

**A SYNCHRONIC SOCIOLINGUISTIC ANALYSIS OF PERSONAL  
NAMES AMONG EWES**

**BY**

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**DECLARATION**

I do hereby declare that this thesis is the result of my own research done under the supervision of Dr. E. K. Amuzu and Rev. Dr. A. K. Dzameshie (both of the Department of Linguistics, University of Ghana, Legon). No part of this work has ever been published or submitted elsewhere for the award of a degree. All sources of information used in this work have been duly acknowledged and I am solely responsible for any inaccuracy that this work may enclose.

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## ABSTRACT

The study is a synchronic sociolinguistic analysis of personal names among Ewe people in Ghana. It treats as its background Egblewogbe's (1977) thesis in which he describes vividly the various types of Ewe names, their linguistic structure and their semantics. In this study a variationist sociolinguistic analysis is made to determine age, gender and regional and variations in personal names being given among the Ewe people. Four types of data were collected: registers from three Senior High schools, questionnaires, interviews, and personal observation. The study shows that the Ewe naming system has undergone some transformations due to language and religious contacts. It is shown among other things that there is a shift from traditional Ewe names to Ewe Christian religious names among Ewe people and the factors responsible for this shift are highlighted. The analysis also shows that Ewe personal names are marked morphologically and conventionally for gender. For the geographical variation, it is shown that some Ewe personal names vary depending on the location of the name bearer. The age-based variations also show that the older folks bear more Ewe names than the younger folks. On the dynamics of the use of names, the study shows that Ewes are addressed differently in different social domains depending on the participants involved in the interaction and the number of names they bear. Finally, the study shows that there is a discrepancy between the respondents' preference for their personal names and their attitudes towards the use of their Ewe names.

**TABLE OF CONTENTS**

Content	Page
<b>DECLARATION .....</b>	<b>I</b>
<b>ACKNOWLEDGEMENT .....</b>	<b>II</b>
<b>DEDICATION .....</b>	<b>III</b>
<b>ABSTRACT .....</b>	<b>IV</b>
<b>CHAPTER ONE .....</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>INTRODUCTION .....</b>	<b>1</b>
1.1 INTRODUCTION.....	1
1.2 STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM .....	2
1.3 THE EWE PEOPLE, THEIR LANGUAGE AND THEIR NAMING SYSTEMS .....	3
1.3.1 <i>The Ewe people</i> .....	3
1.3.2 <i>The Ewe language</i> .....	5
1.3.3 <i>Ewe naming system</i> .....	6
1.3.4 <i>Ewe naming ceremony</i> .....	6
1.4 SCOPE OF THE STUDY .....	9
1.5 AIMS AND OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY .....	9
1.6 RESEARCH QUESTIONS .....	10
1.7 SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY .....	10
1.8 ORGANIZATION OF THE THESIS .....	11
<b>CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW, THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK AND METHODOLOGY.....</b>	<b>12</b>
2.1 INTRODUCTION.....	12
2.2 LITERATURE REVIEW .....	12
2.2.1 <i>The typology and etymology of personal names</i> .....	12
2.2.2 <i>Functions of personal names</i> .....	27
2.3 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK .....	32
2.3.1 <i>Strength of the theoretical framework</i> .....	35
2.3.2 <i>Weakness of the framework</i> .....	36
2.4 METHODOLOGY .....	36
2.4.1 <i>School registers</i> .....	36
2.4.2 <i>Interviews</i> .....	38
2.4.3 <i>Personal observations</i> .....	39
2.4.4 <i>Questionnaire data</i> .....	40
2.4.5 <i>The use of secondary data</i> .....	40
2.4.6 <i>Data analysis and interpretation</i> .....	41
2.4.7 <i>Problems of data collection</i> .....	41
2.4.8 <i>Limitations of the methodology</i> .....	41

<b>CHAPTER THREE: TYPES OF PERSONAL NAMES.....</b>	<b>43</b>
3.1 INTRODUCTION.....	43
3.2 SPECIFIC TYPES OF EWE PERSONAL NAMES FOUND IN THE DATA .....	44
3.2.1 <i>Birthday names</i> .....	45
3.2.2 <i>Order of birth names</i> .....	46
3.2.3 <i>Clan names</i> .....	47
3.2.4 <i>Twin names</i> .....	48
3.2.5 <i>Ewe Religious names</i> .....	48
3.2.5.1 <i>Ewe traditional religious names</i> .....	50
3.2.5.2 <i>Ewe Christian religious names</i> .....	51
3.2.6 <i>Predestination names</i> .....	53
3.2.7 <i>Traditional names</i> .....	54
3.2.8 <i>Slave names</i> .....	56
3.2.9 <i>Special names</i> .....	57
3.2.10 <i>Allusive names</i> .....	57
3.2.11 <i>Discussion of the distribution of the Ewe personal names</i> .....	58
3.3 TYPES OF NON-EWE NAMES.....	60
3.3.1 <i>English Names</i> .....	61
3.3.2 <i>French names</i> .....	62
3.3.3 <i>Arabic names</i> .....	63
3.3.4 <i>Akan names</i> .....	64
3.3.5 <i>Ga names and Dagbani names</i> .....	65
3.3.6 <i>Yoruba names and Hausa names</i> .....	65
3.4 NICKNAMES .....	65
3.5 THE USE OF MULTIPLE PERSONAL NAMES AMONG EWES .....	68
3.6 THE DISTRIBUTIONAL PATTERN OF PERSONAL NAMES IN THE DATA .....	71
3.6.1 <i>Gender variations in personal names</i> .....	72
3.6.2 <i>Regional variations in personal names among Ewes</i> .....	76
3.6.3 <i>The distribution of personal names across age groups</i> .....	83
3.7 GENDER SPECIFIC VERSUS GENDER NEUTRAL NAMES .....	85
3.7.1 <i>Gender specific names</i> .....	85
3.7.2 <i>Gender neutral names</i> .....	87
3.8 GEOGRAPHICAL VARIATIONS IN THE PERSONAL NAMES .....	87
3.9 MODERNIZATIONS IN EWE PERSONAL NAMES .....	90
3.9.1 <i>Orthographic change in names</i> .....	90
3.9.2 <i>Direct translation into English</i> .....	92
3.10 REDUCTION OF FULL FORMS OF PERSONAL NAMES .....	94
3.11 CONCLUSION .....	96
<b>CHAPTER FOUR: DYNAMICS OF THE USE OF PERSONAL NAMES AMONG THE EWES .....</b>	<b>98</b>
4.1 INTRODUCTION.....	98
4.2 DOMAINS OF NAME USE.....	100
4.2.1 <i>Name use within the family domain</i> .....	101

4.2.2 <i>Discussions on the use of personal names within the family domain</i>	106
4.2.3 <i>Name use within the friendship domain</i>	112
4.2.4 <i>The use of personal names in three other domains outside the family</i>	114
4.2.5 <i>Discussion on the use of personal names in the three domains outside the family</i>	117
4.3 PREFERRED NAME USE AMONG THE EWES	120
4.4 NAME GIVERS	122
4.4.1 <i>Factors that influence the choice of a given personal name</i>	124
4.5 ATTITUDES TOWARDS THE USE OF EWE PERSONAL NAMES	130
4.6 CHAPTER CONCLUSION	137
<b>CHAPTER FIVE: CONCLUSION</b>	<b>138</b>
5.1 INTRODUCTION	138
5.2 FINDINGS	138
5.2.1 <i>Types of names and their frequencies</i>	138
5.2.2 <i>Variations in personal names</i>	140
5.2.3 <i>Dynamics of name use</i>	141
5.2.4 <i>Attitudes and preferences</i>	143
5.4 RECOMMENDATIONS	144
<b>APPENDICES</b>	<b>145</b>
APPENDIX A: QUESTIONNAIRE	145
APPENDIX B	148
INTERVIEW QUESTIONS (NAME-BEARERS)	148
APPENDIX C	149
INTERVIEW QUESTIONS (NAME-GIVERS)	149
<b>BIBLIOGRAPHY</b>	<b>150</b>

**LIST OF TABLES**

Table 3.1: Percentage of names collected from the three schools.....	44
Table 3.2: Frequency of use of Ewe names from the school registers.....	58
Table 3.3a: Gender variation in first names in school registers.....	72
Table 3.3b: Gender variation in first names in Questionnaire.....	73
Table 3.4a: Gender variation in second names in the school registers.....	74
Table 3.4b: Gender variation in second names in Questionnaire.....	75
Table 3.5a: Regional variation in first personal names in school registers.....	77
Table 3.5b: Regional variation in first names in questionnaire.....	77
Table 3.6a: Regional variation in second personal names in school registers..	80
Table 3.6b: Regional variation in second personal names in Questionnaire....	80
Table 3.7: Age-based variation in first names.....	84
Table 3.8: Age-based variation in second names.....	84
Table 3.9: Morphologically marked gender specific names.....	86
Table 3.10: Conventionally marked gender distinct names.....	87
Table 3.11: Variants of twin names in Peki.....	89
Table 4.1: The use of Ewe names within the family domain.....	101
Table 4.2: The use of English names within the family domain.....	102
Table 4.3a: Parents report on the use of Ewe names to address their children.....	105
Table 4.3b: Parents report on the use of English names to address their children.....	105
Table 4.3c: Parents report on the use of Ewe/English names to address their children.....	105
Table 4.4: The use of Ewe names within the friendship domain.....	113
Table 4.5: The use of English names in the friendship domain.....	113
Table 4.6: The use of Ewe/English names in the friendship domain.....	113
Table 4.7: The use of personal names in the school domain.....	115

Table 4.8: The use of personal names in the church/mosque domain.....	116
Table 4.9: The use of personal names in the domain of work.....	117
Table 4.10: Gender difference in preferred name use.....	121
Table 4.11: Religious background of name givers.....	126
Table 4.12: Educational background of name givers.....	128
Table 4.13: Regional variations in attitudes towards the use of Ewe names..	136

## CHAPTER ONE

### INTRODUCTION

#### 1.1 Introduction

Names are words that a person or an entity in the world is known by. Personal names are names which identify an individual in the society in which he lives and they reflect the values of the people and the society as a whole. Names given to children signal the general perception of the people and their worldview. Personal names serve as means of communication because different naming systems and forms of address select different things about the self for communication and for emphasis (Goodenough 1965:275, cited in Aceto 2002:578).

Addressing people by their names reminds them and the people around them of events surrounding the construction of the name and the social hierarchies and characteristics of these names. Some people are able to enact their embodied understanding through personal names. According to Firth (1964:60), “everyman carries his culture and much of his social reality about with him wherever he goes”. These realities are sometimes identified through the person’s personal name and his language. Personal names are usually constructed historically, maintained socially and they are based on the shared assumptions and expectations of members of the society (Akinnaso 1980).

This study is a synchronic sociolinguistic analysis of personal names among Ewe people in Ghana. It treats as its background Egblewogbe’s 1977 thesis in which he describes vividly the various types of Ewe names, their linguistic

structures, their semantics and their functions. The study focuses on the sociolinguistic aspect of personal names among Ewes and aims at determining the factors which influence people to give particular personal names to their children.

In this chapter, I present an introduction and the statement of the problem. I also present the sociolinguistic profile of the Ewe people and the scope of the study. The aims and objectives of the study and the research questions that will be addressed in order to achieve these aims are also discussed in addition to the significance and the structure of the thesis.

## **1.2 Statement of the problem**

Much work has been done on personal names in Ewe (see Egblewogbe 1977 and Agozie 2000). Those studies focus on the systems of naming, the structure, the semantics/morphology and the etymology of the names. The works did not give an account of how the Ewe people live their names. Those works rather concentrated on the socio-cultural significance of Ewe names. Studies on names in other cultures show that etymology “does not improve the name’s ability to function or increase its usefulness” (Nicolaison 1998 cited in Anderson 2007:86). With time, knowledge on the etymology of names fades and it is remembered only by a few relatives. With this in mind, it is necessary to research into how Ewe personal names are faring in the face of current globalization. This current study therefore represents a synchronic sociolinguistic analysis of personal names among the Ewes within their

indigenous social context bringing out the variations that exist among their personal names.

### **1.3 The Ewe people, their language and their naming systems**

This section discusses the history of the Ewe people and where they migrated from before settling in their present settlements in Ghana. It also talks about the language of the people and their systems of naming and the naming ceremony.

#### *1.3.1 The Ewe people*

Ewe refers to both the language and its speakers. The Ewes are the second largest ethnic group in Ghana and they occupy the south-eastern part of the country. They are believed to have migrated from Adzato (Sumeria) to the Delta of the River Nile (presently known as Egypt) where they adopted naming and circumcision of the male child on the eighth day from the Jews (cf. Anlo Hogbetsotsoza 2012:23-24). From Egypt, they moved through Ketu, (somewhere in Sudan) to Ile-Ife in Nigeria. Whilst in Ile-Ife, they learned the art of divination (Afa) from the Yorubas. When they left Ile-Ife, they split into three groups; the first group settled near the banks of the Mono River which is known as Tado, the second group settled between the Mono and the Haho Rivers also known as Notsie in the Republic of Togo and the third group settled in Adele country and established the Dogbonyigbo kingdom which is Dahomey, presently known as the republic of Benin. After some time in Dogbonyigbo, the Ewe people moved to join their brothers in Notsie.

In Notsie they started quarrelling among themselves on issues concerning throne accession. To end this quarrel, Tɔgbi Wenya enthroned his nephew Sri as the king of Dogbonyigbo. Sri's accession to the throne invoked anger and envy in Tɔgbi Agɔkɔli, the king of Notsie. Tɔgbi Agɔkɔli decided to work himself up against the Ewe people and vowed to make life miserable for them. He gave a decree that any Dogbo<sup>1</sup> chief who goes contrary to his orders should be killed. He forced them to work hard for him and ordered them to build a very thick tall wall around his kingdom using clay mixed with thorns and broken bottles. As if that was not enough, Tɔgbi Agɔkɔli again asked them to make a rope for him using clay. Looking at the difficult and unbearable situations they were going through, the various Ewe chiefs came together and took a decision on how to escape from the leadership of this wicked king of Notsie. They therefore asked their women to throw waste water against the thick wall to soften it so that they can push it down.

On the appointed night, the men pushed against the wall until it fell. They left Notsie walking backwards with the women and children in the lead followed by the men. They walked backwards because they did not want their footsteps to be traced knowing very well that the king will send his warriors after them when he discovers their escape the next morning. After they left Notsie, some of the groups settled on the Dayi plains and on the mountains. Others moved towards Adaklu and the northern part of the plains (cf. Spieth 1906). Tɔgbi

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<sup>1</sup> Dogbo: the Ewe people who later moved from Dogbonyigbo to Notsie were referred to as the Dogbos.

Wenya led the other groups south towards the sea and they founded the Anlo state. Ewes are also found in Togo, Benin and in some part of Nigeria.

### *1.3.2 The Ewe language*

Ewe belongs to the Kwa branch of the Niger-Congo language family. The language is spoken mostly in the Volta region of Ghana and some of its speakers are found across the ten regions of the country. It is also spoken in Togo, Benin and some part of Nigeria. Dialects of the language spoken in Ghana include Anlo, Tɔ̃nu, Ho, Vɛ, Kpando, Peki and Awudome. The language is studied from primary to tertiary level and it also serves as a lingua franca for other ethnic groups in the Volta region.

Ewe is a language of culture, education and trade. It is a rich source of oral tradition and oral literature. It is noted in oral tradition that before the standardization of the language, speakers of Ewe have their own way of checking linguistic inefficiency. Westerman cited in Spieth (1906:41) describes the language as a rich means of communication employed for the presentation of the materially perceptible. This language according to Spieth (1906) possesses the ability to give characteristic names to objects as it enables its speakers to translate ideas in their own opinion such that these ideas bear resemblance to the objects they name. Spieth posits further that even though Ewe is enriched accordingly through the influx of new cultural objects arriving in Eweland in a manner corresponding to the people's mind, the appreciation for the language and its use is progressively lost to the Ewe speakers through an over emphasis on the European languages.

### 1.3.3. Ewe naming system

Ewes have four major naming systems (cf. Egblewogbe 1977). These systems are categorised according to *dzɔdzɔmɛɲkɔwo* (natural names), *ɲkɔnanawo* (given names) *ɲkɔtsɔtsɔwo* (acquired names) and *subɔsubɔɲkɔwo* (religious names). The natural names are said to be inherent in the child. They are the names that he/she comes into the world with. These names may denote the circumstances surrounding the child's birth or the day of the week on which he/she is born. The given names are given to an individual at birth or later in life but the acquired names are names taken on later in life by the individual. The religious names denote the religious affiliation of the child or its parents. Details of the naming systems will be elaborately reviewed in chapter two.

### 1.3.4 Ewe naming ceremony

Naming ceremony is one of the oldest traditional practices that the people still hold on to. Naming ceremony (known as *vihehedego*) among Ewes takes place on the eighth day after the child's birth. Friends and family members are informed ahead of the day. The actual ceremony usually takes place at dawn and later followed by merry-making during the day. The naming rite is usually performed by the family head or an elderly person in the family. Before the day of the naming ceremony, the baby's parents look for someone who was born on the same week day as the baby. This person must be of good character and be of the same sex as the baby. This person will be the first person to carry the baby out and later hand it over to the mother after the naming rite has been performed. The belief is that if this person has a bad character, he/she will transfer it to the baby therefore the parents must do their homework well before choosing such a person.

When the baby is brought out, its father whispers its name to the elder performing the naming rite. The elder in turn whispers the name into the baby's ears and then pour libation asking the gods to protect the baby and provide it a bright future. Usually it is the baby's father who gives the baby its name but the mother of the baby also has the right to give it a name if she desires a name which is different from the one given by the father. After the libation, the baby is placed on the ground beneath the roof of a thatched house for dew to fall on it and its mother is allowed to pick it up after it has shed some tears. Recently, due to modernization and lack of thatched houses, the baby is placed under an iron roof sheet and water is poured on the roof to drop on it. This part of the naming rite is to tell the baby that life is not always rosy, but in the midst of all difficulties, there will always be somebody to come to its aid. The elder then dips his hand into water and drops it on the baby's tongue. He does the same with alcohol. He concludes this part of the rite with the statement: "this is water and this is alcohol, in life when you see water say it is water and when you see alcohol say it is alcohol. Let your 'yes be yes' and your 'no be no'". This act symbolizes truthfulness. By this, the elder admonishes the baby to be truthful in life and be able to distinguish between good and bad.

After the naming rituals, porridge is shared to the people present. An animal or a fowl is slaughtered (depending on the wealth of the parents) for the real merry-making to begin. In some cases the naming ceremony may not be performed on the eighth day under certain conditions or factors. One of such conditions is when the baby suffers a childhood ailment and does not recover before the eighth day, the naming ceremony is postponed. Also when the mother of the baby is unable to regain her strength after childbirth, the

ceremony can be postponed. Urbanism and the occupation of parents are also factors. Parents living in cities usually shift the naming ceremony to weekends when the eighth day falls on a weekday. This is done to make allowance for their friends and relatives who have to work during the week to be able to attend.

Naming ceremony among the Ewe unlike that of other ethnic groups such as the Yorubas (cf. Akinnaso 1980) and the Gas is a simple ceremony. It is the after party which takes a grand form depending on the financial strength of the parents. Naming ceremony is viewed as one of the important rites in an individual's life. The people believe that it is the name that differentiates one individual from another therefore name givers require knowledge of the home context principle and the philosophical principle in naming the child (cf. Agbedor 1991). According to Akinnaso (1980), naming is a way of talking about what a person (especially the name giver) "experiences, values, thinks and knows in the real world". At the naming ceremony, the baby is initiated into the society. In some societies, a baby is not recognised as a human being until it is given a name. At this ceremony, the baby is presented with gifts from friends and relatives.

Some names given to the baby depict the circumstances surrounding the birth or the social situations such as poverty within the family at the time of birth. A baby is normally not called by name before the eighth day; however, children born under special conditions/circumstances such as the manner of their birth, location of their birth or time of their birth come with names by which they may be called before the naming ceremony. For example, a child born with the leg first is called *Xevi* (bird) for male and *Xewovi* for female. A male child born

in the market is called *Asimenu* and a child born in the middle of the night is called *Zasi* for female and *Zanu* for male. These names are generated automatically once the child is born under such circumstances.

#### **1.4 Scope of the study**

The study is limited to only the synchronic sociolinguistic analysis of the use of personal names among Ewes. It does not seek to identify the various categories of Ewe personal names or analyze their structure and content as this has been adequately accomplished by Egblewogbe (1977). Instead, the study will investigate the actual use of personal names among the Ewe people and also examine the attitude of the people towards their Ewe personal names. The sociolinguistic study of names also known as onomastics is a field in linguistics which identifies the study of language innovation and attitude towards language as a cultural phenomenon on an adequate comparative basis for all groups (Thonus 1992). The sociolinguistic study of personal names is important because it helps us to identify and establish the relationship between an individual and his/her society.

#### **1.5 Aims and objectives of the study**

At the end of the research, the study will achieve the following aims:

- 1) To investigate how Ewes socialize with their personal names,
- 2) To determine whether there is any variations in the personal names given to children and
- 3) To examine the social factors that account for the departure from indigenous traditional names to foreign names.

### **1.6 Research questions**

In the process of achieving the aims and objectives of this research, the following questions will be addressed:

- 1) Which types of personal names are still being given, and in what frequency, to people of Ewe origin?
- 2) Are there any gender distinctions in the personal names being given?
- 3) How does the use of personal names relate to aspects of traditional and social way of living among the Ewes?
- 4) Are there any geographical and generational variations with respect to categories of Ewe personal names given to children?
- 5) In the face of language and cultural (especially Christian religious) contact, how are the various Ewe naming systems holding up against the lure of foreign names?
- 6) In what frequency do people depart from the Ewe names and adopt foreign personal names, e.g. Christian and Islamic names?
- 7) In cases where persons bear a mixture of Ewe and foreign personal names, which of the two do they prefer to be called by?

### **1.7 Significance of the study**

This research will provide a fresh insight into what has already been done on personal names in Ewe. It will be the first of its kind to explain the social significance of Ewe personal names. At the end of the research, it is hoped that answers to the questions will help map out the general worldview of Ewes and

their sense of identity even as they experience intensive globalization. It will also add up to existing literature on Ewe personal names by researchers such as Egblewogbe (1977) and Agozie (2000).

### **1.8 Organization of the thesis**

The research work is divided into five chapters. Chapter one gives a general introduction to the study. In this chapter, I presented an overview of the background of the Ewe people, their language and their naming practice. The research questions and the aims and objectives of the study were also presented in this chapter as well as the scope of the study. In chapter two I will do a review of literature that I consulted in the course of my research. I will also explain the details of how I collected my data and the theoretical framework. Chapter three will consist of data analysis based on the name lists I collected from the various schools and institution and the questionnaire. I will analyse the data based on the variations in Ewe personal names found in the research areas. Chapter four discussed the dynamics of name use among the Ewes and chapter five highlights the research findings and give recommendations.

## CHAPTER TWO

### LITERATURE REVIEW, THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK AND METHODOLOGY

#### 2.1 Introduction

The study of personal names has received considerable attention from both linguists and anthropologists over the years. Studies have been conducted to show the etymology of names, their structure, their meaning, their form and the phonological processes involved in their constructions. In this chapter I present a review of literature on personal names, the theoretical framework and the methods that were used to gather the data.

