fe hlɔkui</i>	The begotten son of Ɖɔtsɛ, the only son of Asogli
<i>Hoɔmekɔwo fe vledoe</i>	He is the precious son Ho that cannot be carried
<i>Agbogbomefia, Fiaga gbɔ loo!</i>	The great king of Agbogbome is coming.
<i>Asor Ladza, Dra Dzo Sika be womaka yetɔ o</i>	Asor Ladza, with the fire of gold says they can never delve into his secrets
<i>Okrebekuku, Wotɔe kpɔ, Wotsɔe ɔoa nyi</i>	Okrebekuku, they tried him, but did nothing to him
<i>Omlintimlim, Edo le kɔme, kɔ gba</i>	You roll me, but you cannot, His presence fortifies the ant hill.

Apart from the fact that appellation motivates our leaders, especially chiefs and kings, to move ahead and fight for the good of the society, it also enriches our stock of vocabulary, communicative competence, and contributes to eloquence, as well as, act of public speaking (Finnegan 1970).

However, the predominant communication system in Ghana is the spoken one, not the written language. Therefore, there is the need for much attention to be paid to these appellations, as well as other literary oral/verbal forms, so that we can use the right language to inculcate in our generations the valuable culture of our land. This is to say, once again, that “language and culture are inextricably interwoven.”

It is usually the case that the distinctive sounds that constitute the words and phrases of a particular language, used to derive “appellations” for ethnic groups and other objects in the world of that particular ethnic group or society, have unique meanings, not shared by other ethnic groups. Therefore, in this work, we shall get to know about the culture and perception of the people of Asogli state in the Volta Region of Ghana through the use of appellations in this state.

Even though the study discusses the appellations of the entire Asogli state, much attention will be paid to Ho, because of its status as the paramountcy of the four traditional set-ups that constitute the Asogli state.

### **1.1 ETHNOGRAPHIC BACKGROUND OF THE PEOPLE OF ASOGLI**

The Asogli state is made up of four main traditional set-ups known as *Akoefe*, *Takla*, *Kpenoe* and *Ho*, with the paramountcy at *Ho*. The Asogli people, like most Ewe speaking people, trace their origin from a place called *Abyssinia* which is now *Ethiopia* (Brown 2008: 19). They migrated with other Ewes from *Abyssinia* to *Oyo* in *Yorubaland*, *Western Nigeria*. From *Oyo*, they went to *Ketu* in *Dahomey* (now *Benin*) before settling at *Dɔtsɛ* in present day *Republic of Togo*, in about the

12<sup>th</sup> century. At Dɔtsɛ, the Ewes were ruled by a tyrant, King Agorkorli whose sadistic rule is reported in the historical records of all Ewes (Brown 2008).

The Asoglis naturally detested the rule of King Agorkorli and, under the leadership of Togbe Kakla, they broke through a portion of a fortified wall for all Ewes to escape. Togbe Kakla and his people broke away from the larger Ewe group to settle at Komedzrale, near what is now Ho. At Komedzrale, the Asoglis engaged in subsistence farming and hunting.

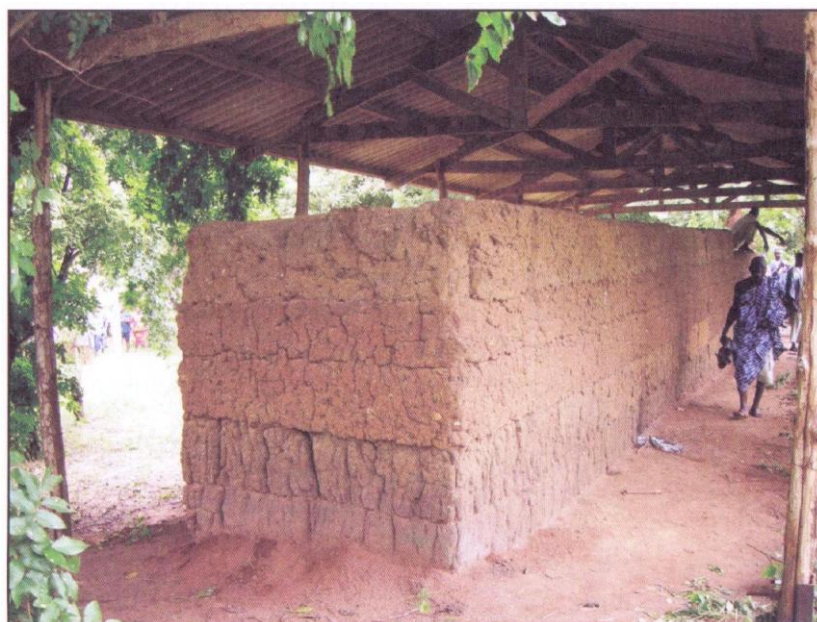


Figure 1: Part of the remains of the wall of the ancient city of Dɔtsɛ, Togo.

Oral history has it that Togbe Kakla had three sons and a daughter. These were Akoe, Letsu, Asor and Esa. As Komedzrale lands gradually lost their fertility and could no longer support any meaningful economic activity and the growing population, the Asoglis migrated further. The descendants of Akoe and Letsu founded Akoeƒe and Kpenoe, and later, Takla. The descendants of Asor settled at

the present day Ho after a brief sojourn at Hofedo. The only daughter of Togbe Kakla, Esa, migrated and settled at present day Saviefe, which lies north of Ho.

The Asogli state council, the traditional ruling council, comprises the Agbogbomefia, Togbe Afede XIV, who is the President, the paramount chiefs of Akoeffe, Kpenoe and Takla, and the four divisional chiefs of Ho.

### **1.1.0 The Asogli state in the Ho Municipality**

The Asogli state is located in the Ho Municipality in the Volta region of Ghana. Ho Municipality lies between latitude  $6^{\circ} 20' 7''$  N and  $6^{\circ} 55' 5''$  N and Longitudes  $0^{\circ} 12' 7''$  E and  $0^{\circ} 53' 5''$  E and covers an area of 2.660 sq km (Gadagoe 2009). According to Gadagoe, the Asogli state is the largest single geographical unit in the Municipal Assembly. Ho, which is the seat of the paramountcy of the Asogli state, happens to be the capital of the Municipality, as well as the capital of the region.

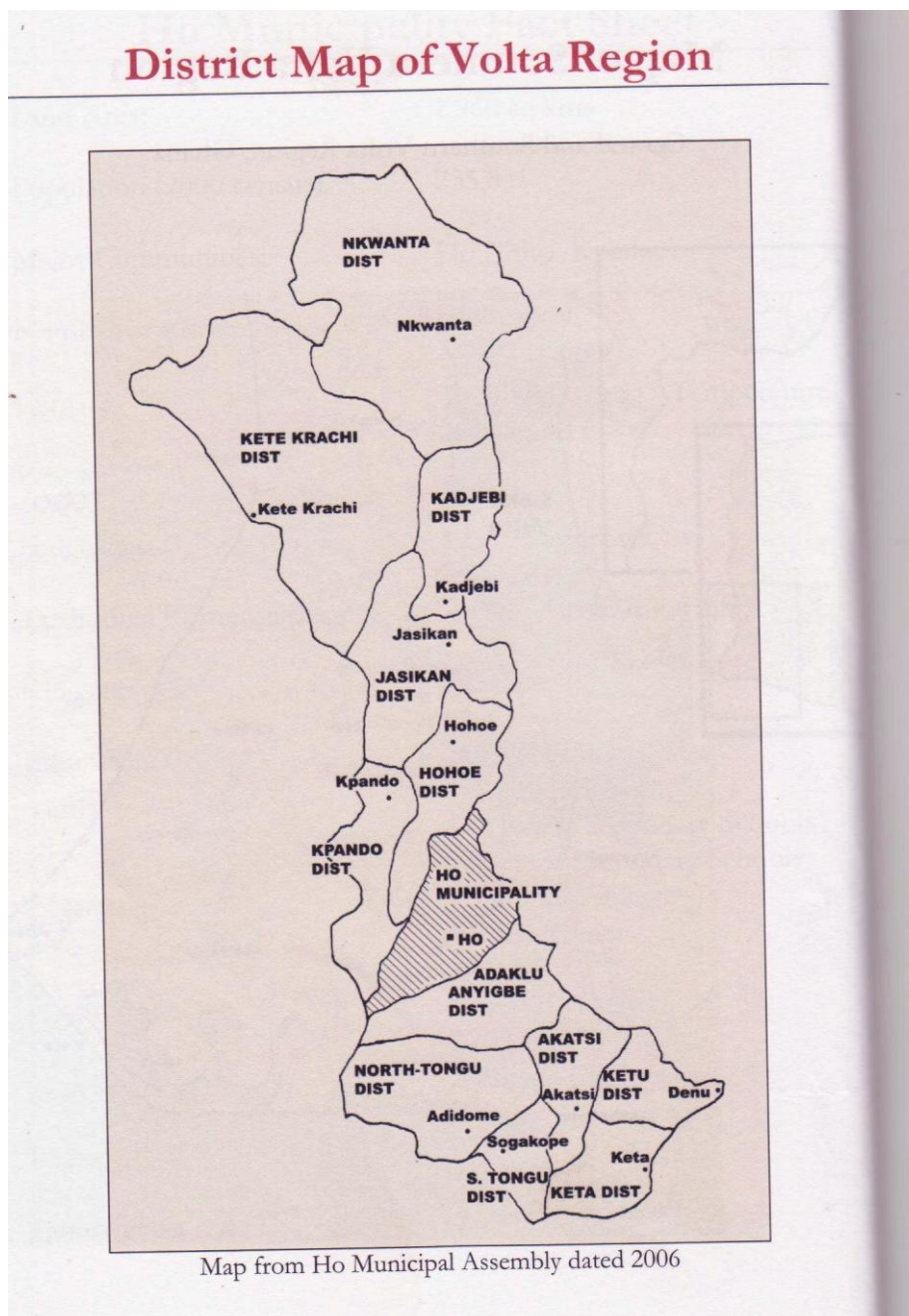


Figure 2: Map of Volta region showing Ho municipality (shaded area)

Ho is also the largest urban centre in both the Municipality and the region. Out of the total of about 200,000 population of the Municipality, the Asogli state has a

total population of 66,935 (2000 population census), making it the highest populated in the Municipality.

The Asogli state has a modified type of equatorial climate. There are two definitely defined seasons: a dry season, from about November to March and a rainy season peak, from March to July (major season) and from September to November (minor season).

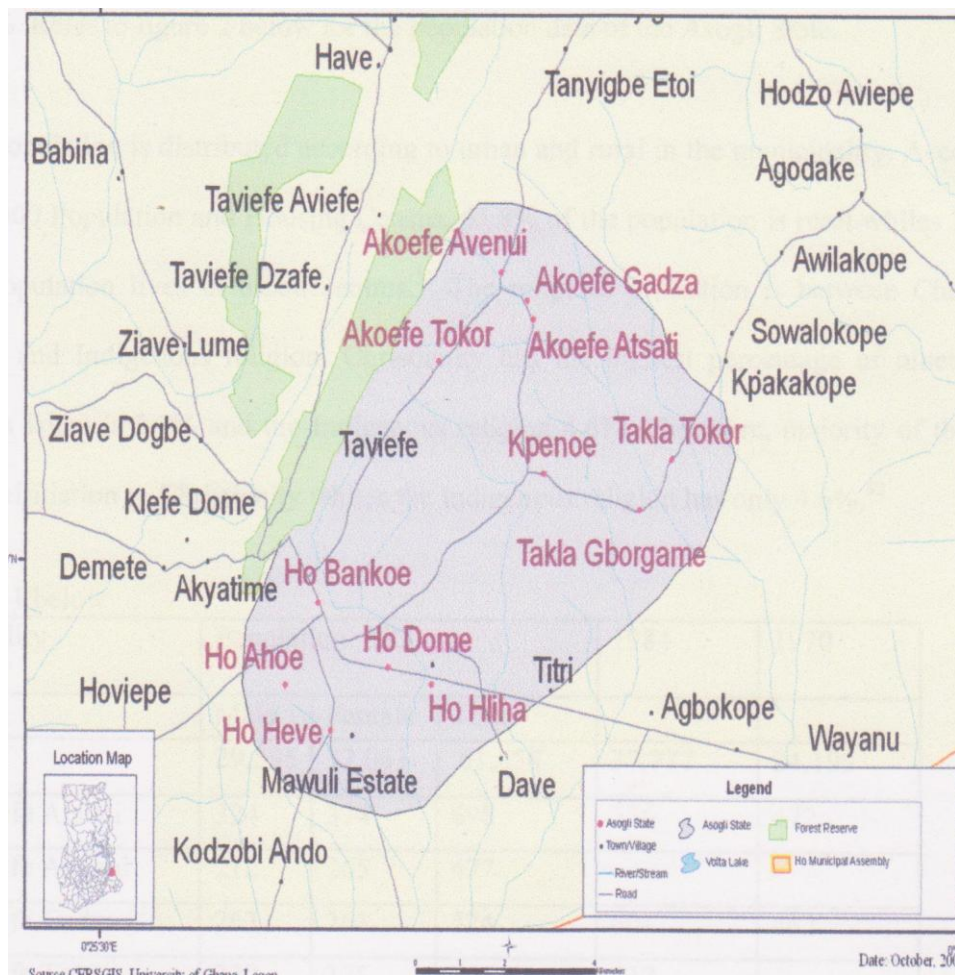


Figure 3: Map showing the various communities in the Asogli state

### 1.1.1 Socio-economic activities

The major economic activity of the people of the Asogli state is farming. About 65% of the population is engaged in agriculture (2004 Housing and Population Census). The majority of the Asoglis are mainly farmers who depend on the land for their living. Some of the crops cultivated are yam, maize, cassava, cereals, oil palm, plantain and cocoyam, which are normally cultivated in a smaller scale. During the dry seasons when farming activities stop, some of them also go on hunting. Among the animals hunted are grasscutter, antelope, etc. Some of the Asoglis are also traders, carpenters, seamstresses and masons.

In addition, the people of the Asogli state have various indigenous social activities such as drumming and dancing. The most popular drum and dance performed includes *bɔbɔbɔ*, *zigi*, *gabaɖa*. All these dances are recreational which are also performed during occasions like funerals, chieftaincy ceremonies, festivals and others like naming ceremonies, parties, end of apprenticeship ceremonies etc. Both the young and old perform these dances. The various divisions in the state have their various drumming groups, which sometimes perform in competition during certain occasions. Other communal activities in the form of communal labour also help the Asoglis to tidy their environments. These include clearing the roads and streams, weeding the cemetery, cleaning the town and several other activities.

### 1.1.2 The Asogli at war

It is believed that the *Hoawo* ‘the people of Ho’ and, for that matter, the Asoglis, were once dominated by the Akwamus. Therefore, the *Hoawo* were paying tribute with human beings to the chief of Akwamu, Nana Akomu Akoto (Gadagoe 2009: 47). On one occasion, the chief of Ho refused to honour their tribute as usual. This resulted into war between the Asoglis and the Akwamus. Togbe Howusu of Ho-Dome, a great warrior, therefore led the Asoglis to defeat the Akwamus in 1833.

As a result of the defeat suffered, the Akwamus joined forces with the Ashantis in battle with the Asoglis in 1869. On the 26<sup>th</sup> June 1869, the Ashantis and their ally, the Akwamus, supported by the Anlos and the Adaklus (Adaklu-Waya) attacked Ho, and for that matter the Asogli state, in the evening. Many lives and properties were lost and some of the Asogli people had to seek refuge in the neighbouring communities like Sokode, Agortime, Matse and Klefe for safety.

When the war became more serious, these neighbouring towns came to the aid of the Asoglis, and the Ashantis were driven away. A few Ashantis were therefore captured and made to serve in the chief’s palace. As a result, Akan language started finding its way into the language of the Asoglis (Mama Agblatsu: P.C.). This, among others, might account for the reason why some of the appellations are in Akan language.

The evening of the Ashanti war became a taboo for the Asoglis, and as a result, the oath, *Hoawo fe fie* ‘the evening of the people of Ho’ was derived by the Asoglis.

### 1.1.3 Beliefs and Religion

In the Asogli state, the traditional concepts are influenced mainly by traditional religion, which combines a belief in a creator, *mawuga* ‘big god’(God), with beliefs in various spirits, including ancestral ones and those of living persons that could cause or prevent good and ill fortunes. Therefore, the Asoglis, as well as all other Ewe groups, would first of all recognize the presence of *mawuga* ‘God’ before *mawuviwo* ‘the lesser gods,’ in their traditional prayers. Morphologically, *mawu* of *mawuga* refers to ‘god’ as *ga* refers to ‘big,’ making it ‘big god’ which refers to God. The *viwo* in *mawuviwo* is made up of *vi* ‘small or less’ and *wo* ‘PLU MARKER,’ therefore *mawuviwo* ‘small or lesser gods.’ *Mawuga* is normally called upon with the following appellations: *Mawu Sogbolisa* ‘God the Father,’ *Mawu Kitikata* ‘God, the source of life through the rays of the sun,’ *Mawu Aqanuto* ‘the Blessed Trinity who is Omnipotent, Omnipresent and Omniscient’ (Mamattah ND: 31).

### 1.1.4 The Yam festival of the Asoglis

*Tezã* ‘Yam festival,’ celebrated annually in September / October, is the main traditional festival of the people of the Asogli state. Yam is called *te*, while festival is *azã* in Ewe language. Therefore, *Te azã*, which has become *tezã*, literally means ‘yam festival.’

Also, the word *ete* literally means ‘it is swollen.’ According to Brown (2008), oral history has it that a hunter on his normal hunting expedition discovered the crop in

the forest. It was during the famine period, but instead of taking his newly discovered tuber home, he decided to hide it in the soil for use some other time. When he later went back for it, to his dismay, the tuber has germinated and grown bigger. Therefore, the hunter looked at the tuber and said: *ete* 'it is swollen.' This is how the cultivation of yam started.

As a result, the yam festival is celebrated annually as thanksgiving to God, and also to the gods and ancestors for a bumper harvest, and as an occasion to offer prayers for good health and prosperity for all.

#### **1.1.5 The Asoglis and their language.**

The people of Asogli state, just like all other Ewe groups, speak Ewe language. The three main dialects of Ewe spoken in Ghana are: Aɲlɔ, Uedome and Tɔɲu. Aɲlɔ and Tɔɲu are spoken in the southern part of the Volta Region, with the Aɲlɔ spoken along the coast, and Tɔɲu, along and around river Volta. Uedome dialect is spoken in the central and some part of northern Volta. The people of Asogli state speak uedome (Ho dialect) of the Ewe language.

