ISSN: 2716-9189 Class B E-ISSN: 2676-1750
Journal of Studies in Language, Culture, and Society (JSLCS). (09) 02, 2026. (PP. 247-264)
Received: 10/18/2025 Accepted: 02/06/2026 Published: 30/06/2026

ETHNOLINGUISTIC STUDY OF GENDER IDENTITY CONSTRUCTION AND COMMUNICATION IN EWE PERSONAL NAMES

Pascal Kpodo [1] Cynthia Mallet [2] Gabriel Agbemehia[3] Hope Dekorn[4]
[1]University of Education, Winneba, Ghana
pkpodo@uew.edu.gh
[2]University of Education, Winneba, Ghana
ckumako@uew.edu.gh
[3]University of Education, Winneba, Ghana
gkagbemehia@uew.edu.gh
[4]University of Education, Winneba, Ghana
hdekorn@uew.edu.gh

Abstract: This study examines the ethnolinguistic interpretations embedded in gender-specific names among the Ewe people. Its objectives are to identify and discuss gender markers in the Ewe language and to analyse how gender is ethnolinguistically manifested in the Ewe naming system. Adopting a qualitative approach, this study draws on a sample of Ewe personal names sourced from Ameevor P.K.M.'s book *Ŋkɔwò ɖe?* 'What is your name?', school records from two basic schools in Klikor township, and social media platforms, particularly Facebook and WhatsApp. Four elderly native speakers aged 70–75 years were purposively selected from Klikor to validate the gender-related classifications of the collected names. Finally, the researchers' native language intuition played a significant role in gathering and processing the data. Through a systematic linguistic analysis, the study uncovers a rich construction and communication of gendered identity through Ewe personal names. The Ewe use gender markers such as /-*sì*/, /-*fúí*/, /-*nɔ̀ví* /, /-*wɔ́*/, and /-*yò*/ to derive female names from male names, following a specific order. Female names are typically derived from male names, reflecting the patriarchal nature of Ewe society, in which male identity predominates. Nevertheless, the study also identifies independent female names, indicating sociocultural contexts that promote women's individuality. It further highlights the role of social cognition and shared cultural knowledge in interpreting gendered information in names. Additionally, language contact, cultural practices, and religious beliefs prove crucial in shaping gender expression in Ewe naming. This article sheds light on the interplay between language and culture in the formation of gendered identities.

***Keywords**:* Anthroponym; ethnolinguistics; gender identity; naming practices; onomastics

How to cite this article:
Kpodo, P., Mallet, C., Agbemehia, G., & Dekorn, H. (2026). Ethnolinguistic study of gender identity construction and communication in Ewe personal names. *Journal of Studies in Language, Culture, and Society (JSLCS)*, 9(2), 247-264

[1] **Corresponding author:** Pascal Kpodo **ORCID ID** https://orcid.org/0000-0002-6263-6595

1. Introduction

The main focus of this article is to explore the ethnolinguistic nuances of gender expression in Ewe personal names. Specifically, it examines how linguistic features encode gender identity within Ewe naming conventions. The paper also considers how gender roles are perceived and assigned in Ewe society. Personal names are culturally and socially significant. They serve as key linguistic and symbolic markers of identity, including both cultural affiliation and gender identity. In addition, personal names function as communicative tools through which cultural traditions and historical practices are transmitted. Among the Ewe people, a personal name is the primary marker of personhood, signifying an individual's existence. Culturally, a child is not regarded as a full member of the community until the child has been named. This practice highlights the central importance of naming within Ewe society.

The Ewe constitute one of the major ethnolinguistic groups in Ghana. They are predominantly found in the Volta Region, with extensions into southern Togo, Benin, and Nigeria (Kpodo & Mallet, 2025). Within Ghana, they form the principal ethnic group of the Volta Region. Although Ewe communities in these countries exist as distinct subgroups, they share a common historical and cultural heritage. This shared heritage underpins a broader sense of collective identity.

Like many other cultures, the Ewe people have distinct naming practices influenced by religious beliefs, family lineage, circumstances, and regional customs. Personal names serve as direct links to a people's cultural heritage, reflecting their values and customs (Sebonde, 2020). Certain names are reserved for members of certain specific religious groups, and the mention of such names communicates the membership of the bearers.

The Ewe people believe that an individual's personality is carried in their name. This conviction manifests itself in an Ewe saying cited in Kpodo and Mallet (2025, p. 45), which goes "*Ŋkɔ́ dè wòdìà àmè ŋú*," meaning 'names affect people like curses or blessings'. This belief significantly influences the Ewe people's choice of personal names, as they consciously select names that will positively impact their bearers. The conviction that names affect their bearers, which apparently shapes people's naming practices, is not unique to the Ewe. Agyekum (2006) notes that the Akan people perceive a close relationship between personal names and the mental and social behaviour of their bearers. Similarly, Zawawi (1993) reports that among the Swahili, names are considered to construct a person. This cross-cultural belief that names affect behaviour is widely observed, at least among African societies.

Personal names are necessary for the construction of a self-concept in terms of identity, since people's self-perceptions and others' perceptions of them are often deeply influenced by their names (Essien, 2000; Mensah, 2020). By not only providing identification but also encoding personality and culture, personal names become a medium for expressing personal and cultural identity.

Personal names have been extensively studied across different linguistic and cultural contexts (Adjeran, 2019; Buberwa, 2017; Charwi, 2019; Ehineni, 2019; Horsu et al., 2026; Laddaoui, 2025; Uwen & Ekpang, 2022). Most of these studies focus on the morpho-syntactic and semantic properties of personal names, as well as their sociocultural and sociolinguistic significance. In addition, a substantial body of research examines general naming conventions across languages.

The study of personal names in the Ghanaian context is increasingly attracting scholarly attention. Some of the major studies in this regard include those by Agyekum (2006) and Sekyi-Baidoo (2024), who examined personal names among the Akan people. Whereas

Agyekum looked at the sociolinguistics of Akan personal names, Sekyi-Baidoo studied the commemorability principle in Akan personal name construction. These works, along with others, have reopened interest in onomastics in Ghanaian languages.

Only a limited number of studies have examined personal names among the Ewe (Abdul, 2014; Agbedor, 1991; Ameevor, 1982; Horsu et al., 2026). These studies have largely focused on sociolinguistic, semantic, and syntactic dimensions, consistent with the broader cross-linguistic analyses discussed earlier. Despite these contributions, the literature lacks a sustained examination of gender expression in Ewe naming practices. To the best of our knowledge, no prior research has systematically investigated how gender is encoded or communicated in Ewe personal names.