#### 2.2 Literature review

Literature is reviewed based on works done on personal names in Ghana and outside Ghana. Some of these works are reviewed to show the etymology and the typology of personal names and naming practices among different cultures as well as the functions of these names in some societies.

##### *2.2.1 The typology and etymology of personal names*

In this section, I will review works that talk about the typology and etymology of personal names. The studies are reviewed to show the types of personal names that exist in different cultures and their naming systems. They are also reviewed to prove the origin of the personal names and the circumstances under which they are given.

Egblewogbe's (1977) study on personal names is one of the major works on personal names in Ewe. His work talks about the etymology and the typology of Ewe personal names. It also describes the structure and the morphology of Ewe personal names and shows how these names function as speech acts in establishing aspects of the socio-cultural life and thought of Ewes. He establishes a ten Ewe naming systems which he classifies into four major groups. Each group consists of other sub-groups as shown below:

- 1) *dzɔdzɔmɛɲkɔwo* 'natural names'
  - i) *dzigbɛɲkɔwo* 'birth day names'
  - ii) *dzidzimeɲkɔ* 'order of birth names'
  - iii) *tɔɲkɔwo* 'patrilineal names'
  - iv) *ɲkɔtɔxɛwo* 'special names'
- 2) *ɲkɔnanawo* 'other names given at birth and later/given names'
  - i) *ahamaɲkɔwo* 'allusive names'
  - ii) *dɔwɔnaɲkɔwo* 'vocational names'
  - iii) *mɛgbɛɲkɔwo* 'nicknames'
- 3) *ɲkɔtsɔtsɔwo* 'names taken later in life or acquired names'
  - i) *ahanɔɲkɔwo* 'praise names'
- 4) *subɔsubɔɲkɔwo* 'religious names'
  - i) *huɲkɔwo* 'cult names'
  - ii) *tsidetɔɲkɔwo* 'baptismal names'

According to Egblewogbe, personal names in Ewe generally come from the personal experiences of the name bearers and the name givers and the circumstances surrounding the birth of the child.

The natural names he explains are names that the child comes into the world with. These names reflect the day on which the child is born, the order of birth of the child, the clan to which the child's father belongs and the manner in which the child is born. Under the natural names, we have names like *Kofi* 'a male child born on Friday', *Ama* 'a female child born on Saturday', *Mesa/Besa* 'third male child', *Tsatsu* 'second male child whose father belongs to the Agave/Tsiame clan' and *Awumee* 'a boy who is born with the foetal membrane'. The natural names also include names given to twins, triplets and children born after them.

Given names among the Ewes are names given to children by their parents and other relatives. These names are usually allusive names, vocational names, and nicknames. Allusive names, according to Egblewogbe, are "derived from circumstances that do not have any direct bearing on the children themselves rather they are socially oriented in that the ideas they express centre around man in society, his general nature, his relationship with others and with the gods" (Egblewogbe 1977:57). He explains that, names which fall within this category are supposed to make direct allusions to other people but most name givers defy this rule. They rather give allusive names to reflect philosophical statements about life and the relationship between man and the gods. Some of the allusive names include *Dzreke* 'the quarrel is ended', *Senanu* 'it is God who gives' and *Domenyozuku* 'kindness has become death'. Vocational names on the other hand are conferred on the name bearer in connection to his/her occupation or vocation. Examples are: *tela* 'tailor/seamstress', *dawɔla* 'hair-dresser', *Bigla* 'mason' and *Titsa* 'teacher'. Nicknames (*megbenkɔwo*) are given to an individual due to his/her "abnormal or anti-social behaviour". They

may also be given to the person to describe his physical appearance. Nicknames are usually not mentioned in the presence of the persons they identify because they may generate into a quarrel; that is why they are literally referred to as back-names in Ewe. Examples of nicknames in Ewe found in his work are: *ηgo* ‘forehead; a person with a long forehead’ and *Kadzavi* ‘young ape; a child whose behaviour resembles that of an ape’.

The acquired names are names an individual takes later in life as he grows up and gain his own personal experiences. They are usually praise names (known as *ahanoηkwo* which literally means ‘drinking names’). These names are most often used among peers especially the males when they sit around to drink. They are acquired or taken to show the strength and the power of the people who bear them and also to show their fulfilment or contempt in life. They usually take the form of appellations. According to Egblewogbe, even though praise names are acquired by the individual himself, a father can also give them to a child and the child uses it when he grows up. He further explains that females do not take *ahanoηkwo* unless they reach their menopause. Examples of these names are *Ahiabu* ‘a missing lover’, its appellation goes as, *ahiabu gamado ne srwo bu nado ga* ‘you cannot beat a gong when your lover is missing, you can only beat a gong when your wife is missing’. *Labada* ‘bad animal’ and *Agbleke* ‘farm soil’.

The religious names according to Egblewogbe are names that are derived from the beliefs and practices of the Ewe people. Of the religious names are cult names (*huηkwo*,) and baptismal names (*tsidetahkwo*). The religious names are given to children based on the religious affiliations of their parents. The cult names are associated with traditional religious beliefs whereas the

baptismal names are associated with Christian religion. The cult names are derived from three cult systems (common among the southern Ewes) which are the *Afa* cult, the *Yeve* cult and the *Da* cult. There are two types of baptismal names according to Egblewogbe. There is the foreign baptismal name and the local baptismal name. The foreign ones are based on biblical concepts and other European names such as *John*, *Peter*, *Naomi*, *David* and *Jessica*. The local baptismal names usually express the positive attributes of God. Example, *Mawuqem* 'God delivers me', *Elikplim* 'God is with me' *Mawuse* 'God hears my prayers'.

According to Egblewogbe, some of the personal names are determined by the circumstances surrounding a child's birth. These circumstances he says are beyond the control of the child's parents and relatives. Some of these names are also given based on the personal experiences and attitudes of the people who give or take them. Others especially the allusive names are however given in reaction to social and cultural experiences.

Egblewogbe also discusses the semantics of Ewe personal names and claims that apart from the names referring to individuals, they also have denotative and connotative meaning. According to him, these names have lexical items as roots and these lexical items denote physical objects but their connotations are found in the socio-cultural behaviour of the people. He says that, the meanings of the names can be interpreted in the contexts of man's interpersonal relationships, his relationship with the gods and his perception of life and death. Personal names that are interpreted in the context of man's interpersonal relationship denote the importance of man and the family, the problematic nature of man, the ingratitude nature of man and the loss of relatives. Examples

of such names are: *Amewuho* 'man is more important than money', *Fomevo* 'relations are strained' *Amenyedɔ* 'human being is a problem', *Amevɔ* 'man is finished' and *Nyuiabu* 'the good is hidden'. Personal names which are interpreted in the context of man's relationship with God denote the greatness of God, God's providence and love and predestination. They include: *Mawuenyega* 'God is the great one', *Elɔm* 'He loves me' and *Segbɔnya* 'something that happened in the presence of God'.

He argues that the use of personal names is socially restricted among the Ewes and identifies age and gender as social variables responsible for this restriction. According to him, younger people do not address the elderly ones by their personal names but the elderly people address the younger ones by their names. People of the same age can also address one another by their personal names; in the case of men they usually use their praise names. He also explains that whereas men are free to address women directly by name, women are not supposed to do same to men. They are expected to show respect to men when addressing them by adding some titles of address to their names.

Another work which discusses the etymology of personal names among Ewes is Agozie (2000). In discussing the etymology of indigenous religious names and the attitudes these names invoke in the name bearers and name callers in the Weta traditional area, Agozie focuses on the naming systems associated with three esoteric cults namely the *Yeve* cult, the *Da* cult and the *Afa* cult. According to him, personal names relating to these cults are chosen based on the manifestation of the various cult spirits in the initiates but rituals and ritual

objects can also be used as personal names by cult members. For example ritual objects like *ase*, *agozi*, *agbayiza*, *sokpe*, *sofatasi* and *awlaya* can be used as personal names and they have special appellations associated with them. *Ase* is a metal rod with a V shape at the top with bells attached to it. It represents the office of the cult priest and it is used by only the *Midawo* ‘chief priest’. *Agozi* is small perforated pot used in rituals and the *Agbayiza* (also known as *adodo*) is a metal rattle used by cult members during cult festivities. *Sokpe* is a sacred stone associated with thunderbolt and the *awlaya* is a skirt made from pieces of cloth and it is worn by the male cult members.

Agozie explains that the *Yeve* names are derived from two *Yeve* spirits: *So* (the male spirit) and *Agbui* (the female spirit) and members are named in accordance to how the spirits manifest in them on the day of their initiation. If a new member falls with his/her face upwards on the day of initiation, he/she is named after the *So* spirit but if he/she falls with face downwards, he/she is named after the *Agbui* spirit. The *So* names are classified into six categories and they reveal how the people relate to the spirit and what they conceive of it. The names are classified according to:

- a) The uncanny nature and anger of *Yeve* (e.g. *Sodoayade*)
- b) Taboo related names/ritual prohibition (e.g. *Hugbedzi* and *Sogbedzi*)
- c) Ritual association (e.g. *Agbodzi* and *Sotɔɔgbe*)
- d) Devotee relationship (e.g. *Husunu* and *Sovi*)
- e) Competition among the gods (e.g. *Sowubo* and *Sodzihusi*)
- f) Miracles and wonders associated with gods (e.g. *Sodolo*)

Other So names include *Misiso* 'show reverence to so', *Sofeda* 'so overcomes Da', *Sosu* 'so is sufficient', *Huto* 'owner of Yeve', *Adasode* 'so reveals anger' and *Adasosi* 'so can be wild'. Personal names associated with the *Agbui* spirit are *Dahoe* and *Huto* for males, *Atoesi* 'a devotee to Atoe', *Hudziezo* 'on orders of yeve' and *Hufodzi* 'on the path of yeve' for females.

Personal names associated with the *Da* 'snake' cult are also selected based on how the *Da* spirit manifests itself in the initiate. *Da* names include *Dawubo* 'Da surpasses sorcery', *Dayome* 'follow Da', *Dadzrohu* 'Da desires hu', *Dakomesi* 'Da has put her in an anthill' and *Dawuso* 'Da surpasses So'. The *Afa* names include *Afanyo* 'Afa is good', *Afayome* 'follow Afa', *Afawogbe* 'order of Afa', *Kpolimenya* 'mystery of Afa', *Afagbedzi* 'will of Afa' and *Afadzinu* 'Afa seeks a thing'. Agozie posits that these cult names show the qualitative differences between the Supreme Being and the gods. He says that in view of the competitive nature of some of the cult names, none of them is superior to the Supreme God.

His study also reveals that cult names bind the name-bearer to the cult therefore they invoke attitudes of fear, defilement, joy, respect, honour and sorrow when they are mentioned. According to Agozie, a cult member feels defiled when s/he is called by his/her pre-initiation name and this amounts to breaking a taboo on the side of the caller. The pre-initiation name is the cult member's original name before joining the cult. Upon joining the cult s/he is seen as a new being and s/he is given a new name, therefore calling him/her by the old name revokes the oath s/he has taken during the initiation. When this happens the defiled member takes to the bush and becomes an *Alaga* until the offender pays the fine. Failure to protest this way may cause the defiled

member to fall sick or die. Cult names also bring honour and respect to the members because of the fear and respect associated to the cults by members and non-members.

His study again shows that cult names identify the ownership of cults and the relationship a person bears with a cult. These names also reflect the various indigenous religious groups that are found in the Weta traditional area and they also expose the competition that exists among the various cults. For example names like *Sowubo* (So surpasses sorcery) and *Dawuso* (Da surpasses So) depict the competition among the cults.

Agozie explains that the cult names are not given to only cult members. Some cult names may be given to a person as a result of reincarnation or when the person is born whilst the mother is a neophyte. About the significance of cult names among the people in the Weta area, he says that these names are losing their importance due to the introduction of new religious beliefs such as Christianity and Islam. These new religions according to him are causing deterioration in people's belief in cult names and they limit the importance that people attach to these names. They are also causing the information encoded in cult names to fade.

Akinnaso (1980) also discusses the sociolinguistic principles that underlie the construction of Yoruba personal names. In so doing he gives two general conclusions on the naming practices among the Yorubas. He says that (i) a personal name can be meaningful or meaningless depending on the differences in expectations on the socio-cultural significance of personal names and (ii) the

linguistic manifestation of a personal name will differ in degrees of complexity according to the types of meaning they encode. His study reports that Yoruba naming systems generally provide a structured perspective in terms of which the individual stores, processes and makes sense out of information about his own experience and how he views the world. According to Akinnaso, the construction of Yoruba personal names requires the integration of both socio-cultural and grammatical knowledge in order for the surface linguistic form to be derived. This construction is based on the lexical, the syntactic, the semantic and the pragmatic rules of the Yoruba language.

He states that there are three principles which constitute the basic socio-cultural rules underlying the construction of these personal names. One of these principles is the home context principle (HC). The home context principle stems out of a Yoruba proverb which says that “the condition of the home determines a child’s name”. This principle he says specifies the important social and circumstantial contexts for the names. The principle is reconstructed in the following forms as:

- i) The special circumstance that strictly pertain to the birth of the child or its appearance at birth; how the child was born, -did the child present its leg first instead of its head?
- ii) The social, economic, political and other conditions affecting the family or lineage into which the baby was born. Example, famine and war.
- iii) The religious affiliation or deity loyalty of the family-which God or deity is worshipped and what is His/her contribution to the welfare of the family?

- iv) The (traditional) occupation or profession of the parents or the family line, - are they hunters, drummers or warriors?

He claims that every Yoruba personal name must be determined by at least one type of the home context principle. Also for an event to be turned into a personal name it must be psychologically, socially and culturally important to the people, however the determination of social value as a personal name is highly relative. The social value of such an event is determined by social factors such as age, socio-economic class and the experience of the name giver. Akinnaso further explains that the construction of Yoruba personal names that fall within the home context principle is rule governed. The rules are obligatory and they exclude events which do not satisfy the home context requirements. The rules are stated as: (a) a personal name is derived from one or more domestic events that satisfy the home context requirement, (b) all negatively valued home context events are raised to positive valued status for the purpose of personal name construction, and (c) any transient and specific event loses its transient and specific properties in the environment of a personal name. These rules are fused into one single rule as:

For the purpose of personal name construction, home context is ultimately realised as one or more domestic events that have their transient and specific properties removed. If negative, such events are raised to valued status by using language to truncate the facts so as to derive a name that in itself is not negative.

In addition to explaining the principles of naming among the Yorubas, Akinnaso also classifies Yoruba personal names into two major classes. The first class consists of the *amutorunwa* names (names brought from heaven) and the second class consists of the *abiso* names (name given during the naming

ceremony). The *amutorunwa* names depict the unusual and the abnormal circumstances under which the child is born and they can be given as soon as the child is born. The *abiso* names depict the social, religious and occupational affiliation of the child and they are given only during the naming ceremony. According to Akinnaso these two classes of names also have structural differences. Whilst the *abiso* names are marked for grammatical processes, the *amutorunwa* names are generally unmarked.

Schottman (2000)'s article on personal names also discusses the traditional naming systems among the Baatõnu people of northern Benin. According to her, a Baatõnu person acquires multiple names as he progresses in life and at each stage in life, some of the names are shed off. The multiple names range from a set of ascribed, unprestigious "little names", through various character-shaping nicknames, to a prestigious, spiritually powerful name. She adds that synchronic plurality of names is commonplace among the Baatõmbu whereas diachronic plurality of names is earned by honourable behaviour and it regards members of the aristocracy. According to her, the synchronic plurality allows a Christian name or a Moslem name to feature among a person's birth names. The traditional Baatõmbu naming system includes birth rank names, birth circumstantial names, gratitude names, stranger names, slave names, inherited title names, joking spouse names and baptismal names among others.

According to Schottman, a Baatõnu child is born with a rank name and/or a birth circumstantial name but these names are referred to as "little names" or "child names". They are not regarded as his real name. A child's real name is

his personal name which is given to him/her after some periods of birth. The personal names are different from his “little names” and the child must not die before acquiring a personal name. She states that Baatõnu personal names do not have etymological or referential meaning for the people who use them but they have social and sometimes spiritual meaning.

Her study shows that there is a slight difference between names given to Baatõnu commoners and Baatõnu nobles. For example birth rank names given to a child of the noble category vary according to the generation name of the child. She also explains that certain names can only be acquired at certain stages in life. For example a baptismal name is given to Baatõnu child at his youthful stage, (i.e. between the age of 7 or 8 and adulthood) and once the baptismal name is given, his/her child names ceased to be used. The baptismal names are given according to the colour of the person’s skin. It is also likely to give a baptismal name to a male child based on the resemblance between his temperament and that of an animal that serves as a totem of certain baptismal names. In addition to the baptismal name, a Baatõnu person can also acquire a joking nickname or a proverb name in his youth. In adulthood, a Baatõnu may receive an inherited title name or a tekonym.

Schottman’s study also reveals that giving birth names to children in the Baatõmbu culture is not the sole perquisite of the parents or relatives. They may be given by any other person in the community or even a stranger. The birth names do not afford the child’s parents or the name-giver the occasion to signal a personal message. They can however transmit personal messages through proverbial dog names or joking nicknames. She mentions that Baatõmbu compound names are formed by adding praise names to personal

names or they may be formed by combining a Christian or a Moslem name with a birth rank name. These compound names become an individual's most generally used name but they may only be used by a limited group of people.

On changes that affect the Baatonu naming system, she explains that the Baatombu traditional naming system has undergone some transformations due to colonisation and urbanisation. The naming system is also influenced by the Islamic and Christian religion. She mentions that one of the typical transformations has to do with situations where families have to give baptismal names to their children before they attend the baptismal ceremony. This is done because for a name to be officially recognised it must be registered at birth. She further explains that there is a tendency for the name which is registered at birth not to be used until the individual reaches the stage of its bestowal.

Another work on the etymology of personal names is Agbedor and Johnson (2005). Their study looks at some similarities between naming practices among Ewes in Ghana and the Guin-Mina people in Togo. They claim that the naming systems among Ewes are based on two principles: the home context principle and the philosophical principle. The home context principle they say "specifies the salient social or circumstantial contexts for Ewe personal names" and the philosophical principle "specifies the philosophical thought, the belief systems and the general worldview" that lead the people in choosing some personal names. They (just like Egblewogbe1977) also propose that Ewe personal names must be viewed to have denotative and connotative meaning because they encode cultural and philosophical thoughts of the people.

Their study shows that naming systems among the Guin-Mina people are graded according to the day of birth, the clan, membership of a religious group or a particular divinity and nicknames which is similar to that of the Ewes in Ghana. They go on to explain that despite these similarities between the two naming systems, they have some differences as well. The differences came from their geographical locations and their settlement histories. Details of the Guin-Mina clan names also confirm the close relationship between Ewes, Fantes and Gas.

Their study does not only talk about the etymology of Ewe names, they also discuss the grammatical structure of these names. In analysing the structure of the names, Agbedor and Johnson posit that Ewe personal names have complex linguistic structures due to the meaning and the socio-cultural information they carry. Unlike Egblewogbe (1977) who categorises Ewe personal names into three grammatical groups, they place them into two grammatical groups namely nominals and sentences. The names that they place under the nominal group are names that are derived from simple nouns, compound nouns and complex noun phrases. According to them, complex personal names are derived through some morphological and syntactic processes. For example a name like *Vigbedɔ* is derived from the relative clause:

Vi si gbe ɔ

Child REL. refuse work

“A child who refuses errands” (Agbedor & Johnson 2005: 173).

They explicate that to derive a name from the relative clause, the underlying relative clause is clipped to obtain the surface form, that is, the relative

pronoun *si* is deleted. They add that for relative clauses which have NPs playing ‘patient’ and ‘instrument’ roles, the patient role is fore-grounded and the instrument is pushed to the end of the clause to derive a nominal as in the example *agboɔaze* ‘a pot that a ram can be cooked in’. This name is derived from the relative clause:

Ze si    ɔa    agbo

Pot REL cook ram

“A pot that a ram can be cooked in”.

In the above sentence, *ze* (pot) is the instrument and *agbo* (ram) is the patient. After undergoing the morphological process, *ze* is pushed to the end of the clause and *agbo* is fore grounded.

### 2.2.2 *Functions of personal names*

In this section, studies are reviewed to demonstrate the roles that personal names play in the society.

Agyekum (2006) posits that personal names can best be analysed by the combination of both philosophical and anthropological notions. He says that knowledge about Akan names gives insight into Akan culture, their philosophy, their thought, their environment, their language and their religion. He also explains that the symbolic nature of Akan names and their interpretation depict Akan religious beliefs and their interaction with foreign cultures.

His study shows that the Akan naming system is indexical in nature. Some Akan names have personal, temporal, spatial and social deixis. Akan names that have personal deixis are names of an elder or an ancestor given to a child, in other words “there is always a person after whom a child is named”. That person can either be a close relative or a distant one. Akan names with temporal deixis are birthday name; that is names that denote the day of the week on which the child is born. He describes such names as being unique and automatic. Akan names that have spatial deixis are those names that refer to the place or locality within the Akan society where the child is born. And finally the social deictic names denote the social status, power and rank of the name bearer or the name giver. This type of names includes appellations and honorifics.

In discussing the innovations in Akan names, Agyekum states that foreign religion, westernization, education and urbanisation have brought about changes in the structure and system of Akan names. He says that whilst some people especially the educated are shifting away from their traditional names and taking Christian and Islamic names, others still stick to their traditional names. His study shows that currently in the Akan culture, people receive multiple names that change according to the social context and the situation. He says that out of the multiple names an individual may have, one serves as the official name and the rest serve as the unofficial names. The official name is used at work and among colleagues whilst the unofficial one(s) is used elsewhere. He adds that given names (i.e the newly acquired names) are rarely used among the Akans; however they may be used later in life as hypocoristic terms of endearment and affection.

He also points out that out of the multiple names a person may acquire, the first name which is usually the birthday name usually serves as an affectionate term. Agyekum adds that Akan females tend to shift from their indigenous names to western or religious names than males. He also adds that in marriage, majority of the Akan women drop their maiden names and replace them with their husbands' names or they combine their husbands' names with their maiden names.

Another work that discusses the functions of personal names is Ansu-Kyeremeh (2000)'s work on the communicative aspect of Bono personal names. Ansu-Kyeremeh (2000) contends that personal names support human interaction as a vehicle for communication among the Bonos. He establishes a basic two-name formal for Bono personal names and classifies them as follows: ascribed versus given names, fixed circumstantial versus flexible circumstantial names, gender differentiated versus gender neutral names, substantive versus substitute names and day-related versus non-day-related names. According to him, much of the communication attributable to names could be unintentionally stimulated, because a negative decoding of a personal name could be derived from a certain degree of stereotypical association.

Gathering data through interviews and observations, he reports that personal names serve the purpose of establishing individuality among the Bono people. For example, married women do not adopt their husbands' names in the Bono society but when it happens, it is regarded as foreign and interference from another culture. Ansu-Kyeremeh also posits that week-day names (*akradin*)

have affinitive and persuasive functions among the Bonos. Their use denotes the kind of informal relationship that exists between the speaker and the addressee. He also explains that substitute names tell stories about the bearer of the name. He says that people are likely to react with a question when they hear substitute names for the first time because the names will evoke some sentiments in them. Substitute names according to him are used to shield the *agyadin* (the acquired names) from abuse and indignities. The *agyadin* are usually names of prominent people in the society which are given to children in order for these children to also grow up and take after the owners of the names. He says that the *agyadin* are usually prefixed with a title such as *Nana*, *Maame*, *Agya* or *Papa* in order to avoid their use in vain.