### **1.2 STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM**

As rightly observed by Abarry (1994), oral literature of Africa is a subject which is attracting increasing attention in recent times. In Ghana, the intellectual, educational and artistic values of oral literature have been confirmed in the

contemporary writings of scholars like Kwabena Nketia, C.A. Akrofi, Ayikoe Armah, Kofi Awoonor, Kwesi Yankah, Kofi Anyidoho, Kofi Agyekum, etc. According to Abarry, in spite of the significance of the literature and its recognition as an academic discipline, evidenced by the organization of a whole national conference on it at the University of Ghana in 1988, with the introduction of foreign literature and writings, the indigenous oral literature, which was taught through the various genres (appellations, libations, proverbs, funeral dirges, drum languages, folktales and folk songs etc), was still derogatively described as barbaric, primitive, uncivilized.

Even though the people of Asogli state showcase a lot of these literary forms during cultural activities like festivals, enstoolments, funerals etc, some of them still give this genre of oral literature (appellations) such negative labels. Sometimes too, people ignorantly regard appellation messages as being 'juju' therefore, take themselves out of these practices. A study of the literature on appellations also revealed that the artistic, imaginative and creative expression of appellations of this state have not been given any treatment by authors. Therefore, the significance of this literary form, such as enriching our stock of vocabulary, among others, is gradually being lost on the generations of the Asogli state and Ghanaians as a whole. There is therefore the need to conduct a study, in order to document the appellations in the Asogli state.

Also, Ho, which is the seat of the Asogli state, and for that matter a place where one would expect to witness the cultural practices of the Asogli state in their original status, can be described as a place full of people with different socio-

cultural backgrounds (the Tɔŋus, the Aŋlɔs, the Anagos from Nigeria, the Dogbos from Togo, the Awudomes, etc), because of its status as the regional capital. This has affected the language use in appellations to a large extent.

According to Mama Agblatsu, the queen mother of Ho-Bankoe, the Asante and Akwamu war with the Ewes also, to a great extent, had influence on the appellations in the Asogli state. This also accounts for the Akan names, as most of the family names of Dome (one of the divisional areas of Ho) are Dikro, Agyemang, Kumi, Owusu from Ho, which becomes Howusu etc. This emergence of other cultures on Asogli land has affected the language of the people, especially their appellations. This would also account for the reason why some of these appellations are in the Akan language and other dialects of the Ewe language, quite different from the Ho dialect. For example, *omlimtimi* is an adulterated Ewe-Akan word which stands for: *omlim*, Ewe word meaning ‘you roll me,’ *timi* is from the Akan word *wo ntumi*, meaning ‘you cannot.’ Therefore, *omlimtimi* ‘you roll me but you cannot do anything.’ There is therefore the need to document these literary forms of the Asogli state so that their originality, which seems to be vulnerable, would be saved.

### **1.3 AIMS AND OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY**

The study seeks to:

- document the appellations in the Asogli state

- identify the place of appellations in the lives of the people of the Asogli state.
- bring to light the meanings of these appellations, as well as the beliefs and spiritual connotations surrounding these appellations.
- unearth the literary devices inherent in the appellations.
- find out the origin of the appellations

#### **1.4 SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY**

The research about appellations of the Asogli state will uncover the history, structure, significance, interpretation and meaning in these appellations, for foreigners to have knowledge about the people of Asogli state. This will go further to foster a harmonious co-existence between foreigners and other Ghanaians on one part, and the people of the Asogli state on the other part.

This work would also add to the number of studies about the Ewe language and literature on oral literature, as well as ethnography of speaking, conducted by some scholars like Agyekum (2006), Anyidoho (1991), Finnegan (1970), Nketia (1971 and 1974), Yankah (1983), etc.

The study will, therefore, serve as a direction of reascent energy towards the promotion and appreciation of age-old oral traditions, especially amongst the people of the Asogli state. As rightly observed by Sunkuli and Miruka (1990: vii), “today, Africa is a continent actively rediscovering herself after a debilitating colonial experience.”

## **1.5 RESEARCH QUESTIONS**

- What is the place of appellations in the lives of the people of Asogli state?
- Is there any spiritual connotation or belief surrounding the appellations of this state?
- To what extent do the meanings of the appellations reveal the worldview of the people of Asogli state?
- What is the history behind the appellations of Asogli state?
- To what extent do appellations really move people into action?

## **1.6 ORGANIZATION OF WORK**

The work consists of six chapters. Chapter one, which is basically the introductory part, takes care of general introduction, ethnographic background of the Asogli state, statement of the problem, aims and objectives, research questions, significance of study and organization of work. Chapter two consists of theoretical framework and method/source of data, while in chapter three, I review some works which are related to this study. In chapter four, I analyze the data on the social history of appellations in the Asogli state, classification and meanings of the appellations (appellations of the state, spirits, clans and families, social and personal appellations, etc.). Chapter five presents the sociolinguistic analysis of the appellations. This includes the form and style, composers and reciters, ethnographic context in which these appellations are used, their traditional and

contemporary significance to the development of the Asogli states, and finally, the language and instrument used in reciting these appellations. The last chapter, which is chapter six, contains the summary of the findings, recommendations and conclusion.

## CHAPTER TWO

### THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK AND METHODOLOGY

#### 2.1 Theoretical Framework

##### 2.1.1 Introduction

There are a lot of languages in the world, and each is quite different from many of the others. Some scholars believe that, due to differences in languages, each language has a worldview which is different from the other. Therefore, speakers of different languages think about the world in quite different ways. Foley (1997: 193-194) observes that “as each language differs from any other, the resulting shape of the experienced world is altered.”

There is also a relationship between language and culture. According to Foley, “Humboldt believed that a nation’s and culture’s mental quality determines the sort of language its people have” (p. 194). How people think and how they ultimately speak is determined to some extent by their culture. The assignment of a meaning to a message concerns human perception about the relation between symbols and their referents within a particular culture (Agyekum 2006).

##### 2.1.2 Linguistic Relativity and the Sapir-Whorf Hypothesis

The framework for this work – Linguistic Relativity, also known as Sapir-Whorf hypothesis, came to prominence through the work of Edward Sapir and his student, Benjamin Lee Whorf. According to Whorf:

“The linguistic relativity principle.....means, in formal terms, that users of markedly different grammars are pointed by their grammars toward different types of observations and different evaluations of externally similar acts of observation, and hence are not equivalent as observers but must arrive at somewhat different views of the world”

(Whorf 1956: 221, as cited in Foley 1997: 192).

Whorf means to say that the language we speak has influence on our worldview and how we look at things and perceive them. Therefore, speakers of different languages may see the same thing, but comment on it differently. Linguistic Relativity talks about the fact that the structure and grammar of a language influence how its speakers view the world. That is to say, although there are universals in languages, which serve to bridge up the differences, yet each language comments on experience in different language-specific ways.

It is the degree to which language influences human thought and meanings. It says that, in human thought, language intervenes between the symbols and the ideas to which the symbols refer. Since people live in different intellectual, physical, cultural and geographical areas, they would naturally express themselves differently to satisfy their socio-cultural needs. As observed by Tuite and Jourdan (2006), “the characteristics of one’s language can affect other aspects of life and must be taken into account.”

### **2.1.3 Historical Background of Linguistic Relativity**

Linguistic Relativity is demonstrated when Sapir and Whorf conducted an extensive study on Hopi culture. They compared the Hopis with the Western European languages, referred to as Standard Average European (SAE). The Hopis are an American Indian tribe of about ten thousand people located in a fairly isolated geographical area in northeast Arizona whose culture can be traced back over two millennia (Foley 1997).

According to Foley, the Hopis see the world as essentially an ongoing set of processes; objects and events are not discrete and countable, and time is not apportioned into fixed segments so that certain things recur e.g. minutes, mornings and days. The grammatical categories of Hopi provide a 'process' orientation toward the world, while the Standard Average European (SAE) group of languages have categories of a fixed orientation toward time and space. SAE, therefore, not only objectify reality in certain ways but even distinguish between things that must be counted and those that need not be counted.

SAE considers time of occurrence, while with the Hopi, what is important is whether an event can be warranted to have occurred, to be occurring, or expected to occur. Whorf believed that these differences lead speakers of Hopi and SAE to view the world differently. The different languages have different obligatory grammatical categories so that every time a speaker of Hopi or SAE says something he or she must make certain observations about how the world is structured because of the structure of the language each speaks.

In this view, the language provides a filter of reality for its users. It determines how speakers perceive and organize the world around them, both the natural world and the social world. Consequently, the language you speak helps to form your worldview.

In the same way, the sounds, words and the structure of the appellations of the Asogli state will represent their linguistic signs (which is their language), and the socio-cultural meanings of these appellations (language) would to a large extent give them a worldview, perception and thought. Again, since these appellations differ from that of other societies in diverse ways, societies would view the world differently.

In this case, we see how language reflects the mindset or views of a particular ethnic group. For Agyekum (2006: 210), “language is a microscope that travels beyond what is expressed and settles on what is practiced in the real socio-cultural world.” It is clear then, that the habitual use of a particular language by a group of people shows their cultural worldview and belief system. In appellations, praise names are normally given to individuals, societies, etc. This can be considered as a universal practice, but how the names are given, the practice and rituals involved, and the interpretations attached to the names, differ from society to society, and from culture to culture (Agyekum 2006).

#### **2.1.4 Criticism against Linguistic Relativity**

However, some scholars in the field of linguistics have leveled the following criticisms against Linguistic Relativity:

1. That people with different socio-cultural backgrounds speak languages that have many or the same characteristics e. g. Hungarians, Finns, and Samoyeds of Northern Siberia.
2. People who speak languages with very different structures often share much the same cultures as Germans, Hungarians, etc.
3. That it would be impossible to describe certain things in a particular language because that language lacks the necessary resources is only partially valid at best. It is assumed that all languages possess the resources that any speaker might require to say anything that he or she might want to say in that language.
4. Languages may develop terminologies for modern developments in science and technology if the need arises. No society has rejected such modern advances as TV, radio, computers, e-mails, etc.

In spite of all these criticisms, it is widely accepted that language and culture of a society may to a large extent influence the worldview and thoughts, because some concepts are more codable than others because of their cultural importance.

This framework has demonstrated the place of language in cultural practices. It also shows how these practices and the language itself influence the thought of a

particular society. I therefore support the claim of Sapir and Whorf that the worldview and belief system of a particular society is to some extent influenced by the continuous use of a particular structure of the language of that society. In other words, language and culture of an ethnic group reflect the mindset of that group.

## **2.2 SOURCES OF DATA AND METHODOLOGY**

I agree with Owusu (2002) that oral literature is hardly to be found in books, and that, appellations by word of mouth and played on drums and other wind instruments are still being used at traditional levels.

Therefore, the major sources of data collection for this work are through observations and interviews. Interviews are arranged with the chiefs and elders, bards, chief priests, king makers, queen mothers, stool fathers, heads of clans and families and other custodians of the land in all the four main traditional areas (Akoefe, Kpenoe, Takla and Ho) that constitute the Asogli state. Ho has five divisions (Dome, Ahoe, Heve, Hliha and Bankoe) because of its size. All these divisions are visited with the same kind of interviews.

In almost all the traditional areas and the various divisions visited, the interviewees prefer to be seen as a group rather than individually. This is to avoid any doubt about the data given. They believe that as they sit as a group, it is easy to correct someone who seems to be giving wrong data, or put on track people who may forget some aspects of the story. Sometimes, I am directed to some other people who have knowledge about certain appellations, but are not present at the

group seating when need arises. Two seatings for two and half hours per seating are made possible. The researcher makes a list of interview questions and supplies the respondents in all the traditional areas and the various divisions in the Asogli state with copies ahead of the interview day. Different days for interview are scheduled with the various groups (Akoefe, Kpenoe, Takla and Ho) of respondents as mentioned earlier. Apart from Ho where the respondents are more or less seen on individual base, and where it takes me five weeks to get the respondents interviewed, the rest of the traditional areas are met in groups within two weeks. At the interview, the researcher asks the interview questions and respondents provide the answers. Probing or follow-up questions are asked for clarifications.

Data is also collected from Mr Xedagbi Vidzreku, the presenter of the programme: *ele afe le gbe* ‘it is at home and abroad’ – a programme which discusses the use of appellations on Volta Star radio at Ho.

With permission from the interviewees, voice recorder is used to record everything that transpires during the interviews. In order to analyze the data collected, the voice recorder is later connected to a bigger loud speaker, and every section of the interview is played over and over until I am satisfied.

In addition to the interview, some observations are made at funerals, Asogli Yam festival and durbars, where some of these appellations are used. Here, there is this opportunity, for instance, to watch the reactions of the subjects as they are being praised, and also observe some of the instruments used in transmitting appellation messages. Some recordings are also done following permission from the

appropriate quarters. My intuition as a speaker of Ewe language is very helpful in understanding responses and explanations from informants (interviewees). I am already familiar with some of the cultural practices of the Asoglis that call for the use of appellations. This also helps to understand why the Asoglis have certain perceptions, thoughts and views about certain things in the world.

Descriptive research method is used in the analysis and interpretation of the data collected.

## **CHAPTER THREE**

### **LITERATURE REVIEW**

In this chapter, I review some of the studies which are related to this work.

Finnegan (1970) discusses panegyric (praise poetry) with particular reference to the Bantus of South Africa. In her submission, she states that praises are not directed to only individuals, but also to clans, animals, inanimate objects and supernatural beings. According to Finnegan, as much as special bards create and perform praise poems, the subject himself can also do so. She cited an example where all men are expected to have some skills in the creation and performance of self-praise in Sotho, and the composition of formalized praise poetry is expected to be within the capacity of noblemen in Ankole. Reference is also made to the ethnographic context in which these praise poems are normally used. This includes preparation towards war, during festival, during installation ceremonies, recognition and reaffirmation of a man's status, before a formal address is given, etc. Finnegan also observes some of the significance of these poems as: a source for recording history, development of act of public speaking, literary and artistic significance.

Finnegan identifies that most of the praise poems use more or less obscure and allusive style. Archaic and lofty language, which often make reference to historical events or people are often used. Frequent in the style and language is the comparison to animals such as lions, rhinoceros, elephant, etc, and to natural phenomena such as storm, rock, downpour of rain etc.

Agbedor (1996) identifies that Ewe libation prayer often begins with invocation. This is said to have been accompanied by adoration, in the form of pronouncement of “praise appellations” to the Supreme Being, the minor deities and the ancestral spirits. According to him, the appellations in the libation prayer do not only depict certain attributes and qualities of these deities and spirits, but also, they mention some of their important feats or wonderful achievements. The logic is to shower praise on spirits and deities in order to get their pleasure and attention. For example, *Kitikata* ‘the greatest,’ is an ideophone which is used to praise the Supreme Being. It goes this way:

a. *MAWU KITIKATA, adanuwɔɔ,*

*Zãdo wonli asi ɲli afɔ.*

(Great God, Master Craftsman,

Who, at night, moulds the hands and feet)

b. *AZADAGLI*

(The great stone that breaks all other stones)

It is also important to know that the libation prayer is normally performed by the followers of traditional religion who are very eloquent, and who are believed to be endowed by the gods themselves. These performers vary their style of language “depending on their intricacies of the language.” The language is mostly full of idiomatic expressions and proverbs.

Agbedor also mentions a category of personal names. He reports that some people often refer to this category of personal names as praise appellations. These are names normally taken by a person himself in adulthood, or given to children in

memory of a deceased family member who had that name. For example, someone is born soon after the death of a family member may be called *Ametefe*, literally means ‘in place of a person.’ Some of these names are normally invoked when people meet at drinking bars, hence the label *ahanonukɔwo* ‘drinking names.’

Agyekum (2006), in his study about Akan names, also looked at the appellations of Akan birthday names and explains that people born on particular days are supposed to exhibit the characteristics or attributes and philosophy associated with the days. For example, a Monday-born is supposed to be peaceful and calm, while a Friday born is a wanderer and an adventurer. According to him, both female and male have the same forms of the same names because they are all derived from the same source, i.e. the deity of the particular day.

Nketia (1971) refers to surrogate language as a substitute verbal language, usually played on drums and certain other wind musical instruments such as horns, gongs and xylophones, whistling, etc. He later identifies four different forms of surrogate language in Akan as: *kaseɛbɔ* ‘information,’ *anyaneanyane* ‘invocation,’ *yampeaa* ‘panegyric, historical poems, dirges,’ and *abɔbuo* ‘proverbs, innuendoes’ (Nketia 1974). According to Nketia, personal names and panegyrics, which are also known as appellations, are usually long and elaborate and they make reference to genealogy. It is now clear in this context that Nketia deals extensively with the role played by surrogates in transmitting appellation messages in our traditional set-ups. That is to say, appellations are played on surrogates, such as drums and other wind instruments.

Nketia (1978) later provides us with a good number of examples of praise names, which he refers to in Akan as *apaeε*, and which is delivered by the word of mouth.

However, there is nothing done in Asogli appellations, an area which this work seems to delve into.

Owusu (2002) found out that most Akan chiefs obtain their appellations from previously occupied stools by their predecessors who originally obtained their appellations from war. He asserts that, though war has currently reduced, it is still the main source through which Akan chiefs obtain their appellations. According to Owusu, some appellations reveal the historical knowledge of a group of people, and so such appellations help the people to know their past.

Owusu indicated that Akan appellation can be subjected to lexical analysis. For example, *Kyeretwie* is a lexical item which is also an agentive noun depicting ‘a person who can catch the leopard alive.’ Analysis also reveals that the formation of the appellations brings about a word formation device that enables the speaker of the Akan to form nominal compounds out of phrases and clauses. For example, *ɔko a ɔforo boɔ* becomes *Ɔkoforoboɔ* ‘he fights to climb a rock’ (simply means a victor). Anyidoho (1991:70, as cited by Owusu) also observes that “the use of appellations is mainly intended to magnify and to elevate the status in society of the person to whom they are addressed.”