This absence of scholarly attention reveals a significant gap in our understanding of the social meanings and ethnolinguistic implications of gender- specific naming within the Ewe community. While existing studies provide valuable insights into general naming patterns, they do not address how gender is explicitly represented or constructed through personal names, thereby limiting comprehensive interpretations of gendered identity in Ewe society.

To address this gap, the present study undertakes a focused ethnolinguistic investigation of gender expression in Ewe personal names. It examines how gender is expressed, constructed, and reinforced through naming practices. The analysis moves beyond purely grammatical categorisation to consider the cultural beliefs, values, and identity structures embedded in these practices. Specifically, the study explores the linguistic and ethnolinguistic features that encode gender in Ewe personal names. In doing so, it provides a deeper understanding of how naming practices both reflect and shape societal conceptions of gender roles.

Even though the current study focuses on the Ewe people of West Africa, its implications extend beyond the regional context. It contributes to broader international discussions on the ethnolinguistic construction of gender and the role of personal names in indexing and performing social identities. By analysing how gender is encoded, interpreted, and culturally grounded in Ewe naming practices, the study offers theoretical insights relevant to cross-linguistic research in anthroponymy, onomastics, and language-and-gender scholarship. Methodologically, the ethnolinguistic approach adopted here provides a replicable framework for examining naming practices in other cultural settings, particularly in societies where names carry deep symbolic and identity-forming functions. The study, therefore, holds comparative value for international researchers interested in how naming systems across cultures communicate, reinforce, or contest gendered social roles.

2. Literature Review

One of the earliest studies of Ewe personal names is Ameevor (1982), which sought to describe Ewe naming conventions. The study classifies personal names and examines the contexts in which particular names are assigned. Ameevor identifies several categories of names, including day names, clan names, death-prevention names, circumstantial names, birth-order names, insinuation names, and *àhànòŋkɔ́wó* ‘drinking names or praise appellations’. This work is widely regarded as foundational in the study of Ewe personal names. It demonstrates that many Ewe names are gender-specific. In particular, categories such as twin names, clan names, day names, and circumstantial names are often shaped by gender distinctions.

Later, Agbedor (1991, p. 39) conducted a linguistic analysis of personal names among the Ewe people, focusing on the question, “What is in a name?” Agbedor classified Ewe

names based on the principles underlying personal naming practices within the Ewe community. The researcher identified two major principles that guide the naming practices of the Ewe people: the Home Context Principle (HCP) and the Philosophical Principle (PP). He explains:

> *The Home Context Principle (HCP) specifies the salient social or circumstantial contexts for personal names, while the Philosophical Principle (PP) specifies contexts which pertain to philosophical thoughts, belief systems, and the general worldview of the Ewe people, which are reflected in the personal names (Agbedor 1991, pp. 39–40).*

Agbedor (1991) concludes that Ewe personal names function as semi-closed diaries, encapsulating detailed information about the Ewe people's belief system, history, culture, and worldview.

A comparable study supporting Agbedor's (1991) claim that personal names reveal significant aspects of a people's culture and history is Aljbour and Al-Abed Al-Haq's (2019) work. This study presents a sociolinguistic analysis of feminine personal names among the Beni Sakhr tribe in Jordan, based on a sample of 900 names drawn from three generations. The authors examine the evolution of feminine names from grandmothers to mothers and daughters, showing how naming practices reflect changing social, cultural, and religious influences as the community underwent urbanisation. Their findings reveal a marked contrast between traditional Bedouin names associated with older generations and more modern, urban-oriented names given to younger generations. This pattern demonstrates the profound impact of urbanisation, religion, and broader social change on naming conventions among the Beni Sakhr. The study concludes that generational shifts in naming practices can serve as indicators of wider sociocultural transformation, particularly in contexts of transition from itinerant to urban lifestyles.

Okal (2018) examines the morphological and cultural dimensions of personal name systems across several Kenyan communities. The study reports that, in many of these communities, specific affixes serve as gender markers. For instance, in Luo, the prefix /o-/ is typically associated with masculine names, while /a-/ marks feminine forms. Similarly, among the Abaluhyia, the prefixes /wa-/ and /na-/ indicate male and female gender, respectively, as illustrated by names such as Wanjala (male) and Nanjala (female), both of which refer to children born during a famine. Among the Kamba, gender marking is expressed through suffixation: in names such as Mwende (female loved child) and Mwendwa (male loved child), the suffixes /-e/ and /-wa/ signal femininity and masculinity, respectively. Overall, these findings suggest that many African naming systems incorporate explicit gender markers within their morphological structure.

Okal's study is particularly relevant to the present research, as it provides a foundation for the linguistic analysis of gender-specific personal names in African languages. Building on this foundation, the current study examines the morphological markers that signal male and female gender in Ewe personal names. In addition, it extends the analysis beyond morphology to explore other linguistic and cultural strategies through which gender is expressed in Ewe naming practices.

2.1 Theoretical framework

In Ewe, personal names serve communicative functions that extend beyond their referential and vocative roles. Each name is interpretable within its cultural and linguistic context. Like other forms of utterance, personal names convey information and intention. Name-givers use personal names to convey specific messages, while other members of the

community interpret and infer the meanings embedded in those names. Given these communicative properties, the present study adopts Relevance Theory (Sperber & Wilson, 1995) as its analytical framework. Within this framework, relevance is understood as the relationship between a communicated input and its cognitive effects on the listener, relative to the processing effort required. Relevance Theory further assumes that human cognition is oriented towards the maximisation of relevance, and that utterances generate expectations of optimal relevance.

A central tenet of Relevance Theory is that utterances are both ostensive and inferential. They are *ostensive* in that they draw the addressee's attention to the communicator's intention to convey information. They are also *inferential*, as the addressee must derive the intended meaning from the utterance's literal content in conjunction with background knowledge, sensory input, and relevant contextual information. Within this framework, the inferred meanings are classified into *explicatures* (explicitly communicated content) and *implicatures* (implicitly conveyed meanings). Relevance Theory also emphasises the notion of a *mutual cognitive environment*, which refers to the set of shared assumptions and knowledge available to both communicator and addressee. This emphasis highlights the central role of shared knowledge and social cognition in successful communication.

This theoretical framework is particularly well-suited to the present study because interpreting gender-specific personal names requires social cognition and shared sociocultural knowledge. Within this approach, personal names are treated as communicative inputs that, when uttered, produce cognitive effects on listeners. The study explores how the interpretation of gender-specific names is facilitated by social cognition and shared cultural knowledge among the Ewe people. The framework is especially useful for analysing the data, as the social meanings embedded in these names are often implicit. Consequently, individuals must infer the intended meanings through contextual reasoning.