Ansu-Kyeremeh points out that these days Bono personal names are losing their communicative function because of the current name acquisition formats and methods. For example, children are now using their fathers' names and some people also use double *agyadin* as compound names leaving out their first names.

According to Pritchard-Evans (1964), titles of address symbolize a man's social position in relation to the people around him, so that by the mention of these titles, the status of the speaker in relation to the addressee is readily recognised. She says that everybody has a personal name which may either come naturally as in birthday names or be given to a person shortly after birth. And these names eventually become a point in lineage structure among the people.

Findings from her work show that every Nuer person has a personal name or a birth name which is his/her true name. These personal names are retained through life and they are preserved in the names of their children especially the in the names of the male child because each of the male children is referred to as the son of so and so. She says that among the Nuer people, children have two personal names. A child is named by his father but s/he is often given a second personal name by his maternal grandparents. It is by this second name that a child is addressed when s/he is with his maternal kinsmen. These two personal names given to the child usually have similar meanings.

She also adds that Nuer personal names may be given to children based on events which took place before or during birth and these circumstances are usually made known to the name-bearer. These names sometimes recur in lineal descent. A male child may be named after his paternal grandfather or a female child may be named after her maternal grandmother so that their ancestors' name may be remembered in daily speech. Twin names among the Nuer are derived from bird names because the people believe that twins are birds therefore a twin may be named *Gwong* (guinea fowl) and *Ngec* (francolin) or they may simply be called *Dit* or *Nyadiet* meaning bird.

Apart from their personal names, her study also shows that every Nuer child inherits a praise name or an honorific of his clan but these names are mostly used on ceremonial occasions and they are mostly mentioned by the women. Their use in everyday activities is minimal.

The studies that have been reviewed show that even though the researchers seem to be discussing the sociolinguistics of personal names, most of them put

much emphasis on the structure and the typology of the names. Others also concentrated on the socio-cultural aspects of personal names leaving little space for discussion on their social aspects. Some of the researchers also discuss changes and innovations that occur in the various naming systems but none of them was able to determine the frequency of change that affect the naming systems to show whether some of the systems have undergone a qualitative shift or not. It is in this light that this current study wants to do a synchronic sociolinguistic analysis of personal names in Ewe in order to determine the use and the frequency of changes that affect some of the naming systems described by Egblewogbe (1977).

### **2.3 Theoretical framework**

This study is based on the Labovian sociolinguistic approach. This approach is a quantitative study of social and linguistic variables and it compares texts or people within social contexts to bring out the differences that exist between them. According to Labov (1971), quantitative analysis of linguistic variables enables linguists to account for the linguistic changes in progress. The changes come about as a result of the relations between linguistic variable and social variables. The quantitative analysis is done by first focusing on a predetermined list of linguistic variables (Hudson 1996:146). The predetermined linguistic variables are elements which the researcher already knows have variants. According to Hudson (1996), each predetermined variable provides a separate dimension on which texts may be compared.

The Labovian approach operates within five stages of methodology and data analysis. The stages are: selecting speakers, circumstances and linguistic variables, collecting the texts, identifying the linguistic variables and their variants in the texts, processing the figures and interpreting the results. The first stage requires careful decision making because the kind of selections made by the linguist will affect the type of results he will obtain at the end of his analysis. According to Sankoff (1980 cited in Milroy and Gordon 2003:24), three different kinds of decisions need to be taken by the researcher when making sampling procedures. The researcher must define the sampling universe, he must assess the relevant dimensions of variation within the community and he must determine the sampling size.

Sankoff explains that in defining the sampling universe, the boundaries of the group or community in which the researcher is interested must be described. After doing this, a sampling frame may then be sought to examine the members. The boundaries of the sampling universe may be defined in terms of members of a particular social group and depending on how the definition is carried out, it may affect the results. After determining the sample universe, the next decision has to do with how to assess the relevant dimensions of variation within the community, in other words how to gauge the structure and the size of the sampling universe. At this level according to Sankoff, the researcher must find out whether ethnicity, gender or the social class of the speaker may affect the kind of language he uses. If this decision is not carefully made, it may have consequences on the generalisations that will be made. Every speaker that will be selected must be interviewed or recorded under the same

circumstances and the variables under investigation must be the same for all of them.

The second stage of quantitative analysis involves data collection. The kind of data to be obtained will depend on the objectives of the study. At this stage, the researcher is expected to find appropriate speakers who are willing to be interviewed and recorded for a period of time. The linguist should be able to gain the confidence of the speakers in order for them to speak under ordinary circumstances. The instruments of recording must be clear to be able to capture the voices so that they can be replayed during the analysis. Methods of data collection include written questionnaires, participant observations and sociolinguistic interviews. These methods of data collection may be combined in an investigation because one may produce some results where the other cannot.

The next stage is where the linguist identifies the variants of the selected variables. At this stage, the linguist does not encounter much difficulty because he already knows the variants he is looking for. In identifying the variants, the linguist needs to gather information about the environment in which they are used because the environment can influence a speaker's choice of one variant over the other. It is also possible for researchers to be subjective at this stage because their identification of variants will be based on what they perceive from the texts.

The fourth stage is the figure processing stage. This is where the linguist counts the number of times a variant occurs in a text and compares the figures with that of the other texts and it requires the use of instrumental techniques.

According to Milroy and Gordon (2003), the use of instrumental techniques makes the measurement process of the results objective and they also make available details for analysis. After counting the variants, all the figures are reduced to percentages for easy comparison. At this point the researcher looks out for significant statistical differences between the texts that will help him to explain the results. According to Labov (1972:82 cited in Milroy and Gordon 2003), there is nothing like a simple way of counting variables because “the simplest type of counting raises a number of subtle and difficult problems” but once one is able to decide on what to count, the problem is solved.

The final stage which is the interpretation stage is where the researcher describes and explains the figures. According to Hudson (1996), this stage is the hardest and the most important stage in a quantitative analysis. He says that this is the stage where “fact and certainty give way to speculation and uncertainty” (Hudson 1996:155). The interpretation usually starts with the description of the patterns that emerge from the texts after which they are explained to make generalisations.

### *2.3.1 Strength of the theoretical framework*

This method of sociolinguistic analysis opens new and exciting possibilities for the theoretical interpretation of quantitative data. The statistical approach of analysis helps to test for the significance of a formulated hypothesis. Even though the basic orientation of this framework is to specify universal patterns of change in vowel systems, in other words, it is formulated to analyse phonological variation, (Milroy and Gordon 2003), it also can be applied in other fields of linguistics to determine linguistic and social variations. This process of statistical analysis can also be used to analyse sociolinguistic

variations. This framework gives researchers the opportunity to select from a number of methods the ones which will help them attain their goals and reduces the amount of subjectivity in the interpretation of results.

### *2.3.2 Weakness of the framework*

A possible weakness of this framework is that it does not readily predict sources of bias since the linguistic variables vary across different social dimensions. Also some of the methods of data collection aligned to it do not provide categorical results and the analysis could be very time consuming.

## **2.4 Methodology**

The methodological approach to this work includes steps that were taken for this work to be accomplished. These steps include the identification of sources of data and how the data was collected as well as the instruments that were used in the data collection exercise. The method of data analysis will also be explained. Data for this study comes from both primary and secondary sources. The primary data was collected through series of recorded interviews, personal observations, registers from schools and some public institutions and through questionnaires.

### *2.4.1 School registers*

Data was also collected from name lists and class registers from Keta Senior High and Technical School (Ketasco), Dzodze-Penyi Senior High School (Dzosec) and Peki Senior High School (Pesco). A total of 2,897 names were elicited from the three schools with Ketasco contributing 1,584 names, Dzosec contributed 714 names and Pesco, 599 names.

Keta Senior High and Technical School (Ketasco) can be described as one of the big schools in the southern part of the Volta Region and in the Region as well. It is located along the coast. It is a school which sees a lot of students enrolling in it every year. According to one of the tutors I interviewed in the school, Ketasco is more or less a “family school” in the sense that majority of the students who attend this school want their siblings, children or other family members to also enrol in it. It is usually a first choice school for some students within and outside the region especially those Ewes who reside outside the Volta Region. The same however cannot be said of Dzosec and Pesco.

Dzodze-Penyi Senior High School (Dzosec) has an average population of a little over one thousand students. It can be classified as a class B school. This school seems not to be the first choice school of most students in the region and the district. Some students found their ways into this school because they could not get admission into the schools of their choice. Also because of the recent computer placement system introduced by the Ghana Education Service (GES), students from other districts and other regions found their way into this school. Dzosec is also located in the southern part of the Volta Region.

Peki Senior High School (Pesco) is located within the inland section of the Volta Region. The student population is not very large as compared to the other two schools. The student population comprises of people from different tribal backgrounds such as Akans, Guans and Hausas. The Pekis are also noted for their long standing relationship with the Akans therefore it is not surprising to see a lot Akan names in their registers. The Peki town itself also shares boundaries with Akan and Guan communities.

#### *2.4.2 Interviews*

Data was gathered mainly through personal interviews with Ewe speakers in the Volta Region and in Accra. The interviews were arranged and conducted in two forms; one with the name bearers and another with the name givers. In some cases, name bearers tend to be name givers as well. Before the start of the interview, I sought permission from the interviewees to do a recording before I proceed.

The interviews were semi structured and informal. In all, 160 interviews were conducted with two different groups of people, 120 subjects from the Volta Region and 40 from Accra. The first group consists of name bearers and the second group consists of name givers. 40 interviews were held in each research area, 20 were held with name givers and another 20 with name bearers comprising of 10 males and 10 females from each group. The rationale behind this grouping is to gather in-depth information on the attitudes towards the use of personal names. Participants in both categories represent a cross-section of the people in the localities. Some participants were selected from schools in the selected areas. Others were selected from churches and mosques, markets, homes and workplaces. The selection of the participants was based on their age, gender, education, and occupation. The name givers interviewed consist of parents, grandparents, guardians, chiefs and elders in the various communities. The name givers were asked mention the names of their children, why they gave their children those names and also to state the specific name(s) they use to address them at home. Name bearers on the hand were asked to tell who their name givers are, whether they have ever changed their name or they have added another name to their name(s).

The interviews took place in classrooms, under trees on school premises, at market squares, in homes, in private offices and some were also conducted in a cemetery. The interviews were informal and semi-structured. The interviews usually begin with me introducing myself and the motive of the interview. After the self introduction and answers to a few questions from some participants, I seek their permission to record the interactions. After gaining their consents, I proceed with the interviews giving them the assurance that their recorded voices will be used only for academic work. The recordings were done using an audio recorder and a dell laptop computer. They were later stored on the laptop for analysis.

Reactions from the participants were generally positive. Some of the elders showed great enthusiasm in the research and readily availed themselves for further consultations. There was also an instance where an informant was not sure of some information and asked me to pause the recording whilst she verified from her aunt before we continue. There was however a few instances where some participants were not willing to be interviewed and rudely turned down the request to answer a few questions. A sample of the interview questions is provided in appendices A and B.

#### *2.4.3 Personal observations*

Apart from the interviews, I also made some personal observations. I took the opportunity to visit homes, churches and workplaces of friends and some people I know and I observed how people use their personal names depending on where they are and who is addressing them. I observed a range of activities of the people in the research areas. The activities include church activities, workplace events, and school activities, daily activities in the markets and at

drinking bars. During lunch breaks, I visited some schools and observed the students as they play. I also had the opportunity to observe a naming ceremony in one of my research areas. What I usually do during the periods of observation is to take note of how a particular person is addressed by his family members, peers or colleagues and later approach the person for an interview.

#### *2.4.4 Questionnaire data*

200 questionnaires were also administered to respondents in the four research areas to gather their bio-data and to seek additional information on the use of personal names. The questions were aimed at finding out how people perceive their names in some domains of their daily activities and their attitudes towards the use of those names. The questionnaire was designed in three formats, the first part contained questions aimed at gathering information on the respondents bio-data. The second set of questions was directed towards finding out the preferred name(s) of the respondents and the domains in which they are used and the third part has to do with attitudes towards the use of the names.

I personally administered most of the questionnaires and some were administered by my friends in the towns I conducted the interviews. These friends were guided on what to do and they also helped in retrieving the questionnaires on time.

#### *2.4.5 The use of secondary data*

I also consulted some articles and publications as additional sources of data for my research. Some of the materials include earlier studies on Ewe names and publications on the Ewe culture such as Egblewogbe (1977)'s Ph.D thesis on Ewe personal names and Agozie (2000)'s Mphil thesis on Ewe cult names. The

publications I consulted are Anlo Hogbeza (2012) and Rev. R.K. Nutsuako (1977)'s book on "Blema Kɔnuwo, Lododowo kple Adagana".

#### *2.4.6 Data analysis and interpretation*

After the visits to the field, I compiled all the notes according to each study area and reviewed all the information I gathered on the field. I played back all the recordings and sorted out the salient information. I then compared information from the different research areas for analysis. I did a quantitative analysis using Microsoft Excel and Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS). The analysis was done to determine the frequency at which the people use their personal names and the social factors that influence the choice of name for children. The results of the analysis were quantified, described and explained accordingly.

#### *2.4.7 Problems of data collection*

At the early stages of the data collection, I encountered a few problems. During the interview sessions some people were not ready to mention their names to me. They asked questions like "what do you need my name for?" and others remarked "I can't mention my name to you because I don't know you". Those who couldn't openly ask such questions or make such remarks only mention their names after some minutes of hesitational pauses or they show looks of doubts on their faces. It was also difficult scheduling interviews with some name-givers as they keep on postponing the time.

#### *2.4.8 Limitations of the methodology*

The first limitation in the methodology has to do with the amount of time spent in collecting data. I had less than one month to collect data from the field because

the schools were about going on vacations. The other limitation has to do with willingness of some headmasters to release the name lists of their students. There was a disparity in the number of names collected from each school because some of the schools authorities were not ready to give me access to the name lists of their students. It was only in Ketasco that I was given the lists of the entire student population. This made it a bit difficult for a strong comparison to be drawn between the names from the three schools.

## CHAPTER THREE

### TYPES OF PERSONAL NAMES

#### 3.1 Introduction

Every Ewe child is born with a name. This name could be his/her birthday name or a name derived from the circumstances surrounding his birth and it can be replaced with another name as he/she progresses in life. However some changes have occurred in the naming systems among Ewes making some people depart from the traditional system of naming. Some researchers such as Agyekum (2006), Ansu-Kyeremeh (2000), Aceto (2002) and Schottman (2000) have also shown in their works that the trends of naming have changed in other cultures as a result of globalization. In this chapter, I discuss the types of personal names being used by Ewe people and the variations that are found in these names. The discussion in this chapter is based on data from the registers of three schools in the Volta Region, from the questionnaires administered in the schools and the towns where they are located, and from interviews conducted with some of the people captured by the questionnaire survey.

Names of 2, 897 students were collected from the three schools. Personal names gathered from Keta Senior High and Technical school (Ketasco) represent 54.6% (1,584) of all the names collected. They include 981 males and 603 females. In Dzodze-Penyi Senior High School (Dzosec), 714 (24.6%) names were elicited from their registers, 385 of which are males, 329 females. In Peki Senior High School (Pesco), a total of 599 names were gathered from their registers representing 20.7% of the whole data. Out of this number, 267

are males and 335 females. Below is a tabulation of personal names collected from the three schools.

**Table 3.1 Percentage of names collected from the three schools**

Name of school	Males	Females	Total
Ketasco	981 (33.8%)	603 (20.8%)	1584 (54.6%)
Dzosec	385 (13.2%)	329 (11.4%)	714 (24.6%)
Pesco	264 (9.1%)	335 (11.6%)	599 (20.7%)
Total	1630 (56.2%)	1267 (43.7%)	2897 (100%)

From the table above, it is shown that majority of the personal names come from Ketasco. The numerical differences reflect differences in the geographical locations of the schools and in the yearly enrolment of students into the schools.

Different forms of personal names are drawn from the data. These names are categorized into three main groups; they are Ewe names, non-Ewe names and nicknames. The non-Ewe names include some Ghanaian names and foreign names. In the subsequent sections, I discuss the different forms of personal names in the three categories in detail.

### **3.2 Specific types of Ewe personal names found in the data**

Ewe personal names of different types were found in the data. A total of 1,015 Ewe personal names were recorded from the school registers. 268 (26.4%) of these names are used as first personal names, 730 (71.9%) of them are used as second personal names and the rest 17 (1.6%) are used as third personal names. Ewe personal names found in the data are birthday names, order of birth

names, clan names, twin names, religious names, traditional names, predestination names, slave names, special names and allusive names. Each type is discussed in the subsequent sub-sections but the discussion of implications of their patterns of distribution in the data is taken up in section 3.2.11. All the types of Ewe personal names identified here are also extensively discussed in Egblewogbe (1977)'s work.

### *3.2.1 Birthday names*

Birthday names are names given to children based on the day of the week on which they are born. They are known as *azagbenkwo* in Ewe. The general practice is to give a birthday name as the first automatic name to a child as soon as he/she is born (Agyekum 2006:213). Among the Ewes as with Akans, birthday names are given based on the seven days of the week. The days are *Dzoda*, *Blada*, *Kuɖa*, *Yawoɖa*, *Fiɖa*, *Memliɖa* and *Kɔsiɖa* (Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday, Friday, Saturday and Sunday). Birthday names among the Ewes just like among other tribes including the Akans are perceived as “the soul” of the people bearing them (Agyekum 2006:213). Although they are the automatic first names, they can be replaced by other personal names. Their use most often is restricted to family circles, among close friends and loved ones. Some people do not like using their birthday names at all. Some people, who use them on their official documents, present them in the form of initials. Different respondents in the questionnaire and interviews gave differing views as to why some people do not use their birthday names. According to an old man from Keta, birthday names can be used to cast a spell on the bearer so some people do not want their birthday names to be known.

In the analysis, 357 birthday names were identified out of the 1,015 Ewe personal names in the school registers. Out of the 357, 36 (10%) are used as first personal names, 306 (85.7%) as second personal names and 15 (4%) as third personal names. When we analyzed the use of birthday names according to the schools, we find that 279 students from Ketasco bear birthday names; 6 of them use such names as their first names while 258 of them use them as second name and 15 use them as third names. Dzosec also recorded 63 students bearing birthday names. 28 of them use the names as first personal names and 35 use them as third names. None of the students in Dzosec use birthday names as his/her second personal name. The figures are less in Pesco as only 15 students use birthday names. Of this number, 2 use them as first names while 13 use them as second names. Examples of the birthday names include *Kofi, Abba, Ameyo, Kɔsi, Yawo, Esi* and *Afi, Ama, Kɔbla* and *Kɔdzɔ*.

### 3.2.2 Order of birth names

These names are also referred to as numeric birth names because they are given to children of the same sex who are born in series. In Ewe, they are known as *dzidzimeɲkɔwo* (cf. Egblewogbe 1977). The names mark the order in which the same-sex siblings are born. The first bearer of order of birth names is usually the third of the same-sex children. For example, the name “*Mɛsa*” means that the bearer was born after two other male children and that no female child broke the sequence in which the boys were born. Researchers have shown that tribes which practice this kind of naming system usually have numeric names for children of the same sex born in sequence from the first born to the eleventh born. But among the Ewe people these names range from names for the third same-sex child to those for the tenth same-sex child. Even with this

trend, the commonest among them is the name of the third born, namely *Mesa* (third male child) and *Mansa* (third female child). Also commonly found are, - *Nani* (fourth male child), *Anumu* (fifth male child), *Mana* (fourth female child) and *Makɔ* (fifth female child).

From the data gathered, only 15 (1.47%) people out of the 1015 students who have Ewe personal names bear order of birth names. Out of the 15 people, 3 people use these names as their first personal names, 11 use these names as their second personal names while only 1 person use his as a third personal name.

### 3.2.3 Clan names

Clan names (*hlɔŋkɔwo*) are given to children in accordance to the clan s/he belongs to. Among the Ewe people, a person's clan is determined patrilineally, i.e. children belong to their fathers' clan. Each clan has its own way of naming children depending on the order in which they are born. Clan names are used to indicate patrilineal identity. Only the Aŋlɔ practice the clan system of naming. It is therefore not surprising that all the clan names found in the data come from the data collected from the Keta area.

There are 15 clans in Aŋlɔ and the clan names vary according each clan. The clans are: *Agave*, *Tsiame*, *Blu*, *Ame*, *Adzɔvia*, *Dzevi*, *Klevi*, *Vifeme*, *Bamee*, *Amlade*, *Like*, *Lafe*, *Tovi*, *Bate* and *Xetsofe* (cf. Egblewogbe 1988). From the data, 11 (1.0%) people are found to bear clan names. Of this number, 3 students use them as their first personal names while the remaining 8 use them as their second personal names. Examples of the clan names found in the registers are:

*Abui* (second female child from the Adzovia/Bamee/Xetsofe clan)

*Ame* (first male child from the Tsiame clan),

*Madui* (fourth female child from the Blu clan),

*Tsatsu* (second male child from the Agave/Amlade/Like/Klevi clan)

*Tete* (first male child from the Dzevi/Vifeme clan).

#### 3.2.4 *Twin names*

Twin names are given to twins and children born after twins based on their gender (cf. Egblewogbe 1977). If they are both males, they are named *Atsu* and *Etse*. If they are both females, they are named *Eyi* and *Yetsa*. If they are male and female, they are named *Atsu* (male) and *Atsufui* (female). Children born after twins also bear special names which clearly identify them. There is a general belief among Ewes that when twins are born, a hole is created after them which need to be filled. In order to fill this hole, a child must be born after the twins. This child is named *Do* (for both male and female). Another child born after the *Do* will be named *Dotse* (*Do*'s junior brother) if a male and *Dofui* (*Do*'s junior sister) if a female.

A total of 29 (2.8%) twin names are gathered from the registers and out of this 7 are used as first personal names, 21 as second personal names and 1 as a third name.

#### 3.2.5 *Ewe Religious names*

Religious names among the Ewes are known as *subɔsubɔɣkɔwo* (Egblewogbe 1977). They are names which reveal the religious affiliation of the name givers or the name bearers. According to Obeng (2001:144), "African religious names

reveal the African belief that God is the giver of joy, wealth and peace and also the protector of humankind”. Through religious names the Ewes show their reverence and gratitude to God for His mercies and kindness towards them. Their religious names manifest the omnipotence of God. In trying to analyze Ewe personal names associated with religion, I encountered some difficulties. It was a difficult task trying to establish a clear distinction between Ewe Christian religious names and the traditional religious names.

Where some of the names have direct reference to a particular religion, others do not. According to Dalfovo (1982:122), “religion consists of a set of beliefs and rites in which the human effort at establishing a relation with the beyond finds fulfilment”. This shows that the association of a particular name to a particular religion does not necessarily mean the bearer of the name belongs to that religion. It could mean that by choosing that name, the name-giver or name-bearer is able to express and establish his relationship with the Supernatural.<sup>2</sup> To clarify this view, Dalfovo further asserts that the “indirect association of names with religion poses a dilemma as to whether they are to be considered really religious or not” (Dalfovo 1982:122). He also states that traditional religion cannot be separated from the individual and social life because what is viewed as secular and sacred is in fact intermingled to become one reality. Under this section, following Egblewogbe (1977)’s categorization of religious names, I grouped the Ewe religious names into two: Ewe traditional religious names and Ewe Christian religious names. There are 499

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<sup>2</sup> For example, I bear a Moslem name, Rashidat, even though I am a Christian. The name was given to me by my Moslem father. Another well known example is Obama’s name *Hussein*.

religious names in all and this number represents 49% of the total number of Ewe personal names found in the data.