Chapman (1999) also conducts a study on praise poems with particular reference to the use of appellations in the court of Shaka and a trade union rally in South Africa. Having considered both the traditional and contemporary roles of praise

poems, Chapman observes that, whatever the skills of the oratory of the praise poetry, contemporary royal praises would be regarded as politically compromised by the city-based. With reference to Alfred Temba Qabula's praise poem, addressing FOSATU (Federation of South Africa Trade Union), Chapman realizes that it is difficult to know whether appellation "traditional" is adequate, or even accurate. He also argues that royal praising is not only about the power of chieftaincy, but also, the insecurity and mobility of change. To him, when a praise poem is confined to eulogies of powerful kings, then its manifold social significance is limited. Some of the social significance of praise poems or appellations, Chapman identifies are: encouraging the warrior in battle, medium of communication between the living and the ancestors, performing invocation. He insists that praises of past kings may not be simply commemorative, but invocative. Praise poem can also be seen as a socially acceptable way of giving public expression to anger, grief or joy.

Okpewho (1992) contributes immensely to the place of tone instrument in transmitting appellation messages. The poetry of these instruments has a place in various facets of the social life of the communities where they are found. Horns and flutes, for example, are used for hailing personalities of certain occasions. He observes that in trying to recite the appellations, the tone instruments imitate the sounds of what is being said by the mouth. This is because our African languages have two primary tones (low-high), and these instruments also happen to have two primary tones. Reference is made to Asaba Igbo in Nigeria where a chief would salute another chief with the soprano-pitch.

Okpewho comments on styles of expression utilized by tone instruments in their statements. “It is indeed impressive and artistic by the poetic dexterity with which these instruments bend the human resource that they have borrowed” (page 261). These resources include the figurative color of praise names given to objects and actions, the emphatic and rhythmic use of repetition, and the tremendous sense of structural balance thereby achieved.

Agozie (2000) identifies the appellations associated with the titles of *Yeve* cult among the people of Ueta in the Volta region. According to Agozie, the cult titles of *Yeve* are also used as proper names. He says there are certain appellations associated with these offices and names, and that these appellations indicate certain things that the office holder must do or not do. For example, an appellation about the priest says:

<i>Midawo me q̄ua tsiami o.</i>	1
<i>Katidawo kple etɔwo fe dɔe.</i>	2
The priest cannot be a linguist.	1
This is the work of Katidawo and others.	2

This appellation, according to Agozie, brings the chain of command in the cult house. At meetings, it is the *Katidawo* and others who serve as an orator. It is really odd for the priest to take up such a duty.

Agozie also identifies the appellations of the various ritual objects that are used during the initiation rites and cult festive occasions. For example, about *agbayiza* ‘the metal rattle’: *agbayiza, eq̄o do menya hohom o* ‘the metal rattle is thrust into the ground and cannot be pulled out.’ *Agbayiza* is believed to give some potent

cultic power. A cult male member boasting of being soaked with esoteric power, can command his rattle to get stuck in the ground and expects a challenger to pull it out. It may happen that no challenger may pull it out, thus giving cause to this appellation.

Agozie's work is relevant to this study because it reinforces one of the objectives of the study which talks about the spiritual connotations of appellations. This has confirmed the fact that some appellations have spiritual connotations and are exclusively owned by cult members. Research about Asogli appellations would add to Agozie's work and bring out all other connotations, as well as the sociolinguistic features embedded in appellations.

Swa-Kabamba (1997) acknowledges the place of *Mbímbi*, a panegyric dynastic poem, in the court of the *kyáámbou*, the king of Bayaka. This genre is said to have been invested with an important socio-cultural signification in the heart of the society that practices it. *Mbímbi*, according to Swa-Kabamba, is an exclusive praise poem which the people use to invoke the founding ancestors and their high deeds, the historic events, the places where these events took place, and the persons said to be associated with them. The creators of this type of poem, who reside in the chief's court, are so crafty and impressive that they are considered to be true "poet-creators" who give birth to all kinds of words. The form, style and language use in *mbímbi* is so unique that no other praise poem can be compared with it. It is, therefore, generally accepted by all that *Mbímbi* distinguishes itself from all other praise poems in the Yaka society.

It is also identified by Swa-Kabamba that the power in *mbíímbi* can make and unmake, “for here, the art of the word is at the service of power” (page 144). Swa-Kabamba goes ahead and describes the genre (*Mbíímbi*) as follows:

*Mbíímbi* is executed solo, sometimes sung in a chanting tone, sometimes declaimed in a tone, establishing its rhythm through the accompaniment of the indispensable of *bisáánzi*. During solemn festivities, the cattle bells *maskila*, and the wood drum, *móóndo*, join this accompaniment ... It is a political discourse, and more precisely, an exaltation of political power for the singer, this power is indeed personified by the founding ancestors of the kingdom of Yaka, the great Lunda conqueror Mu-Phutu Kasongo.

What Swa-Kabamba means is that, as much as *Mbíímbi* is seen as a genre that exalts power and moves chiefs, ancestors and spirits into action. It is also one of the major tools of the ruling dynasty’s ideology. Therefore, “it has fulfilled and continues to fill an important socio-political function” (p.146).

Egblewogbe (1977) discusses *ahanonkɔwo*, names he refers to as ‘praise names,’ in his research on the Ewe personal names. According to him, *ahanonkɔwo* which literally means ‘drinking names’ are so, because they are mostly used by peers when they are enjoying themselves over drinks.

However, he asserts that these names are not limited to drinking situations. They are taken mainly by men to celebrate some qualities in them, or to celebrate some personal experiences. It is identified by Egblewogbe that a person may also take this name to signify contentment with his own achievements or as a mockery being directed to a neighbour for failing to achieve something. He added that while

some of these praise names are based on the concept of power, others reflect our everyday personal or communal experiences. For example: *Ahiadzegbe* ‘the day of courtship.’ This is taken from the appellation:

*Ahiadzegbe ahia vivina, takutsogbe adã q̄o eme.*

(Love is sweet during courtship, when it is time

to buy headgear, then anger sets in) (page 40).

Egblewogbe also submits that the taking and using of names exemplify the sociolinguistic identity of cultural sub-groups. For example, praise names are mainly taken and used by men. He said a male person can take a praise name on attainment of adulthood, but a woman, if she takes one at all, must normally have reached her menopause before taking it, a situation which is culturally institutionalized.

Mulokozi, M.M. (1997) describes the crafty nature with which Selemani Habibu, a young Tanzanian bard, uses the wind instrument (zither) and the mouth to perform the *enanga*, a Tanzanian traditional poetry, with great eloquence and expertise. As praise poetry, *enanga* is used to gratify kings, heroes and traditional spirits in the communities in Tanzania. In present days, presidents and cardinals are also praised with *enanga*.

Three modes by which the genre is delivered, according to Mulokozi, are: the speech mode, the recitative mode and the song mode. It has also been identified that the song mode, characterized by intonative and normal solo singing, is the most popular employed by the bards.

Having assessed the performance of Selemeni Habibu, Mulokozi concludes that he is a great oral artist who is known for his oratorical skill in his language. “As I look back on his repertoire and listen to his many surviving records, I realize that was a talented master of *enanga* epic performance who was hardly surpassed during his lifetime, and is unlikely to be surpassed later” (page 159).

A very important thing one would admire about Habibu is his technique or style of performance. As observed by Mulokozi, Habibu takes advantage of his charisma and wins his audience through his facial expressions. He also sometimes involves his audience by mentioning some outstanding audience member in the course of singing the praise songs. This way, it would appear as if the poems are in praise of these outstanding members. This can be seen in the following lines during one of his performances:

<i>Eeeee eeee ai bambi</i>	1
<i>Na Bwana Mugyabuso, ohulile enangaegi yani</i>	2
Eeeee, alas, the day!	1
And you, Bwana Mugyabuso, listen well to this <i>enanga</i> (p. 167).	2

As a result, Mulokozi infers that Habibu draws his techniques from traditions. Therefore, he has always been able to manipulate the techniques in a way that his creations were always new, personal and exceptional. His use of metaphorical language is also said to have been drawn from experience from nature and landscape, history, war, the cattle culture, the banana culture etc. For example:

<i>Kagogo nkajunda eila</i>	1
<i>Nkanga 'ugwa ntatengiibwe</i>	2

<i>Ayakuntengya na'ugwa nawe!</i>	3
Dead banana stem: I rotted long ago	1
But I refused to collapse without being shoved	2
He who shoves me would collapse with me (page. 169).	3

From experience, the dead banana tree which is being compared to the King is harmless and weak, yet it would cause harm to you if you shove it. That is, if you lean on it, it would tumble over with you, and you may end up being hurt.

Sowah (2008) conducts a research on the aesthetic qualities and values of appellations among the Tongu-Ewes of the Volta region of Ghana. He submits that appellations are generally part of naming system among the Ewes. For him, appellations do not only promote self-esteem, self glorification and social recognition, but also, they serve as a guide to conduct. He also acknowledges the fact that appellations compel the users to observe all the communicative norms known to the people of Tongu-Ewe, and for that matter, through appellations the worldview of the people is known.

Sowah reports that knowledge of the sources of appellations is very important, because it helps in the understanding of the language and culture that characterize the substance of appellations. "The language and culture of the genre are a reflection of origins or sources." (p. 27). He also agrees with the submission made by Okpewho (1992: 240) and Akivaga and Odaga (1982: 5) that appellations can trace their sources from the environments such as household, the world of animals

and plants, the heavens, the landscape of mountains and rivers; human lives and activities. Crucial in their submissions is that the images, similes, metaphors and other figures of speech used in songs, proverbs, narratives or appellations are drawn from the people's own experiences and their daily activities.

Sowah also agrees with other scholars that appellations reveal the use of aesthetic devices, such as imagery, metaphor, simile, parallelism, ideophone, repetition, interjection, etc. Discussing the aesthetic qualities and values of appellations, he reports that the values are not only seen in the ideas the appellations convey to the people, but also in such areas as functionality, appropriateness, quality of presentation and their impact (p. 87). He added that all these result from effective delivery, including dramatic gestures, skillful voice modulation and abrupt twists but with breaks and pauses in the delivery of the genre. These are to explain actions and qualities of people and at the same time the beauty and the value of the appellations.

Ansu-Kyeremeh (2000) reports from his study of the Bono Personal Names that personal names support human interaction as a vehicle for communication. As an aspect of communications, Darden (1983), as cited in Ansu-Kyeremeh believes that personal names present an opportunity to determine meaning. It is, therefore, admitted that Bono personal names and the naming system at large are prototypically Akan. He classified Bono personal names into (a) ascribed and given, (b) fixed circumstantial and flexible circumstantial, (c) gender differentiated and gender neutral, (d) substantive and substitute, and finally (e) day-related and non-day-related names.

Ansu-Kyeremeh asserts that Bono personal names conform to Warden's (1986) classification of the Akan name into two-part format, composed of an ascribed *akradin* 'soul name,' derived from the week-day on which one is born, and *Agyadin or din pa* 'proper name,' which is chosen by the father of the child. It is believed by the Akans that week-days are ruled by certain deities whose names are ascribed to people born on the days the deities ruled over (Ahinful 1997). Therefore, these deities are referred to as the guardian spirits of the child.

As a result, almost all the Bono *akradin* and *agyadin* carry appellations (Nketia 1969). "Chiefs often adopt image-enhancing titular names that may originate from *nsabrane* (appellations deriving from war exploits)" (Ansu-Kyeremeh 2000: 23). Danquah (1928: 241) acknowledges that, while *agyadin* has its appellation which takes its source from the "guardian spirit," *akradin* also has *mmrane* 'ordinary appellation which takes its source from the week-days.' For example, Kwame (Saturday male-born) has the appellation *Kyeretwie* 'one who catches leopards.'

It is submitted that Bono personal names can have certain communicative attributes. That is, a father may select a name with an intention to communicate a message that is embedded in that name. The child thus becomes a medium of communication. Bono personal names for communication may also carry a notion of identification. "Through identity, personal names also become enmeshed in matters such as ideology, ethnicity, religion, sexual differences and social mythology" (Mazrui 1986: 253).

In another development, Ansu-Kyeremeh recognizes the appellations of Bono birth-order names. For example, the appellation of *Dɔnkɔ* is *Bagyina* ‘surviving child or the child who stayed.’ *Dɔnkɔ* is a name given to a child after a successive death of children, in order to expose the child to public ridicule, mockery and humiliation. By so doing, it is believed that the child will survive.

Finally, Ansu-Kyeremeh asserts that Bono *mmane* ‘appellations’ convey a lot of specific messages, as in the case of Kwame which means the one who catches leopards. Nketia (1969) also observes that a dirge is a principal communication medium through which an individual may be praised, commended or extolled.

Agyekum (2003) refers to honorifics as “specialized address and deference forms used to show politeness and competence in language and culture” (p. 369). He says that within the honorific categories are the honorifics associated with God, chiefs and kings, females and males. Discussing the honorific terms, Agyekum points out that, among the Akans, multiple honorifics are mostly found in appellations and dirges. He makes reference to a situation where the king is referred to with a sequence of honorific terms such as *Otumfoɔ* ‘The Powerful,’ *Daasebre* ‘The Gracious One,’ and *Nana* ‘Grandparent.’ Akan honorifics are also said to be expressed by non-speech signs such as gestures, dress or the bodily comportment of the interlocutors. In this way, the honorifics, just like appellations, would be used to praise the subject to whom they are directed.

To show that there is a direct link between honorifics and appellation, Agyekum tries to put honorifics into groups such as: power-based honorifics, gender-based honorifics, symmetric honorifics and honorific greetings. “In power-based situations, the general rule is that the superiors use plain forms with inferiors, but the latter must always use honorific terms that display deference” (p. 374-375). Honorary title, such as *Nana*, which is used for chiefs, the queen, the traditional priest etc., is the commonest form of power-based honorifics. Some of the ethnographic contexts power-based honorifics, as mentioned by Agyekum, are ritual ceremonies, such as pouring libations, healing, worship at churches and shrines, and praise poetry for the king.

He acknowledges the fact that this kind of honorifics is used in encounter with deities, ancestors and the supernatural. Agyekum observes that most of the honorific terms refer to historical achievements, events and successes in wars, and issues related to traditional institutions. He added that the use of honorifics and titles brings out distinctions of power and status whenever Akan chiefs are gathered at a durbar. Therefore, one can distinguish between titles like: *Odikuro* ‘care-taker of a village,’ *ɔhene* ‘chief of a town’ and *ɔmanhene* ‘paramount chief.’ It has also been identified that while some of the honorifics refer to how benevolent a chief is to his subjects, others denote the martial character of the chief.

Gender-based honorifics are also said to identify certain specific roles of male and female in the society. In Akan social life, women’s morale are said to be boosted with: *ɔbaatanpa* or *ɔbaapa* ‘good mother.’ Men are also referred to as: *okumpa*

‘the good husband,’ *ɔkokɔdurufɔ* ‘the courageous man,’ *ɔkofo* ‘the warrior,’ etc. Symmetrically, the Akans use certain honorifics in solidarity. These honorifics, according to Agyekum, are referred to as *elee* ‘fashionable names’ or *mmrane* ‘nicknames.’ In this case, both interlocutors use the same terms as call and response.

However, Agyekum could not give us enough ground to understand the difference between honorifics and appellations. Most of the examples given in his work seem to be praise names, in other words, appellations. Also, as said earlier on, his discussion on honorifics is a true reflection of the Akan society. This may not reflect entirely on the Assogli state.

## CHAPTER FOUR

### APPELLATIONS AND THEIR MEANINGS

#### 4.1 The Social History of Appellations

According to the *Dictionary of the English Language*, the word “appellation” is derived from Middle English word, “appelacion,” which is also derived from the Latin word “appellātiō.” According to the dictionary, “appellātiō is also derived from “appellātus,” which is the past participle of “appellāre” meaning “to entreat” or “to appeal.”

In another development, ‘appellation’ was being used in old French to mean *d’origin controlée* ‘registered vintage,’ a trade name which was associated with the sale of wine at the time. In this way, the word (appellation) was used to mean: (a) a name title, or designation, (b) a protected name under which a wine may be sold indicating that the grapes used are of a specific kind from a specific district, and (c) the act of naming.

From the above, it is clear that “appellation’ can also trace its source from a drinking environment, where it was used as a trade name under which a wine may be sold, just to reiterate the fact that the wine on sale is a special one, and from special grapes. I would therefore suggest that the meanings of appellation in Ewe: *ahanonkɔ* ‘drinking name,’ *hamenɔ* ‘peer group name,’ and *ɲkɔfofoɔ* ‘recitative,’ are all derived from the origin of the genre. Let us now look briefly at the various vocabularies that try to define “appellation” in Ewe.

#### 4.1.1 The meanings of appellation in Ewe

Scholars in the field of language and culture, studying Ewe appellation, have come up with different terms for the genre. While some refer to it as *ahanɔŋkɔ* ‘drinking name,’ others say *hamenɔkɔ* ‘peer group name.’ There is also the third school of thought that refers to the genre as *ɲkɔfofoɔo* ‘recitative name.’

Those who refer to appellation as *ahanɔŋkɔ* argue that these names are normally used when people meet to drink. Agbedor (1996: 35) asserts that “these names are usually invoked when men meet in drinking bars, hence the label “drinking name.” Anyidoho (1997) and Atakpa (1997) have all supported Agbedor on the ground that the term literally means drinking name, and that the name is used when men come together to drink. Trying to understand the etymology of the Ewe vocabulary, *ahanɔŋkɔ*, for appellation, I begin to ask myself if it is the origin of the word “appellation,” as discussed previously that suggests the Ewe word, *ahanɔŋkɔ* as the meaning of appellation.

According to Egblewogbe (1977), appellations are praise poetry which is recited. He therefore argues that, even though *ahanɔŋkɔ* is appropriate for the definition of the genre (appellation), it is just a trigger or the beginning of the whole text. For example, in appellation *Gbeve menyia vi o* ‘Two voices do not raise a child,’ the trigger can be said to be *Gbeve* ‘Two voices.’ In his explanation, Egblewogbe points out that, it is the mention of the name *Gbeve* that brings about the recitation of the full text as: *Gbeve menyia vi o*. Therefore, *Gbeve* can be referred to as *ahanɔŋkɔ*, and the full text as *ɲkɔfofoɔo*.

The recitative nature of appellation is also again made clear when Abadzivor (2007: 118, as cited by Sowah 2008: 24) asserts that these are names responded to by people like chiefs, elders, paupers and groups. It is normally the case that people respond to appellation by reciting the full text. Abadzivor also states some functions of appellation as “showing pride in personal achievements, praise, positive living, describing experience of people, counseling or warning people about dangers, expressing opinion on issues and the casting of insinuations.”