3. Methodology

This qualitative research examines how gender is expressed in Ewe personal names. Data for this study came from a book titled *Ŋkɔwò ɖe?* 'What is your name?' by Ameevor P.K.M. The book is an annotated collection of Ewe personal names, which are grouped under headings such as day names, circumstantial names, clan names, and others. One of the earlier works conducted on Ewe personal names that used this book as a secondary data source is Agbedor (1991).

Apart from this book, some of the names were obtained from school records of two basic schools in the Klikor township: Klikor Central Basic School and Klikor Unity Basic School. Additionally, some data were compiled from social media platforms such as WhatsApp and Facebook, following Adeoye et al. (2021). These sources were considered essential because personal names on such platforms function not merely as labels but as performative markers of identity. They index religious and cultural affiliations while also expressing gendered roles.

A total of 200 names were obtained for the study. Four elderly Ewe native speakers were purposively selected to validate the gender-related classification of the collected names. The participants included two men and two women aged 70-75 years from Klikor in the Ketu South Municipality of the Volta Region of Ghana. Additionally, the researchers' native-language intuition played a significant role in data gathering and processing.

4. Results

In analysing and presenting the data, the study examines how the Ewe distinguish between male and female genders in their naming practices. Ewe personal names can be grouped into several categories, including day names, religious names, circumstantial names, death-prevention names, twin names, clan names, and theophoric names. Some of these categories are gender-specific, while others are not. The categories that show clear gender differentiation include day names (*Kɔ̀dzó / Àdzó*), twin names (*Àtsú / Àtsúfúí*), birth-order names (*Tsàtsú / Àbùí*), clan names, particularly among the Anlo (*Tsìɖí / Dzòē*), religious names (*Àmúzù / Àɖùgbá*), and circumstantial names (*Àgblènú / Àgblèsì*). In each pair, the first form is masculine and the second feminine.

In Ewe culture, as in many African societies, gender is typically conceptualised as binary, comprising male and female categories. The analysis of gender-specific naming patterns shows that suffixation is sometimes used to derive feminine forms from masculine names. This morphological process is not unique to Ewe; similar patterns have been documented in Akan (Adomako, 2017; Sekyi-Baidoo, 2019). Beyond affixation, gender distinctions are also expressed through compounding processes. In addition, the data reveal a set of independent feminine names that have no clear morphological or lexical relationship with corresponding masculine forms. Such non-derived gender-specific names are common among religious names.

Other categories of personal names, such as theophoric names, are generally gender-neutral, although some occur more frequently among female children than male children. However, it is not possible to claim that any particular theophoric name is exclusively associated with one gender.

4.1 Morphological structures

In the Ewe language, gender morphemes are used to distinguish between the male and female genders, especially in personal names. The male gender is referred to as *àtsúfōmē,* and the female gender, *àsīfōmē.* The morpheme *fòmè* means 'family' or 'group,' while the morphemes */àtsú/* and */àsì/* specifically denote 'male' and 'female,' respectively. Consequently, when the morpheme *àsì* is attached to male names, the name conveys a female gender identity. Examples of names with the female gender morpheme '*àsì*' attached to male names can be seen in Dataset 1:

Dataset 1

Male	Female
Àwùmī	Àwùmèsì
Lógò	Lógòsì
Àgɔ̀	Àgɔ̀sì
Lūmɔ̄	Lūmɔ̄sī

The female gender morpheme in Ewe is incorporated into personal names through a process of suffixation, whereby the morpheme */àsì/*, which marks feminine gender, is attached to a full male name. In this process, the initial vowel of */àsì/* is deleted to avoid vowel hiatus, which is prohibited in Ewe phonotactics (Mottey, 2013). This morphophonological process facilitates a smooth transition between the male name and the gender marker. The process exemplifies one of the means by which female personal names are systematically derived from male names in the Ewe naming conventions.

Another instance in which the female gender morpheme */àsì/* is employed in the construction of gender-specific personal names, without necessarily being suffixed to male names, is illustrated in Dataset 2. In this case, both male and female names are derived from the names of deities, such as the river goddess, *Tɔ̀mèkɔ́sú,* or from circumstances related to the birth of the child.

For example, when a male child is born at night, he may be named *Zãnú*, whereas a female child born under the same condition is named *Zãsì*. In this case, both names are derived from the root *Zã*, which denotes the time of birth (night). The distinction in gender marking is evident in the use of */-nú/* for the male and */-sì/* for the female. This pattern illustrates how the circumstance of birth functions as a semantic base, while gender is indicated morphologically.

In the case of female names, gender marking occurs through a suffixation process in which the feminine gender morpheme *asi* (realised as /*-si/*) is affixed to the semantic base. By contrast, male names typically incorporate other morphemes - such as /*nú/*, /*dzí/*, or /*sú/ (Zãnú, Àlìfòdzí, Tɔ̀sú)* - which do not convey any gender-specific meanings and therefore are not morphological markers for the male gender in the Ewe language.

At best, the morpheme /*nú/* can be described as gender-neutral, as it is also used in the construction of some female names. For example, in the pair of names given to children born in the market - *Àsīgbí* (male) and *Àsīnú* (female) - the base *Àsì* refers to 'market'. The suffixes /*gbí/* and /*nú/* in these names are not gender-specific; rather, they are assigned across genders in various naming contexts within the language. This further underscores the observation that explicit morphological gender marking is more consistent in female names, while male names rely on more flexible, non-gendered suffixes in Ewe.

Dataset 2

Male	Female
Àlì*fò*dzí	Àlì*fò*sì
Tɔ̀sú	Tɔ̀sì
Zãnú	Zãsì
Àgblènú	Àgblèsì
Xèví/Xènú	Xèsì

It is pertinent to note that although both male and female names in this category are derived from birth circumstances, female names are consistently marked with the gender-specific morpheme */àsì/* (female). In contrast, male names incorporate varied morphemes that do not necessarily function as gender markers. As such, gender marking in Ewe naming conventions is morphologically explicit for female personal names but mostly implicit or often absent for male personal names.