### 3.2.5.1 Ewe traditional religious names

Traditional religious names are personal names which depict indigenous traditional religious practices and beliefs among the Ewes. Egblewogbe (1977) referred to this type of religious names as *hunƙɔwo* 'cult names'. From the data collected from the school registers, only two names are found to be connected to indigenous traditional religion and these two names are used by three of the subjects. This number represents 0.6% of the total number of religious names. The traditional religious names found in the schools registers are *Akakpo* (a divination name) and *Huse* (a cult name). *Akakpo* is the name given to the first male child of a *bokɔ* (diviner) and *Huse* belongs to the Yeve cult names (see Agozie 2000 for more on Ewe cult names). Out of the three students who bear these names, one person use it as his first personal name and the other two use them as their second personal names.

Additional five traditional religious names were also elicited from the questionnaire data. They are *Dadotoɔe*, *Sodzede*, *Sonyeamaɔe*, *Kpɔkpɔ* and *Adzi*. These names are all cult names. *Dadotoɔe* is a feminine name associated with the Da (snake) cult whilst *Sodzede*, a masculine name, and *Sonyeamaɔe*, a feminine name, are associated with the Yeve cult. *Kpɔkpɔ* is also a cult name and it is used to refer to a new female convert of the cults who is yet to be outdoored. But most often this name is used to address any female cult member whose cult name is not known. Even when the cult member's name is known, it is used as a title of address to show respect.

### 3.2.5.2 Ewe Christian religious names

Personal names that are classified as Ewe Christian religious names are the names which reference the relationship between man and God and the attributes of God. As I stated earlier in section 3.2.5., some of these names are only indirectly associated with Christian religion. For example, personal names like *Edɔnam* (he heard me) and *Elikem* (he established me) are mostly construed as Christian religious names but these same names can also be understood from another angle to mean that a deity or a supernatural being heard my prayers or a deity established me. For example, there is this lady in my area who goes by the name *Edina*. Initially, I thought the name was *Edna* which the local folks decide to simplify by inserting the vowel, /i/, between the two consonants. One day, whilst collecting data in my area, I came across her junior brother who bears a divination name so I decided to find out from him how come his sister has an English name and he does not have. He explained to me that his sister's name is actually *Trɔɔɔina* which has been reduced to *Edina*.

The third person pronoun 'e' (he/she/it) which begins such names can be replaced with *Mawu* (God) to mean *Mawuɔnam* (God heard me) or *Mawulikem* (God established me). It can also be replaced with a name of a deity such as *Afa/Trɔ* (which are lesser gods) to mean *Afaɔnam/Trɔɔɔnam* (afa/trɔ heard me) or *Afalikem* (afa established me). Taking these facts into consideration, it can be seen that this was indeed a difficult task for me as a researcher, because these names were elicited from school registers where I could not get the opportunity to interview all the students one on one. Examples of the Ewe Christian religious names found in the registers are:

*Agbeyeye* (a new life)

*Eɖem* (God delivered/rescued me)

*Elikplim* (God is with me)

*Elɔm* (God loves me)

*Enyam* (God knows me)

*Eyram* (God blessed me)

*Hɔlali* (there is a saviour)

*Klenam* (shine for me)

*Makafui* (I will praise Him)

*Mawunyo* (God is good)

*Mawusime* (in God's hands)

*Selasi* (the hearer hears)

*Xɔese* (believe it)

*Xɔnam* (deliver me)

*Yayra* (blessing)

*Yesuenagbem* (it is Jesus who gave me life)

*Kplɔla* (Shepherd)

A total of 496 personal names are analyzed as Ewe Christian religious names representing 99% of the Ewe religious names and 48.8% of the entire Ewe names. Out of the 496 Ewe Christian religious names, 166 (33%) are used as first personal names and the remaining 330 (66.5%) are used as second

personal names. None of the students use this type of religious name as third personal names.

### *3.2.6 Predestination names*

These are names that predefine the destiny of the name giver or the name bearer. Destiny among the Ewes is known as *Dzɔgbese*. People believe that their destiny is responsible for their fortune and misfortune in life. They see their destiny as the one who has the sole power over their lives so that if a situation is not preordained by their destiny, that situation will never come to pass in their life. The meaning of predestination names express the feelings that whatever situation the individual finds him/herself is already designed by a supernatural being to happen. In other words, Ewes believe that some situations are destined to happen in one's life and nothing can change or stop them from happening.

Predestination names portray the supremacy of Destiny in the lives of human beings. Through these names the Ewes are able to make known their thought about Destiny and how the natural and the supernatural work hand in hand to build a person's fate and destiny (Obeng 2001). A total of 28 predestination names were obtained from the schools registers. This number forms 2.7% of the number of Ewe names analyzed. Students who use this type of names as their first personal names sum up to 23 (82%) whilst those who use it as their second personal names sum up to 5 (17.8%). Examples of predestination names drawn from the registers include:

*Sedɔ* (destiny's work)

*Setsoafia* (destiny has pronounced judgement)

*Sefako* (destiny has comforted)

*Sefenu* (something from destiny)

*Senanu* (destiny has given)

*Senya* (destiny knows)

*Semeko* (destiny is clear)

*Semenyo* (destiny is good)

*Seto* (destiny's own/destiny has responded)

*Sewonu* (destiny has done something)

“Se” in the above names is the short form of *Dzɔgbese* ‘Destiny’. Apart from this meaning, it also means different things to different people. To some people, it can be interpreted to mean God or a Super power. Irrespective of what interpretation is given to it, the basic understanding is that the functions of “se” are beyond human imagination and nobody can control his/her “se” or try to alter its decisions and activities.

### 3.2.7 Traditional names

Traditional names are names that talk about the general lifestyle of the Ewe people. These names portray the true ingenuity of the Ewe people. Traditional names are usually conservative and in recent times, they seem to be falling out of favour with most people. The names that are treated as traditional names are names that expose the general perception and the sense of judgement of the people. They describe the relationship that exist between the people and the world in which they live. Traditional names encode cultural histories and values

of the communities. 73 traditional names were obtained from the data representing 7% of the total Ewe personal names. 30 (41%) of these traditional names are used as first personal names and the remaining 43 (58.9%) are used as second names. The traditional names found in the data include the following:

*Ablɔde* (freedom)

*Agbenyega* (life is great)

*Amenyo* (human being is good)

*Emekɔ* (it is clear)

*Lebene* (take care of her)

*Dodzi* (take heart/be courageous)

*Dzifa* (a cool/free heart)

*Dzidzɔ* (happiness)

*Dzilanyo* (parent(s) is good/ a good parent)

*Dziwɔnu* (a heart that does things)

*Nyatefe* (truth)

*Sika* (gold)

*Suetɔ* (the smallest one)

### 3.2.8 Slave names

A slave name as defined by Schottman (2000:88) is a “seal of fictive sale meant to divert malevolent spirits”. A woman who lost several children at birth can decide to visit an oracle to intervene in her situation for her children to survive. It is believed that babies who die at birth are evil and if no spiritual action is taken, they will continue to come and go causing pain to their mother. In order to ensure the survival of such babies, the mother goes to the shrine of an oracle and ‘buys the child’. In other words, she pays for the life of the child by spiritually buying the womb that carries that ‘evil child’. This action is known among the Ewes as *dɔfɛfle* (the act of buying womb) and such children are called *dɔflewiwo* (children bought from the womb).

Another situation in which a child can be given a slave name is when a woman who is barren for many years is able to give birth with the assistance of an oracle. The baby becomes the slave of that oracle. The hair of such a child is usually left uncut so that it grows into dreadlocks entangled with cowries. Before the hair could be cut, some rites have to be performed or else the child dies. The hair is a symbol of the child’s existence and depending on the instructions of the oracle s/he may be dressed in only white calico tied around his/her waist until a given stage in his/her life.

Slave names include *Kosi* (a female slave), *Kosifi* (the younger sister of a female slave), *Klufi* (the younger sister of a male slave), *Klu* (a male slave), *Klutse* (the younger brother of a male slave) and *Kluvi* (the younger brother of *Klutse*). These names are in contrast to infant mortality names. Only three examples of slave names were identified in the questionnaire data namely *Kosi*, *Klutse* and *Aɔɔkɔ*, an indication of the fact that the practice is becoming rare.

### 3.2.9 *Special names*

These are names given to children born under certain special conditions. In this section, I refer to special names as names given to children born after their dead siblings. A child who is born after another child who passed away is regarded as the dead child who has reincarnated. Examples of such names are *Degbɔɛ* or *Dogboɛ* (for males) and *Nɔviɛgbɔ* (for females). This category of names is also given to a child born in a house where an elder (especially a grandfather or grandmother) passed away just before his birth. In such cases, the child, if a boy, will be named *Afetɔgbɔ* (landlord is back) and *Mamanyɛ* (it is my grandmother) if a girl. The morpheme *gbɔ* (to come back) attached to nouns signals the coming back of the deceased in another form. Only two of these names appeared in the data namely:

*Nɔviɛgbɔ* (it is the sibling/sister who is back)

*Degbɔɛ* (one who left and is back)

### 3.2.10 *Allusive names*

Allusive names, according to Egblewogbe (1977:57), are “derived from circumstances that do not have any direct bearing on the children themselves rather they are socially oriented in that the ideas they express centre around man in society, his general nature, his relationship with others and with the gods”. These names allow the name givers to transmit a personal message to (specific) members of the society. That is to say that the message contained in an allusive name is not directed at the name bearer but to a third party (or parties). Allusive names are known as *ahamanɔwo* in Ewe. Through these names, the name givers indirectly express criticisms of mockery of other

persons or send a warning message to them. By hiding behind these names to put across their message, name givers avoid open confrontations and conflicts with their target recipients. Examples of allusive names found in the questionnaire data are:

*Metsɔekewo* (I have forgiven them)

*Agbekomefa* (it is only life I think about)

*Agbeleŋɔ* (there is life ahead)

*Menyawo* (I know them)

### 3.2.11 Discussion of the distribution of the Ewe personal names

In the analyses of the percentage of various types of Ewe personal names relative to their total number as recorded in the registers, we find that apart from birthday names (3.2.1) and Ewe Christian religious names (3.2.5.2), which are very frequent, all the other types of Ewe personal names are not frequent. This is shown in the table below.

**Table 3.2 Frequency of use of Ewe names from the school registers.**

Type of Ewe personal name	Frequency
Ewe Christian religious names	496 (48.8%)
Birthday names	357 (35%)
Traditional names	73 (7%)
Twin names	29 (2.8%)
Predestination names	28 (2.7%)
Order of birth name	15 (1.4%)
Clan names	11 (1%)
Ewe traditional religious names	2 (0.6%)
<b>Total</b>	<b>1015 (100%)</b>

As already noted, the frequent use of the Ewe Christian religious names (48.8% of all the Ewe names) has to do more with an ideological association of these names with the Christian faith. As for birthday names (35%), their frequency derive from the fact that they are automatic first names of Ewe children. The question now is why the other types of Ewe names are so infrequently given to children these days.

The least frequently used type of names is Ewe traditional religious names (0.6%), and we find through the interviews that people who bear decidedly traditional religious names prefer to be addressed by such kinship terms as *Ete* (aunt), *Davi* (sister), *Nyruie* (uncle), or *Tɔgbui* (grandfather). Others (especially those who are now parents) prefer to be addressed by teknonyms (i.e. they are addressed in connection to their children, in other words they prefer to be called as the 'parent of so and so person'). Some also prefer to use nicknames instead of their traditional religious names. During one of my field trips to Keta I met a young man on the bus who introduced himself to me as *Man Arana* as we entered into conversation. He should be about 18 years old. Somewhere into the conversation, I looked up into his face and noticed cultic marks on his cheeks so I questioned him on why he is called by that name yet he has cultic marks. He replied that his real name is *Sodzedo* but *Man Arana* was given to him by one of his teachers because he was a very good athlete at school. He mentioned that the nickname suits him better because his real name makes him feel odd at times when he is among his peers.

An interview with a 'boko' (diviner) also explains that for traditional religious names to be given to children certain rites need to be performed. However, according to him, looking at the economic situations these days, it has become

expensive to perform those rites so most traditionalists have decided to ignore them. He also explains that people especially the youth are no longer interested in joining the cults as it used to be in the past therefore the traditional religious names seem not to be in frequent use. He added that in the olden days people willingly join this religion but in current times, when you see someone converting to this religion, it could be that the person was cured of some sickness by the gods or the fellow or a member of his/her family committed a crime and the penalty for that crime is to convert to the indigenous traditional religion. Due to the unattractiveness and the unpopularity of the indigenous traditional religion in current times, most name givers who belong to this religion do not feel obliged to name their children with names that are associated with the religion.

The data also suggests that apart from the indigenous traditional religious names, other personal names such as slave names, allusive names and traditional names are also less frequently given these days. Technology and Christianity have managed to reduce some people's misconception on infant mortality and infertility thereby reducing the rate at which people consult oracles in search of such children. These days, some people prefer to seek the face of God through Prophets, Men of God and Mallams to address issues concerning childlessness and infertility whilst others especially the affluent ones prefer to seek technical help to resolve such problems.

### **3.3 Types of non-Ewe names**

Non-Ewe names are personal names from other ethnic backgrounds. They include some Ghanaian names, other African names and European names.

There are English names, French names, Akan names, Ga names, Dagbani names, Yoruba names, Hausa names and Arabic names found in the school registers. These types of personal names are discussed in the sub-sections below.

### *3.3.1 English Names*

English names form a greater majority of the personal names found in the data. A total of 2,794 English names were obtained from the data. 2,615 (93.5%) of the English names is used as first personal names, 173 (6%) as second names and the remaining 6 (0.2%) as third names. Generally people misconstrue English names to be Christian religious names but in reality, not everyone who bears an English name is a Christian. Some people were forced under certain circumstances to bear English names. One of the respondents in Dzodze shared his experience with me. According to this respondent, his father named him *Afeli* when he was a child. But when he started the Roman Catholic school the Reverend Father in the school changed his name to *Joseph* even though he is not a Christian because the Reverend Father saw the name *Afeli* to be a 'pagan name' and refused to list it in the school register. Situations similar to this one made people adopt English names as Christian names.

Another observation which stems from the questionnaire data and the interviews is that in most cases, English names are seen as a person's official name because they are the names that often appear on official documents. The majority of the students who have English names in addition to Ewe names use the English names as their first names whilst the Ewe names become their second names. Some of the people that I interviewed confirmed this view that the English names are their official names whereas the Ewe names are their

'local/house' names. When the respondents were further questioned on what they meant by official name and local name, they usually express the view that an official name is the name that appears on a person's documents; a name that is written on paper and used in school, church or places other than the home whereas the local or house name is the name used at home among siblings, parents and relations. These names most often are not likely to appear on any official documents. Examples of English names found in registers are: *Albert, Abigail, Barry, Brainy, Benson, Bernard, Carl, Jerry, Mary, Miracle, Juliet, Rose, Alex, Effort, Doreen, Celest, Cephas, Maryqueen, Elvis, Ebenezer, Rockson, Thatchroot, Thywill, Gladstone, Honesty, Laurent, Lawrencina, Diamond, Gifty, Mercy, Gloria, Judith, Juliana, Constance, Felicia, Comfort, Patrick, Moses, Prosper* and *Dickson*.

### 3.3.2 French names

Another set of non-Ewe names identified in the name lists are French names. The use of French names among Ewes is not surprising because the Volta Region is close to Togo therefore it is possible for the Ewes to pick up some French names. Apart from language contact, some Ewes in Ghana do have relatives in Togo and some of these children were born in Togo so they are given French names. From the data, 6 French names were gathered. 4 of them are used as first names and the remaining 2 as second names. Examples of French names identified in the data are:

*Edwige* (Edith)

*Jeanette* (Janet)

*Pierre* (Peter)

*André (Andrews)*

### *3.3.3 Arabic names*

Some Arabic names are also found in the data. Arabic names are usually linked to the Islamic religion therefore anyone who bears an Arabic name is seen to be a Moslem. Interviews with some of the students who bear Arabic names reveal that either both of their parents or one of them is a Moslem. Few students seem to bear Arabic names in the Volta Region because Islam is not as well spread in the region as Christianity is. Out of the 2,897 students, only 11 (0.37%) of them bear Arabic names. 7 of the Arabic names are used as first names and the remaining 4 as second names. The Arabic names found in the data are:

*Abif*

*Amidu*

*Hadiza*

*Hiram*

*Mohammed*

*Musifa*

*Nurudeen*

*Saheed*

*Sheriff*

### *3.3.4 Akan names*

Akan names are also part of the names identified in the data. They are one of the three Ghanaian non-Ewe names found in the data. The Akans are the largest ethnic group in Ghana. They are found in almost every region in the country by means of inter-ethnic marriage, education or occupation. There are Akans ethnic groups in the Volta Region especially in the northern part. They marry Ewes and give birth to children of mixed ethnic backgrounds. 13 Akan names were found in the data and majority of them are in the Peki Senior High School register. Some of these students told me in an interview that they have one of their parents being an Akan. Others also have the Akan names as a result of language contact. Only one of the thirteen Akan names is used as a first name and the rest twelve are used as second names. Some of the Akan names are:

*Amoah*

*Atuprah*

*Abena*

*Obidie*

*Oforiwa*

*Nhyira*

*Nyamekye*

### 3.3.5 Ga names and Dagbani names

The other types of Ghanaian names found in the name lists are Ga names and Dagbani names. Ga names form a very minimal percentage of the total number of names which is 0.13%. 4 students were registered to have Ga names and they all used them as their second personal names. The Ga names are *Nadu* and *Akwele*. Two Dagbani names are also identified in the data and they are also used as second names. The two Dagbani names are *Abedi* and *Kabu*. In an interview with the two students who bear the Dagbani names, *Abedi* said he was named after the renowned Ghanaian footballer, *Abedi Pele*. *Kabu* also claimed that the name *Kabu* was given to him by his father's friend who is a military man from the Northern Region.

### 3.3.6 Yoruba names and Hausa names

In addition to the Akan, Ga and Dagbani names, two other African names were also identified in the data. They are two Yoruba names and one Hausa name. The Yoruba names are *Ifeoluwa* and *Gbenga*. The only Hausa name found in the lists is *Bajulo*.

## 3.4 Nicknames

This section discusses the third type of personal names identified in the data. This type of names is made up of nicknames. A nickname is a name given to an individual in addition to his personal name(s) or a name an individual takes upon himself in addition to his real personal name. According to Schottman (2000:95), nicknames are “unique and coined with reference to a specific event in the individual's life or a tendency observed in his behaviour”. Nicknames

are also known as peer names or ‘guy names’ because as Aceto (2002:582) puts it, they are “created and maintained by friends, family and various social groups”.

Among the Ewe people, nicknames are known as *megbenkwo* ‘back names’. They are called ‘back names’ in the sense that people perceive them to be derogatory and abusive in nature and also because they are usually used against the will of their bearers. Because they are abusive, they are most often used in the absence of the bearer. Morgan et al (1979:5) cited in Aceto (2002:582) also states that nicknames very often home in on just those characteristics the recipient would want to forget. Although nicknames have negative connotations, they also come along with some positive values. They serve as an indirect means to discipline the bearer. They could also serve as means of shaping the identities of others or as a means of carving an identity by the name bearers themselves (Schottman 2000:95).

Evidence from the questionnaire and interviews shows that the stigma that used to be attached to nicknames in the past among the Ewes (cf. Egblewogbe 1977) has reduced somehow. Although people still use the *megbenkwo* to refer to others and these names are often used secretly to refer to recipients, some of these names are referred to as ‘guy names’ that are used openly among peers and some family members. The use of nicknames as guy names is fashionable among the Ewes these days, especially among the youth. The information I have gathered reveals that the majority of the people who have nicknames pick them during their adolescence while in junior high school or senior high school. Some of those who did not acquire any formal education also claimed to pick nicknames around the same age. As to how they come across their

nicknames, some said it was given to them by elder brothers or their fathers while others claimed it was their seniors or teachers who gave it to them at school. Some also said they coined them themselves.

Nicknames can be derived through internal and external strategies. The internally generated nicknames are based on the “phonetic similarity or rhyme between the recipient’s name and the nickname or even a reduction of the recipient’s given name” (Aceto 2002:583). Some examples are, *Benjamin* = *Benjilo* and, *Moses* = *Mozey*. The externally generated ones are however derived from physical, intellectual, emotional, or cultural qualities that are attributable to the recipient. The language origins of the nicknames found in the data vary. Some of them have English origins, others are derived from Ewe and Akan, and some have unknown origins. Examples of nicknames found in the data include: *Dangab*, *Knallington*, *Ananse*, *Zion*, *Flash*, *Man Arana*, *Butros*, *Swatt Marconi*, *Countryman*, *Stranger*, *Para*, *Kpodosk*, *Akpɔkplɔ*, *Snash*, *Culture*, *Guy Toto*, *Kponbosu*, *Deyoung*, *Alexis*, *Galaxy*, *Swat*, *Russia J.J.*, *Rescue*, *Bigtius*, *Abigilolo*, *Emperor*, *Action*, *Raxico*, *Zambio* and *Zigma*.

The examples cited above are all retrieved from the questionnaire data. No nickname was identified in the data from the school registers because nicknames are seen as unofficial names so they are not written on official documents. With the exception of *Kponbosu*, which is borne by a female respondent, all the nicknames cited are masculine names. This does not mean that females do not bear nicknames; they do but only among themselves unlike the guys who use them among peers from both sexes.

### **3.5 The use of multiple personal names among Ewes**

Among the Ewe people, as in many cultures, the use of multiple personal names is a commonplace. In these modern days, it is possible for a person to bear multiple personal names which s/he uses depending on the social context and the situation in which s/he finds him/herself. For example, a person with three personal names may be addressed differently at home, at school, and at work. The use of multiple names could be a strategy of secrecy and concealment of ethnic identity (cf. Aceto 2002). When people do not want to reveal their ethnic identity for fear of discrimination, they use a name which is neutral to their ethnic background. The number of personal names people bear varies as there is no restriction on the number of names a person can bear. Some people may bear only one name; others may bear two to three names or even four to five names. Out of the multiple names an individual bears, one (or more) is usually identified as his official name(s) and the others unofficial names. It is the official names which appear on their certificates and other official documents. Often people with multiple personal names do write them in the form of initials on their official documents. Such cases are identified in the course of my analysis and the action taken was to classify them as multiple names even though I was unable to typify them.