However, from every indication, all the three schools of thought have agreed on the real origin of the meaning of appellation in Ewe, i.e. drinking place, hence *ahanonkɔ* ‘drinking name’. While *hameɲkɔ* ‘peer group name’ tries to point at its users, *ɲkɔfofoɔo* ‘recitative name’ emphasizes its recitative nature. Therefore, it is not surprising that the people of the Asogli state use all the three terms interchangeably for appellation.

#### **4.1.2 Sources of appellations**

For us to grasp the full concept surrounding the use of appellation, we need to trace it from its source. Once again, I agree with Sowah (2008) that knowledge about sources of appellations is very important because, it helps in the understanding of language and culture that characterize the genre.

Sowah (2008: 26) confirms that, “appellations are products of the environment. They make references to bravery, for example, as emerging from historical events of war, migration, hunting and virtues and vices such as love, kindness, truth,

mercy, theft, adultery, murder and witchcraft.” In the same way, the war saga, the migration saga, hunting and farming, all of which characterized the lives of the people of the Asogli state, can be said to be the major factors that gave rise to most of the appellations in the land of the Asogli state. (Ref. p. 4-5 and 11-12 for details).

According to Togbe Korku Ayim III, Fiaga of Takla traditional area, the appellation, *Ntakra* ‘feather,’ came as a result of the war between the Asoglis and the Ashantis. He said that during the times of the war, it was believed that some people of Takla, with their mystic powers, were seen in the form of feathers in the air, a position from where they were shooting. Others were seen with feathers fixed on the hat that they put on. As a result, whenever the Ashantis saw feathers moving towards them, they began to shout: *ntakrafɔɔ ba*, literally means ‘the feathers people are coming.’ It was *ntakrafɔɔ* that had changed to *ntakra*, and later on to Takla, which has become the name and appellation of the town:

<i>Ntakra nwurefi kotoko</i>	1
<i>Avadzɔgbe hafi wonyana xefu fe dɔwɔwɔ</i>	2
Feathers do not forget about the porcupine.	1
The importance of feather is realized in times of war	2

## 4.2 CLASSIFICATION OF APPELLATIONS

In this section, I am going to discuss the various types and meanings of the appellations of the Asogli state. These include appellations for the various

traditional areas that make up the Asogli state, those of the clans and families in the state, those of certain individuals such as hunters, warriors and certain noble people. We shall also look at the appellations that are used to invoke the ancestors and deities of the Asogli state, and also those that are used to receive guests such as the President of the state, ministers, members of the diplomatic corps and finally, traditional rulers who pay visit to the Asogli state.

I agree with scholars like Finnegan (1970), Mulokozi (1997) and Sowah (2008) that certain appellations relate to things of nature, such as plants and animals, storms, thunder strike, etc. These types of appellations, some of which are also found in the Asogli state, and which describe the things of nature to which they relate, as well as the entire environment, shall also be looked at.

#### **4.2.1 Appellations of the Asogli state**

The word *Asogli* is made up of two Ewe words: *Asɔ* ‘thorn’ and *gli* ‘wall,’ therefore, ‘the wall of *Asɔ*.’ *Asɔ* or *Asor* was the last son of Togbe Kakla, the founder and father of the Asogli state. As part of the sadistic and wicked ruling of King Agorkorli, reported in the historical records of all Ewes, our forefathers were asked to use their hands and feet to mix mud together with this thorn (*asɔ*). This mud was later used for wall in which they lived under King Agorkorli. Therefore, Togbe Kakla named his son after *asɔ*, and his descendants are referred to as *Asɔgliawo* ‘the people of Asogli,’ meaning the people who have come out of the

walls made of *asɔ* ‘thorns.’ This was to remember the ordeals they went through when they were under this wicked King at Dɔtse.

The appellations of the Asogli state comprise the various appellations of the four main traditional areas that form the Asogli state. The areas are: Akoe*fe*, Kpenoe, Ho and Takla. Each of these traditional areas has its own appellation which may represent the name of the chieftaincy stool of the area, and which has become an appellation for the entire community. Therefore, these sorts of appellations do not belong to any individual, but the community for which the chief is the head. However, it can be used to praise the chief on certain occasions, because the chief is the head and representative of the community.

The various appellations for the traditional set ups of the Asogli state are considered and recited as one, whenever the head of the Asogli state (Togbe Afede XIV) is discharging duties in the name of the state, normally at functions such as durbars, when receiving guests, etc. The following are the appellations of the various traditional areas that make up the Asogli state:

#### 4.2.1.1 Appellation of the Akoe*fe* traditional area.

<i>Akoeviawo, waɖamaxawo</i>	1
<i>Tedrɔmanyami, Aloloawo</i>	2
The children of Akoe, who consider no one in their actions	1
The pounded yam of yesterday which cannot be swallowed, the people of Alolo	2

Akoe was the eldest son of Togbe Kakla, the founder of the Asogli state. Also, Akoe*fe* was named after Akoe, as he was the first to settle in the area. Therefore, Akoe*viawo*, the stem of the appellation, simply reminds the people of their genealogy, while *wadamaxawo*, a nominal compound, describes the attitudinal feature of the people. It means, they don't consider anything or anyone before taking an action. *Tedrɔmanyami*, another nominal compound, also stresses their spiritual and physical powers, as you pick quarrel or fight with them. It is formed out of the noun: *te* 'yam,' *drɔ*, an adjective, referring to 'hard yesterday' and *manya* NEG. and the verb, *mi* 'swallow,' therefore, 'the hard yesterday yam which cannot be swallowed.' The statement is therefore metaphorical. It means the people of Akoe*fe* cannot be defeated by anybody.

#### 4.2.1.2 Appellation of the Kpenoe traditional area.

*Oɔumdza kotoko,*                      Quenchers of the fire, kotoko

*Okum apem, apem beba*              When you kill a thousand, a thousand will come

The above appellation emanated from the war between the Ashantis and the people of Asogli state. At a point in time, it became necessary for the people of Kpenoe to fight in order to defeat some recalcitrant Ashantis who were advancing toward them, after they (the Ashantis) had conquered Ho. The people of Kpenoe managed and stopped the war by defeating these recalcitrant Ashantis. As they fought and stopped or quenched the war, they were referred to in Akan language as:

*dumdzafɔ* ‘the people who quenched the fire.’ Its Ewe equivalence is *Fodzotsiawo* ‘the people who quenched the fire by beating it.’

*Fodzotsiawo* is a compound word, made up of *Fo* ‘beat,’ *dzo* ‘fire,’ *tsi* ‘quench,’ *-a* ‘the definite article’ (consider this same *-a* in words such as *yiyiawo* and *gbɔgbɔawo*), *wo* ‘PLU marker’ while *dumdzɔ* ‘quench fire,’ is also made up of *dum* ‘quench’ and *dza* ‘fire.’ *Kotoko* ‘porcupine’ refers to the Ashantis, therefore, line 1 of the appellation *Oɔdumdzɔ kotoko* simply means the people of Kpenoe, referred to as *dumdzafɔ* or *fodzotsiawo*, beat and quenched the war fire set by Ashantis, referred to *kotoko* ‘porcupine.’ The response, *okum apɛm apɛm beba* ‘you kill thousand, thousand will come,’ communicates how prepared the Asoglis are when it comes to an issue of reinforcement.

According to the regent and stool father of Kpenoe traditional area, Prosper Mlimɔ Tsigbe, this appellation makes them believe that, no matter how difficult the situation, their presence would put things to an end and let people live in tranquility.

#### **4.2.1.3 Appellation of the Ho traditional area**

Ho traditional area is made up of five divisions, namely: Bankoe (the seat of the paramouncy), Heve, Ahoe, Dome and Hliha. Each of these divisions has its own appellation, which represents the entire division. The following are the appellations of the various divisions in the Ho traditional area:

**4.2.1.3.1 Bankoe division:**

<i>Adawuro kotoko</i>	1
<i>Aganuwawo, Hoɔemakɔwo</i>	2
<i>Hotutɔkɔlika, woka ametɔ, wome kana wotɔ o.</i>	3
<i>Hotɔ ka gbe avi ɔi.</i>	4
Adawuro kotoko	1
Those at the slope of mountain, Ho which cannot be carried	2
Hotutɔkɔlika, they delve into others, others don't delve into them	3
The day of delving into theirs, people cry.	4

Among the five divisions of Ho, Bankoe is the seat of the paramountcy. It is administered by the Agbogbomefia, who is also the head of the Asogli state. Their appellation does not only describe how powerful they are, but also, it explains what is meant by “Ho,” as it is the name of the town, which represents the capital of the whole region.

In the first place, Bankoe used to be pronounced fully as *Banyakɔ* ‘muddy area,’ referring to the muddy nature of the land at the time (Michael Avor, the stool father of Bankoe: P. C.). The whole area used to be muddy, and so, was described as such. In Ewe, the word for “mud” is *ba* or *banya*, and “area” is *kɔ*, therefore, *banyakɔ* ‘muddy area.’ *Banyakɔ* later became Bankoe. This was as a result of rapid pronunciation, resulting in some phonological processes. The “ya” of *banya* is

deleted, and the “ɔ” in *kɔ* changes to “o”. The “e” added to the *ko* makes it to mean small area.

In the second line of the appellation, *aganuawo* ‘those at the slope of mountain,’ depicts where they position themselves in order to easily see anyone who is passing by. At the slope of the mountain, they can see everyone and quickly find out about him or her before the person approaches them. They believe it would be difficult for other people to see them at this position, let alone find out about them.

They describe themselves as *Hoɖemakɔwo* ‘Ho that cannot be carried.’ In Ewe, the word “ho” refers to the rubbish which is collected and packed, after a land is cleared for farming. *Hoɖemakɔ* means ‘packed rubbish that cannot be carried or collected.’ The idea is that, there are normally reptiles and other dangerous creatures that hide under this packed rubbish. One can imagine the reaction of these reptiles if you attempt to collect this packed rubbish. They would bite you. In this same way, the people of Ho would destroy you if you dare touch them. They are therefore like *ho* that cannot be touched or carried, but they can carry other people’s *ho*. And if they can carry your *ho*, as expressed by the third line, it means they have superior power.

The noun, *Hoɖemakɔwo* is made up of: *ho* ‘packed rubbish,’ *aɖe* ‘some,’ *ma* ‘NEG marker,’ *wo* ‘PLU marker.’ *Hotutɔkɔlika*, in line 3 means ‘abandoned packed rubbish that is scattered.’ It is made up of: *ho* ‘packed rubbish,’ *tutɔ* ‘abandoned’ (packed and abandoned rubbish). This refers to the enemies. *Kɔli* in this case refers to the people of Ho who could scatter the *ho* of their enemies, and *ka* meaning

‘scatter.’ And if the people of Ho can scatter your *ho*, it means they can delve into your secret, know much about you and finally defeat you, when it is time for war. Their *ho*, in other words, their secrets can never be delved into by others. The appellation is indeed, metaphorical. While they refer to themselves as *Hoɖemakɔwo* (the super-powers), others are referred to as *Hotutɔ* (the weak).

#### 4.2.1.3.2 Dome division:

This is a very remarkable division in the history of the Asogli state, because of their instrumental role they played in times of the war. The people of Dome are said to have migrated from somewhere. As they arrived, the people of Asogli decided to give them a settling place in their middle i.e. the middle of Asogli state. In Ewe, the word for ‘middle’ is *dome*. As a result, they were being referred to as *Domeawo*, which literally means ‘the middle people.’ *Dome* ‘middle,’ referring to the location of these settlers in the state, therefore, became the name of the area. They were led by Avafiaga of Ho, Togbe Howusu to defeat the Akwamus in 1833 (Gadagoe 2009: 47). They have the following appellation:

<i>Howusu krakani kokoroko</i>	Howusu krakani kokoroko
<i>Ɖutsu mesena haha sina o.</i>	A man does not run away at the shout of ‘hey’
<i>Afi aɖeke menye kpome o.</i>	There is no hiding place
<i>Tue bɔbɔna nu.</i>	It is the gun that cools down situations.

The first line of the appellation, which is in Akan, signifies the warrior and boldness nature of Togbe Howusu at the time. According to Togbe Adzi Läkile Howusu XII, *Howusu*, in the first place, means ‘*Owusu* of Ho,’ and in the second place, *Ho woso* ‘Ho shakes.’ *Wusu* is said to have been taken from an Akan word, *woso* ‘shake.’ Therefore, *Ho woso*, ‘Ho shakes’ refers to the atmosphere at Ho at the time, when Togbe Howusu took the initiative and declared war against the Akwamus. By the description, Ho was said to have shaken at the declaration of the war. As a result, the leader, as well as the entire division was praised with the name, Howusu (*Ho woso*). The idea is they are the people who really caused Ho to shake. *Krakani Kokoroko*, also Akan words, depicts the strength of something or someone.

The other lines, which serve as the response to the appellation, are words of encouragement that moved and continue to move the people of Dome, as well as the entire Asoglis into action. It also reminds men of their role whenever the society in which they live, is faced with war or any attack. It states that, a man must not run away at the least of a shout. *Haha*, in the second line is an idiom in Ewe, which refers to war or any deadly situation. Therefore, as a man you don’t run away when you are confronted with situations of that nature. Another word that may make it difficult to understand the appellation is *kpome* ‘hiding place’ in the third line. This is made up of *kpo* ‘oven-like place’ and *me* ‘inside.’ Therefore, *kpome* literally means ‘inside the oven.’ People think this is a very good hiding place, but the appellation is telling us that even when you hide in this place, you

are not safe. Line 4 ends it by saying you had better resort to the gun and face the situation.

#### 4.2.1.3.3 Heve division

*Heve Anikpinikpi* 1

*Yiyiawo fe ηgɔ, gbɔgbɔawo fe doxeawo.* 2

*.Hemaɖamaɖa si ame kple aku* 3

*Milɔ ne woava, migalɔ ne woayi o.* 4

Heve Anikpinikpi 1

The front of the goers, the back of the returnees 2

Blunted knife cut people with its cover 3

Allow them to come, don't allow them to go 4

*Heve*, the first word of the appellation, and the name of the town, was derived from Ewe statement request, *heva* 'come closer.' According to Togbe Anikpi, the chief of Heve division, it was the Heve group that took the front when the Asoglis were migrating from Ɔɔtse. As they had already settled in their present settlement, they realized that the other groups of the Asoglis were far away from them. Therefore, they asked them to come closer to them. This was expressed in Ewe as: *mi heva* 'you should come closer.' By asking someone to come closer, they have

expressed a sign of love. Therefore, they were referred to as *hevawo* literally meaning ‘the people of *heva*.’ The idea was they are the people who expressed love by saying *heva* which later became *heve*. The deeper meaning for *Heve* is therefore ‘lovers.’

The second line depicts the role the people of Heve played in the journey from  $\text{D}\text{o}\text{t}\text{s}\text{e}$ . They took the lead with the mind to clear any enemy that may attack them. This is expressed in the appellation as: *yiyiawo fe ngɔ* ‘the lead or front of the goers.’ Also, thinking that people might chase them as they were running away from the tyrant King Agorkorli, the Heve group had to come back so that they could protect the entire Asogli group from any attack that might come from the back. This is also expressed by line 3 as: *gbɔgbɔawo fe doxeawo* ‘the back of those who are coming back.’ As at now, they continue to play this role whenever the entire Asogli is supposed to move in convoy to functions, such as a durbar. They always take the front when going to the function, and the back when coming back from the function.

The fourth line, *hemaɖamaɖa si ame kple aku* shows how powerful the people of this division were. It simply means that, even though they don’t have the weapons or their weapons are without bullets, they would use all means, be it spiritual, to fight and defeat people. According to Tsiamé Yadehene, the chief linguist of Heve division, this expression gives them the mindset that, as a man, you have to fight with or without weapon. Therefore, even up till today, the people of Heve as a division are ever ready to combat any attack, be it spiritual or physical.

**4.2.1.3.4 Ahoe division:**

*Yeviawo, Ahoewo*      The people of Yevi, the people of Ahoe

*Ade aɖe mada*      Some animal which cannot be hunted

*Lāmakumakudziɖeawo.*      The people who remove the heart of a live animal

According to Godwin Kle Akorsu, the stool father of the Ahoe division, and Steephen Benawo, the head of Dzaviwo clan, in the Ahoe division, the name *Ahoe* is derived from the experience of a plant, referred to in Ewe as *Ahor*. This is a plant that gives you cuts when it has contact with your body. As a result, it is difficult for one to pass through a forest full of these plants. Therefore, the name *Ahoe* is a metaphor which compares the nature of the plant, *Ahor*, to that of the people of Ahoe division. *Ahoewo* ‘the people of Ahoe,’ as expressed in the first line of the appellation means that, these are the people through whom you cannot easily walk, in terms of war or any other struggle.

*Yeviawo* ‘the people of Yevi’ in the appellation reminds them about their root in the migration saga. According to Togbe Kasa III, the chief of the Ahoe division, from Dɔtse, where the Ewes are said to migrate from, the people of Ahoe as a group made a sojourn at Yevi in Togo, before they finally joined their brothers and sisters at Ho-Ahoe, their present settlement.

Again, the second line of the appellation stresses the metaphorical implication in the name *Ahor* or *Ahoe*. That is, they are like some animal which cannot be hunted. If you dare get onto them, in order to hunt them, they would end up hunting you, just as the *Ahor* would cut you when you have contact with it.

In order to emphasize their strengths and powers, they are described with the nominal compound, *lāmakumakudzideawo* ‘people who are capable of removing the heart of live animal.’ This nominal compound is made up of the following: the noun *lā* ‘animal,’ adjective *makumaku* ‘live,’ noun *dzi* ‘heart,’ the verb *de* ‘remove,’ *a* ‘referring to the people and *wo* ‘PLU marker.’

#### 4.2.1.3.5 Hliha division:

*Atafo bleho siho*            Atafo cut *ho* with his deceptive plan  
*numadzemadze bafifi*    Invisible swampy area.

The meaning of Hliha (the name of the division), cannot be understood without the history about the nature of the land (area) before settlement. According to Togbe Afele, the chief of Hliha division, and his elders, the land used to be full of a type of rock, known in Ewe as *hliha* or *hlihakpe* ‘iron pan concretion.’ As a result, the whole area was called *hliha*. It is also interesting to know that the people of Hliha were part of a clan (Avedeawo) in Bankoe. They decided to break away and settled on the *hliha* ‘iron pan concretion’ in order to avoid a persistent family misunderstanding.