Our observation of the Ewe naming system reveals that gender, as a social construct, does not always align with biological sex. For instance, some men are given names and titles that include the female gender morpheme */àsì/*. In such cases, the bearers of these names and titles are often assigned roles traditionally associated with women in Ewe society. Examples include *Àmègãsì*, *Dzàtásì*, *Màmísì*, *Àgbòsúsì*, *Fófúísì*, and *Kɔ̀kúsì*. As illustrated, all these names end with the female gender morpheme */-sì/*. The names to which */-sì/* is attached in these cases are all names of deities of the Ewe people. Typically, the bearers of these names or titles are either priests or devotees of these deities. Culturally, many Ewe deities are assigned a male gender, and their priests or devotees, irrespective of their biological sex, are

considered wives of the deities. In this context, priesthood and religious devotion are metaphorically equated with being a wife to the deity. Thus, priests and devotees serve their deities in roles symbolically similar to those of wives serving their husbands.

In addition to */-àsì/*, other female gender markers in Ewe include */-wɔ́/ /-yò/*, */-fúí/*, and */-nɔ̀ví/*. These morphemes are suffixed to male names and sometimes to names already marked as female, further indicating that the bearer is female. Dataset 3 provides examples of how these female gender markers are used in the Ewe people's naming system.

Dataset 3

Male	Female
Kɔ̀sí	Kɔ́síwɔ́
Kɔ̀kū	Àkúyò
Àtsú	Àtsú*fúí*
Àtsú	Àtsú-nɔ́ví

The morpheme */-wɔ́/*, for example, is a borrowed diminutive marker */-wa/* from Akan, which metaphorically conveys femininity (Appah & Amfo, 2011). In Ewe, the central low unrounded vowel [a] does not follow the labial-velar approximant [w], and as a result, the [a] is replaced with [ɔ] during the adaptation process. The suffix */-wɔ́/* is typically attached to the male day names, *Kɔ̀sí* (the name for a Sunday-born male child), to form *Kɔ́síwɔ́*, which is the corresponding name for a Sunday-born female child. Additionally, in the exception of the Saturday-born female name 'Àmí', the morpheme */-wɔ́/* can be added to all the female day names in Ewe to further highlight the gender of the bearers.

Another female-gender morpheme, also used exclusively as a suffix for female day names, is */yò/*. The morpheme */-yò/* is a borrowed morpheme from the Dangme language, where it denotes 'woman'. The morpheme */-yò/* is also used in Ewe to mark the female gender in day names. Examples include *Àdzóyò, Àblályò, Àkúyò*, *Àfíyò*, *and Àméyò,* all female day names. We could not find any instances in which the morpheme /-yò/ is suffixed to Sunday- and Thursday-born female names, such as *Ésí/Kɔ́síwɔ́ and Yáwɔ́.*

The participants further noted that the concept of femininity already exists in the base forms *Àdzɔ́, Àblá, Àkú,* and others. Therefore, even without the suffix */-yò/*, native speakers inherently recognise the bearers of these names as females. We also noted that the two borrowed female morphemes always occur as final morphemes in the names in which they are used.

The final female morpheme in Ewe is */-fúí/*. In cases where a set of twins (one male and one female) is born, the male twin is given the name *'Àtsú',* which means male, while the female twin is called *Àtsúfúí*. Here, the suffix */-fúí/* serves as a female gender marker, indicating that the bearer is a female twin. Culturally, regardless of the order of birth, the female twin is considered the younger of the two. Consequently, the suffix */-fúí/* marks both gender and age in Ewe.

In some instances, the suffix */-nɔ̀ví/* is used instead of */-fúí/*, even though, in general terms, *nɔ̀ví* simply means 'younger sibling' without any gender-specific denotation. However, in contexts where it is attached to the name *Àtsú* (male twin), it signifies the younger female twin sibling of *Àtsú*. Thus, in the context of *Àtsú*, */-nɔ̀ví/* and */-fúí/* function as variants that mark both gender and age.

Respondents noted that *Àtsú-nɔ́ví* is not typically used as a personal name but rather as a term of endearment when expressing affection for someone named *Àtsúfúí.* The female morpheme */-fúí/* has a male counterpart, */-tsē/*. The morpheme */tsē/* is always used to connote a younger male sibling, just as */-fúí/* connotes a younger female sibling.

4.2 Gendered semantic nuances

Ewe personal names sometimes carry semantically nuanced meanings which are only interpretable to native speakers who are highly competent in the language. These names communicate historical information, sociocultural symbolism, and/or familial connections, all of which add layers of meaning beyond their literal meanings. Within some particular instances, we found personal names that reflect the gendered roles that the Ewe society, being patriarchal, assigns to its members according to their biological sex. In Ewe society, men and women are assigned rigid, complementary roles that are sometimes subtly reflected in children's given names by sex to express their gender predisposition and the societal expectations behind the names. Based on these expectations, the child is socialised to "align with existing sexist norms and gender ideology in which the name-giver is dominant and the named is subservient" (Mensah, 2023, p. 45). This practice among the Ewe people is not different from what Mensah (2023) found in naming conventions of some Nigerian traditional societies where stereotyped gender roles and patriarchy are engrained in the naming of female children, thus using naming traditions as tools for the subjugation of women. Examples of names in this category are presented in Dataset 4.

Dataset 4

Male	Female
Àtítsōgbí	Dzàtúgbí/Xánúkplɔ
Kālẽdzí/Àdìká	À*f*éáfá
Àmètè*f*í	Yɔxɔmī

Among the Ewe people, certain gender-specific roles are culturally designated for males and females. For instance, men are traditionally expected to undertake responsibilities such as building and roofing houses, mending fences, chopping down trees, climbing trees, and protecting the family. On the other hand, women are assigned roles such as cleaning the home, fetching firewood and water, and cooking for the family, among other things. These traditional gender roles often find expression in the names given to men and women within the Ewe community.

Women who are declared barren sometimes consult some deities that are believed to have the power to give them children. When these women eventually give birth, they dedicate the children to the deities they consulted, and, as a result, special religious names such as *Àtítsōgbí*, *Dzàtúgbí*, and *Xánúkplɔ̄* are typically bestowed on them. For example, the name *Àtítsōgbí* is given to male children born through the intervention of deities. These boys are perceived as individuals who will grow up to maintain the fences surrounding the shrines of these deities. This involves tasks such as venturing into the forest to cut tree branches and creeping plants used for building and mending the shrine fences. Other responsibilities of these children include cultivating the land by clearing the vegetation cover. All these roles involve cutting down trees. The role of cutting trees is therefore scripted within the name *Àtítsōgbí.* The name *Àtítsōgbí* is a compound noun with the following structure:

àtí + tsò + gbè

tree + cut + day

The name *Àtítsōgbí* literally means 'tree cutting day' or 'the day of cutting trees.' It signifies that, on days when people are needed for tree-cutting activities, the bearer of this name will be called upon. Bearers of this name often reside in the shrines and are tasked with performing traditionally masculine duties culturally reserved for men.