Examination of the data shows that less than half the number of people whose names were gathered bears multiple names. The number of multiple names they bear on the name lists ranges between two to four names. Their multiple names are usually written in the following orders in the school registers:

- i) Ewe name + Ewe name  
Examples: Sefako + Esinam, Edinam + Semenyo, Senanu + Afeti, Eyram + Aku, Senyo + Kɔsi, Mawunyo + Kɔku
- ii) Ewe name + English name  
Examples: Emefa + Matilda, Eyram + Stephanie, Kɔsi + Victor, Mesiwɔtso + Laura
- iii) English name + Ewe name  
Examples: Albertina + Yayra, Benita + Abla, Ben + Kofi, Albert + Tete, Bismark + Mensa
- iv) English name + English name  
Examples: Edward + Ferdinand, Comfort + Augusta, Bismark + Lucky
- v) English name + Foreign/Ghanaian non-Ewe name  
Examples: Cephas + Mohammed, Justine + Nhyira
- vi) Foreign name + Ewe name  
Examples: Nurudeen + Kɔsi, Saheed + Kofi, Honore + Yao, André + Makafui, Pierre + Kɔdzo
- vii) Ewe name + Ewe name + Ewe name  
Examples: Soeto + Delali + Kɔmi  
Mawusi + Gadede + Ama
- viii) English name + Ewe name + English name  
Examples: Diana + Edinam + Rose  
Elizabeth + Ama + Louisa

These eight orders are the forms in which multiple names appear when they are written in the school registers. The first order caters for students who have

double Ewe names. The Ewe names include all types of personal names in Ewe such as birthday names, religious names and clan names. Category two and category three take care of students who bear both English and Ewe names. What it means is that in category two, the first name is an Ewe name and the second name is an English name but the reverse happens in category three where the first name is an English name and the second one an Ewe name. The fourth category makes allowance for students who bear two English names.

The fifth category and the sixth category take care of students who bear two names and one of the names is of a foreign origin or of a Ghanaian non-Ewe origin and the other one, an English or Ewe name. The foreign names are any other names apart from English names. They include Arabic names and French names. This category can be written in a reverse form. Category seven and category eight make provision for students who bear three names. In category seven, the three names are all Ewe names but in the category eight, the second name is Ewe whilst the first and third are English names.

According to the data from the schools, 933 (32.2%) students have double names, 63 (2.2%) of them have triple names and 1 (0.03%) person has four names. The remaining 1,900 (65.6%) bear single names. Breaking these statistics down according to gender, we have 365 (39%) female students who bear double names and 568 (60.8%) male students who also bear double names. For the triple names we have 32 (50.7%) female students and 31 males (49%). Only 1 (0.03%) female student has four names. To further split these figures according to region, Keta registers 685 (73%) students with double names, 54 (85.7%) with triple names and only 1 (0.03%) with four names. Peki contributes 84 (9%) students with double names and only 2 (3%) with triple

names whilst Penyi supplies 164 (17.5%) students with double names and 7 (11%) with triple names.

### **3.6 The distributional pattern of personal names in the data**

This section talks about how the different types of personal names identified in the data are distributed across gender, region and age. In section 3.5, I mentioned that the use of multiple names is common not only among Ewes but also among people from other cultures. The focus of this section is to show how those multiples names are distributed and what types of names are used as first names and second names. The distributional pattern of the names is limited to only second names because only few people reported using more than two names in the entire data and it will be insignificant representing them on tables. The analyses are based on the data from the school registers and the questionnaire data and the analysis will be done separately for each data set. It is important to do a separate analysis for each data set because in the questionnaire data, the respondents were given the chance to tell which of their names comes first or second but I had to assume the distribution of the names based on the order in which they appear in the school registers. It is also important to do separate analysis because the information from the questionnaire data cut across people from different social backgrounds but the schools data is limited to only the students who fall between the ages of 14-20. Taking this into consideration, I realized that it will not be proper to merge both data to draw a general conclusion.

### 3.6.1 Gender variations in personal names

The distribution of personal names across gender is presented in the tables below. The tables show how the various types of personal names identified in the data are distributed across gender according to first names and second names. Tables 3.3a and 3.3b show the types of first names that are used by the females and the males in the school registers and the questionnaires respectively.

**Table 3.3a: Gender variation in first names in school registers**

Type of name	Females	Males
Akan		1 (0.06%)
Arabic	2 (0.15%)	5 (0.3%)
English	1148 (90.6%)	1467 (90%)
Ewe	114 (8.9%)	154 (9%)
French	3 (0.2%)	1 (0.06%)
Unknown		1 (0.06%)
Yoruba		1 (0.06%)
Total	1267 (100%)	1630 (100%)

The table above shows that the female students use only four types of personal names as first names and the male students use six types plus a name from an unknown language origin. It is shown that both sexes have more English first names than the other types of names represented in the table but the percentage of female students (90.6%) with English first names is a little higher than that of the male students (90%). Let us now examine the same distributional pattern in the table 3.3b below.

**Table 3.3b Gender variation in first names in Questionnaire**

Type of name	Females	Males
English	38 (38%)	41 (41%)
Ewe	61 (61%)	58 (58%)
French	1 (1%)	1 (1%)
Total	100 (100%)	100 (100%)

In this table, we find that only three types of names are used by both sexes as first personal names. Contrary to the representation in table 3.3a, we find respondents from both sexes admitting to have more Ewe first names than any other type of personal name and again the females are in the lead with 61% as compared to 58% for the males.

The pattern of first names represented in the tables above shows that females bear more Ewe first names than the males whilst the males also bear more English first names than the females. In addition to the Ewe and English first names are Arabic first names, French first names, Akan first names and Yoruba first names. An equal percentage (1%) of respondents from both sexes bears French first names in the questionnaire data. In the school registers, 0.2% of the female students have French first names compared to 0.06% of the male students. The only Akan name (0.06%) and a Yoruba name (0.06%) found in the school registers are all borne by male students. I also came across one personal name which I could not determine its language of origin hence I labelled it an 'unknown name'. This unknown name is used by a male student.

Let us now turn to tables 3.4a and 3.4b and see how second personal names also vary across gender. Tables 3.4a and 3.4b display how the second names are

distributed across gender in the school registers and the questionnaire correspondingly.

**Table 3.4a Gender variation in second names in the school registers.**

Type of name	Females	Males
Akan	10 (2.7%)	2 (0.3%)
Arabic	1 (0.2%)	3 (0.5%)
Dagbani		2 (0.3%)
English	54 (14.8%)	119 (21%)
Ewe	294 (80.9%)	431 (76.6%)
French		2 (0.3%)
Ga	3 (0.8%)	1 (0.1%)
Hausa		1 (0.1%)
Unknown		1 (0.1%)
Yoruba	1 (0.2%)	
Total	363 (100%)	562 (100%)

In table 3.4a, we have nine types of names plus an unknown name that are used as second personal names in the school registers. The female students use six types of these names whereas the male students use all the nine types in addition to the unknown name. In all, 925 (31.9%) students have identifiable second names in addition to their first personal names. Out of the 925 students, 363 (39%) are females and 562 (60.7%) are males. A careful look at the table shows that the type of personal names that is mostly used as second names among the students is Ewe names. 80.9% of the female students have Ewe second names compared to 76.6% of the male students who have Ewe personal names. 14.8% of the female students have English second names compared to 21% of the male students. It is significant to note that three Ghanaian non-Ewe

names are also used as second names in the school registers, but their frequencies are rather insignificant. They are Akan names, Ga names and Dagbani names.

**Table 3.4b Gender variation in second names in Questionnaire**

Type of name	Females	Males
Akan	1 (1%)	
Arabic	1 (1%)	1 (1%)
English	40 (44.9%)	33 (37%)
Ewe	46 (51.6%)	55 (61.7%)
Unknown	1 (1%)	
Total	89 (100%)	89 (100%)

Turning to the representation of second names on table 3.4b, we have four types of names that are used as second names by the respondents. The female respondents bear all the four types of second names listed here in addition to an unknown type of names but the male respondents bear only three types of the second names. 178 people reported having second names in the questionnaire data. They are made up of 89 males and 89 females. 44.9% of the female respondents bear English second names as oppose to the 37% of the males whilst 61.7% of the males have Ewe second names against 51.6% of the females. These percentages show that more female respondents have English second names than their male counterparts whilst the male respondents also have more Ewe second names than their female counterparts. The only Ghanaian non-Ewe name represented on this table is an Akan name and it is used by a female respondent. Two Arabic names also occur in this distribution and they are used by 1 (1%) female and 1 (1%) male.

On the average, therefore, the data from both sets show that the females have more English second names than the males whilst the males have more Ewe second names than the females. The frequency of English names has reduced here because the students are likely to choose Ewe names as their second personal names if they already have English first names. The majority of the students who have English second names already have Ewe first names. It is only in few instances that I came across students bearing double English names or double Ewe names.

The high frequency of English first names among the students can be explained in relation to the type of primary school the children attended. If the child attended a mission school, it is very likely for that child to be asked to replace his first (if it is an Ewe name) with an English name or a Christian name. Some students who also attended international schools or preparatory schools tend to change their first names into English names because they have these perceptions that once their schools are 'international'; they also need to bear 'international names'.

Also the dominance of masculine names in the school registers is because I was not able to collect equal number of names across gender from the three schools. This is due to the fact that the schools do not admit equal number of boys and girls in their yearly enrolments. The intake of male students is more often higher than that of the female students.

### *3.6.2 Regional variations in personal names among Ewes*

This section presents a tabulation of the types of personal names found in the school registers across the three research areas (regions): Keta, Peki and Penyi.

In this section too, the analysis will be done according to first names and second names and my discussions will be based on data from the school registers and the questionnaire data. As explained in the previous chapter, the data from the questionnaire is drawn from four research areas therefore the questionnaire analysis will be based on four regions.

In tables 3.5a and 3.5b below, the regional variation in first names is presented according to the school registers and the questionnaires respectively.

**Table 3.5a Regional variation in first personal names in school registers**

Type of name	Keta	Peki	Penyi
Akan	1 (0.0%)		
Arabic	4 (0.25%)	2 (0.3%)	1 (0.1%)
English	1,440 (90.9%)	547 (91%)	628 (87.9%)
Ewe	135 (8.5%)	50 (8.3%)	83 (11.6%)
French	3 (0.18%)		1 (0.1%)
Unknown			1 (0.1%)
Yoruba	1 (0.0%)		
Total	1,584 (100%)	599 (100%)	714 (100%)

**Table 3.5b Regional variation in first names in questionnaire**

Type of name	Accra	Keta	Peki	Penyi
English	25 (50%)	24 (48%)	15 (30%)	16 (32%)
Ewe	24 (48%)	25 (50%)	35 (70%)	34 (68%)
French	1 (2%)	1 (2%)		
Total	50 (100%)	50 (100%)	50 (100%)	50 (100%)

Table 3.5a shows the distribution of first personal names among the students from the three research areas in the Volta Region. Six types of first names are presented in this table. The Keta region has all the six types, the Penyi region has four types in addition to an unknown type and the Peki region has only three types. Across the three regions English first names have the highest frequency followed by Ewe names and then the other types of names. Table 3.5b on the other hand displays only three types of names that are used as first names among the respondents. The Accra and Keta regions have names that fall under all the three types but names coming from the Peki and the Penyi regions fall under only two out of the three types. The table indicates that most of the respondents bear Ewe first names across the four regions as opposed to the situation presented in table 3.5a where majority of the students have English first names.

In table 3.5a, 90.9% of the students from Keta have English first names, 91% of those from Peki also bear English first names as well as 87.5% of those from Penyi. It is obvious by looking at these percentages that Peki has the highest percentage of students with English first names. Even though the percentage difference between Peki and Keta is very minimal, it is still remarkable taking into consideration Peki's geographical location and its students' population. When we come to the use of Ewe names as first personal names among the students across the regions, we realised that the numbers have reduced drastically as compared to those of the English names. Keta has 8.5% of the students bearing Ewe first names; Peki has 8.3% and Penyi has 11.6% making it the region with the highest percentage of students with Ewe first names.

In table 3.5b, however, we are shown a clearer picture of the regional distribution of first names in the questionnaire. Peki has the highest percentage (70%) of respondents bearing Ewe first names followed by Penyi (68%), Keta (50%) and Accra (48%). The highest number of respondents with English first names is recorded in Accra with 50% and the lowest number of respondents with English first names is recorded in Peki. For Accra to record the highest number of respondents with English first names is not surprising because comparing the four research areas; Accra is more urban than the other three. And also the effects of urbanization such as language contact and economic hardships make it difficult for those living in urban areas to stand true to their ethnic identities.

The overall distributional pattern of first personal names across the regions displayed in the tables above shows that the Keta region scores the highest percentage of the number of people who have English first names in the Volta Region. Penyi recorded the highest percentage of the people who bear Ewe first names followed by Peki and Keta. Comparing these three regions in the Volta Region to Accra, we realized that Accra recorded the highest number of Ewe people with English first names and the least number of people with Ewe first names.

Let us now turn away from the discussion on first names and see how the second names too are distributed across the regions in the tables below. In table 3.6a, the regional distribution of second names in the school registers is presented whilst table 3.6b presents that of the questionnaires.

**Table 3.6a Regional variation in second personal names in school registers**

Type of name	Keta	Peki	Penyi
Akan	4 (0.5%)	7 (8.2%)	1 (0.6%)
Arabic	2 (0.2%)	1 (1.1%)	1 (0.6%)
Dagbani	2 (0.2%)		
English	85 (12%)	26 (30.5%)	62 (43.3%)
Ewe	598 (85.7%)	48 (56.4%)	79 (55.2%)
French	1 (0.1%)	1 (1.1%)	
Ga	3 (0.4%)	1 (1.1%)	
Hausa		1 (1.1%)	
Unknown	1 (0.1%)		
Yoruba	1 (0.1%)		
Total	697 (100%)	85 (100%)	143 (100%)

**Table 3.6b Regional variation in second personal names in Questionnaire**

Type of name	Accra	Keta	Peki	Penyi
Akan			1 (2%)	
Arabic				2 (4.5%)
English	13 (30.2%)	19 (44%)	20 (41.6%)	21 (47.7%)
Ewe	30 (69.7%)	24 (55.8%)	26 (54%)	21 (47.7%)
Unknown			1 (2%)	
Total	43 (100%)	43 (100%)	48 (100%)	44 (100%)

The tables above display the regional variation of personal names that are used as second names among the Ewes. Table 3.6a presents the types of second personal names that are found in the school registers collected from Keta, Peki and Penyi and table 3.6b presents the types of second names gathered through the questionnaire in Accra, Keta, Peki and Penyi. Nine types of second

personal names plus an unknown name are identified in table 3.6a but only four types and an unknown one are identified in table 3.6b.

In table 3.6a, eight types of second personal names were elicited from the Keta region, seven from the Peki region and only four from the Penyi region. The Keta region records 85.7% of Ewe second names among its students. The Peki region records 56.4% and the Penyi region records 55.2% of them. As we saw for the gender variation of second names in table 3.4b, there is a quick drop in the frequency of English second names across the three regions. Few students have English second names as compared to the number that has Ewe second names. As usual the other types of second names that are identified in the registers appear in very minimal percentages except for the Akan names. It is worth mentioning that Peki is the region that records the highest number of Akan names. This, however, is not surprising because the long standing relationship between the Pekis and the Akans makes it possible for the people of the Peki region to bear Akan name. The only Dagbani second names found in the entire data are from the Keta region and the only Hausa second name comes from the Peki region.

In table 3.6b, the region with the highest number of people who bear second names is Peki, followed by Penyi. Accra and Keta come next with equal number of people bearing second names. The Accra and Keta regions record only two types of the names listed above whilst the Penyi and Peki regions record three types. The Peki region also registers an unknown type of name. As in table 3.6a, this table also shows that the number of respondents who bear Ewe second names is more than those who bear English second names and the other types of second names across the four regions. The Accra region records

the highest percentage (i.e. 69.7%) of respondents with Ewe second names followed by the Keta region with 55.8%, the Peki region with 54% and Penyi comes last with 47.7%.

When we compare the data from the two tables in the Volta Region, we will realize that averagely, the Penyi region has the highest percentage of its subjects bearing English second names than the other two regions but when it comes to Ewe second names, the Keta region records the highest percentage of its people bearing them. Again when we compare the three research areas in the Volta Region to Accra it is realised that Accra has the highest percentage of subjects who bear Ewe second names and the least number of people who have English second names. This suggests that the respondents from the Accra region who for one reason or the other were not given Ewe first names are rather given Ewe names as their second personal names. This also shows that the harsh urban conditions that make people struggle to keep their ethnic identities do not totally prevent them from adding their ethnic names to their list of names. The tables also indicate that the use of Ewe names as second names is highly favoured among the respondents across all the regions than the other types of personal names.

The overall distributional pattern of personal names across the regions reveal interesting findings about the types of personal names the Ewes like to have as first names and second names; it also gives us an insight on the region that records the highest frequency of such names. From the schools data, it is shown that the frequency of English first names among the students is higher than the Ewe first names and any other type of first names across the three research areas. But for their second names, the majority of the students have

Ewe names. When we turn to the questionnaire data, we see the opposite situation taking place. A lot of the respondents claimed to have both Ewe first names and Ewe second names. What is observed through these regional variations of personal names is that generally, majority of the Ewes who have multiple names tend to make English names their first names when they go to school and the Ewe names or the other types of names they bear become their second names. The distributional patterns found in the two data sets are summarized below. Pattern (a) caters for the data from the schools and pattern (b) caters for the questionnaire data.

A. English first names.....Ewe second names

B. Ewe first names.....English second names

### *3.6.3 The distribution of personal names across age groups*

In this section, I discuss how the various types of personal names found in the questionnaire data are distributed across two age groups: the younger age group and the older age group. The respondents who fall within the ages of 16-40 belong to the younger age group and those who fall within the ages of 41-70 belong to the older age group. The analysis in this section is based only on the questionnaire data because the data from the school registers is limited to only the young age group; it does not cut across the old age group therefore its analysis will be incomplete. The discussion will be focused on tables 3.7 and 3.8.

Table 3.7 displays age-based variations in first names whilst table 3.8 displays the age-based variations in second names.

**Table 3.7 Age-based variation in first names**

Type of name	16-40	41-70
English	43 (43%)	36 (36%)
Ewe	56 (56%)	63 (63%)
French	1 (1%)	1 (1%)
Total	100 (100%)	100 (100%)

From the table above, we see how the three types of first names are distributed between the two age groups. There is a clear discrepancy in the frequency of names that fall under each group. We realise that the older people bear more Ewe first names than the younger ones. The younger ones on the other hand tend to have more English first names than the older ones. This shows that there is a general shift from giving Ewe first names to English first names to children.

**Table 3.8 Age-based variation in second names**

Type of name	16-40	41-40
Akan	1 (1%)	
Arabic	1 (1%)	1 (1%)
English	42 (42%)	31 (39.7%)
Ewe	55 (55%)	46 (58.9%)
Unknown	1 (1%)	
Total	100 (100%)	78 (100%)

This table shows that the number of people within the younger age group who have second names is more than those who fall within the older age people. Interestingly, a lot of younger people claimed to have Ewe second names than

English second names. The reason is that some of them already have English first names therefore Ewe names are the better choice for a second name.

A careful look at the two tables show that for all the types of personal names identified with the two age groups, the younger age group has more of the names than the older age group except for the first personal names where the older group has higher frequency of Ewe names than the younger ones. The distributional patterns also show that Ewe personal names are frequently used as first names or second names between the two age groups than the other types of names. The tables again show that younger people have more multiple names than older people. In addition, these age-based variations presented above show that the younger people tend to bear English first names than the older folks.

### **3.7 Gender specific versus gender neutral names**

In this section, I discuss the types of Ewe names that are gender specific and those that are gender neutral. The gender specific names are names that are precisely given to children of a particular sex whilst the gender neutral names are unisex names. Sections 3.7.1 and 3.7.2 below discuss these two types of gender names among the Ewes.

#### *3.7.1 Gender specific names*

Gender specific names in Ewe are of two categories; those that are morphologically marked versus those that are conventionally marked. Generally, the majority of Ewe personal names given to children are not morphologically marked for gender unlike some other languages such as Akan

(cf. Agyekum 2006 and Ansu-Kyeremeh 2000) and Igbo (cf. Onukawa 2000). The morphologically marked gender names in Ewe are formed by adding the suffix *-si* or *-fi* to the masculine forms to derive the feminine forms. Types of names that fall under this category of gender names are twin names, circumstantial birth names, some traditional religious names, slave names and some special names. Some birthday names<sup>3</sup> are also morphologically marked for gender. Examples of morphologically distinct gender names are presented in the table below.

**Table 3.9: Morphologically marked gender specific names**

Male name	Female name	Type of name
Atsu	Atsu <i>fi</i>	Twin name
Klutse	Klu <i>fi</i>	Slave name
Klu	Ko <i>si</i>	Slave name
Huto	Hu <i>si</i>	Traditional religious name
Alifo	Alifo <i>si</i>	Circumstantial birth name
Lumo	Lumo <i>si</i>	Circumstantial birth name
Afedo	Afedome <i>si</i>	Special name
Kosi	Kosiwa	Birthday name
Yao/Yaw	Yawa	Birthday name

The conventionally marked gender names are names whose gender is not determined by affixation. Knowledge about this type of gender marking is inherent to the people. Types of Ewe names that are conventionally marked according to gender are the clan names, order of birth names, and traditional names. Examples are presented in the table below.

<sup>3</sup> Birthday names in Ewe are borrowed from Akan therefore they carry the Akan morphological marking.

**Table 3.10: Conventionally marked gender distinct names**

Male personal names	Female personal names
Dziwɔnu, Agbenyega, Nofegali, Dodzi, Agbesinyale, Agbeyeye (traditional names)	Ewɔenam, Lebene, Sika, Suetɔ (traditional names)
Mawuko, Anɔkplim, Mawulolo (Ewe Christian religious names)	Emefa, Enyonam, Sromawuɖa Mawuse, Mawuena (Ewe Christian religious names)
Senyo, Setɔ, Setsoafia (Predestination names)	Sefenya, Semefa, Sefakɔ (Predestination names)

The names in table 3.10 are perceived to be gender distinct names among the Ewes. Hardly will a person of an opposite sex be seen bearing them.

### 3.7.2 Gender neutral names

Apart from gender distinct names, the Ewes also have gender neutral names. The gender neutral names are usually names which describe man's relationship with God and they are given to both Christians and non-Christians. Examples of such names are: *Eɖem, Elɔm, Sitsofe, Mawukoenya, Yayra, Dela, Mawufemɔ, Selasi, Makafui, Etɔnam, Wolanyo, Elikplim, Dziedzɔm, Dzidzɔ, Kekeli, Klenam, Dzifa, Sena, Seyram, Nunana, Elikem.*

## 3.8 Geographical variations in the personal names

Among the Ewes, there are variations in personal names depending on where the person is located geographically. There are certain names that are peculiar to some groups of people even though they can be used by other groups. But there are also some names which cannot be used by people outside the group

that bears them. With migration and the search for greener pastures, these names are scattered across the different locations but once they are mentioned people are able to discern where that person comes from or might have migrated from. For example, a person might have migrated from an Anloland to a vedomeland (Inland Volta) for so many years but depending on his personal name and that of his children, people in his new area can make out his hometown. In this section, I will discuss some geographical variation in names that were found in the data.

One of the types of Ewe personal names that vary across the three research areas is twin names. The twin names in Ewe are:

*Atsu* and *Etse* (boys)

*Eyi* and *Yetsa* (girls)

*Atsu* and *Atsufi* (boy and girl)

These names are the common twin names used among the Ewe people but there are variants of them. These variants are common among the people of Peki than the other areas. Variants such as *Ata*, *Atople* and *Atawa* are found in the data gathered from the Peki area. In table 3.11 below, I present more variants of twin names in the Peki geographical area.