The first line of their appellation, *Atafo ble ho si ho* simply means that, no matter how dangerous, strong or powerful you are, they are capable of defeating you with their deceptive plan. *Atafo*, in this line refers to the people of Hliha, *ble* ‘deceived,’ *ho* ‘packed or gathered grass that is believed to have dangerous reptiles under it’ (referring to the enemies), *si* ‘cut.’ Therefore, knowing very well how dangerous

this *ho* is, the people of Hliha claimed they had a deceptive plan that they would use to capture you.

The second line, which contains *numadzemadze* ‘invisible thing,’ and *bafifi* ‘swampy area,’ reveals the nature of the deceptive plan by which the people of Hliha would kill or defeat their enemies. This plan is expressed metaphorically by the use of the word, *bafifi* ‘swampy area.’ As we know, swampy area is more or less a death trap. Stepping on a swampy land, one may sink and die. Therefore, when you step on the toes of the people of Hliha, they would swallow you just like the way swampy land swallows. *Numadzemadze* ‘something that you cannot see,’ in the same line, tells you that once their nature is like a swampy area, you cannot see and know what they plan against you.

#### **4.2.1.4 Appellation of the Takla traditional area.**

*Ntakra, nwurefi kotoko,* Feather does not forget about the porcupine,

*Asiakoleawo, Aloloawo.* People who dichotomize with hand, the people of Alolo

*Avadzɔgbe hafi anya xefu fe vevie nyenye.* Importance of feather is realized when there is war

According to Togbe Agbeshie of Takla, Takla was formerly known as Agordome, which literally means ‘under the raffia palm,’ because the land was full of raffia palm trees. The name ‘Takla,’ therefore came as a result of the war that broke up between the Asoglis and the Ashantis. ‘Takla’ was taken from an Akan word

*Ntakra* ‘feathers.’ According to Togbe Doe, the Atamfia of the Takla traditional area, the Akans referred to the people of Takla in the Asogli state as *ntakrafoɔ* ‘feathers people’ during the times of the war. Oral history has it that, when the war became difficult, some people of Takla, as reinforcement, appeared in the air as feathers of bird, as they shot at the Ashantis. All that the Ashantis could see at this point were feathers shooting at them. Therefore, whenever the Ashantis saw the feathers in the air, they alerted their people by shouting: *ntakrafoɔa ba*, meaning ‘the feathers people are coming.’

As a result, *ntakra*, from which the name “Takla” emanated, became the symbol of the traditional area, just as *kotoko* ‘porcupine’ is the symbol of the Ashantis. Therefore, *ntakra nwurefi kotoko*, the first line of the appellation literally means ‘feathers do not forget the porcupine.’ ‘Feathers’ here refer to the people of Takla; the porcupine refers to the Ashantis. What it means, therefore, is that the people of Takla do not forget about the Ashantis. The second line, which says *Asiakolāwo* ‘the people who dichotomize with the hand,’ reiterates the fact that the people of Takla, by their mysterious powers, can use their hand in place of cutlass and gun to fight when the need arises. This is to say that what the cutlass can do, the hand can do it better. Line 3, which seems to be the response to the appellation, is a continuation of the first line and emphasizes the importance of feathers, in other words, the strength of the people of Takla is seen in times of war.

#### 4.2.2 Appellations for the clans

According to the Longman Dictionary of Contemporary English, clan is “a group of families, all originally descended from one family.” This definition is not different from the clan system among the Ewes. The word for “clan” among the Ewes is *hlɔ* or *kɔ*. Among the clans in the Asogli state are Kegbɔme, Hɔnuvife, Agɔɔɔake, Asialea, Muvi, Bake, etc. All these clans are identified with their various appellations. This appellation does not only project the image of the clan, but also, it contributes to their general view about certain things in the world. Here are examples of appellations for some of the clans in the Asogli state:

i. *hwana beka abredzima*

Who will talk about python?

The above is an appellation of the Kegbɔme clan in the Asogli state. It simply means that, no one dares touch the people of Kegbɔme. If you dare touch them, they will take the form of that dangerous snake called in Akan *abredzima* ‘python’ and bite you. With this appellation, the people of Kegbɔme clan always have the perception that they are strong enough to defend their people in any situations.

ii. *Kodogolidzolekɔnuawoe* 1

*Adamaseveawoe, amenɔkɔnudzuamewoe* 2

*Afɔtoguilɔleawoe* 3

Kodogoli who are the fire on the slope of mountain	1
The Ada people who do not understand Ewe, the people who insult from the steep of mountain.	2
The people with smooth ankle.	3

This is an appellation for Hɔnuviefɛ clan of Ho-Bankoe in the Asogli state. According to Mama Agblatsu, the queen mother of the clan, *Hɔnuviefɛawo* ‘the people of Hɔnuviefɛ’ are endowed with beautiful women who are believed to be gossips. Among all the clans in the Ho traditional area, it is a general belief that, no matter how difficult or serious the dispute, there would always be amicable solution when it is entrusted into the people of Hɔnuviefɛ. In Ewe, *hɔnu* means ‘a place where disputes are settled,’ *vi* means ‘small’ and *afe* means ‘house.’ Literarily, *hɔnuviefɛ* means a small house where disputes are settled, which can also refer to a traditional court. This name came as a result of the role the clan was playing at the time.

However, they used to be people who would normally parade themselves on the slope of the mountain of Ho, where they could see everybody. From this position, they could gossip, insult and say all sorts of things about their neighbours who are passing by. Therefore, line 1 of the appellation, *Kodogolidzolekɔnuawoe* is a compound noun which describes their position: *Kodogoli*, referring to the people, *dzo* ‘fire,’ *le* ‘on,’ *kɔ* ‘hill,’ *nu* ‘mouth,’ *wo* ‘PLU marker,’ *e*, also referring to the people. They refer to themselves as *Kodogoli* because they claimed they could assume the nature of the Kodogolis of Togo and insult you. As they are the fire on the hill, they believe no one can outwit them. While line 2 emphasizes the position

from where they could insult, line 3 talks about their beauty. In Ewe, your smooth ankle also depicts how beautiful you are. The appellation is therefore a descriptive one, talking about the nature of a particular people in the state.

iii. *Asiale, asigbe asi dīna, asi meḍina gbedzrogbe o.*

(Asiale, business booms on market days, business does not boom on ordinary days).

The above is the appellation of the Asiale clan in the Kpenoe traditional area. Asiale is a compound word which is made up of *asi* ‘hand,’ *a* ‘would,’ and *le* ‘catch,’ meaning “the hand would catch.” With this appellation, the people of Kpenoe, in the Asogli state, are saying that, they will catch you when the actual time for the battle comes. This is expressed in the proverb: *asigbe asi dīna* ‘market booms on market day,’ *asi meḍina gbedzrogbe o* ‘market does not boom on ordinary day.’ That is to say, it is on the ‘D’ day that you will see where the power lies, and the ‘D’ day, referred to as *asigbe* ‘market day,’ they will surely catch you. They also believe that, whatever they want to do or want to achieve would be achieved when the right time comes. *Gbedzrogbe* ‘ordinary day,’ makes reference to the undue times for something which is to happen.

iv. *Agɔvi agɔ* Little raffia palm, raffia palm

*Agɔvi kpoḍoḍo* Strong raffia palm

The above is the appellation for the people of Agɔɔɔake clan in the Asogli state. According to Togbe Atiku VII, the chief of the clan, Agɔɔɔake was originally spelt as *agɔɔɔdeka (agɔɔɔideka)* ‘one raffia palm tree’, referring to a particular raffia palm tree under which the early settler, Togbe Atiku I, decided to live. It is this name, *agɔɔɔake* meaning *agɔɔɔdeka* that has become the name of the descendants of Togbe Atiku I. Therefore, their appellation makes reference to this raffia palm.

The first line of the appellation: *agɔɔɔviagɔ*, simply means a raffia palm, no matter how little it is, is still a raffia palm, and that it is a difficult task to break its kernel. The word *kpoɔɔoɔo* in the second line serves as an adjective describing how strong the kernel of this raffia palm is. Therefore, by this appellation, the people of this clan are likening their strength to the raffia palm (kernel). That is to say, because they are strong and powerful, it will be difficult for other people to defeat them in battle of all kinds.

v. *Adase mayɔ ke*: Adase (Thanks) never fills pocket.

The above is an appellation for the Adase clan in the Ahoe division of Ho traditional area. The appellation is a combination of Akan and Ewe language. Adase is from Akan word, *meda wo ase* ‘I thank you,’ and *mayɔ ke*, Ewe expression meaning ‘never fills pocket or valise.’ *Ke* or *kevi* is a locally-made valise, which is normally made with *ketsi* ‘reed plant.’ In *kevi*, are normally kept valuable items like money, gold wears, clothes, etc., especially in the days of our forefathers.

According to Teacher Korku, the head of Adase clan, their great grandfather, Adase was a rich man, and so, people were coming to borrow money from him. Out of generosity, Togbe Adase does not charge interest on the money he lends out. Instead, he receives “thanks,” expressed orally in Akan as *meda wo ase*. As a result, people referred to him as *medase*, which later became *Adase*. Later, some friends and family members cautioned him that the “thanks” would not make his pocket or valise full, therefore, he should start charging interest on the money he was lending out. This simply means the “thanks” alone would not earn him any profit which he could use to acquire more wealth. *Adase mayɔ ke*, therefore, cautions people to mean business when it is time for business. In business, profit making is the ultimate.

vi. *Owuo fri owuo, owuo fri titi* Death from death, death from long time

*Ɔɖumakuma, Ɔɖumakuma* Almighty God, Almighty God

The above appellation is a praise poem for the people of Muvi clan of Ho-Bankoe, referred to as *Muviawo* ‘the people of *Mu*.’ *Mu* is the Ewe word for mosquito, therefore, the name *Muviawo*, because they could multiply in terms of population.

The appellation which is in the Akan language, talks about death, which is inevitable. The phrase, *owuo fri owuo* ‘death from death,’ talks about the philosophy that death comes from the land of death, where nobody seems to know.

This is buttressed *with owuo fri titi* ‘death from long time,’ meaning death has been there since time immemorial. Therefore, the appellation gives the people of this clan the thought that, since death is inevitable, there is no need to fear it. It is upon this thought that these people could move forward and fight in every situation without fears. *Ɔdumakuma* which forms the second line reiterates the fact that it is only God Almighty who knows the source of death, and the only one who can conquer it.

#### 4.2.3 Appellations for the spirits

These kinds of appellations are mostly praise names which describe the religious beliefs and the life of the people of the Asogli state (Sowah 2008: 61). They express the mindset of the people about the Supreme God, the deities and the ancestor spirits. These spirits were believed to be of tremendous help during the times of war. Their appellations are still used by the Asoglis, mostly to invoke the divinities during libation prayers, when the community is seeking help or favour from the spirits. Also, whenever issues crop up and the society wants to ascertain the truth, people are made to swear by the names of these deities. In this way, the spiritual culture of the people is being expressed by the help of these appellations.

Here are some examples:

- |                                    |   |
|------------------------------------|---|
| <i>i. Mawu Sogbo Lisa</i>          | God, the Omnipotent                         |
| <i>Aɔaɔuwɔtɔ, Eɔli asi ɔli aɔɔ</i> | The craftsman who created all things        |
| <i>Mawu Azadagli</i>               | God, the stone that breaks all other stones |

The people of the Asogli state also believe in the existence and powers of the Supreme God. Therefore, even in their traditional prayers, the presence of God is sought first. This is mostly done with the praise names as in the appellation above.

ii.	<i>Avavikpe, ava nɔ tofo</i>	1
	<i>Ebe yee nye kpe tu aza, yenɔ aza dzi aza gli.</i>	2
	Avavikpe, the war is in public domain	1
	He says he is the stone-gun trap, he mounts the trap, the trap fails	2

According to Prosper Mlimɔ Tsigbe, the regent and stool father of Kpenoe traditional area, *Avavikpe* is a god of war for all the people of Asogli state. In Ewe, *ava* means ‘war,’ *vi* ‘far’ and *kpe* ‘stone.’ Again, when we say *avakpe* ‘war stone’ in Ewe, we are referring to bullet. Therefore, *Avavikpe* means bullet that travels far, which implies that, spiritually, the bullet of the god can travel far and near to destroy the enemies. It is because of this role that the praise name, *Avavikpe*, came about. It is called *kpe* ‘stone’ because the god takes the form of stone. According to Prosper, this is the main god the Asoglis used in the war against the Ashantis. Presently, it is invoked with the above appellation when the people of Asogli state are confronted with difficult situations, such as droughts, famine, death, etc. People even swear by it for fair judgment.

#### 4.2.4 Appellations for the chief

Apart from the state appellation, which may also be used for the chief and elders on certain occasions, the chief also has his own praise name. These are mostly the names of the stool, which are inherited from ancestry, and still used by the incumbent chief, as well as prominent members of the royal family. In some communities in the Asogli state, the appellation of the chief is the same as the appellation of the entire traditional area. The following are some examples of praise names for the chiefs in the Asogli state:

- |    |   |   |
|----|---|---|
| i. | <b>Ahorsu:</b> <i>Ahorsu foklomaɖuklo</i>                     | 1 |
|    | <i>Ebe yefo klo tsi dɔdɔe</i>                                 | 2 |
|    | Ahorsu (eagle) cannot eat the tortoise which it has hunted it | 1 |
|    | It says it has hunted the tortoise but goes hungry.           | 2 |

The above is the stool name of Togbe Ahorsu, the *Miamefia* ‘left wing chief’ of the Kpenoe traditional area. The appellation is a metaphor which compares the strength of the “tortoise” over that of the “eagle” to the power of the chief over the people. By nature, the eagle is a bird which can hunt all other birds, but even when it hunts the tortoise, it can never eat it. The tortoise is highly protected by its shield. In the same way, you may launch every spiritual attack on the chief, but you cannot succeed. The chief is always covered with his protective powers. No one can ruin or defeat him.

- |     |  |   |
|-----|--|---|
| ii. | <b>Atiku:</b> <i>Atiku atsa, ebe ye gbogbolulu</i> | 1 |
|     | <i>Ati bu metsena ati bu fe ku o</i>               | 2 |

<i>Kpekpe metsena adido o</i>	3
<i>Atiku xemaɖu</i>	4
Atiku atsa says he is on his own	1
No tree can bear the fruit of the other	2
Kpekpe does not bear the fruit of baobab tree	3
Atiku that cannot be eaten by birds	4

The above is the appellation of Togbe Atiku VII, one of the sub-chiefs of Takla. History has it that Togbe Atiku, the founder of Takla, decided to settle under the raffia palm tree. (Ref. 3.2.5 iv). Having appreciated the strength of the raffia palm kernel, Togbe Atiku decided to take the appellation: Atiku ‘seed of tree.’ This is made up of *ati* ‘tree’ and *ku* ‘seed,’ thus ‘seed of tree.’ The tree here refers to the raffia palm. The response, *ebe ye gbogbolulu* ‘he says he *gbogbolulu*’ refers to the nature of the tree. That is, nobody plucks the seed of raffia palm. It has to fall down on itself. This is a metaphor meaning the chief is like this tree. There is no one who can take his life by any means, unless his time is due for him to meet his death.

iii. ***Aklamanu***: *Aklamanu, menyɛ avu tɔ o.*

Aklamanu: Aklamanu, not a matter of struggling

The above is the stool name and the appellation of Togbe Aklamanu, the chief of Avenui, in the Akoeɖe traditional area. The stem, Aklamanu, in this case, stands for ‘talent or gift.’ It is therefore believed that you don’t have to struggle before

you do something which is already your talent. This is expressed by the response as: *menye avu to o* 'it is not a matter of struggling.' The appellation therefore motivates the people of this royal family, as well as, the chief and elders of Avenui, to use their talents to the benefit of the area. It also advises people that they should not struggle so much in doing things which are not within their capabilities.

iv. *Kasa*

Kasa( the rope ties)

The above is the name of Togbe Kasa III, the chief of Ho-Ahoe division of the Asogli state. This represents the name of the stool or the royals, and it is inherited from ancestry by the incumbent chief. *Kasa* is formed out of the noun, *ka* 'rope' and the verb, *sa* 'tie.' This name depicts the powers of the chief. That is, whatever he says is final. When the chief ties the rope, it means the chief has taken the final decision. Therefore, no one can untie it. In other words, no one can flout the decision of the chief.

In another sense, when the chief ties the rope on you, it means that is the end of you. You can never get yourself out of it. It is believed that the chief is supported by all the spirits of the land. Therefore, he can also deal with you spiritually, by invoking these spirits. This action of the chief is what is expressed figuratively as *kasa*, meaning you have been tied in the rope.

#### 4.2.5. Personal and social appellations

Finnegan (1970) observes that some praise names may be owned by, or given to certain individuals, as a result of their distinguished roles they played in the society. These individuals may include great warriors, hunters, noble people who might have contributed to the society in one way or the other. As observed by Sowah (2008: 59), “this category of appellations is owned for identity, referencing, a guide to conduct, self-assertion and self-affirmation. Some of these appellations are allusive in nature. They touch on social life, such as inheritance, law suit and conflict, and teach moral lessons.” Here are some examples:

- |    |   |   |
|----|---|---|
| i. | <i>Adetsikrebetsi</i>                                 | 1 |
|    | <i>Nyamakumaku fiawo ma ho.</i>                       | 2 |
|    | Adetsikrebetsi  | 1 |
|    | Uncompleted case, but the chiefs have shared the fine | 2 |

This appellation advises the chiefs and elders, as well as others who form panels in arbitration, that they should wait for the completion of whatever case they are judging before they share the fines accrued out of the case. This is because it may happen that fines are not genuinely collected, and therefore, must be returned. This appellation reminds us to be cautious and see the end of whatever we are doing, and make sure that the remuneration is genuine before we start enjoying it. If it is about some work, let it be done and make sure the remuneration is genuinely paid before you start spending it.

ii.	<b>Hotɔ:</b> <i>Hotɔmakumaku</i>	1
	<i>dɔme le tsɔdiviwo vem</i>	2
	The rich: The rich who lives long	1
	his next of kin are not happy.	2

The above appellation makes allusion to those who inherit the properties of their family members after their death. It is very important to know that *ho* in the context of the first line of the appellation means “wealth,” and *tɔ* ‘owner.’ Therefore, the noun *Hotɔ*, among the Ewes, refers to a rich person. *Makumaku* is a reduplication of *maku* ‘not die.’ This is made up of the negative maker, *ma* ‘not,’ and the verb, *ku* ‘die.’ Therefore, *makumaku* stresses the long life of *Hotɔ* ‘rich person.’ Another vocabulary, very important to understand, is *tsɔdiviwo*. This is in two senses: (a) next of kin and (b) the organizers of the funerals. The organizers of the funerals of the rich person are angry, because they are thinking about the profit they would make out of the funeral. This same way, the next of kin of the rich person would wish the death of the rich man so that he can take control of his money and other properties.

iii. **Datsomɔ:** *Datsomɔ mesi na kpo o.*

Datsomɔ: the snake that crosses the road does not fear club.