Female children born through the intervention of the gods are given names such as *Dzàtúgbí* or *Xánúkplɔ̄*. As previously stated, tasks like grinding corn and pepper, preparing food, and sweeping the compound are traditionally considered women's responsibilities among the Ewe people. The name *Dzàtúgbí* is a compound formed from three free morphemes:

dzà + tù + gbè

corn + grind + day

The name *Dzàtúgbí* literally means 'the day for grinding corn flour.' This name signifies that the bearer belongs to the gender traditionally responsible for grinding corn and, by extension, preparing food for the household. In every Ewe home, the girl child is trained to take on these responsibilities, and this name explicitly reflects the gender roles women play in Ewe society.

Children given this name are often dedicated to the gods to serve in the shrine. Within the shrine, a *Dzàtúgbí* is responsible for preparing food for all members on various occasions. As mentioned earlier, another name given to female children born through the intervention of the gods is *Xánúkplɔ̄*. This name is also a compound formed from three morphemes:

xá + nú + kplɔ̀

broom + thing + sweep

The name *Xánúkplɔ̄* means 'the person who uses a broom to sweep' or the 'sweeper'. In the shrine, a *Xánúkplɔ̄* is typically responsible for keeping the compound clean and tidy; tasks traditionally reserved for women. Consequently, this name is a gender-specific name for females. While these names lack explicit gendered morphological markers, they are semantically nuanced to convey both the gender of their bearers and the societal expectations regarding the roles they are to play.

Other names with similar gendered semantic nuances include *Kālẽdzí* and *Àfèáfá*. These names are given to the first child of a widow after her husband's death. When a widow remarries and gives birth to her first child with her new husband, who is not a relative of the deceased, the child is given a special gender-specific name. For instance, if the child is a boy, he is called Kālẽdzí, which means 'bravery.' The name Kālẽdzí consists of two morphemes:

kālẽ + dzí

bravery + on

Literally, the name *Kālẽdzí* means 'to continue being brave.' According to the social structure of the Ewe people and the gender roles assigned to men and women, men are expected to embody and consistently demonstrate bravery. They are entrusted with the honourable responsibility of defending and protecting the family, the native land, and the community from both internal and external threats.

The female counterpart of *Kālẽdzí* is *Àfèáfá*. Socio-culturally, the Ewe people associate womanhood with attributes such as tenderness, peacefulness, calmness, love, and kindness. One of the primary roles assigned to women in Ewe society is to pursue peace and

unity in the home and the broader community. Women are regarded as advocates of tranquillity and harmony.

The name *Àfèáfá* literally means 'the home is peaceful.' Female children are believed to be more resilient than their male counterparts when faced with harsh and unfavourable family conditions. The Ewe people believe that boys are more likely to succumb to such adversities, especially during periods of family conflict. When a baby boy dies under such circumstances, it often leads to blame and finger-pointing among family members, escalating the disputes and sometimes resulting in separation or even divorce. Women are often advised never to quarrel with their husbands once they start having male children. Ewe people, therefore, see male children as time bombs waiting to explode, hence the need for caution when they start arriving in a family.

In contrast, the resilience of girl children allows them to survive and serve as unifying figures within the family, even during prolonged feuds. As long as the child is alive, no matter how long a family dispute lasts, the couple (especially the woman) always has a reason to stay together in the marriage. This belief is one of the reasons why the Ewe people sometimes pray to the gods for a girl child, especially when the couple are always quarrelling. Whenever a girl-child is born, her name often includes the morpheme */fá/,* which literally means 'cool' or 'peaceful'. Names such as *Fàfàlì, Émèfá,* and *Àkɔ́fá* are more commonly associated with female children than with male children, further emphasising that the Ewe people traditionally attribute peace and harmony to women.

Another name given to female children born after the death of an elderly person in the house is *Yɔ̀xɔ̀mī.* This name is composed of three morphemes:

yɔ̀ + xɔ̀ + mè

tomb + room + inside

According to the Ewe tradition, the room in which a deceased person once lived is referred to as *yɔ̀xɔ̀* (tomb-room) or *àvìxɔ́* (mourning-room). Traditionally, wives and female children of the deceased reside in this room for months, mourning their late loved one. If a child is born during this period of mourning, the child is said to be born inside the tomb-room (*yɔ̀xɔ̀ mè*).

This name carries two distinct interpretations, both of which illustrate feminine roles within the Ewe society. On one hand, the name signifies 'a child born during mourning', indicating the fact that the mother of the child actually performed all required traditional rites as expected from close relatives of the departed. Among the Ewe people, extended mourning is culturally designated for women, as men are not expected to cry or mourn the dead for an extended period. Mourning (leaving one's daily activities to grieve the dead for a prolonged time) is considered a uniquely female role.

On the other hand, the name *Yɔ̀xɔ̀mī* may also mean 'one who will stay in the *yɔ̀xɔ̀* to mourn the dead'. This interpretation suggests that the bearer is culturally assigned the lifelong role of mourning the dead in the family, a responsibility traditionally reserved for women. Thus, the name not only reflects the circumstances of the child's birth but also symbolises the societal expectations of women's roles in mourning and familial responsibilities.

4.3 Exophoric gender-specific names

Some Ewe names lack explicit gender markers or gender-specific semantic nuances but are traditionally used exclusively for specific genders. In this study, we refer to these names as *'exophoric gender-specific names.'* The names in Dataset 5 fall under this category of gender-specific names among the Ewe people. These names come in pairs (male and

female), but there are no identifiable morphological relationships between the male names and their female counterparts.

Dataset 5

Male	Female
Àhètò	Àɖàbàsú
Ètúí	Gbàtò
Drà	Ʋàlā
Èfūí	Tòlō
Tsàtsú	Èʋī
Àkɔ́lí	Ègbō

There is no logical or linguistic element for the gender-specific application of these names in the Ewe language. Thus, the assignment of gender to these names is arbitrary and conventional. For instance, *Àhètò* is the name given to an only male child born among many female children, while *Àɖàbàsú* is assigned to an only female child born among many male children. There is nothing inherent in the structure or composition of these names to indicate their gender-specific designation as male or female, respectively.