**Table 3.11 Variants of twin names in Peki**

Twin name	Variant(s)	Gender
Atsu	Ata	Male
Etse	Atople or Atakuma	Male
Eyi	Atawa	Female
Yetsa	Atawakuma	Female
Atsufi	Atakuma	Female

Hardly will one get twins from the Keta and Penyi areas being called by these variants unless they have migrated from the mid and inland Volta. In addition to these variants, Akan twin names may also be given to twins in the Peki area. An example of such Akan twin name is *Tawiah*. *Tawiah* is given to a boy or a girl born after twins.

Some religious and traditional names also vary across the areas. A religious name like *Esinam* is found to vary across the locations. Among the southerners (i.e. Keta and Penyi), it is pronounced as /*Esinam*/ whilst the inlanders (i.e. Peki) pronounce it as /*Esenam*/. Some religious names like *Mawuse* and *Worlasi* are common to the inlanders than the southerners. Indigenous traditional names are found to be commonly used among the southerners than the inlanders. For example names like *Afeke*, *Dziwɔnu*, *Emekɔ*, *Metsɔekewo* and *Nudzedzenyuie* are seen to be southern names.

The use of some English names also varies according to location among the Ewes. Some English names are direct translations of Ewe names and they can be used across the areas. However, there are some English names which typically depict the geographical location of the name bearer. The following

English names are found to be commonly used by the southern Ewes: *Righteous, Favour, Brilliant, Clever, Amen, Thywill, Heartwill, Thatchroot, Fortunate, Lyrical, Believer, Wonder, Diamond, Lovemore.*

### **3.9 Modernizations in Ewe personal names**

This section talks about some new developments that are taking place regarding the spelling and pronunciation of Ewe personal names. Formal education, civilization and urbanization are factors that account for these changes within Ewe personal names.

#### *3.9.1 Orthographic change in names*

Today the written form of some Ewe names has changed. People try to Anglicize their personal names by changing the orthography of the names. When this happens, it becomes difficult to identify those names unless they are pronounced. With the introduction of formal education, some people think the way in which their names are written no longer suit their current status, thus they need to do something about it. Others too have the feeling that the original written form of their names makes it look too local and points directly to where they come from so to prevent easy identification of their ethnic background, they alter the orthography of their names. By altering the orthography of their personal names, the name bearers try to “de-ethnicize” their names in order to hide their ethnic identity (Aceto 2002) and also to assimilate to a more general culture. Examples of Ewe names that undergo alteration in form include the following:

*Sedour* instead of *Sedɔ*

*Apetsi* instead of *Afeti*

*Chachu* instead of *Tsatsu*

*Tetteh* instead of *Tete*

*Amey* instead of *Ame*

*Horvey* instead of *Xɔve*

*Hussey* instead of *Huse*

*Horlali* instead of *Xɔlali*

*Kpormorne* instead of *Kpɔmɔne*

*Macaphy* instead of *Makafui*

*Nutiphaphali* instead of *Nutifafali*

*Setor* instead of *Setɔ*

*Jijor* instead of *Dzidzɔ*

The change in orthography is also done in names that have the /ɔ/ sound. The excuse usually given is that this sound does not exist in English so it is difficult to write it on official documents therefore anytime it occurs in a name, it is changed into /o/ or /or/ as shown in some of the examples above. Another group of Ewe personal names that seems to undergo extensive change in orthography is birthday names. Most Ewe birthday names are either Anglicized or they are written with an Akan orthography these days. When they are Anglicized, the initial /k/ sound is written as either /q/ or /c/ and the /ɔ/ is written as /o/. Examples are as follows:

*Quarshie/Kwashie/Kossi/Korshie* instead of *Kɔsi*

*Coffie* instead of *Kofi*

Quarcoo instead of *Kɔku*

*Cudjoe* instead of *Kudzɔ*

When they are written with the Akan orthography, they appear in this form:

*Kwame* instead of *Kɔmi*

*Kwesi, Kwasi* instead of *Kɔsi*

*Kwabena* instead of *Kɔbla*

*Kojo* instead of *Kɔdzɔ*

The problem associated with these kinds of alterations in orthography is that it becomes difficult for the actual ethnic background of the name-bearer to be identified. Also the actual meaning of the names is lost as they undergo these changes and this can result in the reduction of the value attached to the names.

### *3.9.2 Direct translation into English*

Translation is also another way by which some Ewe personal names are modernized. This phenomenon is employed by a few name givers and name bearers to give a facelift to their Ewe names. By translating the Ewe form into English, the name-bearer seems to have two names whilst in actual fact; s/he bears only one name. Sometimes when this phenomenon occurs and the individual is asked of his/her English or Ewe name depending on the one he/she is using at the moment, the individual mentions the English or Ewe version of that name. However, there are instances too where a person may

bear such names and have a different name as his or her English or Ewe name.

Examples of names that undergo direct translation are:

*Ablɔɔɛ = Freedom*

*Dzidodo = Courage*

*Dzigbɔɔɔi = Patience*

*Dziwɔnu = Heartwill*

*Dzifa = Freeheart*

*Mawunya = Godknows*

*Xɔse = Believe/Faith*

*Nukunu = Miracle*

*Yayra = Blessing/Bless*

*Elikplim = Emmanuel/Emmanuella*

*Mɔkpɔkpɔ = Hope*

*Mawufemɔ = Godsway*

*Ɖela = Saviour*

As I mentioned earlier, some factors are responsible for these transformations.

They are formal education, civilisation and urbanisation. Formal education opens people's eyes and broadens their thoughts to carry out some changes on their names so that they do not look too 'local' in the era in which we live.

Through education, people are able to replace some original phonemes in their

names with new ones which even though retain the same sound, gives them ‘a new appearance’. The desire to feel civilised and urban drives some people to make changes to their names. When people migrate to urban centres, some of them are tempted to conceal their ethnic identity by modifying their names in order to avoid discrimination from other ethnic groups.

### **3.10 Reduction of full forms of personal names**

Another form of innovation in the system of Ewe personal names is the reduction of the full form of the names. This is a style that truncates the full form of most personal names that have more than one syllable. Reducing the full form of personal names is sometimes done to show affection or it may be done just for the fun of it. Personal names which undergo this process include the following:

*Agbenyega/Agbeko/Agbeyeye becomes Agbee*

*Dodziɖenu becomes Dodzi*

*Edinam/Edem becomes Edi*

*Elikplim/Elinam becomes Eli*

*Esenam becomes Ese*

*Emefa becomes Eme*

*Ewɔenam becomes Ewoe*

*Lɔlɔnyo becomes Lɔlɔ*

*Sedinam* becomes *Sedi*

*Sitsofe* becomes *Sitso*

*Sromawuḍa* becomes *Sroḍa*

Ewe names which contain the morpheme ‘*se*’ (destiny) also go through this process. People who bear names like *Setsoafia*, *Selɔm*, *Senyo*, *Senanu*, *Semenyo*, *Setɔdzɔ* and *Sefenya* are affectionately called ‘*Se*’ or ‘*Ese*’. Another category of Ewe names that go through reduction in form are names which begin with the morpheme ‘*Mawu/Yesu*’ (God/Jesus). Examples are:

*Mawulɔm* becomes *Elɔm*

*Mawuenam* becomes *Enam*

*Mawukoenya* becomes *Koenya*

*Mawutɔ/Yesutɔ* becomes *Etɔ*

*Yesuenagbem* becomes *Enam*

In the above examples, some of the names seem to go through another form of transformation in addition to the reduction. That other form of transformation is replacement. After the morphemes *Mawu* ‘God’ or *Yesu* ‘Jesus’ are removed, they are replaced with the third person singular pronoun ‘*e*’ ‘He’ referring to God.

### **3.11 Conclusion**

In this chapter I have discussed the types of personal names among Ewes. I particularly focused on the specific types of Ewe names and the non-Ewe names touching on the geographical and gender distinctions found in the names as well as their distributional patterns. Based on data from the school registers and questionnaires, the analysis revealed that there are other types of personal names that form part of the Ewe naming system apart from the typical Ewe personal names. The analysis also revealed that generally, a lot of English first names are being given to Ewe children these days. Among the types of Ewe names that were identified, it was also shown that Ewe Christian religious names are the most frequently given Ewe names followed in specific order by birthday names, traditional names, twin names and predestination names. The traditional religious names are shown to be the least given personal names these days. The discussion also highlighted on some innovations that occur in the Ewe names and stated formal education, civilization and urbanization as factors that trigger those innovations.

The various distributional patterns discussed above show that females tend to have more Ewe first names and English second names than the males. It was also shown that among the research areas in the Volta Region, Penyi records the highest percentage of its respondents having Ewe first names whilst Keta records the highest percentage of people with English first names. But for the second names, Keta records the highest number of Ewe second names. When we compare the three areas in the Volta region to Accra, we realized that, the percentage of people in Accra who have Ewe first names is lower than that of the other three regions but it records the highest percentage of people with Ewe

second names. The age-base variation also shows that the younger folks have more English first names than the older folks.

## CHAPTER FOUR

### DYNAMICS OF THE USE OF PERSONAL NAMES AMONG THE EWES

#### 4.1 Introduction

This chapter discusses the dynamics of the use of personal names among Ewes. It pays special attention to people's attitude towards the use of their Ewe names. As already shown in chapter three, different types of personal names are given to Ewe children these days. Some of the names are of Ewe origin and some are of other language origins. In this chapter I discuss how, where, when and with whom the people use their personal names and what kinds of attitude they have towards the use of their Ewe personal names in addition to their preference for the type of personal names they bear. I also talk about the name givers and the factors which influence them in their choice of names for their children.

Name use is also a form of communication. Addressing a person by a particular type of name one way or the other expresses our feelings towards that person. It also sometimes gives a signal on the formality or otherwise of the interaction to the addressee. According to Lanehart (1999:212), language is not only a means of communication; it is also "a means of solidarity, resistance and identity within a culture or a social group". This means that the choice of personal names by speakers demonstrates the kind of relationship they wish to establish with the addressees. They may choose to connect with them or distance themselves from them. Le page (1986 cited in Lanehart 1999:212) clarifies this problem of the individual and identity by saying that:

People create their linguistic systems so as to resemble those of the groups with which from time to time they wish to identify. Both the groups, and their linguistic attributes, exist solely in the mind of each individual. When we talk we project the universe as we see it on to others as on to a cinema screen in our own images, expressed in the language we consider appropriate at that moment, and we invite others by these acts to share our universe. This does not necessarily mean that we accommodate our behaviour to resemble that of our audience, though we may do so. Rather, we behave in the way that - unconsciously or consciously- we think appropriate to the group with which at that moment we wish to identify. This may be quite distinct from the group we are talking to (1986:23).

This shows that the way we interact with people identifies us as individuals. Also how we relate to people around us and our understanding of our culture and other social institutions around us mould us to become who we want to be and how we want to be perceived by others. Thus the type of names by which we are addressed by people around us shows how close they want to be with us or how distant they want to be from us.

In order to account for the use of personal names among the Ewe people, I administered open-ended questionnaires to the informants and I also conducted interviews with them. The questionnaires were targeted at finding out the types of personal names that are used in some selected domains and to find out how Ewe personal names are faring against the other types of personal names in those domains. They were also aimed at finding out how people respond to their names and how they feel towards the use of their names. My personal observation on name use among the informants was also employed. The questionnaires were distributed in four research areas: Accra, Keta, Peki and Penyi.

## 4.2 Domains of name use

According to Nishimura (1997:5), “domains are societal level constructs under which a cluster of specific interactions take place”. He explains that in any speech event, the place where the interaction takes place, the people involved and the roles they play and the topics they discuss are factors that will contribute to their choice of words. Different researchers have identified different domains in terms of the patterns of language use in the society. Greenfield and Fishman (1972) for example identified five domains of language use. They are the family domain, the friendship domain, the religious domain, the education domain and the employment domain. These domains according to them determine the choice of a particular linguistic item in an interaction.

In this current study, the use of personal names is discussed within five domains of language use. They are the family domain, the friendship domain, the school domain, the church/mosque domain and the work domain. In these domains, I tried to find out what type of personal name the respondents use or are being addressed by. This information is important in making a case on the present status of Ewe names among the Ewe people. In each of the research sites the respondents were asked to state the personal name(s) they use when they are with family members, friends, colleagues, church members, school mates and other people they know. They were also asked to give details of their preferred name(s) and also tell the frequency at which they use their Ewe personal name(s) if applicable. In all, 200 questionnaires were administered in addition to 160 interviews conducted. In the sub-sections below, I talk about the use of the personal names across the three domains. Section 4.2.1 analyzes

the types of personal names that are used within the family domain; section 4.2.2 discusses the types of personal names that are used within the friendship domain while section 4.2.3 discusses the types of personal names that are used within the school domain, the church/mosque domain and the work domain.

#### *4.2.1. Name use within the family domain*

The discussion in this section is based on the respondents' report on the types of personal names they use with their family members. These reports are represented on tables 4.1 and 4.2. Table 4.1 below presents the number of respondents who reported using only Ewe names with their family members.

**Table 4.1: The use of Ewe names within the family domain**

Family domain	Accra (n=50)	Keta (n=50)	Peki (n=50)	Penyi (n=50)	Total (n=200)
Mum	16 (32%)	25 (50%)	35 (70%)	33 (66%)	109 (54.5%)
Dad	17 (34%)	24 (48%)	29 (58%)	30 (60%)	100 (50%)
Sister	16 (32%)	16 (32%)	26 (52%)	25 (50%)	83 (41.5%)
Brother	14 (28%)	18 (36%)	26 (52%)	26 (52%)	84 (42%)
Aunt	20 (40%)	19 (38%)	28 (56%)	31 (62%)	98 (49%)
Uncle	21 (42%)	19 (38%)	26 (52%)	30 (60%)	96 (48%)
Grandmother	20 (40%)	23 (46%)	38 (76%)	29 (58%)	110 (55%)
Grandfather	18 (36%)	22 (44%)	35 (70%)	26 (52%)	101 (50.5%)

In the table above, it is realized that the siblings (i.e. brothers and sisters) do not frequently use Ewe names to address the respondents as their grandparents, parents, uncles and aunts do. The table shows that grandmothers are the people

who very often address the respondents by their Ewe names, followed by mothers, grandfathers, fathers, aunts, uncles, brothers and sisters. Describing this type of name use with the relational pattern, we will say that the pattern of use of Ewe personal names rises from the level of grandmothers and mothers to grandfathers and fathers, reduces at the stage of aunts and uncles and reduces further at the stage of siblings. It is also shown that on the average Accra recorded the lowest number of people who use Ewe names within the family domain, followed by Keta. Peki and Penyi on the other hand recorded higher percentages of Ewe name use within the family.

In the next table we see a representation of the number and percentage of people who stated that they are addressed by English names among their family members.

**Table 4.2: The use of English names within the family domain**

Family domain	Accra (n=50)	Keta (n=50)	Peki (n=50)	Penyi (n=50)
Mum	29 (58%)	25 (50%)	14 (28%)	15 (30%)
Dad	30 (60%)	23 (46%)	20 (40%)	17 (34%)
Sister	29 (58%)	29 (58%)	23 (46%)	20 (40%)
Brother	29 (58%)	28 (56%)	22 (44%)	18 (36%)
Aunt	20 (40%)	28 (56%)	19 (38%)	17 (34%)
Uncle	27 (54%)	28 (56%)	20 (40%)	17 (34%)
Grandmother	26 (52%)	22 (44%)	8 (16%)	15 (30%)
Grandfather	27 (54%)	22 (44%)	11 (22%)	15 (30%)

This table shows that a lot of the respondents from Accra and Keta are addressed by English names within the family domain more than their

counterparts in Peki and Penyi. The increased use of English names by family members in Accra and Keta is a result of urbanization. Reports from the respondents from these two areas show that the majority of their family relations are affected by this urban transformation to the extent that even their family relations who do not live in the urban towns also address the respondents by their English names. The storyline is different for the respondents from Peki and Penyi. Comparatively, the use of English names is least favoured in their homes especially by their grandparents. Parents, siblings, aunts and uncles in these areas also use English names to address the respondents but their usage is not as much as those in the Accra and Keta areas. It is also shown that averagely the male family relations address the respondents more by their English names than the female relations across the four areas.

There are other types of personal names that are used in the family domain which are not represented on the table. They are not represented on the tables because they are used in minimal proportions. These names are French names and Arabic names. Two people from Accra reported using French names with their relations and one person from Penyi reported using an Arabic name with his parents and siblings. Another respondent from Accra also reported to be addressed by both his French and Ewe names at home.

The patterns of use of personal names within the family domain presented in the tables above show that the type of personal names chosen as a form of address within the family domain depends on the kind of relationship that exists between the addressees and their family relations. It may also depend on the type of relationship the speakers wish to establish between them and the

addressees as well as their geographical locations. It is perceived among some Ewe people that Ewe personal names are *afemenkwo* 'house names' and they are used to show affection and a feeling of closeness. But where an individual is not close to a particular family member, that family member may decide not to address him/her by his/her *afemenkwo* 'house name'. In another context too, where the individual is not familiar with some of his/her family relations especially those of them who live outside their home, he or she may decide to hide his/her *afemenkwo* 'house name' from them allowing them to use only his/her English name.

It also appears from the tables that parents, aunts, uncles and grandparents from the rural areas (i.e. those from the Peki and Penyi regions) use more of Ewe names to address the respondents than their brothers and sisters who prefer to use English names more often to address them. But almost all the kinsmen of the respondents from Accra and Keta are motivated by the urban wind to address the respondents mostly by their English names. Among the research sites in the Volta Region, Keta is the site which records the highest number of relations who use more English names in addressing the respondents. In terms of the use of Ewe names in the family, Peki records the highest number of respondents. The fact that the older relatives frequently address the respondents by their Ewe names shows that they are the people who, as noted above, are more enthused about keeping their traditional values and conserving their ethnic identities.

Informants who have children were also asked through interviews to report on the type of personal name they use in addressing their children at home. Their responses are presented in tables 4.3a, 4.3b and 4.3c. In all, 80 parents (40

males and 40 females) were interviewed with 20 (10 males and 10 females) coming from each research site.

Those who reported using only Ewe names to address their children are presented in table 4.3a; those who use only English names in addressing them are also presented in 4.3b and those who reported addressing their children by both their Ewe and English names are presented in table 4.3c.

**Table 4.3a: Parents report on the use of Ewe names to address their children.**

Family Domain	Accra (n=20)	Keta (n=20)	Peki (n=20)	Penyi (n=20)
Mum		6 (30%)	4 (20%)	3 (15%)
Dad	5 (25%)	9 (45%)	7 (35%)	3 (15%)

**Table 4.3b: Parents report on the use of English names to address their children.**

Family Domain	Accra (n=20)	Keta (n=20)	Peki (n=20)	Penyi (20)
Mum	6 (30%)	2 (10%)	2 (10%)	4 (20%)
Dad	3 (15%)		2 (10%)	4 (20%)

**Table 4.3c: Parents report on the use of Ewe/English names to address their children.**

Family Domain	Accra (n=20)	Keta (n=20)	Peki (n=20)	Penyi (n=20)
Mum	4 (20%)	2 (10%)	4 (20%)	2 (10%)
Dad	2 (10%)	1 (5%)	1 (5%)	2 (10%)

From the interviews, 46% (37) of the parents claimed to address their children by their Ewe names at home whilst 28.7% (23) of them claimed to use English names to address them. 22.5% (18) of them also claimed to use both Ewe names and English names in addressing their children and the remaining 2.5% (2) which are not represented on the table reported using Arabic names and Arabic-English names to address their children.

32.5% of the mothers interviewed claimed to use either English or Ewe/English names in addressing their children as oppose to the 18.7% of the male parents. The female parents (16%) who claimed to use Ewe names to address their children at home are less than the male parents. 30% of the male parents claimed they use Ewe names for their children at home. But my observation of the use of names in some of the homes I visited shows the opposite situation taking place. Even though majority of the male parent claimed to use Ewe names in addressing their children, I realised that they were rather using the Ewe-English combination. This shows that their reports about their use of names in addressing their children contradict their actual use of the names.

#### *4.2.2 Discussions on the use of personal names within the family domain*

My observation of the use of personal names within the family domain shows that generally older people tend to address the informants more often by their Ewe personal names than the younger people. This observation validates the assumption that the elderly people are the ones who maintain their cultural identity more than the younger people. Some sociolinguistic studies (such as Eckert 2005 and Holmes 2001) have also shown that there is a correlation between age and conservatism. Old age is the period where conservatism comes into play especially with linguistic choices. The need to conserve ones

ethnic identity comes about as a result of the pressure to use standard forms in the midst of other linguistic choices. The elderly people therefore deem it their responsibility to protect their cultural heritage. Some of them feel uncomfortable addressing the young people by their English names. When I interviewed some of the older people in the homes I visited, some admitted that they do not see the sense in using a foreign name to address their children at home. They explained that it is deceptive to claim to be a Ewe while using another person's name because it makes one a lost person in his own homeland. They also said that they find it difficult to pronounce some of the foreign names people bear.

The younger people on the other hand are more inclined to the use of English personal names. They see the use of English names as a way of creating a new identity as compared to the use of the Ewe ones. Most of these young ones are people who have gone to school or are still going to school and are more exposed to modern innovations such as the computer and the internet than their older counterparts. Youthful stage is a period specific to "industrial society and the modern era" (Eckert 2005:162). This stage is seen as a period of gaining freedom and being open to new opportunities as well as a period of making new social demands and finding new social identities. These changes and the desire to construct new lifestyles and identities lead to linguistic innovations. The new identities that are constructed are usually independent of adult identities.

Another observation that I made has to do with the use of names within the family domain across gender. I observed that females use Ewe personal names in addressing the informants more than the males. For the females, the use of a

person's indigenous name shows a feeling of affection, endearment and oneness. It draws the speaker and the addressee closer to each other as compared to the use of a foreign name. Another explanation to this effect is the social role assigned to women as guardians of the social values of the society (cf. Holmes 2001). As guardians of societal values, women are expected to preserve and uphold these values thus the society looks up to them to use the standard form of any linguistic item. In this context of name use, the standard form of personal names for an Ewe person should be his/her indigenous name (or local name). Although standard forms are usually formal and less personal (Holmes 2001:158), in this context this rule is non-applicable. Because even though I described the use of the Ewe name in the home context as the standard form, its usage is more relaxed and informal.

Regardless of these social variables which seem to influence the use of personal names among family members, I also observed that some of the informants are addressed by kinship terms at home. Some of the informants are addressed by pet names or nicknames at home and those who have younger siblings are often addressed by their siblings as *davi* 'sister', *sister* or  *aunty* and *efo* 'brother' or *brother* without adding their personal names. This type of name use shows that there are social restrictions on the use of personal names as younger folks are expected to show respect to their elders. There are some informants who due to being frequently addressed by their nieces and nephews as *ete* or *tasi* 'paternal aunt', *nɔ̃di*, *daɖia*, *dagã* or *nɔ̃gã* 'maternal aunt', *nyruie* 'maternal uncle' and *tɔ̃di* or *tɔ̃gã* 'paternal uncle', have retained these kinship terms of address among their family members and they are sometimes used in other domains outside the family. A similar situation applies to some

informants who have children. They (especially the mothers) are addressed by teknonyms. Teknonyms are terms used to address people in relation to the name of their children, especially their firstborns. Examples are: *Esinɔ* 'Esi's mother', *Conformɔ* 'Comfort's mother', *Kɔdzonɔ* 'Kɔdzo's mother' and *Brightnɔ* 'Bright's mother'. Where a woman is the mother of twins, she is simply addressed as *Vena* 'mother of twins' by her family members even by her own children.