This appellation encourages people to go into action, or take certain decisions without fear. *Da* ‘snake’ is assumed to be aware that people normally chase it when it is seen. Therefore, the snake is already aware of the consequence before taking the decision to cross the road. In the same way, once we are aware of the

consequences before venturing into certain actions, we don't care so much about what happens. For instance, someone going to fight in war has no fear for death. We are therefore encouraged to stop thinking about the negative side when taking certain decisions.

iv. ***Agblegodui / Agblegui***: *ebe yee wɔ dɔ fle seda kple ago*.

*Agblegodui / Agblegui*: he said he worked and bought *seda* and *ago*.

The stem of this appellation is a nominal compound derived from the noun, *agble* 'farm,' and another noun, serving as an adjective, and another noun, *godui* 'shorts,' therefore, *agblegodui* 'farm shorts. This nominal compound uses the verb, *be* 'says' to explain his intentions. It says that even though it is worthless, it contributes to acquisition of wealth, by making itself to be used on the farm. *Seda* and *ago*, among the Ewes, are expensive *kentey* cloths which portray wealth. Therefore, *agblegodui* 'the shorts for the farm' is saying that, though it is worthless, it is through it toils that those expensive clothes are acquired.

*Agblegodui*, the object in question is therefore personified and used as the composer's name. This is done to attribute human emotions about the object, in order to show how he or she feels about the object. The appellation implies that nothing is useless in this world. It also reminds us that people, with certain jobs, that we don't normally regard, are normally the ones who, through their efforts, produce not only important personalities like doctors, lawyers, etc, but also, they acquire a lot of wealth in the society.

- v. **Godzo:** *godzo mado le ku ηgɔ, amega do godzo ku tsɔɛ* 1  
*Gbegblea avu sena, avu mese na nyuiea o.* 2  
*Efo gle wo hle, efo gada wofɔ kpe le edzi.* 3

No stooping in front of death, the man stooped and death picked him 1

The bad news that the dog hears, the dog never hears the good news 2

He caught cobra people flee, he caught rat they removed the stone on it 3

The above is a personal appellation of Zikpuitɔ, Togbe Kle Kɔsi, the stool father of the Ho-Ahoe traditional area. The stem, *Godzo*, means stooping position in order to prove super-power. The first line, therefore, says that no one is super-power before death. No matter how powerful you are, death will surely knock at your door one day. It goes on to state the nature of people in society in line 2 and 3, using the experience from some animals and the hunter in the environment.

Line 2 points to us the way we normally treat the dog when we are enjoying ourselves over some meal. We seem to forget it even when we are eating the animal that the dog hunted. But when we are confronted with terrible situations like wild animals and robbery or theft situations, we turn to the dog for help. This is real in life situations. Sometimes, we don't remember those who toiled with us before we are successful. We only know them in times of difficulty.

On the other hand, line 3 also makes it clear that in times of bad news, bad omen, or in suffering times, we see no friends. You only see them when things are good for you. *Gle* 'cobra,' in line 3, symbolizes bad omen, while *gada* 'rat,' symbolizes good times. According to Zikpuitɔ Kle Kɔsi, the appellation gives him a mindset

that has made him to form an opinion that, so is nature. He is therefore careful about the sort of friends he deals with in good and bad times.

#### 4.2.6 Appellations for plants and animals

These appellations describe the qualities of plants and animals found in our environment. Here are some examples:

- i. *Akpa: Akpa medzia vi woɖia adewu o.*

Tilapia: the offspring of tilapia does not resemble mud fish

The animals involved in this appellation are *akpa* ‘tilapia,’ and *adewu* ‘mud fish.’ Though both the tilapia and the mud fish live in water, as well as in the mud, they are different from each other. Therefore, an offspring of one cannot resemble the offspring of the other. This means that the offspring of tilapia will automatically take the features of tilapia. In other words, tilapia would behave like tilapia, but not like mud fish. This appellation is normally used when someone picks the qualities of his or her parent, and behaves exactly like him or her. It is a proverbial appellation, which is also used in a situation where a child picks the physical qualities of the parent. It is also used when someones’ conduct is contrary to expectation.

- ii. *Atikese: atikese meyɔa xevi o.*

Atikese: the tree that bears flowers does not have to call birds.

The stem of the appellation, *atikese* ‘tree bears flowers,’ is a nominal compound, which is formed out of the clause: *ati* ‘tree,’ *ke* ‘bears,’ *se* ‘flower.’ This goes on with the response: *meyɔa xevi o* ‘does not have to call birds.’ It simply means that when there are flowers on the tree, the bird would automatically be attracted. Therefore, there is no need for the tree to call the bird. Here again, *ati* ‘tree’ is personified in order to make the situation concrete and vivid.

This proverbial appellation normally urges people to be successful in order to get whatever they want. It is a general belief that when one is successful in life, all other things would come by themselves. In love situations where a man is extraordinarily handsome or financially powerful, women are attracted to him. The appellation therefore reminds us to, first of all, be successful in whatever we are doing.

iii. **Baba:** *ebe yee du ati, ati gli.*

Baba (termite): he said he ate the tree and the tree lost its balance.

The subjects involved in the above appellation are *baba* ‘termite’ and *ati* ‘tree.’ The appellation describes the effect of the termite’s habit of feeding on trees. It makes the tree to lose balance. In other words, the termite causes damage on the tree and other plants. Therefore, the relationship between these two subjects is very unhealthy.

There are a lot of values presented in this appellation. On one hand, it is important to know that the activities of your enemy could cause destruction to your natural

plan in life. On the other hand, the appellation also gives us a mindset that the weak, or people with small stature can also survive through determination and hardwork.

iv. *Gbo*: *ebe ye tɔgodoma, duɔdu dzroe gake mate ŋui o.*

**Gbo (Goat):** he says he has a taste for the grass at the other side of the river but cannot eat it.

The stem and the subject in this appellation is *gbo* 'goat.' The appellation describes, in life, an experience from the goat. That is, the goat has the taste and would like to go and feed on the grass at the other end of the river, but it cannot because of the difficulty in crossing the river. Metaphorically, a person with the appellation, *Gbo*, is simply communicating to the enemies that he is like that grass, which is at the other end of the river, and because of the difficulty of you, as the goat, you have in getting close to it, there is no way you can conquer him. In life, we all know that *gbo* 'goat' is an animal which can never cross a river.

#### 4.2.7 Appellations played on surrogates

Nketia (1971) refers to surrogate language as a substitute verbal language, usually played on drums and certain other wind musical instruments such as horns, gongs and xylophones, whistling, etc. In the Asogli state, drums such as *atumpani* 'talking drum,' *afanyavu* 'rescue drum,' *agblɔvu*, and wind musical instruments

such as the horns, gongs, and *atentenben* ‘flute’ can also be used to communicate appellation messages. While all appellations can be played on the *atumpani* ‘talking drum,’ only some particular ones can be played on the other wind musical instruments like the flute, horns, etc. Examples of appellations played on *atentenben* include dirges such as *Blewu, kpɔ meyɔna ne azɔli o* ‘slowly tiger does not take haste when walking.’ The popular appellation which is played on *afanyavu* ‘rescue drum is:

*Fri titri, metsri ablɔde*: Calling long time, I hate liberty

This appellation is normally used to assemble the people at a gathering for action, be it war or an action in order to rescue a situation. *Fri titri*, in the Akan refers to ‘a call’ that is being made for sometimes, asking you to come. *Metsri ablɔde* ‘I hate liberty’ tells you that you are not on your own to refuse the call. You must leave whatever you are doing and attend to the call. This appellation may be used when people are being called for war, to rescue emergent situations such as attack coming from persons or animals, when there is fire outbreak, etc.

### 4.3 Conclusion

The various meanings of the appellations discussed in the chapter show that the perception of the people of the Asogli about appellation is not necessarily about drinking. It is more about social relations. I therefore agree with Sowah (2008: 82) that “the beauty and values, as well as, the richness of social relations and

interactions are seen through sources, nature, themes, classification, linguistic and literary merits and delivery of appellation.”

## CHAPTER FIVE

### A SOCIOLINGUISTIC ANALYSIS OF ASOGLI APPELLATIONS

This chapter provides us with information about the sociolinguistic analysis of the appellations in the Asogli state. The various sections discussed include the forms and style of appellation, the mode of composition and recitation, the ethnographic context of use, and its significance in the lives of the people.

#### 5.1 Forms of appellation

Appellation can take different forms. It could be just a word or phrase, or “sentences of different structures and types indicating various aspects of discourse” (Sowah 2008: 48). It can also take the form of a full verse (poem). While some of the appellations in the Asogli state take the form of short poems, others are discourse which is normally preceded by a word, representing the stem of the discourse. A few of them, especially those that represent the names of the divisions in the state, are single words which have meanings.

##### 5.1.1 Appellation as a poem

Some appellations take the form of a poem, which can be performed through recitation, just like any other oral art forms. Mulokozi (1997) describes the crafty nature with which Selemani Habibu, a young Tanzanian bard, uses the wind instrument (zither) and the mouth to perform the *enanga*, a Tanzanian traditional

poetry, with great eloquence and expertise. He said that, “as praise poetry, *enanga* is used to gratify kings, heroes and traditional spirits in the communities in Tanzania. In present days, presidents and cardinals are also praised with *enanga*.”

Appellation as a poem may be long or short, and which may also be sung as a song. Consider the following appellation of the people of Asogli state

- i. *Ho ka Akorli, wo meka Hoawo tɔ o*  
*Hoawoe! Asorgliawoe! Ewedukɔwoe!*  
*Ɖɔtsɛawo fe Tenu, Asorgliawo fe Hlɔkui*  
*Hoɖemakɔwo fe vledoe*  
*Agbogbomefia, Fiaga gbɔ loo!*  
*Asor Ladza, Dra Dzo Sika be womaka yetɔ o*  
*Okrebekuku, Wotɔe kpɔ, Wotsɔe ɖoa nyi*  
*Omlintimlim, Edo le kɔ me, kɔ gba* (Ref. chapt.1, p. 3)
- ii *Howusu krakani kokoroko*      Howusu krakani kokoroko  
*Ɖutsu mesena haha sina o.*      A man does not run away at the shout of ‘hey,  
*Afi aɖeke menye kpome o*      There is no hiding place  
*Tue bɔbɔna nu.*      It is the gun that cools down situations.

The appellations in examples (i) and (ii) are poems. Example (i), a relatively long poem, can be referred to as a narrative, while example (ii), which is a short poem, is known as witticism (Okpewho 1992).

### 5.1.2 Appellation as a discourse

Appellations may also take the form of a discourse, made up of the various sentence types: declarative, imperative, interrogative and exclamatory (Sowah: 2008). According to Gray (1984) as cited in Sowah (2008: 48), “a discourse is conversation or a serious discussion or examination of a learned topic.” The discourse appellations that are identified by the Asoglis are those of declarative, imperative and interrogative.

#### 5.1.2.1 Declarative appellations

These are appellations which are formulated in the form of declaration. Declarations are indeed statements that say that events have occurred. It is a statement which states generally accepted information about something or somebody. Appellations are said to be declarative when the statement is official, and can be said to be “legally binding on the owner and the society as an article of faith, philosophy and principle and guide to conduct and education” (Sowah 2008: 49). Here are some examples of declarative appellation:

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| i. <i>Ahorsu: Ahorsu foklo maɖu klo</i>                                   | 1 |
| <i>Ebe yee fo klo tsi dɔdɔe</i>   | 2 |
| <b>Ahorsu:</b> Ahorsu (Eagle) hunted tortoise but cannot eat the tortoise | 1 |
| It says that it hunted the tortoise but goes hungry                       | 2 |

The above statement gives us information that is generally true about the eagle and the tortoise. In life, the eagle can hunt other birds and eat them, but even if the eagle hunts the tortoise, it can never eat it because of the shell. This is a sort of philosophy expressed with this declarative appellation by the people of the Asogli state. This tells us that in life, while certain things are possible, others are not possible.

ii *Adase: Adase mayɔ ke*

Adase (Thanks) never fills pocket.

The philosophy in example (ii) above is simple. It states that you can never make profit when you continue to sacrifice your profit for “thanks.”

### 5.1.2.2 Imperative appellations

According to Sowah (2008), imperative discourse is the one which is extremely important and urgent. An imperative discourse is a commanding one, which tells something or someone what to do, when to do something, or how to do it ([www.Grammar.com/Grammar Checker](http://www.Grammar.com/Grammar_Checker) 15/03/2012). In our societies, people issue commands, in order to compel response and action. Therefore, appellations which reflect the phenomena as described above can be referred to as imperative appellation.

i. *Tsɔna: Tsɔna menɔa ame si dɔwua ame o.*

Give out: One does not go hungry while he or she has “Give out.”

*Tsɔna* ‘Give out,’ the stem of the appellation, is imperative in nature. It is a short form of the Ewe imperative, *tsɔe na* ‘give it out.’ The statement commands someone to give out something to somebody. The response of the appellation, *menɔa ame si dɔwua ame o*, explains the situation which necessitates the order. In this context, the command *Tsɔna* forces someone to give out something that he or she has. This is an intangible thing that is possessed. This possession may refer to the ability to use language in order to get something from somebody. Some believe it to be a chant or juju. With the response, the idea is that, if you have this ability to use language to convince others, you can’t be denied whatever you want from people. In society, people may resort to *Tsɔna* for credit facility or borrowing if they need something urgently at the time that they don’t have money to afford it.

### **5.1.2.3 Interrogative appellations**

Sowah (2008: 52) also notices that some appellations are interrogative in nature. He realizes that, “in the society, people ask probing, leading and rhetoric question in order to either disseminate information, provoke thought or share knowledge and experience” (page 52). Questions may also be designed in order to make enquiries. It is evident that some of the appellations in the Asogli state are interrogative in nature. They ask questions in order to get and disseminate information through the behaviour of certain things and people in the world. One example of interrogative appellation is the appellation of Kegbome clan as stated below:

vii. *hwana beka abredzima?*

Who will talk about cobra?

This is an appellation designed in order to spread information about certain people through questioning. That is, the people are dangerous in terms of battling with other people. This information is made to public domain through questioning the nature of *abredzima* ‘cobra’ which is known to be a dangerous creature.

### 5.1.3 Proverbial appellations

Appellations can also take the form of a proverb. “A proverb is a peculiar linguistic medium of communication, which is usually a terse sentence or a pithy statement, so frequently repeated that it has come to acquire a fixed form” (Agyakwa 1979 as cited in Sowah 2008: 70). According to Sowah, proverbs are full of wisdom, truth, and style meant to enrich utterances and addresses. It is also a short simple saying of our elders and ancestors full of concepts and ideas about life. Yankah (1989: 11) also defines proverb as “a short, generally known sentence of the folk which contains wisdom, truth, morals, and traditional views in a metaphorical, fixed and memorisable form, and which is handed down from generation to generation.” To him, proverbs are the children of experience, wisdom of the streets and true words.

Some appellations have the same features, as described for proverbs. They all show the skills of wisdom, aesthetic creativity and describe, explain and comment on the activities of men, as well as plants, animals and objects. The difference

between appellation and proverb may be seen in the recitation. Appellations are recited or chanted. This is not common with proverb. Also, prefaces such as *tsitsiawo be* ‘the elders say’ are not applicable to appellations, but applicable to proverbs. The following appellations, as discussed at page 74 and 75 are examples of proverbial appellations: *Akpa medzia vi woɖia adewu o* ‘the offspring of tilapia does not resemble mud fish,’ and *Atikese meɣa xeɓi o* ‘the tree that bears flowers does not have to call birds.’

## **5.2 Stylistic qualities of the appellations of the Asogli state.**

Style is the manner in which language is used in prose or verse. It is how speakers or writers say whatever they want to say. According to Adzei and Angsotinge (2010: 27), “the style of a particular work may be analyzed in terms of its diction (choice of words); its structure and pattern of sentences; its figurative language, and other formal features.” The style of the appellations of the Asogli state reflects the above definition.

### **5.2.1 Diction**

Diction is simply the choice of words used by the writer or the narrator. In diction, the narrator or writer decides whether to use words formally or informally, connotatively or denotatively, literally or figuratively. A close study of the

appellations in the Asogli state therefore reveals the use of the following language type:

i. Archaic and lofty language which may need interpretation even to the local listeners. Consider the following extract from the appellation of the Asogli state at page 4:

*Hoawoe! Asorgliawoe! Ewedukɔwoe!*

*Dɔtsɛawo fe Tenu, Asorgliawo fe Hlɔkui*

*Hoɔmekɔwo fe vledoe*

In the above appellation, the word *tenu* ‘begotten son,’ *hlɔkui* ‘the only son’ and *vledoe* ‘precious son’ are all archaic and lofty words. These words need to be explained to even the local listeners for the understanding of the appellation. *Tenu*, for instance, is a biblical word which was used to describe Jesus as the only begotten son of God. This is likened to the chief, who is considered as the only begotten son of the people of the Asogli state. The use of this word is to show how important, how precious the chief is to the people. Also, the statement, *Hoɔmakɔwo fe vledoe* ‘the precious of Ho that cannot be carried,’ is lofty and needs to be interpreted to even most of the indigenous Asogli people. According to Mr Xedagbi Vidzreku, the radio presenter of the programme, *ele afe le gbe*, appellations lose their values when they are said in language that is understood by everybody. As a result, appellations are mostly said in archaic and lofty language.

ii. Comparison with animals such as the lion, elephant, tiger, leopard, cat, snake, and birds such as eagle, etc. The strength of people is usually conveyed by referring to them as these animals. For example:

*hwana beka abredzima?* ( Akan)

Who will talk about cobra?