Despite this, these names have been used for centuries as gender-specific personal names among the Ewe people. Their social meanings and gender-specific designations have become embedded in the shared social and cultural knowledge of Ewe speakers. As a result, whenever any of these names are mentioned, people instinctively associate them with a specific gender, aligning their expectations accordingly. This reliance on social cognition and shared cultural knowledge is central to the gender-specific interpretation of these names. In other words, the accurate interpretation of these gender-specific personal names is enabled by social cognition and the shared cultural knowledge of the Ewe people. Consequently, individuals who are not culturally literate in Ewe may find it difficult, if not impossible, to determine the precise gendered meanings of these names.

Even though *Àhètò* is a male name, its association with femininity - stemming from its interpretation as referring to an only male child born among many female siblings – traditionally renders it less masculine. The community does not expect an *Àhètò* to exhibit stereotypically masculine traits, as he is likely to grow up surrounded by female siblings. Regardless of the bearer's actions, the name often causes others to perceive him as 'not man enough' due to his close relationship with women. Participants noted that *Àhètò* is sometimes used with derogatory connotations for boys who are frequently seen in the company of girls.

The final category of gender-specific personal names among the Ewe people includes *Ewe religious names.* These names are given to children of initiates and devotees of certain deities, as well as members of certain specific cults. The names in Dataset 6 are drawn from the Àfá cult. Within this cult, Àfá diviners, known as *Bòkɔ́wó,* assign special names to their children. These names distinguish the children as offspring of Àfá diviners and carry cultural significance. In this naming category, there are distinct pairs of names for male and female children.

Dataset 6

Male	**Female**
Àmúzù	Àɖùgbá
Àkákpò	Àfásímè
Àfátsìàwù	Àfáɖìnà
Àfágbēdzí	Àfáyómè

The gender-specific application and interpretations of these names are established through exophoric referencing, which relies on social cognition and the shared cultural knowledge of Ewe speakers. Over time, the gender-specific application of these names has become widely recognised and conventionalised. Whenever these names are mentioned, native Ewe speakers instinctively associate them with a specific gender. For instance, any competent Ewe speaker will immediately identify *Àmúzù* as the name of the first male child of a diviner and *Àɖùgbá* as the name of the first female child. This makes *Àɖùgbá* the female counterpart of the Ewe name *Àmúzù*. There is, therefore, nothing inherently gender-specific in the morphological structure of these names. This suggests that speakers have learned to accept the gender-specific connotations of these names as a matter of convention.

5. Discussion

The study found that the Ewe express gender in multiple ways through their personal naming practices. One prominent strategy involves using gender-specific suffixes, such as */-sì/*, */-fúí/*, and */-nɔ̀ví/*. These suffixes are typically used to derive feminine forms from masculine names. For example, the suffix */-fúí/* is added to the male name *Àtsú* (a name given to a male twin) to form *Àtsúfúí*, which denotes a female twin.

The analysis also shows that the feminine marker */-sì/*, which denotes 'wife' in Ewe, occasionally occurs in religious titles assigned to men. This usage arises in contexts where such men are expected to perform roles traditionally associated with women within their religious practices. Additionally, certain gender-marking morphemes have been borrowed from neighbouring languages such as Twi and Dangme. For example, the suffixes */-wɔ́/* and */-yò/* are incorporated into Ewe to mark feminine gender in personal day names.

In these cases, feminine names are derived from masculine forms by adding gender-specific markers. This process highlights a central feature of gender differentiation in Ewe naming practices. Notably, overt morphological marking of masculine gender is rare. One clear example is the name Dòtsē. The base form Dò, given to a child born immediately after a set of twins, is gender-neutral and may be assigned to either male or female children. However, gender distinction is introduced through suffixation: Dò*fúí* is assigned to a female child, while Dòtsē is assigned to a male child. The suffixes /-tsē/ and /-*fúí*/ both denote 'younger sibling' and carry gender-specific meanings. In this instance, therefore, these suffixes function simultaneously as markers of age and gender in Ewe.

The study found that, in addition to morphological markers, personal names sometimes have gender-specific social roles and identities embedded in their meanings. These gender-specific expressions are metaphorical and cultural, as they are not immediately apparent in the morphological structure of the names. Such names are seen to be semantically nuanced, gender-specific personal names.

Through these names, socially prescribed roles for male and female members of Ewe society are implicitly communicated. For example, activities such as climbing and cutting trees, as well as building or repairing fences, are traditionally associated with men. In contrast,

tasks such as cooking, cleaning, sweeping, and other domestic responsibilities are typically assigned to women. These culturally defined roles are reflected in gender-specific naming practices. The connotative meanings embedded in such names reinforce traditional expectations, signalling the roles individuals are expected to assume from birth to be recognised as full members of Ewe society.

In child-rearing, the wider community plays an active role in ensuring that girls and boys conform to socially prescribed gender roles. Girls are expected to engage only in activities deemed appropriate for females, while boys are guided towards tasks considered suitable for males. For instance, it is considered highly inappropriate for a girl to climb trees; such behaviour may attract social disapproval and be interpreted as nonconformity. Similarly, among men, activities such as cleaning, fetching firewood, and sweeping the compound are strongly discouraged. Boys are therefore socialised from an early age to avoid these domestic tasks. Given the belief that names shape the character and behaviour of their bearers, Ewe communities carefully select names that align with socially defined gender expectations. In this way, personal names function as tools for reinforcing normative roles and guiding individuals towards culturally valued patterns of behaviour. These findings support Mensah's (2023: 60) assertion that "names are particularly useful in the development of individual identity and in the preservation of ethnic identities."

The gender-specific personal names of the Ewe people also reflect the values and behaviours attributed exclusively to men and women. Traits such as valour and courage are attributed to male members of the community. The entire community celebrates men who demonstrate these traits. On the other hand, qualities such as calmness, meekness, and humility, as well as emotional expressions like crying or mourning, are associated with femininity. This illustrates societal expectations for each gender, as expressed through the names given to the individuals.

For example, names like *Kālẽdzí* and *Àdìká* signify valour and bravery, reflecting the expectations placed on male children of widows who remarry outside their deceased husbands' families. Traditionally, these children are expected to demonstrate courage in defending their families and communities. In contrast, their female counterparts, who are bestowed with names like *Àfééfá* and *Àkɔ́fá,* which convey calmness and peacefulness in consonance with societal expectations for women to maintain harmony and tranquillity, are expected to be humble and peaceable.

The study identified names that exhibit gender-specific distributions among the Ewe people, without necessarily having morphological or semantic elements indicating gender specificity. These names are conventionally gender-specific and are used as such by the community. In many cases, these names are given to children of members of certain religious sects, such as the Àfá and Yèʋè cults. Accurate gender-specific interpretation of these names requires some degree of social cognition and shared cultural knowledge. It takes a high level of familiarity with the cultural practices, belief system, and worldview of the Ewe people to decode the gendered identities of those bearing these names.