Another observation made on the use of names is that there seems to be a strong competition between the use of Ewe names and English names in the home. Education is one major factor responsible for the increased use of English names in the family domain these days. Some people pick up English names when they get to school and these names go a long way to replace their indigenous names at home. With education comes modernity. When people go to school, they are exposed to new cultures which affect their lifestyles and the way they behave as they try to live the things they study there. Some of them pretend to be like the Europeans by adopting European personal names and attitudes. They prefer to address their fellows and relations by their English names and expect the same to be done for them. In table 4.2, it is realised that siblings recorded the highest points in the use of English names to address the informants. This does not mean that they are more educated than the other members of the family hence their preference for English names; rather it is because they are the people who are more affected by modern changes in the society via education and are likely to deviate from their traditional norms.

Urbanization is also a factor responsible for the increased use of English names within the family domain. Urban areas are mostly sites where speakers of

different languages come into contact. This therefore results in the promotion of linguistic diversity and uniformity. It also gives rise to an increase in social stratification which then is reflected in linguistic variation (Romaine 2000:65). According to Romaine (2000), urbanization is characterised by physical proximity but vast social distance. People living in urban centres have more exposure to people from different cultural and social groups. They are also exposed to broader communication networks such as the electronic media and the mass media which results in the tendency of losing touch with their own cultural backgrounds. The urban people are less conservative and they easily abandon their culture in favour of the mixed urban culture posing a threat to the preservation of the indigenous culture. People living in urban areas more often address their relations by their English names than their rural counterparts. Urbanization can influence people to be what they are not.

Looking at the data in table 4.1, it is clear that informants living in Accra are not frequently addressed by their Ewe names within the family domain especially by their brothers, sisters and parents. This is because Accra is the capital city of the country and the way of living there differs from that of Keta, Peki and Penyi. Informants in Accra are more exposed to people from different cultural backgrounds and for some reasons may want to maintain a neutral cultural identity therefore they choose to use more of their English names than their Ewe names. The next research site with an increased use of English names is Keta. Due to the geographical location of Keta, it is more of an urban area than the other two research sites in the Volta Region. Keta is a coastal town and was once a port city during the colonial times and it still carries its past glories. Because the Europeans lived there for a long time, some of the

people tend to behave like them and would prefer to use English name to Ewe names.

Intermarriage is also a factor responsible for the increased use of English names in the family. In the past it was not easy and not very common for people to marry from different ethnic groups but these days intermarriage seems to gain currency all over the place. Those who migrate to urban towns and cities end up marrying from different tribes and when this happens they end up giving birth to children of mixed tribes and races. These children end up receiving mixed personal names from their parents and to show neutrality in the home, they are better addressed by their English names.

In an interview with some of the respondents, I tried to find out how they respond to the type of names by which they are addressed by their relations and they gave varying responses. Whilst some of the respondents do not care much about how they are called at home provided the name is one of their names, others are very particular about the type of name that is used to address them at home. Some of those who care about how they are called explained that some of the names by which they are addressed by the relations are *devimeɲkɔwo* “childhood names” and they do not want to be identified with these names as they grow. These names are usually given to them based on something that occurred in their childhood or a pet name given to them by one of their parents especially the mother or the grandmother.

Some informants also reported that they are forced to respond to some of the names because they do not want to show disrespect to the relations. They also added that some of their relations (particularly the grandparents) can hardly

remember their English names thus they are forced to respond to the Ewe names which they do not like. Those of them who wish to call them by their English names do so by creating their own versions (i.e., they are likely not to pronounce the English names the way they are supposed to, they may replace the difficult sounds with easier ones). For example, one of the informants whose name is *Patrick* claimed that his grandmother calls him *Apache* because she cannot pronounce the name correctly.

#### *4.2.3 Name use within the friendship domain*

In this section, I discuss the type of personal names that friends of the respondents use to address them. Apart from the family domain, the friendship domain is another domain where the respondents and their addressees have some degree of closeness and familiarity. There is some sort of laxity in the forms of address in this domain. In the questionnaire, respondents were asked to report on the types of names their female friends and male friends use in addressing them. The respondents belong to a wide range of age group within 16-70 years. Tables 4.4, 4.5 and 4.6 illustrate their responses.

Table 4.4 displays respondents who claimed to be addressed by their Ewe names within the friendship domain; table 4.5 presents respondents who use English names among their friends whilst table 4.6 also presents respondents who claimed to use either Ewe or English names within the friendship domain.

**Table 4.4: The use of Ewe names within the friendship domain**

Friendship domain	Accra (n=50)	Keta (n=50)	Peki (n=50)	Penyi (n=50)
Female Friends	10 (20%)	12 (24%)	12 (24%)	10 (20%)
Male Friends	8 (16%)	13 (26%)	11 (22%)	9 (18%)

**Table 4.5: The use of English names in the friendship domain**

Friendship domain	Accra (n=50)	Keta (n=50)	Peki (n=50)	Penyi (n=50)
Female Friends	32 (64%)	35 (70%)	34 (64%)	33 (66%)
Male Friends	31 (62%)	35 (70%)	35 (70%)	32 (64%)

**Table 4.6: The use of Ewe/English names in the friendship domain**

Friendship domain	Accra (n=50)	Keta (n=50)	Peki (n=50)	Penyi (n=50)
Female Friends	6 (12%)	3 (6%)	4 (8%)	5 (10%)
Male Friends	9 (18%)	2 (4%)	4 (8%)	6 (12%)

In table 4.4, it is demonstrated that on the average, more female friends use Ewe names to address the respondents than their male friends. The general picture presented here is that Ewe personal names are not frequently used among friends in the four research areas. Table 4.5 shows that the frequency of use of English names within the friendship domain is higher than the use of the other names identified. It is interesting even though not strange that friends of the respondents from the three research areas in the Volta region address them frequently by their English names than friends of those who live in Accra. This

shows that the identity reconstruction wind that is blowing is not limited to the urban areas but has extended its wings to the rural areas too.

In table 4.6, it is shown that very few friends use Ewe-English names to address the respondents. This type of personal name use is a phenomenon by which friends address each other interchangeably by either their Ewe names or by their English names. This phenomenon even though not limited to the friendship domain is a style common to people of the same age cohort. The table also shows that the male friends use more Ewe-English names in addressing the respondents than their female friends. Accra records the highest number of respondents admitting to this style of name use among their friends.

Two other types of personal names were also reported to be used in this domain. These are Arabic names and Ewe/French names. Only two respondents from Penyi reported being addressed by their Arabic names when in the company of their friends. Another two from Accra also reported being addressed by either their Ewe names or their French names in the friendship domain.

In general the tables show that of the types of personal names (i.e. Ewe names, English names, French names and Arabic names) that are identified as address forms in the friendship domain, English names are the most frequently used names followed by Ewe names.

#### *4.2.4 The use of personal names in three other domains outside the family*

In addition to the use of names within the family domain and the friendship domain, the respondents were also asked to report on how they are addressed by people in three other domains. These domains are the school, the

church/mosque and the workplace. These areas are grouped under one major domain because they are assumed to be places where the respondents have some form of formal relationship with their interlocutors. In tables 4.7, 4.8 and 4.9, I present the types of personal names that are used in these three domains per the respondents report.

Table 4.7 presents the types of personal names that are used in the school domain; table 4.8 presents the types of names that the respondents are addressed by at church or at the mosque and table 4.9 presents the type of names that the respondents reported being addressed by at work.

**Table 4.7: The use of personal names in the school domain**

Type of name	Accra (n=49)	Keta (n=49)	Peki (n=50)	Penyi (n=49)	Total (n=197)
Arabic/Ewe				1 (2%)	1 (0.5%)
Ewe/English	6 (12%)	2 (4%)	3 (6%)	3 (6%)	14 (7%)
English	32 (64%)	36 (72%)	36 (72%)	37 (74%)	141 (71.5%)
Ewe	10 (20%)	11 (22%)	10 (20%)	8 (16%)	39 (19.7%)
French	1 (2%)				1 (0.5%)
Igbo			1 (2%)		1 (0.5%)

Table 4.7 shows that the majority (71.5%) of the respondents are addressed by English names in the school domain than any other type of personal name they have. Only 19.7% of the respondents admitted using Ewe personal names at school whilst 7% of them also claimed to use both their Ewe names and their English names. One person (2%) from the Penyi area reported being addressed by both his Ewe name and Arabic name at school and another one person from the Peki area also claimed to use an Igbo name at school. Penyi is the area that

records the highest number of respondents who use English names in school and also records the lowest number of respondents who use Ewe names in school.

**Table 4.8: The use of personal names in the church/mosque domain**

Type of name	Accra (n=49)	Keta (n=47)	Peki (n=49)	Penyi (n=42)	Total (n=187)
Arabic				2 (4%)	2 (1%)
Ewe/English	3 (6%)	1 (2%)	2 (4%)		6 (3.2%)
English	38 (76%)	35 (70%)	37 (74%)	35 (70%)	145 (77.5%)
Ewe	7 (14%)	11 (22%)	10 (20%)	5 (10%)	33 (17.6%)
French/Ewe	1 (2%)				1 (0.5%)

Table 4.8 on the other hand illustrates the types of personal names that the respondents reported to be addressed by at church or at the mosque. 187 respondents gave reports on their use of personal names in this domain. 2 (1%) of them are Moslems and the remaining 185 (98.9%) are Christians. The majority of the respondents who are Christians reported that they are addressed by their English names at church more often than their Ewe names. For those who are Moslems, they said that in the mosque, the only name they use is the Arabic names so even though they have Ewe names, they do not use them in the mosque. The Accra research area recorded the highest number of people who use English names at church followed by Peki. Again, Penyi recorded the least number of people who use Ewe names at church. One person from Accra also stated that he uses both his French name and his Ewe name at church.

**Table 4:9: The use of personal names in the domain of work**

Type of name	Accra (n=48)	Keta (n=46)	Peki (n=41)	Penyi (n=45)	Total (n=180)
Akan			1 (2%)	1 (2%)	1 (0.5%)
Arabic				1 (2%)	1 (0.5%)
Ewe/English	1 (2%)	3 (6%)	3 (6%)	1 (2%)	8 (4%)
English	36 (72%)	29 (58%)	24 (48%)	32 (62%)	121 (67%)
Ewe	10 (20%)	14 (28%)	13 (26%)	10 (20%)	47 (26%)
French	1 (2%)				1 (0.5%)

As shown in the table above, the use of English names is very frequent at the workplace than the other types of personal names. This is because English names are considered the official names to be used at work. Those who use both Ewe names and English names in this context claimed that they use their Ewe names with their co-workers who are also Ewes and they use the English names with any other person. Some of the female respondents admitted that they sometimes use their husbands' names at work and others also claimed that apart from their personal names they are sometimes addressed by their surnames among their co-workers. Others also added that they are occasionally addressed by their occupational titles such as *teacher*, *doctor*, *master* and *engineer*.

#### 4.2.5 Discussion on the use of personal names in the three domains outside the family

It is observed that there is a pervasive use of English names in the three domains outside the family than in the family domain itself. Even though the Ewe names are not the least used names in these domains, their frequency of

use is not encouraging. This shows that there is no restriction on the use of English personal names among Ewes in these domains as they are regarded as the official names to be used in such domains.

The school is an institution where children are encouraged to speak foreign languages, especially the English language more than their mother tongues. Some teachers even go to the extent of punishing students who speak the vernacular in school. Right from the onset, these children are made to believe that the English language is better than the mother tongue and that the use of the mother tongue should be limited to the home. This situation of language use is similar to the use of personal names in schools. In school, some children are forced to add English names to their Ewe names and it is these English names that they use in the school domain.

According to one informant from Peki, he was forced to give English names to his two daughters when he took them to school because the headmaster insisted on doing so but when he later took his son to the same school, he refused to give him an English name and also insisted that his Ewe name should be written in his class register. This man explained that he did not like the idea of giving English names to his children because he would have given them those names at their birth if he had wanted to but the headmaster of their school forced him to do so. Some informants also attested to this fact that they were also forced to pick up English names at school. Other informants also reported using English names voluntarily in school because at school because they are ashamed of the meanings of the Ewe names they bear and in order to avoid being teased by their mates; they decided to take English names.

The situation observed in the school domain is not different from that of the church domain. It was observed that the use of English names is higher in the church domain than the other two domains. Until recently, the church does not favour the use of Ewe personal names. New converts were forced to use English names as their baptismal names relegating the use of their Ewe names to the home. Some people even go to the extent of rejecting the use of their Ewe names at home after converting to Christianity. The assumption behind this behaviour was that some of the Ewe names have profane meanings therefore their use is not permitted in the church as the Church is a holy place. A female informant from Penyi who is a Catholic explained that in the past, some of the Catholic priests who pastored the Roman Catholic churches in the Volta Region were Europeans who do not understand the Ewe language. These priests thought that the meanings of the Ewe names are not biblical so when they baptized people they give them English names or they name them after the saints and martyrs. These new names are believed to be religious and conforming to the Christian principles.

The observation made at the workplace is not different from the observation made in the two domains discussed above. As expected, English names are in frequent use than the other types of personal names. The situation at the workplace is an interesting one. Some informants claimed that they choose to use English names at the workplace because they are able to hide their real identity and prevent tribal discrimination against them at the workplace. Others also claimed that some of their co-workers have difficulties pronouncing their names so they either use English names or nicknames at work.

### 4.3 Preferred name use among Ewes

This section talks about the respondents preference for the type of personal name by which they wish to be addressed. They were asked to state the type of name they would personally prefer to be addressed by. This was necessary because I observed that some people bear some types of personal names which they do not like and they hate to use them and they become very furious when people address them by such names. One Sunday on my way to church I met a woman and her son. The boy was taking quick steps ahead of his mother so the mother called out to him: “*Kɔmigã*, wait for me”. The boy turned in fury and asked the mother: “have I not asked you not to call me *Kɔmigã* anymore?” So I asked the boy whom we all know by that name in the community how he wants to be called. He replied that his names are *Mawuli* and *Emmanuel* and he prefers to be called by either of them but not *Kɔmigã*. I asked him again to tell me why he does not want to be called by the first name. He simply replied: “I do not like it”.

The story of this boy applies to some other people in the Ewe community. Another informant also told me of how he had to start stoning and beating children before they could stop calling him by a particular name given to him by his mother when he was young which he does not like. Some people even go to the extent of going to the chief’s palace for a gong-gong to be beaten warning people to stop calling them by those names they do not like. These stories tell us that of the many names an individual could bear, there could be a particular one(s) s/he would prefer or detest to use. From the data gathered, 50.5% of the respondents stated that they prefer to use English names as against the 41% who reported that they prefer to use their Ewe names. Another

7.5% of them reported that they prefer to use both their Ewe names and English names and an insignificant percentage of 1% also claimed to prefer the use of Arabic names.

At the four research areas, there is a gender discrepancy in the preference of name use. From the data, more female respondents (26%) claimed to prefer English names to Ewe names than the male respondents (24.5%) whilst more male respondents (24%) on the other hand also claimed that they prefer Ewe names to English names than the female respondents (17%). For those who claimed to like both the Ewe names and English names, 6.5% of them are females and 1% is males. As for the Arabic names, an equal percentage of only 0.5% from both sexes claimed to prefer them. The percentages of their preferences are summarized in the table below.

**Table 4.10 Gender difference in preferred name use**

Preferred name	Females	Males	Total
Arabic names	0.5%	0.5%	1%
English names	26%	24.5%	50.5%
Ewe names	17%	24%	41%
English and Ewe names	6.5%	1%	7.5%

I also asked the respondents who have Ewe personal names to describe how often people address them by these names or how often do they introduce themselves to others by these names and the responses they gave are so interesting. 32% of them claimed that they use their Ewe personal names often and 26% of them also claimed to use them very often. However, a significant number of them (42%) stated that they do not use their Ewe personal names at

all. These people claimed that they never mention their Ewe names to any one unless the person already knows them by that name but even that they feel very reluctant to respond when addressed by such names.

According to the group of people who claimed to use their Ewe names often, the domains in which they use these names are restricted. Some said they use them only at home while others claimed they use them only at school. Those who claimed they use their Ewe names very often said they use it everywhere they find themselves. They prefer to use them more than the English names they have. The other group who do not use them at all also claimed that most people do not know them by their Ewe names, thus they prefer to use the English names instead. In short, the rate at which people use their Ewe names depends on their preference for the name, the domain of use and the interlocutors involved.

#### **4.4 Name Givers**

Taking the discussions in the sections above into consideration, one may wonder why that pattern of use of personal names among the Ewes and why the use of some personal names is prevalent than others in the various domains. In order to understand the pattern of name use among the Ewes and the influx of other types of personal names into the Ewe naming system, it is necessary to know who the name givers are and why they give those types of given names. In this section, I discuss some information about the name givers and the factors that influence their choice of given names among the Ewes.

Name givers are people who give names to children. These people may not necessarily be the biological parents or relations of the child; they may be friends of the child's parents, kinsmen, neighbours or dignified people in the community in which the child is born. Unlike some cultures where anyone can give a name to a child (c.f. Aceto 2002 and Schottman 2000) the same cannot be said of the Ewes. Anybody cannot just name a child because naming a newborn baby is an honour among the Ewes.

In the past, naming a child used to be the sole prerogative of the father or the paternal grandfather because children belong to their fathers in Ewe land. As soon as the child is born the father is expected to provide a name which will be officially and publicly announced on the eighth day after the child's birth. Sometimes the child's father may consult the oracles to look into the future of the child before his or her name is determined. He may also consult some members of his family to determine which name will be suitable for the child. Mothers can also give names to their children but it is not their outright responsibility as it is done among the Logbara people. According to Dalfovo (1982), in the Logbara culture, it is the child's mother, aunts, grandmothers and other female relations who propose a name for the child because the Logbara people believe that children are the affair of women. But among the Ewes, mothers could only name their child after the father has first given a name. Also in instances where a man refuses to accept responsibility for the pregnancy, the mother is compelled to name the child.

As times change and new developments continue to creep into our social and cultural systems, the Ewe naming system has also witnessed some changes. The scope of name givers has expanded beyond the paternal jurisdiction.

Aunts, uncles, grandparents (from both maternal and paternal sides), older siblings of the new-born baby, family friends, reverend ministers and even nurses and doctors at the hospital where the baby is born now fall within the range of name givers. Even with this expansion in the scope of name givers, not just anyone who falls within these groups of people is eligible to name a child because it is an honour and a sign of respect to be asked to name a child. Therefore the name giver must be of good character and be of good standing in the community.

Interviews with my informants revealed 56.5% of them claiming that they were named by their fathers, 13.5% of them said they were named by their mothers and 19.5% claimed they were named by both parents. Another 4% of them also claimed to be named by their aunts, uncles and grandparents and 0.5% reported being named by a Reverend Minister. A minimal percentage of 1.5% however claimed not to know the persons who named them. Let us now look at some of the factors that influence the choice of given names.

#### *4.4.1 Factors that influence the choice of a given personal name*

For a child to be given a particular name is not by mere coincidence or mishap. There is something that usually triggers the choice of a given name. As I mentioned earlier in the previous chapters Ewe personal names have meaning and the meaning of the names sometimes tells stories about the name givers and also depicts some of their societal values. Personal names sometimes afford the parents or the other name givers the occasion to transmit a personal message. They serve as forms of allusive communication. According to Musere and Byakutaga (1998) cited in Lombard (2008:21), "African names often reflect negative or positive opinions of the name givers towards the child or

other people (usually kinsmen, neighbours or friends). The child's name can commemorate significant events or circumstances at the time of birth". This reiterates the importance of given names among Africans and Ewes in particular. Their names serve as record books in which vital information is kept. The analysis of the data shows that religion, education and age are factors that seem to influence the name givers choice of names. In the subsequent paragraphs I discuss these factors in detail.

The religious background of name givers is one of the factors that influence the type of personal names given to people. Some personal names people bear easily identify their religious backgrounds and/or that of the name givers and also depict their belief systems. If the name giver is a Christian, he tends to give names that depict Christian values. If he or she happens to be a Moslem, his/her choice of a given will be in line with the Islamic values and faith but if the name giver is a traditionalist, his/her choice of name will portray the indigenous traditional values, the objects of worship and even the place of worship. Giving personal names that are connected to their faith is an attempt by the name givers to show their commitment and gratitude to the object of their faith.

I asked the respondents about the religious background of their name givers and these are their responses: 71.5% of them claimed that the people who named them are Christians. 26% of them stated that their name givers are traditionalists. 1% of them also responded that their name givers are Moslems and the remaining 1.5% claimed not to know the religious background of their name givers. These responses show that the majority of their name givers are

Christians hence the high frequency of Christian religious names in the data. Their responses are summarized in the table below.

**Table 4.11 Religious background of name givers**

Religious background	Percentage
Christian	71.5%
Moslem	1%
Traditionalist	26%
Unknown	1.5%

The educational background of the name giver is also a factor which can influence the type of personal name he/she gives to a child. The level of education of a name giver sometimes determines the type of personal name s/he gives to a child. Some informants alleged that name givers with high level of formal education tend to give “sophisticated” English names to their children. There are some name givers who due to their education give certain names to their children which are names they come across in novels or books. These educated people are also able to translate Ewe names into given English names. According to Brender (1986:132) cited in Thonus (1992:176), better-educated parents usually give “unique and novel” names to their children as compared to the “idiosyncratic appellations given by those of low intelligence, of relatively poor educational attainment, unimaginative and indifference to the presence or the needs of the offspring”. An interview with one of my informants from the Peki area confirms Brender’s assertion. The informant, a senior high school teacher, claimed that he named his first daughter *Brenda* because one day whilst in Sixth form, he was reading a novel in which he came

across the name. He fell in love with the name and decided that he would give it to any of his female children when he gives birth. He admitted not knowing the meaning of the name but he just loves it.

It is also rare for an educated person to give allusive names or circumstantial birth names to a child these days unlike an uneducated name giver who sees nothing wrong with those names and thinks he is rather preserving his cultural heritage. This is because the educated person believes that whatever name he gives to a child goes a long way to affect his/her future therefore s/he thinks carefully before choosing a name. The uneducated person is also aware of the effect the meanings of such names have on people but he does not care too much about the future consequences of the name on the name bearer. His concern is only on the message he intends to put across.

Education also makes people think and view things differently. These days, we rarely hear certain types of personal names among the Ewes (e.g. occupational names and circumstantial birth names). The issue is not that the situations or circumstances that give rise to these names no longer exist but the issue is that some name givers no longer attach much importance to these situations or circumstances. In an interview with a female name giver who is a seamstress and a Junior High School dropout from the Keta area, she said she lost her husband when she was pregnant with her second child. But when she delivered the baby, she named her *Grace*. I asked her why she named the child *Grace* but not after the situation in which the child was born, because under normal circumstance, the child should have been named *Megbenu* or *Afedomesi*. She replied that it was by God's grace that she was able to deliver that child because considering the emotional trauma she went through as a widow; she

thought she couldn't make it with the baby hence that name. She also added that "these days, no one gives such names to children because their meanings are too obvious and people may even think such children are evil". 73% (143/200) of the respondents claimed their name givers are educated whilst the remaining 27% (54/200) also claimed that their name givers are uneducated. The educational background of name givers is outlined in the table below.