Here, the interrogative appellation compares the dangerous nature of the *abredzima* to the people of the Asogli state. They are as dangerous or poisonous as the cobra. Therefore, if you dare pick fight with them, they will deal with you.

iii. Use of attributes of plants, nature, atmospheric entities such as thunder, sun, storm, etc. Among the Ewes, the thunder god is referred to as *Tɔhonɔ*. Some people also own this as their personal name, thus equating themselves with *Tɔhonɔ* ‘the thunder god’ who has the divine attributes. The full form of this appellation is: *Tɔhonɔ, edze ga dzi gaɖe gbe* ‘the thunder god, it drops on metal and the metal resounds.’ *Tɔhonɔ* also represents the praise name of *Yeve* ‘the thunder god’ (Agodzi 2000).

### 5.2.2 Structure of appellation

Composition of appellation is organized in a certain manner. Most appellations consist of the stem and the response. The stem may be a word, which is a noun or nominal compound, formed out of a phrase, a clause or even a sentence. The stem which is mostly the main idea of the appellation triggers the response. The stem and the response constitute the full text. In some cases, the performer decides to

start the appellation from the response to the stem. Other appellations, especially praise poetry, may be without a stem. Let us look at the following examples:

i. *Sokpe: edze ati da hle*

**So's stone (thunderbolt):** it strikes a tree and the branches scatter.

ii. *Edze ga dzi ga de gbe: enyeTɔhonɔ*

It drops on the metal and the metal resounds: **it's me Tɔhonɔ.**

iii. *Ho ka Akorli, wo meka Hoawo to o*

*Hoawoe! Asorgliawoe! Ewedukɔwoe!*

*Dɔtsɛawo fe Tenu, Asorgliawo fe Hlɔkui*

*Hoɔemakɔwo fe vledoe*

*Agbogbomefia, Fiaga gbɔ loo!*

*Asor Ladza, Dra Dzo Sika be womaka yetɔ o*

*Okrebekuku, Wotɔe kpɔ, Wotɔe ɔoa nyi*

*Omlintimlim, Edo le kɔ me, kɔ gba* (Ref. chapt.1, p. 3)

In example (i), the appellation starts with the stem, which is *Sokpe*, followed by the response: *edze ati da hle*. It means that the first performer mentions the appellation of his friend, who is the second performer, and he, the second performer replies with the response of the appellation. The structure is different in example (ii). Here, instead of mentioning the stem of the appellation, the first performer decides to rather recite the response of the appellation of his friend. This allows the other person who bears the name to accept the response by

mentioning the name. This is what he does by saying: *enye Tɔhonɔe* ‘it is me *Tɔhonɔ*’ in example (ii). In example (iii), the appellation is a praise poetry which is without a stem. The performer goes straight and recites the poem in praise of someone, or something. The various structures discussed above help to bring out the aesthetic qualities of appellations.

### **5.2.3 Figurative language**

Figurative language “is a form of expression used to convey meaning or touch the feelings and emotions of readers often by comparing or identifying one thing with another that has a naming or connotation familiar to the reader or listener” (Agyekum 2007: 106). It is a language used both in written and oral literature, in order to beautify a piece of literary work with the mind of attracting the attention of the listeners and audience. Some of the figurative expressions, in other words figures of speech, identified in the appellations of the Asogli state include metaphor, personification, apostrophe, ideophones, allusion, repetition and piling.

#### **5.2.3.1 Metaphor**

Metaphor is a statement which compares one thing to another, basically without the use of connectives, such as “like,” “as,” “than,” as in simile. It states that one thing is something else, which in literal terms, it is not. In order to show that one is

like or more than certain characteristics, the composers of appellations make use of metaphor. Consider the following examples:

vi. *Agblegui*: *Agblegui gokaya, ebe yee wɔ dɔ fle seda kple ago.*

Agblegui: he said he worked and bought *seda* and *ago*.

The understanding of this appellation is that, the bearer of the name, *Agblegui*, derived from *Agblegodui* ‘farm short,’ considers himself as the object in question. *Agblegodui*, such a dirty and thorn clothing is usually laughable in the society. In spite of all, it is through the efforts of this so-called useless clothing that the farmer has been able to buy those expensive cloths referred to in Ewe as *seda* and *ago*. This gives us an image of people who are not regarded in society, yet the society cannot do without them. People whose jobs are looked down upon, but they managed to acquire wealth and produce great men and women. This is indeed *Agblegui/Agblegodui*..

### 5.2.3.2 Personification

In this device, the composers of appellations cleverly make the non-humans behave and act like human beings by the use of certain verbs, actions, nouns and sometimes pronouns (Agyekum 2007: 109). A typical example is the appellation discussed under metaphor above: *Agblegui/Agblegodui, ebe yee wɔdɔ fle sedakple ago* ‘he said he worked and bought *seda* and *ago*.’ The act of buying, we all know, is done by human beings. If *Agblegui/Agblegodui*, an inanimate, is made to buy

*seda* and *ago*, then it is being attributed human qualities. This technique does not only portray the aesthetic values and qualities, but also, make situations and ideas expressed by the appellation real.

Again, in the appellation, *ntakra nwurefi kotoko* (Akan) ‘feathers do not forget the porcupine,’ as it is the appellation of the Takla traditional area, the composer personifies the *ntakra* ‘feathers,’ because the act of forgetfulness is a human quality, which is being attributed to an inanimate, ‘feathers.’ This device is to help the people to have an image of what transpired during the war between the Asoglis and the Ashantis at the time. It reveals the beauty of the appellation as well.

### 5.2.3.3 Apostrophe

Apostrophe which goes hand in hand with personification is a way of addressing someone or something that you cannot see. In apostrophe an inanimate object, dead or absent person, an abstract thing or spirit, may be addressed as if they are ordinary persons. Composition of appellations, particularly those of the Asoglis, reveals that, the use of apostrophe is a unique and essential technique which the composers use to make their audience feel the presence of the person or thing that is being praised. As an aesthetic quality of an appellation, apostrophe shows the beauty of the phenomenon expressed in the appellations. It also helps the composer to easily express his / her thoughts in the appellation. Consider the example below:

*Oh! Torgbi Azadagli, meyo wo*

<i>Woe nye kpe si gba kpewo kata</i>	2
<i>Eh! miawo ya mie nya o, gake woya enya</i>	3
<i>Aha enye si, noe eye na wɔ̃ ava kple futɔ̃wo kata</i>	4
Oh! Torgbi Azadagli, I call you	1
You the stone that breaks all other stones	2
Eh! we don't know, but you know	3
This is the drink, take it and wage war against all the enemies	4

The above is an example of libation prayer in which the performer makes use of appellation of an ancestor spirit, Torgbi Azadagli. The performer addresses the ancestor spirit as if he is addressing a visible ordinary human being. This apostrophe is made clearer in line 3 and 4. In line 4, for instance, the performer says: *Aha enye si, noe eye na wɔ̃ ava kple futɔ̃wo kata* 'this is the drink, take it and wage war against all the enemies.' Here, the performer addresses the ancestor as if there is someone visible to take the drink.

#### **5.2.3.4 Allusion**

According to Agyekum (2007: 134), allusion is "a figure of speech that makes brief and casual indirect reference to a historical event, a person, object, or action." Okpewho (1992: 100) asserts that allusion is "a device whereby such an idea or image is used in a tightly compressed form." According to him, the origin or

source of the allusion is hardly apparent from the context in which it occurs, but the user has assumed that the speakers of the language already know the source. Allusion features in both written and oral literature. Let us look at the following example:

*Dunyo: Dunyo mēsea gbagba o,* 1

*Keta trɔ zu Dzelukɔfe* 2

Dunyo (Beautiful city): The devastation of a beautiful city takes no time. 1

The devastated Keta has turned into Dzelukɔfe 2

The above appellation alludes to the past glory of Keta, as it once became one of the urban and commercial cities, attracting all sorts of people, then to its downfall as a result of the devastation caused by the invasion of the sea and the lagoon. It goes on to allude to the absorbing of Keta (the people of Keta) into Dzelukɔfe, making Dzelukɔfe a more successful town than Keta. What it means here is that, there is no condition which is permanent. The value in this appellation makes us understand again that, there are certainties and uncertainties in life.

### 5.2.3.5 Repetition

This is one of the commonest stylistic qualities in oral literature, particularly in praise. Repetition may occur in words, phrase, a line, or even a whole discourse, in order to lay emphasis on certain points or values in the world of literature. It

makes the literary work more aesthetic. The appellations in the Asogli state have also shown some reflections of repetitions. Here are some examples:

i. *Atiku*: *Atiku atsa, ebe ye gbogbolulu*      Atiku atsa says he is on his own

*Ati bu metsena ati bu fe ku o*      No tree can bear the fruit of the other

*Kpekpe metsena adido o*      Kpekpe does not bear the fruit of baobab tree

*Atiku xemaḍu*      Atiku that cannot be eaten by birds

In the above appellation, it is clear that there is repetition of the words, *ati* ‘tree’ and *atiku* ‘seed.’ *Atiku*, in line one, is repeated in line 4, while *ati*, in line 2, is repeated in line 3. Again, in line 2 and 3, there is repetition of *metsena ... o* ‘does not bear.’ All these repetitions are to lay emphasis on the point the performer is making. That is, no tree can bear the fruit of the other. In life, every single individual is different from the other. All of us cannot live in the same way.

ii. *Owuo fri owuo, owuo fri titi*      Death from death, death from long time

*ɔḍumakuma, ɔḍumakuma*      Almighty God, Almighty God

Here, in example (ii) above, the repetition is in phrases and even lines: *Owuo fri owuo, owuo fri* ‘death from death,’ a phrase, and *ɔḍumakuma, ɔḍumakuma* ‘Almighty God, Almighty God,’ representing a full line. The emphasis here is on the existence of death. Death has been there from time immemorial. It should not be a fearful phenomenon as we live. Finally, the appellation tones down by emphasizing *ɔḍumakuma*, meaning it is only God who has power over death, and for that matter, He is the only one to fear.

### 5.2.3.6 Piling

Piling is a form of repetition whereby the performer compiles one detail or idea to another so that the whole performance builds up to a climax (Agyekum 2007: 46). Piling is also referred to as linking. This can be said to occur when the last detail on a line of a poem or song becomes the first detail in the next line. In piling, we see successive lines of poem or song built up in such a way that each line borrows an element from the last. Piling is a common feature in the performance of appellation. Here is an example, as shown in the extract of an appellation performed in the context of divination:

<i>Afa madzo kli, etɔ ku</i>	Afa you cannot avoid, the father died
<i>Etɔ ku, vi vatso kale</i>	The father died, the son became a hero
<i>Wo vli geɖe wutɔ</i>	The killer of many

It is evident from the above extract that piling exists between the end of the first line and the beginning of the second line. This device contributes to the beauty and continuity of the poem.

### 5.2.3.7 Ideophone

Ideophone is a technique which counts on sounds for the meaning of a word or utterance. In the world of ideophone, one can get an idea of the nature of the event or the inferred from the sound of the word (Agyekum 2007: 51). Some of the

appellations in the Asogli state rely on this technique in order to create vivid impression. Here is an example:

ii. *Hmm!:* *Hmm meḍe na hia dzi kpɔtɔ na o.* Hmm does never alleviate poverty

OR *Hmm! nya le dɔme* Hmm there is a matter in the stomach

The sound “hmm,” as we all know, means that one has something which has not been voiced yet. This is what the second form expresses: *Hmm, nya le dɔme* ‘Hmm, there is a matter in the stomach.’ Already, the sound tells us that there is certainly a matter that is to be voiced. Now, the matter may be a financial problem which the bearer is keeping to him, himself. “Hmm” alone may tell that the bearer is financially constrained, yet the advice: *Hmm meḍea hia dzi kpɔtɔ na o* ‘Hmm does never alleviate poverty.’ Indeed, “Hmm” will never solve your problem. You better think of a solution to your problem. The appellation is cautioning people to stop complaining too much about their problems. They should rather think of the best solutions to solving their problems.

### 5.3 Composition and Recitation of appellations

Finnegan (1970) observes that composition and recitation of praise poetry for the chief, among the Bantus, is a sole responsibility of the specialist bards. She also observes that praise poems composed about earlier chiefs are handed down, and are still used by the current chief. This situation is not so different in the composition and delivery of appellations in the Asogli state.

According to all the traditional leaders that I interviewed, the appellations, especially those of the state, the traditional areas, the clans and families, the chiefs and elders, and even those owned by individuals, were handed down from generation to generation. This would continue to be handed down to future generations as well. Even though the present users have some knowledge of meanings and sources about the appellations, they could not tell the exact persons who emerged the composers of the appellations. It is therefore a general belief that most of the appellations were conferred unto the original subjects, as a result of their roles played in the society. A few of them were taken by the subjects themselves, in order to praise, describe a phenomenon, give moral and social education, or project his or her philosophy about certain things in the world.

As to the question of new appellations, the people of the Asogli state believe that hardly will new appellations emerge. This is so, because the eras of war and migration, which gave rise to most of their appellations is over. However, some people may compose dirges and other songs in praise of some subjects. An example of such composer in the Asogli state is Israel Nanevi, popularly known as Mawettah. One of his songs is: *Nɔ ame gbɔ me dzea ame ŋu o* 'one's value is not realized until his death.'

In reciting the appellations of the Asogli state, the selection of the reciter or performer depends on the type of appellation to be recited. For example, the appellation of the Asogli state is recited by the official bard, Mr Frank Mawuko Adoba, while those of the gods and ancestor spirits are normally recited by the chief priests, all on the appropriate occasions. Apart from special bards and the

stool father, who recite the appellations of the chiefs and elders, the *atsrama* ‘the chief *atumpani* drummer’ also plays them on the drum. In addition, the followers of the chief, may also recite, drum, or pipe these appellations, as they follow the chief to official functions. Personal and social appellations may be recited by peers and friends as they meet.

#### **5.4 Ethnographic context for the use of appellations**

It is the occasion which determines the type of appellation to be performed. Among many Ghanaians, for instance, the appellations for the chief may not be performed at the drinking spot, or whenever the chief, on his own errand, is passing by. This occasion would rather be best suitable for personal or social appellations. The context for the performance of appellations, particularly among the people of the Asogli state, can be put under two main headings: formal and informal.

##### **5.4.1 Formal occasions**

Appellations or praise names may be used on formal occasions where formal address is required (Finnegan 1970: 118). In most of the societies in Ghana, particularly in the Asogli state, the types of appellation, normally used in this context include the appellations for spirits, state appellations, appellation for clans

and families, and appellations for chiefs and elders. The following are therefore some of the formal contexts in which appellations are used in the Asogli state.

#### **5.4.1.1 Festive occasions**

Generally, festive occasions, such as national celebration, Christmas and Easter celebrations, marriage ceremony, etc, may call for the use of appellations in most Ghanaian communities. For example, praise poetry may be recited in honour of the president of the republic of Ghana, before or after his official address on national days like the Independence Day. Christians and all other religions all over the world, also pour a lot of praise names not only on their spiritual divinities, but also, on some of their important personalities on certain festive occasions for one reason or the other. We also see the bride and the groom been praised with different kinds of names during marriage ceremonies.

Likewise, in our traditional societies, a lot of these praise names are showcased when we are celebrating our traditional festivals. In the Asogli state, for instance, festivals have become the major occasion where most of the appellations, especially those pertaining to the state (Asogli state), to the clans and families, to the spirits, and to the chiefs and elders are used. For example, during the durbar of the Asogli yam festival, the state bard has to recite all the appellations of the various traditional areas that make up the Asogli state before the chief of Asogli (Torgbe Afede XIV) gives his formal speech.

Praise names are also sung or drummed in honour of the chiefs and elders throughout, especially during the procession to the durbar ground. Also, during rituals in preparations for the festival, praise poems are recited in honour of the Supreme God, and the gods and ancestor spirits of the land.

#### **5.4.1.2 Enstoolment of chiefs**

Praise names are also sung, recited or drummed whenever a new chief is to be installed. At the installation ceremony, the chief is taken through a lot of rituals. Therefore, in every ritual, different kinds of praise names are recited in order to let the chief, as well as his subjects, know of the powers which are backing the chief. This is also to encourage the chief to move into actions. The praise names in this context include the appellation of the stool and the spirits. The chief is also expected to make and take vows from other chiefs during installation. This also goes with the use of praise names being sung and drummed by the bards.

#### **5.4.1.3 Death of chiefs and elders**

Appellations normally precede the announcement of death of chiefs and other individuals, whose contributions have brought goodwill and laurels to the society. They include warriors, hunters and others, who have ever defended the society in one way or the other. The appellations serve as preambles to the announcement of the death of these categories of people. Appellations are also used during their

funerals, especially when they are laid in state. According to the state bard, Frank Mawuko Adoba, and the Fiator of Kpenoe traditional area, Mr Prosper Mlimor, the appellations of these people at their funerals are necessary, because it reminds people once again, of their crucial roles they ever played in the society.

#### **5.4.1.4 Announcement and honour of important guests**

Finnegan (1970: 118) observes among the many West African societies that “drummers at the king’s gate play not only the king’s praise names, but announce and honour important guests by drumming or piping their names as they enter the palace.” Similarly, the chief *atumpani* drummers in the areas of the Asogli state play the appellations of their chiefs. Others pipe their praise names, just to give honour to the chief. They also announce and honour important guests by drumming their praise names. At other functions, such as durbar, these drummers and pipers are placed at vantage points, a position from where they see and announce the presence of chiefs and other important guests, by drumming and piping their appellations.

#### **5.4.1.5 Academic achievements and graduation ceremonies**

Appellations are also used at the ceremony of academic achievement and graduation of someone. Appellations may be sung or recited at the graduation ceremony of someone or people who have achieved academic success. In Ho

Polytechnic, for example, appellations are sung or recited during the passing out ceremony of students, either in honour of the graduants or the chiefs and other dignitaries present.

#### **5.4.1.6 Preparation towards war**

Another important ethnographic context for the use of appellations among the Ewes is when people are preparing to go for war. History has it that most of the appellations of the Asogli state trace their sources to war, and so the same appellations were being used as a sort of encouragement and power to move forward and fight. The words and meanings of these appellations do not only give them a mindset about war, but they also motivate them to move ahead and fight. Again, there is the belief that, when the spirits are properly communicated with, using the right appellations, they would become victorious in whatever war situation they find themselves.

According to Prosper Mlimor Tsigbe of Kpenoe and Mr Agbeshie Ayim of Takla, even though war situations are no longer the case in the Asogli state, they recite a number of their appellations as they prepare to face any internal or external attack.