The literature on onomastics succinctly explains the communicative value of names, particularly within African cultures. Agbedor (1991) noted that personal names among the Ewe people contain valuable cultural and societal information, though this information is not immediately apparent to those who hear the names. The findings of the current study align with this observation, particularly regarding the gender identities inherent in the names.

Ewe naming practices encapsulate societal perceptions of each gender and the expectations placed on men as against women. Our participants explained that, among the Ewe people, naming a child is predominantly the prerogative of men. Being a patriarchal

society, children ultimately belong to their fathers, and to claim ownership, fathers are required to name their children. In other words, if the man does not name the child, the child is regarded as an illegitimate child. Thus, as name-givers, men tend to accentuate their preeminence in society through naming practices. In all, the naming practices of the Ewe people place greater value on masculinity than on femininity. The set of attributes, behaviours, and roles generally associated with women by virtue of their biological sex or physiological dispositions is of less importance than those associated with their male counterparts.

Discounting the value of women, one participant said:

> *Nyɔnu megblɔna be wonese ye tɔ o. Nyɔnu ɖe wòle abe ɖevi ene, ne amewo le nu ƒoma, wo tɔe nye woaɖo to ase nya si gblɔm ŋutsuwo le. Nyɔnu mabuamee gblɔna be wonese ye tɔ.*
>
> A woman does not insist on being completely heard. A woman is like a child, when people are talking, they are to keep quiet and listen to what the men are saying. A disrespectful woman always wants to be heard completely.

Among the Ewe people, men hold the position of authority and governance. Women, like children, are not afforded a significant voice or influence within the community. When women need to speak, they often do so through their male counterparts. A woman who is outspoken or publicly visible is frequently regarded as disrespectful and lacking decorum. Consequently, the gendered identity of women is closely tied to their role as wives, reinforcing societal norms of submission and domesticity.

The study demonstrates that the Ewe people's naming conventions typically ensure a clear distinction between males and females. In nearly every category of personal names, there is a way to differentiate males from females. A closer study of the naming practices of the Ewe people reveals that it is important for the name-givers, who are predominantly men, to establish a separation between themselves and the female members of the society. This practice reflects the patriarchal nature of the Ewe society. Male-specific names, which connote masculinity, tend to project men as powerful and dominant, whereas women are often portrayed as subservient members of society. This naming tradition attaches significant prestige to male names, so much so that giving names perceived as insufficiently masculine to men often leads to questions or criticism about why such names should be assigned to a man.

The various linguistic elements that serve as gender markers significantly contribute to the gender identity of individuals with gender-specific names. For example, the female gender marker */-sì/*, which denotes 'wife,' reflects the societal expectations for women to fulfil their traditional gender roles as wives in heterosexual marriages. These expectations become the norms and standards defined by men in society. The name-bearers are therefore groomed from infancy to conform to these expectations. The literature clearly states that gendered naming is intrinsically tied to social norms and standards passed down from one generation to the next (Mensah, 2023). It is therefore abominable for an Ewe woman to remain unmarried after puberty, as the social acceptability of women is closely linked to marriage.

Similarly, the marker */-ƒúí/*, which signifies 'younger sibling,' assigns women an identity of immaturity and inexperience, implying that they are expected to follow and learn from others, particularly male elders. This reinforces the cultural notion that leadership is a preserve for men among the Ewe people. Within this framework, a 'good woman' is also perceived as a 'good follower,' reflecting her adherence to traditional values of subordination and respect for authority. Traditionally, men are considered older and wiser than women, regardless of age.

The practice of deriving female personal names from male names among the Ewe people, as seen in names like *Klú versus Klúfúí, Kɔ̀sí versus Kɔ́síwɔ́,* reflects the sociocultural dynamics of patriarchal societies, succinctly established in the literature (Mensah 2023). This practice carries significant sociocultural implications, including the reinforcement of male primacy. In patriarchal societies, men are often viewed as the primary bearers of lineage and identity. The practice of deriving female names from male names highlights male dominance and positions women in a secondary, derivative role, symbolically emphasising men's foundational roles within the social structure of the Ewe people.

Typically, among the Ewe people, women's identity is closely tied to men's, whether as daughters, wives, or subordinate family members. This linguistic practice of deriving female names from male names therefore mirrors social structures in which women are often defined by their relationships with men, reinforcing the perception of women as dependents. As Nukunya (2007: 46) intimated, "in many Ghanaian societies, the traditional position is that women are never wholly independent."

It is important to note that the presence of standalone, female-specific personal names in Ewe indicates a recognition of the distinctiveness of womanhood. Names such as *Dzàtúgbí* and *Xánúkplɔ*, which reflect the unique roles women play within the community, may index an acknowledgement of women's independent social identity. Female names that are not derived from masculine forms further reinforce this perception, as they symbolise the recognition of women as autonomous individuals whose identities are not contingent on male counterparts. This suggests a cultural valuation of women's roles, responsibilities, and individuality. At the same time, Ewe naming practices employ both the derivation of feminine names from masculine forms and the use of independent feminine names. The coexistence of these two strategies points to a complex and nuanced understanding of gender and identity in Ewe society. It reflects an interaction between dominant patriarchal structures and a parallel recognition of women's distinct roles and identities. This dynamic suggests that, although Ewe society is broadly male-dominated, there are contexts in which women are accorded considerable respect and authority. According to informants, elderly women and priestesses may be symbolically treated as men, enabling them to perform roles typically reserved for men. In some cases, such women also act as name-givers within families, thereby asserting their agency and reinforcing women's individuality through the names they assign.

6. Conclusion

To sum up, this study examined, from an ethnolinguistic perspective, how the Ewe construct and communicate gender through their naming practices. The analysis outlined the major types of gender markers in the Ewe language and demonstrated how these markers manifest in personal names. In particular, the study showed that feminine names are often formed from masculine bases by adding gender-marking suffixes such as /-*fúí*/, /-*sì*/, /-*wɔ́*/, and /-yò/. While /-wɔ́/ and /-yò/ were found to be loan morphemes from Akan and Dangme, respectively, the remaining markers appear to be indigenous to Ewe.

In addition to these derivative forms, the study identified a number of female-specific names that are not morphologically linked to male counterparts. These names indicate that female identity in Ewe culture is not always defined in relation to male identity, revealing a more nuanced and layered gender system than is often assumed.