**Table 4.12 Educational background of name givers**

Educational background	Percentage
Educated	146 (73%)
Uneducated	54 (27%)
Total	200 (100%)

The last factor that also seems to influence the name giver's choice of a given name is age. The age of the name givers most often determines the type of personal names they give to their children. There is the tendency for name givers who are older to give typical Ewe names to children than name givers who are younger. This is because the older ones belong to a generation where to maintain one's cultural values is the norm but the younger ones form part of the new generation where one is not obliged to keep those values. At their youthful age they try to carve their own social identities and are ready to open up to linguistic innovations. Name givers between the ages of 41-70 and above are grouped as people belonging to the old generation and those who fall between the ages of 16-40 are grouped as people belonging to the young

generation. In an interview with an older name giver in the Accra area, he said he gave English names to his older children because at the time they were born, English names were in vogue. But later he realized that if he is not careful, his children may lose their true identities, he therefore decided to give Ewe names to his younger children and grandchildren because he thought it wise to return to his roots and reclaim his African identity. This signals a kind of revival of Ewe names and the commitment to maintain the Ewe culture by the older folks.

Another older name giver in his late 70s from the Penyi area also exclaimed in an interview with him that: “I do not know what is wrong with you children of today. Instead of giving simple and meaningful names like birthday names to your children, you give them other people’s names which are difficult to pronounce and meaningless”. This informant referred to English names as “other people’s name” because according to him, once you name an Ewe child by a name other than an Ewe name, you lost the child’s identity, alienating him/her from his own people thereby rendering him a stranger in his own land.

Contrary to these views from the older people, some of the young name givers also see nothing wrong with the foreign types of personal names they give to their children in these days. A female name giver from the Keta area in her early 30s and a mother of two children explained that the type of names their generation gives to their children does not mean they are lost; they are only trying to stay in line with time. She said things are changing and they cannot be expected to continue giving some of those old fashioned names to their children; they must obey the current wind that is blowing if not they will be left behind. She further explained that the Ghana in which we live now, some people are discriminated against because they are Ewes, they are mocked and

called 'number 9' behind their back so it is just normal to mix the Ewe names with other names to look normal on the social front.

#### **4.5 Attitudes towards the use of Ewe personal names**

Attitudes are salient indicators that help to describe the sociolinguistic profile of a particular language community. They portray the social characteristics of the people in the community bringing out their thoughts and beliefs about who they are and where they are heading towards.

People have different attitudes towards the use of their Ewe personal names. Many of the respondents lamented on the frequent use of English names among the Ewes these days. They said that even though they prefer to use English names, they do not wish for their ethnic identity to be lost at the expense of a foreign culture. In order to find out how the respondents feel about the use of their Ewe personal names, they were asked a set of questions to this effect. The results from the analysis show that the majority of the respondents in all the four research areas express positive feelings towards the use of Ewe personal names.

I asked the respondents whether they feel comfortable using their Ewe personal names everywhere and the majority of them (58.5%) responded in the affirmative. One of the reasons they gave is the pride they feel and the fulfilment they find in the use of their Ewe personal names. According to them it is not a crime to be born an Ewe therefore they have to be proud of their heritage by using the Ewe names everywhere they find themselves. In so doing they will be able to portray their ethnic identity to the world. A female informant from the

Peki area stated that it is good to bear Ewe personal names and use them because these names identify them as “true Voltarians”.

Another reason given for the positive feeling towards the use of Ewe personal names is the meanings the names carry. Some of the respondents confirmed that the meanings of their Ewe names serve as a source of encouragement and inspiration to them. According to one of the respondents from the Penyi area who gave her name as Ami, “all Ewe names have meaning but not all English or Christian names have meaning”. She explained that some foreign names given to them by their parents are meaningless and sometimes it is difficult trying to find their meaning and origin. Another respondent by name Etɔnam from the Accra area also said that he cherishes his name *Etɔnam* ‘He (God) has responded to my call’ so much because its meaning makes him feel honoured and great. Another informant also stated that the meanings of some personal names are like antidotes which energize the name bearers at the point of giving up. He explained that if for example your name is *Dodzi* ‘be courageous’ and you are going through difficult times, once you think of the meaning of your name, it will remind you to be courageous and persevere. This means that in times of adversity, people are encouraged and strengthened by the meaning of their names not to give up.

Other respondents also claimed that the use of Ewe names solidifies the family systems and keeps the lineage alive. Some of the personal names, especially the clan names prevent the clan systems from being wiped out. They said that it is important for Ewe people to use Ewe personal names because by using them they will be able to preserve their socio-cultural identity and stand firm in unity

to oppose their oppressors and also be able to develop themselves as one strong ethnic group.

A group of respondents also reported that they do not feel comfortable using their Ewe personal names. These people represent 29.5% of the total number of respondents. They gave different reasons for having this negative attitude towards the use of Ewe names. According to some of them the Ewe personal names are too indicative of who they are and where they are coming from. They claimed that the Ewe names create room for tribalism and discrimination against them especially those of them living in the cities. One of the respondents by name Abigail shared her experience with me during one of my field trips to the Accra site.

According to Abigail, she lives among some Akan people in Alajo, a suburb of Accra where the Ewes are always insulted and discriminated against at the least misunderstanding. She said that some of her Akan neighbours have this mentality that the Ewes are bad and evil people with black magic powers therefore any bad thing to happen in the community is always linked to the Ewes. According to her the situation is even worse during election periods; the majority of the Akans in the area belong to the National Patriotic Party (NPP) and they believe that all the Ewes too belong to National Democratic Congress (NDC) so during election times, they do not care to insult the Ewes from dawn to dusk for voting for NDC and even dare them to respond. They sometimes even beat up some Ewe people just because they suspect them of belonging to NDC. For fear of being attacked and hurt, Abigail said she does not feel comfortable using her Ewe name neither does she speak Ewe outside her home.

Still on the issue of discrimination, some of these respondents also claimed that they are treated badly at their workplaces because they bear Ewe names. Some of them are denied jobs and promotions and at times too they are asked to perform certain tasks which are inhuman. They said that even some of their co-workers who are from different tribal backgrounds do not trust them because they are Ewes. A high ranking police officer from the Accra site known as Patrick (not his real name though) reported that he is an Ewe but no one in his office knows of it because he bears an English personal name and his surname too is Anglicized. He explained that once his superiors get to know that he is Ewe, his position in the police service could be given to another officer and he would become an officer without a portfolio because the position he occupies now is very sensitive to the police service and the presidency.

Apart from being discriminated against, some of these people also stated that they have negative feelings towards the use of Ewe personal names because of the stigma attached to the Ewe names and the people as a whole. It is believed among people from other ethnic backgrounds that Ewe people have very potent juju powers hence anyone who bears Ewe personal names is viewed with suspicion. This misconception about the Ewe people from outsiders has crept into the head of some of the people themselves making them to hate the use of indigenous Ewe names. Even some of the respondents have these bad feelings about their own people to the extent that some of them who bear birthday names hate to use them. They claimed that they do not feel comfortable using their birthday names because they do not want to reveal the day on which they were born to other people due to the traditional belief that your enemies can use your birthday name to cast a spell on you. Birthday names are regarded as

the soul of a person and once you know a person's birthday, you can have spiritual authority over that person.

Other reasons given by some of the respondents for the discomfort in using Ewe personal names are mockery and the mispronunciation of the Ewe names by some people. These people feel that other people mock at them when they mention their names because they have never heard those names before so they sound strange in their ears. They also feel bad when people do not pronounce their names properly. Miranda, a civil servant from the Peki area whose Ewe personal name is *Bosio* confirmed this that she does not feel happy using her Ewe name because people laugh at her when she mentions it and people cannot even pronounce it well. She explained that whenever she mentions her name, some people say that it is "too archaic" and they wonder what type of Ewe name it is. *Nɔviɛgbɔ*, a 20 year old lady from the Penyi area also said that people tend to reduce the full form of her name to *Gbo* 'goat' instead of *Nɔviɛgbɔ* 'it is the sister who is back' therefore she is thinking of changing her name.

The preference for English names over Ewe names is one of the reasons the people gave that makes them feel negative towards the use Ewe personal names. They prefer English names because they feel that Ewe names sound too local and not presentable at all places. A respondent from the Accra area stated that people prefer to call him by his English name and with time he became so used to the English name that he feels uncomfortable using the Ewe name. Some of them do not prefer the Ewe names because they claimed the Ewe names are not part of their official names (i.e. they are not written on their official documents) and once these names are not represented on their

documents, they do not attach any importance to their use. Another respondent also stated that Ewe names are just too common. For instance one can find so many people bearing the same Ewe names like *Elom*, *Enam*, *Senyo*, *Emefa* etc, it makes him feel uncomfortable using his.

Some people simply do not like using the Ewe personal names. Even though they have Ewe names, they do not feel any attachment to the names because they are not used to it from childhood and they wish their parents never named them so. A female respondent from Peki claimed she does not like it when people call her by her Ewe name, not for any particular reason but for the mere fact that she hates to use it. Her attitude clearly showed that she does not want to identify herself with the name.

An informant by name Mark, a teacher from Keta also made a claim that being an Ewe does not necessarily mean one should bear an Ewe personal name; being an Ewe is a mindset. He explained that for a person not to bear Ewe name does not change the fact that he is Ewe, what changes his Eweness is his way of thinking. He stated that: “my name is my symbol of identification but it does not change who I am. I am a proud Ewe but I do not have to bear we name before I show that pride”.

The remaining 12% of the respondents also displayed attitudes of indifference towards the use of Ewe personal names. This group of people do not have any feeling whatsoever towards Ewe names. They care less about what is happening around them as far as Ewe personal names are concerned.

Concerning the attitude towards the use of Ewe personal names on comparative bases among the four research areas, the results are represented on the table below.

**Table 4.13 Regional variations in attitudes towards the use of Ewe names**

Attitude	Accra	Keta	Peki	Penyi
Positive	24 (48%)	28 (56%)	32 (64%)	33 (66%)
Negative	25 (50%)	8 (16%)	16 (32%)	10 (20%)
indifference	1 (2%)	14 (28%)	2 (4%)	7 (14%)
Total	50 (100%)	50 (100%)	50 (100%)	50 (100%)

The results presented in the table above show that majority of the respondents from Penyi have positive feelings towards the use of Ewe personal names. This is closely followed by Peki with 64%. Keta comes next with 56% and then Accra with 48%. When we turn to the number of respondents with negative attitudes, we realised that the majority (50%) of them come from Accra. For Accra to produce this number of people with negative attitudes towards the use of Ewe personal names is not surprising because as already mentioned in section 4.2.2, Accra is an urban city; the capital city of the country. It is a city which has become the melting pot of different cultures; a city where people of different ethnic backgrounds strive for survival. It is here that the people are usually faced with tribal discrimination and are easily compelled to compromise their ethnic personal identities. Finally on the category of people who exhibit attitudes of indifference towards the use of Ewe personal names, the table shows that Keta records the highest number of them.

#### **4.6 Chapter conclusion**

The discussions above showed that a person can be addressed differently in different domains depending on the number of names he or she has. The type of personal names chosen as a form of address depends on the social distance between the interlocutors, their relative power and the absolute ranking of the situation (Brown and Levinson 2008). The analysis showed that apart from the family domain, Ewe personal names are less frequently used in the other domains. It also revealed that the majority of the respondents prefer to use their English names to their Ewe names even though they like the Ewe names.

I also provided some background information on the name givers pointing out three factors that influence their choice of a given name. I mentioned that the religious background, the educational background and the age of the name givers are the factors that influence the type of personal names they give to people.

## CHAPTER FIVE

### CONCLUSION

#### 5.1 Introduction

The previous chapters (i.e. chapters three and four) provided a synchronic analysis of the types of personal that are found in the school registers and the questionnaires, the variations that are found in these names and the dynamics of the use of personal names among Ewe people. This chapter seeks to highlight some of the major findings from the study and then gives recommendations. Section 5.2 presents the research findings whilst section 5.3 presents the recommendations.

#### 5.2 Findings

This section deals with the key findings of the research. The findings are discussed according to the types of personal names found in the data, their variations, the dynamics of their use and the people's preferences for and attitudes towards their use.

##### *5.2.1 Types of names and their frequencies*

In chapter three, we investigated the types of personal names and their frequencies. It was shown that apart from the typical Ewe personal names, there is an influx of foreign personal names into the Ewe naming system. This influx is due to language contact and contact with other religions. The foreign names found in the data are English names, French names, Arabic names, Akan names, Ga names, Hausa names, Dagbani names, and Yoruba names.

The discussions in section 3.2 and section 3.3 on the types of personal names found in the data revealed that English names are the most frequently given personal names, followed by Ewe names, Akan names, Arabic names, French names, Ga names, Yoruba names and Hausa names. This implies that the frequency at which Ewe personal names is given to Ewe children these days is low compared to English names.

On the frequency in which the different types of Ewe personal names are given, the analysis revealed that some of them are less frequently given to children these days (cf. section 3.2.11). Some of them have been completely discarded from the naming system and others too have been altered (c.f. section 3.9) to suit the personality of the individual and his/her religious belief. For example names like allusive names, traditional names, slave names, death prevention names and traditional religious names are not common these days because people have come to realize that there are solutions to the circumstances that give rise to such names. Instead of consulting oracles and spiritualist to determine the cause of infant mortality and unusual child birth conditions, parents now decide to seek medical attention to resolve these problems. Periodic immunization processes and frequent pre-natal and post-natal care have helped to save the lives of most babies. Some parents have also decided to solicit for God's intervention when faced with problems like these. As shown in table 3.2, the most frequently given Ewe personal names these days are the Ewe Christian religious names followed in specific order by birthday names, traditional names, twin names, predestination names, order of birth names, clan names and traditional religious names.

### 5.2.2 *Variations in personal names*

Also in chapter three we discussed the variation among personal names in terms of age, gender and region. The age-based variation showed that the majority of the Ewe people who still bear indigenous traditional names are the older folks. The data analysis in table 3.7 shows that 63% of the people who fall within the ages of 41-70 bear Ewe first names compared to 56% of those who fall within the ages of 16-40. This statistical difference suggests that most of the name givers no longer fancy the choice of traditional names for their children these days due to the fact that some of these names are seen as old fashioned and out of place. Hence the younger folks bear more English names than the older folks.

Besides the age-based variations, the study also revealed that there are some gender distinctions in the Ewe personal names. The gender distinct names are marked morphologically and conventionally. The morphologically marked gender names are the circumstantial birth names, twin names, the traditional religious names and some birthday names whilst the clan names, the order of birth names and the traditional names are conventionally marked for gender.

The geographical variations showed that Ewe personal names like twin names, predestination names, some religious names and traditional names vary with respect to the geographical location of the people. The geographical variation in the personal names is influenced by the contacts the people in those areas have with other language groups and also by the sound systems of the various dialects spoken. There is also some form of geographical distinction in some of the English names. For instance, among the Southern Ewes some of the given English names are direct translations of the Ewe names.

### 5.2.3 Dynamics of name use

Chapter four dealt with the dynamics of name use among the Ewes. It was found that the socialization of personal names among the Ewes takes different forms depending on the number of names the individual bears, the social context in which the names are used and the participants involved in the interaction. The participants in the social contexts serve as socializing agents who exert great influence on the type of personal name to be used. The socializing agents are the family members, peers, colleagues and individuals in the society as a whole.

The discussions also showed that the socialization of personal names among the Ewes is not done anyhow. Speakers are expected to show respect to their elders when addressing them. This is done by using kinship terms of address and teknonyms. The kinship terms are also used as politeness strategies to address elders who may not necessarily be one's kinsmen. According to Agyekum (2006:229) "the use of kinship terms carries with it both implicit and explicit recognition of the superiority of the addressee and his or her status". As discussed in section 4.2.2, the kinship terms are sometimes prefixed to the names of the elders or they are used in isolation as in *Tɔgbui* 'grandfather', *Tɔɖia/Tɔgã* 'paternal uncle', *Nyruie* 'maternal uncle', and *Efo* 'brother'. Some kinship terms like *brother*, *sister*, *uncle* and *aunt* have also been borrowed from English (cf. Oyetade 1995) and they are also used to address non-relatives. The kinship term *aunt* which originally refers to the sister of one's father or mother is now often used to address one's biological elder sister or any other older female who falls within the elder sister age group and it is pronounced as *aunty*.

Teknonyms are often used to address parents. When a woman gives birth, she is often referred to by a teknonym as in *Kofinɔ* ‘the mother of Kofi’ or *Brightnɔ* ‘the mother of Bright’. Teknonyms are also used for fathers but they are commonly used for mothers than for fathers. The husband in this case is addressed as *Kofifofo/Kofitɔ* ‘the father of Kofi’ or *Brightfofo* ‘the father of Bright’.

Again, the analysis showed that there seems to be a strong competition between the use of Ewe names and English names in the family domain. Education, urbanization and intermarriage are factors which were identified to be responsible for this competition. Outside the family domain (i.e. the friendship domain, the school domain, the religious domain and the work domain) the analysis shows that the respondents are mostly addressed by their English names.

In the context of name use in the workplace domain (cf. section 4.2.4) it is shown that during the socialization process, some people are addressed by their occupational titles. The occupational titles are used to show respect to an individual in relation to his occupation. Thus to show respect to a University lecturer who has not yet received a professorial title or a Ph.D degree, he may be addressed as *prof* or *doc* ‘professor or doctor’. A school proprietor or a headmaster may simply be referred to as *Master*. A class teacher is addressed as *Teacher* or *Sir* if a male and *Miss* or *Madam* if a female. A bank manager or a fuel filling station manager is called *Manager*. Other examples include *Honourable* for politicians, *Lawyer* for a legal practitioner, *Doctor* for a medical practitioner and *Secretary* for a receptionist or a typist. In most cases

these occupational titles are not used with the addressee's personal name, they rather go with the person's surname.

Furthermore, the data suggested that people who bear multiple personal names assign definable social roles to each of them. Some of the names are used as *afemeɲkɔwo* 'house names' and others as *sukuɲkɔwo* 'school names'. The *afemeɲkɔwo* 'house names' are most often used at home among family members and close acquaintances. Some name bearers frown upon their use in social domains especially if their meanings are unpleasant. The *sukuɲkɔwo* 'school names' are names people who have been to school use as their first names and their official names. It is the school names that people identify as their 'real or true' names. The school names are their English names which also serve as Christian names for those of them who are Christians.

#### *5.2.4. Attitudes and preferences*

On the attitude of the Ewes towards the use of their personal names (also discussed in chapter four) 58.5% of the respondents expressed positive attitudes towards the Ewe personal names. This is not surprising because ideally Ewe names are their traditional names. What however is surprising is the number of people who claimed that they prefer the use of their English names to their Ewe names. 50.5% of the respondents said they prefer the use of English names. Comparing this percentage of people to those who have positive attitudes towards Ewe names tells us that there is a difference between the people's perception of their Ewe names and their actual use of these names.

The study also investigated the preferences of name givers. Information about the name givers showed that factors such as religion, education and age affect

the name givers choice of a particular type of personal name for a child. Interviews with both name givers and name bearers suggested that the younger the name giver, the lower the chances of his/her choice of an Ewe personal name and the older the older the name giver, the higher the chances of his/her choice of an Ewe personal name.

The importance of these findings lies in the fact that they illustrate the crucial link between language use and social factors and how these social factors determine the dynamics of linguistic choices in the society.

#### **5.4 Recommendations**

Since the study drew exclusively on quantitative materials, interviews and personal observations, it did not explore the actual use of Ewe personal names in social contexts. In order To explore the dynamics of use of personal name in social context, there will be a need to do extensive recordings of conversational data. Analysis of such data will provide a wealth of insight (i.e. beyond what this study has presented) about the socio-cultural values of personal names.

Also, the research was limited to only three sites representing three dialectal areas in Eweland. Thus naming by speakers of other dialects, such as Agave, Adaklu, Kpandu and Tɔ̃ɔ, were not investigated. A more comprehensive study of Ewe names should cover these areas also.

## APPENDICES

### APPENDIX A: QUESTIONNAIRE

This questionnaire is aimed at investigating the use of personal names among Ewes. Information provided by you will be highly confidential and will be used purely for academic work. Thanks for your cooperation.

#### **Section A: Bio-Data**

- 1) Gender: male ( ) female ( )
- 2) Age: 16-20 ( ), 21-25 ( ), 26-30 ( ), 31-35 ( ), 36-40 ( ), 41-45 ( ), 46-50 ( ), 51-55 ( ), 56-60 ( ), 61-65 ( ), 66-70 ( )
- 3) Where do you come from?-----
- 4) Where are you living now?-----
- 5) How long have you been living there?-----
- 6) What is your level of education?  
J.H.S ( ) Tertiary ( )  
S.H.S ( ) None ( )
- 7) What is your occupation/profession?-----
- 8) What is your religious background? Christian ( ) Moslem ( )  
Traditionalist ( ) Other ( ), Please specify-----

#### **Section B:**

- 9) What is your first name(s) at birth?-----
- 10) Do you have other names apart from the one(s) mentioned above?  
Please specify-----

11) Which of the name(s) do you prefer to be called?-----

Why?-----

12) Who gave you the first names at birth?-----

13) What is the person's educational background?-----

14) What is his/her (i.e the person who named you) religious background?

Christian ( ), Moslem ( ) Traditionalist ( ) Other ( ), Please specify---

15) Do you know why you were given the name(s) ? -----

16) Do you have a name(s) that you gave yourself?-----

What name is it?-----

17) How do people call you most often at the following places?

Home -----

School -----

Church -----

Workplace -----

18) How do the following people call you most frequently?

Mother-----

Father-----

Siblings-----

Aunts-----

Grandparents-----

Friends-----

### **Section C**

19) How often do you use your Ewe personal name (if you have one)?

Often ( ) very often ( ) not at all ( )

20) Do you feel comfortable using your Ewe personal name in all places?

Yes ( ) No ( )

Why-----

21) Do you have an idea why some people don't like using their Ewe

names?-----

22) Did you change your name? Yes ( ) No ( )

22b) If yes, why?-----

22c) To what name?-----

23) Do you think it is important for every Ewe person to have an Ewe

personal name? Yes ( ) No ( )

Why?-----

**APPENDIX B****INTERVIEW QUESTIONS (NAME-BEARERS)**

- 1) What is your name?.....
- 2) Where do you come from?.....
- 3) Who gave you those names?.....
- 4) Why are you named so?
- 5) Is that the name everybody everywhere call you?
- 6) If you get married, by which name do you wish your spouse to call you?.....

	mother	father	siblings	Others	friends
Home					
School					

- 7) How do you prefer to be called?
- 8) How do you feel when people call you by that particular name?
- 9) Do you have a name that was not given to you by your parents?
- 10) Do you usually introduce yourself to people using your full name?

**APPENDIX C****INTERVIEW QUESTIONS (NAME-GIVERS)**

- 1) Your name.....
- 2) Where do you come from?.....
- 3) How many children do you have?.....
- 4) What are their names?

NAME	SEX

- 5) Who gave them the names?.....
- 6) Why did you give them such names?.....  
By what name(s) do you call them at home?.....

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