#### **5.4.1.7 Pouring of libation**

Libation is one of the most important religious rituals of the Ewe traditional religion. It is a traditional prayer which is very essential to the traditionalist

(Agbedor 1996: 25). Libation prayer is characterized by the use of praise names, especially, those of the gods and ancestor spirits. It normally starts with the appellations of the Supreme God before the lesser gods and the ancestor spirits.

Here is an extract of Ewe libation prayer as recorded by Agbedor (1996: 46):

Oh! I call Great God Kitikata;  
Master of Craftsman;  
Made He the hands and the feet;  
And everything under the sun;  
I call Togbi Wenya,  
The Great Leader of the Ewes  
Who by great courage,  
Led the Ewes from Notsie  
I call Togbi Avada,  
He said he went to war,  
And killed a cow;  
I call Togbi Azadagli,  
The great stone,  
That breaks all other stones;  
I call Togbi Ladzaka,  
He swallowed the children of the lion;  
I call all the Ancestors,

Known and unknown,

I call you all.

#### 5.4.1.8 Divination

Divination can be said to be the act of finding out about the future by receiving signs from the spirit world. In the Asogli state, people resort to divination for different reasons. From time to time, there is divination in order to find out about the future occurrences in the various traditional areas of the Asogli state, in order to make sacrifice to stop bad occurrences from happening, and pave the way for the good ones to come. This is what the Ewes refer to as *dufa* ‘town divination.’ There are also divinations at the clan and family level, shrine level and individual level. In invoking the spirits for the divination, *Tɔbokɔ* ‘the chief diviner’ normally makes use of appellations or praise names for the spirits. For example, *avavikpe*, the war god, is praised as: *avavikpe, ava nɔ tofo, ebe yee nɔ aza dzi aza gli*. Here is an extract of *dufa* in which the *Tɔbokɔ* invokes the Afa cult spirit with appellations:

<i>Afa madzo kli, etɔ ku</i>	Afa you cannot avoid, the father died
<i>Etɔ ku, vi vatso kale</i>	The father died, the son became a hero
<i>Wo vli gedɛ wutɔ</i>	The killer of many
<i>Ebe yexɔ ame tɔ</i>	You want one’s father
<i>Xɔ ame nɔ</i>	You want one’s mother
<i>Dutsu aɖu ŋutsitsi</i>	Man with white teeth

*Be yeano xome adu gbɔ* Wants to stay indoor to feed on goat (Agozie 2000: 106).

#### **5.4.1.9 Funerals**

Praise names may be used among friends and peers when they meet at funeral. One person normally mentions the stem of his friend's appellation, followed by the recitation of the response from the other person at the time they are shaking hands. Sometimes too, the dead person is referred to with all kinds of praise names. This may be sung as a dirge by a group, as in the *anyokrom* group of the Akans

#### **5.4.2 Informal occasions**

Praise names, among friends and peers are also heard at social places such as drinking spot, sports field, etc. They are also used during occasions like communal labour to motivate individuals or groups to work hard. Most often, appellations are heard when games, such as playing cards, ludo, draughts or oware, are being played. These are normally personal and social praise names. The winner may be praised with a lot of appellations that befit the situation. For example:

***Galey guda:*** *ebe yee bɔ gagawo kpe*

(The slim metal that can bend says it is the one that brought all other metals together)

The slim metal that can bend here refers to the winner, and all other metals refer to the losers. In building or construction, the steal benders use the slim or small size metal to tie the other big size metals. Therefore, in this appellation, the winner assumes himself as the small size metal, who has defeated his colleagues, referred to as the other metals. The appellation is therefore a metaphor.

As a form of teasing, the loser may also receive some kinds of appellation. For example:

*Tsetsebogidi azagidi: ebe yee nye xedzedevudzi* 1

*Ye medoa vu fe ku o.* 2

Tsetsebogidi azagidi says he is the bird that rests on kapok tree 1

He does not wish the death of the kapok tree. 2

Here, *tsetsebogidi azagidi*, the stem of the appellation, is the bird, which refers to the loser of the game, while *vu* ‘kapok tree’ in the appellation refers to the winner. This bird depends so much on the kapok tree for shelter therefore it cannot wish its death. In a nutshell, the bird cannot live without the kapok tree. The kapok tree therefore serves as a sort of master to this bird. When the loser is referred to as such, it means he is always a servant to the winner. He always has to depend on the winner. Simply the winner has upper hand over the loser.

Sometimes, the personal and social appellations of the contestants are used to praise them. Praise names that make reference to plants and animals are also used figuratively in this context, in order to communicate a particular message. All this makes the game lively and interesting.

### **5.5. The socio-cultural roles of appellations in the lives of the Asogli people**

First and foremost, the genre acts as an inducement to action and ambition. Traditional leaders, warriors, hunters, politicians, or even a whole society can be stirred into action at the mention of their appellations. They can be moved to do certain things, or take certain decisions, in order to preserve the dignity embedded in the appellation. In most cases, the meanings in the appellations give them a mindset that makes them play certain roles by taking certain actions. For instance, the appellation of Dome division of Ho describes the people as warriors, and so they always have the notion that, should there be war in the Asogli state, they would have to lead the people to fight and bring victory. Most traditional leaders bring back to memory their appellations and act accordingly. For example, the appellation of the people of Ahoé division asks the people to be at the front whenever the Asoglis are in convoy going to places like durbar. The chief and people of Ahoé therefore play this role as stated in their appellation without fear.

As noted by Finnegan (1970:143), appellations can also be a vehicle of recording history. Knowledge about genealogies, in other words, the history of the people, is embedded in their state appellations. Almost all the appellations of the Asogli state, those of the clans and families, chiefs and elders, and some personal ones depict the historical background of the subjects (people). The appellation of the people of Takla, for instance, depicts how the people of Takla, by their mystical powers, fought the Ashantis.

Appellations or praise poetry can also serve as a source of environmental studies. People get to know much about the ecology, flora and fauna and their behaviour. Appellations are products of the environment. They provide us with information about things, such as the ecology, plants and animals in the environment. Appellations may describe and tell us the behaviour of these things. Knowledge about our environment would help us understand and appreciate things in our environment. A typical example is appellations for plants and animals, discussed in the earlier chapter. Through these appellations, we have been able to know about the things that surround us. For example, the appellation about the eagle helps us understand that, the eagle that hunts birds and eat them cannot eat the tortoise, even if it (the eagle) hunts the tortoise. This tells us that, in life, there are possibilities and impossibilities.

The recitation of the praises of the chief and his ancestors serves to point out to the listeners the chief's right to the position he held both through his descent from those predecessors whose great deeds were commemorated and through his own qualities so depicted in the poetry.

The genre helps the people of the Asogli state to develop their intellects. The composition and use of appellations enable these people to develop intellects in the areas of narration, memorization, analysis, comparison, evaluation, all of which are involved in the use of appellations. According to Mr Frank Mawuko Adoba, the chief bard of the Asogli state, the recitation of the appellations of the Asogli state has made him develop skills, which he uses to memorize any other texts with ease. Mr Prosper Mlimor Tsigbe also confirmed that the appellations and the

histories surrounding them make it possible for him to compare how the world looked like in the past, and how it is presently. This may help them to deal with their personal and social issues.

Appellations are embodiments of a value system. They are guide to conduct, and can also be used as tools for education. As noted by Sowah (2008: 75), “appellations are acceptable norms meant to regulate the life of the people. Appellations help citizens to learn the ethical norms at the early stages of life. Community’s beliefs and practices are enhanced through the delivery of the genre.” The observation of Sowah is a direct reflection on the communities in the Asogli state. Both the youth and adults are exposed to the worldview of the people, in such areas as taboos, practices, rules and regulations.

## **5.6 CONCLUSION**

It has been noticed in this chapter that appellations are themselves literary devices whose rendition may be done implicitly or indirectly through other forms of literary genre. The various forms and stylistic qualities identified in the appellations of the Asoglis evoke the aesthetic qualities and values of the genre. We have also noticed that the appellations of the Asoglis are used in certain contexts. Every context selects its appellation. While appellations for spirits, state, clans and families, chiefs and elders may be used on formal occasions such as festive, enstoolment, death of chiefs and elders, divination, libation, war,

announcement, social and personal ones see their place in informal settings like drinking spot, playing field, etc.

Recitation of the appellations of the Asoglis is the responsibility of the bards, chief priests, stool fathers and the *atsrama* 'the talking drum player.' Apart from few praise songs and dirges which are still being composed, the appellations of the Asoglis are said to be handed down from generation to generation. These appellations do not only induce our leaders into action, but also, they serve as a vehicle for recording history, and help to communicate to listeners the right of the chief to the stool.

## CHAPTER SIX

### SUMMARY, RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONCLUSION

#### 6.1 Introduction

This study sought to show the sociolinguistic analysis of the appellations in the Asogli state in the Volta region of Ghana. It is based on the theory that language is a powerful tool, which can be used to view and understand the worldview and philosophy of a particular society. The appellations in the Asogli state can best be understood and analyzed when one is well-versed in the socio-cultural practices and the language and culture of the Asoglis.

Five objectives were set for the study: to document the appellations in the Asogli state; to bring to light the meanings of the appellations, the beliefs and spiritual connotations surrounding the appellations, to identify the place of appellations in the lives of the people of the Asogli state, to unearth the literary features and devices which are characteristic of appellations, and to find out the origin of these appellations. These objectives have been achieved by making a collection of appellations in the Asogli state, and analyzing and interpreting them.

#### 6.2 Summary of the findings

The findings of the study are stated below:

The study reveals that all appellations have meanings which can normally be traced to the source of the appellation. The meanings and the ethnopragmatic

import of the appellations of the Asoglis, to a large extent, do not only reveal the historical background, but also, affect their thoughts and perceptions. Thus, the appellations of the people of Dome in the Asogli state makes the people have the notion that, they have a crucial role to play, should war break up in the Asogli state. This is due to the meaning they deduce from their appellation: *tue bobɔa nu* ‘it is the gun that cools situations.’ The meanings of the appellations again reveal the values that are embedded in the genre, making people to appreciate and use it. We have been able to understand some of the socio-cultural practices of the people of the Asogli state out of the meanings of these appellations. The meanings of some terminologies, idiomatic expressions and proverbs, peculiar to the Asoglis, have also been brought to light through the study of this genre.

The study exposes the main sources of the appellations, especially those of the state, those of the spirits, and those of the clans and families, as the war and the migration saga that had confronted the people. These are the appellations that moved our forefathers to fight and achieve the laurels, as well as the freedom which we are enjoying today.

Personal and social appellations, as well as those of plants and animals, are normally drawn from the environment, either to teach values or to unveil certain phenomena or philosophy in life.

The study reveals that the Asoglis had ever been colonized by the Akwamus and later on entered into war with them (the Akwamus) and the Ashantis. These

events, among others, account for the reason why some of the appellations are in Akan language.

*Ntakra nwurefi kotoko*

‘Feathers, do not forget the pocupine’

The name of the place, ‘Takla’ even, according to my consultants, was taken from the Akan word *Ntakra* ‘feathers,’ as a result of a war.

Indeed, I have found out that some of the appellations have beliefs and spiritual connotations associated with them. Some praise names are even juju words, as observed by the general public. Appellations that invoke the spirits, both the divine and ancestor spirits, are all backed by beliefs and spiritual connotations, and as such, they are only used on special occasions. This applies to most of the appellations of the various traditional areas, as well as the appellations of clans and families in the Asogli state, and even some personal and social appellations. As a result, some rituals had to be performed before the researcher was exposed to some of these appellations.

However, not all appellations have spiritual connotations. Most appellations are just praise names that move people into action, and also control people to live up to expectations. They inculcate into people morality and values. Most personal and social appellations, appellations for plants and animals, and some others, be it for clans and families, are all in this category.

Appellations also have the following socio-cultural roles to play in the lives of the people of Asogli: the genre moves the chiefs and people of Asogli into action. A typical example is the appellation of the chief and people of Dome traditional area

(Ref. page 59). Among others, Togbe Howusu at the time was moved by his appellation to lead the entire Asoglis into war against the Akwamus and the Ashantis in 1833 and 1869 respectively; the genre serves as a tool for recording history; it is a source of studying the environment of the Asogli state; they are embodiments of a value system and so, they are guide to conduct, and are used as a tool for educating the people of Asogli.

### **6.3 Recommendations and Suggestions**

It can be deduced from the findings that the migration of the Ewes from Dɔtɛ and the war saga that had once characterized the people of Asogli state are very important events in the composition of the appellations of this area. Efforts should therefore be made to properly document the history of the Asoglis, particularly these two events. This would serve as a reference source not only of the appellations, but also of all other genres of oral literature.

Oral genres, particularly appellations, contain our worldview, history, cherished values, fears, hopes and aspirations. It is useful to suggest that the genre should form part of other oral genres, such as story-telling, folksongs, etc, that are integrated into the curricula and pedagogical schemes of Ghanaian schools. Policy makers should indeed ensure the effective teaching and learning of the genre, as well as all oral art forms. Organizers of the school music and cultural festivals should make provision for the exhibition of the genre. Teachers and all stakeholders should encourage pupils to appreciate the genre. Teachers should

make their pupils understand that, even appellations that have spiritual connotations, and the drums used to play them are not evil. Indeed, “if we desire a purposive education for Ghanaian children, then social and cultural institutions like appellations, that buttress the entire life of the society, should be used to prepare them to play meaningful roles in society by inculcating into values through the oral literature” (Abarry 1994).

The public, particularly the youth, should be encouraged to venture into the world of appellations, and learn to use them in order to derive both the linguistic and socio-cultural benefits that are inherent in the genre. People should be educated on the need to study oral art forms. The derogative perceptions that oral literature is barbaric and heathen should be disabused through enough education, using the media and our institutions.

Researchers should be encouraged to go into the areas of the oral genres, in particular appellations. The government, Non-Governmental Organizations and institutions should resource and finance prospective researchers so that they can undertake researches intensively, in order to document and unearth all the values embedded in these genres. This would help preserve, promote and appreciate our age-old oral traditions, and again, add up to efforts being made by Africa as a continent to rediscover itself after a debilitating colonial experience.

## 6.4 CONCLUSION

The negative impression about oral literature could only emanate from a lack of understanding of the real nature of oral literature and the meaningful role it can play in the society. In this study, I have made people understand that the literature does not deserve such labels: 'primitive and 'heathen.' Oral literature contains our worldview, history, cherished values, fears, hopes and aspirations. This literature teaches life at the traditional level and provides the foundation for a sense of cultural identity, group awareness and solidarity.

I have argued in this study that the language used in the transmission of appellation messages can be viewed as a powerful tool to view and understand the worldview and philosophy of a particular society. The beliefs, ideology, religion, culture, philosophy and thoughts of the Asoglis are reflected in their oral art forms, in particular appellations.

Investigation into the sociolinguistics of appellations in the Asogli state proves that the appellations in the Asogli state convey meanings, most of which are drawn from the context of war, migration and the environment. The meanings in these appellations, to some extent, affect not only the belief system of the Asoglis, but also their ideological and philosophical life. This would definitely make the people have perceptions and thoughts, different from that of other societies.

A critical examination of the appellations in the Asogli state classifies them into: appellations of the various traditional areas which make up the Asogli state, appellations of the spirits, both Supreme God and lesser deities, appellations of

chiefs and elders, appellations of families and clans, social and personal appellations, appellations for plants and animals, and appellations played on surrogates. We have also seen that appellations help in the composition of discourse, poems, dirges, proverbs, etc. The forms and the stylistic qualities, all of which are inherent in the genre, bring to light its aesthetic qualities and values. Indeed, its linguistic and social roles, such as communicative competence and a tool for recording history are highly acknowledged. Considering the fact that a few appellations have spiritual connotations and belief about the deities, it is very important for all who see ourselves as Ghanaians, and for that matter Africans, to appreciate and promote the use of this and the other oral genres. It is then that one can say he is developing, conserving and transmitting African culture from one generation to another.

## APPENDIX 1

### Verbal interview questions

These questions seek to find out about the sociolinguistics of the appellations in the Asogli state. Be assured that responses provided will be used strictly for academic purposes.

**To be answered by the various bards, chiefs and elders, queen mothers, chief priests and king makers or the custodians of the various traditional areas that constitute the Asogli state, and Mr Xedagbi Vidzreku, the producer of the programme, *ele afe le gbe* on Volta Star radio.**

1. Could you please give me some examples of praise names (appellations) of the Asogli state?
  - 1a. Could you give me their meanings?
  - 2a. Could you please give me examples of praise names that are associated with the following in your traditional area?: chiefs and elders, queen mothers, hunters or warriors or heroes, clans, families, ancestors, deities, guests, including the president, diplomatic corps and other traditional rulers.
  - 2b. Could you please give me their meanings?
3. Which kinds of people compose appellations used for the subjects mentioned in (2a), in your traditional area?
4. In which contexts do people compose appellations?

5. Which kinds of people recite appellations used for the subjects mentioned in (2a)?
6. On which occasions do they recite them?
7. During what time of the occasions do they recite them?
8. Apart from the mouth, which instruments do they use to transmit the appellation messages?
9. Could you please give me examples of cultural practices in the world that the meanings of the appellations help you to understand?
10. The appellation messages are not easy to understand, why?
11. What are some of the things in the world that the meanings of the appellations help you to understand?
12. Could you please give me examples of how chiefs and elders react when they are being praised? What do they mean by their reactions?
13. Could you tell me why some of the appellations are in the Akan language?
14. Are new appellations still being composed and recited?
15. If no, why? if yes, what are some of the new ones?
16. Could you please tell me about the spiritual connotations surrounding the use of appellations in this state?

17. Could you also tell me about the beliefs surrounding the use of appellations in this state?
18. What are some of the social roles, if any do appellations play in the development of the people of Asogli state?
19. Which roles do you think appellations play in the development of the country as a whole?
20. How do you think the appellations help the people of Asogli state, in the use of language?
21. Could you give me examples of some developmental projects, if there are, that appellations move chiefs and his elders to initiate in your traditional area, as well the Asogli state?

**APPENDIX 2**

The researcher (extreme right) in an interview session with some chiefs and elders of Takla



### APPENDIX 3

A portrait of Togbe Afede XIV, The Agbogbomefia of the Asogli state



### APPENDIX 4

Some divisional chiefs of The Asogli State



**APPENDIX 5**

Elders of Takla using appellations while pouring libation before a shrine. The researcher (extreme right) and other elders look on.



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