Altogether, the findings demonstrate that gender-specific names play a significant role in constructing and expressing gender identity among the Ewe people. Societal expectations surrounding gender roles are frequently encoded in personal names, highlighting the cultural belief that a name forms an integral part of an individual's identity.

The study also showed that gender expression in Ewe names is shaped not only by internal linguistic processes but also by external influences, including language contact with Akan and Dangme, as well as cultural practices and religious beliefs. Through this ethnolinguistic lens, the research offers insight into how language and culture work together to construct and communicate gendered meanings.

Funding. This research did not receive any funding from any public, commercial, or not-for-profit organisations.

Conflict of Interest. The authors hereby declare that there is no conflict of interest related to the publication of this manuscript.

Author Contributions. All authors contributed to the conception, design, data collection, analysis, and writing of the manuscript. All authors have read and approved the final version of the manuscript.

AI Use Declaration. The authors used Grammarly and Copilot solely for language editing and formatting. All content, analysis, and interpretations are the authors' own. The use of these tools does not compromise the originality or intellectual contribution of the work, and the authors remain fully responsible for the final report.

Ethical Declaration. We hereby declare that this study was conducted in accordance with accepted ethical principles governing academic research. Participation in the study was voluntary, and all participants were adequately informed about the purpose, procedures, and nature of the research before providing consent.

Participants' privacy, confidentiality, and anonymity were respected throughout the research process. No identifying information has been disclosed, and all data collected have been used solely for academic purposes. Participants were informed of their right to withdraw from the study at any stage without penalty.

Furthermore, we declare that this research was conducted with honesty, integrity, and respect for the rights and welfare of all individuals involved. All sources consulted have been appropriately acknowledged, and every effort has been made to ensure the accuracy and authenticity of the findings presented.

References

Abdul, R. (2014). *A synchronic sociolinguistic analysis of personal names among Ewes* (MPhil thesis). University of Ghana, Legon.

Adeoye, J. A., Olaiya, O. M., & Ikotun, R. O. (2021). Language use in condolences among Yorùbá of Southwest Nigeria. *Journal of Studies in Language, Culture, and Society, 4*(2), 36–50.

Adjeran, M. (2019). Individual names with Tiv people from Nigeria and Cameroon. *Journal of Studies in Language, Culture and Society (JSLCS),* 2(2), 16–25. https://asjp.cerist.dz/en/article/125437

Adomako, K. (2017). Morphophonological analysis of Akan female family-name formation. *Ghana Journal of Linguistics, 6(3),* 1–32.

Agbedor, P. (1991). What is in a name? *Working Papers of the Linguistics Circle, 10(1)*.

Agyekum, K. (2006). The sociolinguistics of Akan personal names. *Nordic Journal of African Studies, 15(2*), 206–235. https://doi.org/10.53228/njas.v15i2.24

Aljbour, A. F., & Al-Abed Al-Haq, F. (2019). An investigation of feminine personal names in the Beni Sakhr tribe of Jordan: A sociolinguistic study. *International Journal of Linguistics, 11(6),* 41–62. https://doi.org/10.5296/ijl.v11i6.14960

Ameevor, P. K. M. (1982). *Ŋkɔwò ɖe?* Ghana Publishing Corporation.

Appah, C. K. I., & Amfo, N. A. A. (2011). The morphopragmatics of the diminutive morpheme (-ba/-wa) in Akan. *Lexis, Journal in English Lexicology, 6,* 79–95. https://doi.org/10.4000/lexis.437

Buberwa, A. (2017). Kiswahili personal names selection in Tanzania: A sociolinguistic analysis. *Kiswahili, 80(1),* 81–96.

Charwi, M. Z. (2019). A semantic analysis of personal names in Datooga society. *Ethnologia Actualis, 19(1)*, 101–115.

Ehineni, T. (2019). The ethnopragmatics of Yoruba personal names: Language in the context of culture. *Studies in African Languages and Cultures, 53*, 69–90. https://doi.org/10.32690/SALC53.4

Essien, O. (2000). What is in a name: A linguistic and cultural explication of Ibibio personal names. In H. Wolf & O. Gensler (Eds.), *Proceedings of the 2nd World Congress on African Linguistics* (pp. 103–130). Rüdiger Köppe.

Horsu, I., Akakpo, I., Horsu Boakye, S., & Yao Agbenyo, E. (2026). An onomastics study of theism and sacrality in Ewe anthroponymy. *Journal of English Language Teaching and Applied Linguistics*, 8(1), 27-34. https://doi.org/10.32996/jeltal.2026.8.1.3

Kpodo, P. & Mallet, C. S. A. (2025). A sociolinguistic analysis of cloth names in Ewe. *Nordic Journal of African Studies*, 34(1), 41-67. https://njas.fi/njas/article/view/1136/656

Laddaoui, N. (2025). The attribution of Kabyle personal names. *Journal of Languages and Translation, 5*(2), 232–240.

Mensah, E. O. (2020). Name this child: Religious identity and ideology in Tiv personal names. *Names: A Journal of Onomastics, 68*, 1–15.

Mensah, E. O. (2023). Husband is a priority: Gender roles, patriarchy, and the naming of female children in Nigeria. *Gender Issues, 40(1),* 45–59. https://doi.org/10.1007/s12147-022-09303-z

Mottey, M. (2013). *Vowel hiatus resolution in Ewe*. MPhil Thesis, Norwegian University of Science and Technology.

Nukunya, G. K. (2007). *Tradition and change in Ghana*. University of Ghana Press.

Okal, B. O. (2018). A linguistic overview of the patronymic and gender names amongst the selected African communities. *American Journal of Linguistics, 6(1)*, 9–14.

Sebonde, R. Y. (2020). Personal naming practices and modes of address in the Chasu speech community. *Nordic Journal of African Studies, 29*(2), 18. https://doi.org/10.53228/njas.v29i2.519

Sekyi-Baidoo, Y. (2024). The commemorability principle in Akan personal name construction. *Genealogy, 8*(2), 48. https://doi.org/10.3390/genealogy8020048

Sekyi-Baidoo, Y. (2019). *Akan personal names*. University of Ghana Press

Sperber, D., & Wilson, D. (1995). *Relevance: Communication and cognition* (2nd Ed.). Blackwell Publishers.

Uwen, G. O., & Ekpang, J. N. (2022). A socio-onomastic categorisation of Erei personal names. *Onoma*, 57, 267. https://doi.org/10.34158/onoma.57/2022/17

Zawawi, S. M. (1993). *What's in a name? Unaitwaje? A Swahili book of names*. Africa World Press.