



Sociolinguistic Etymologies of Ewe Names Denoting the Relationship with Man and Animals

Isaac Horsu

University of Professional Studies, Accra, Department of Communication Studies
horsui@yahoo.com

Imeta Akakpo

Ho Technical University, Department of Applied Modern Languages and Communication
iakakpo@htu.edu.gh

Wisdom Blackson Agbanyo

SDA College of Education, Asokore-Koforidua, Department of Languages
wisdomblackson27@gmail.com

DOI: <http://doi.org/10.36892/ijlls.v7i5.2302>

APA Citation: Horsu, I., Akakpo, I., & Agbanyo, W. B. (2025). Sociolinguistics Etymologies of the Ewe Names Denoting the Relationship with Man and Animals. *International Journal of Language and Literary Studies*. 7(5).1-14. <http://doi.org/10.36892/ijlls.v7i5.2302>

Received:

17/07/2025

Accepted:

25/08/2025

Keywords:

Sociolinguistics,
Etymology, Ewe
Names,
Connotation,
Denotation.

Abstract

This work looks at the human-animal relation displayed in Ewe personal names in Ghana, Togo, and Benin by studying sociolinguistics and etymology. Using cultural and socio semiotic theories, the study adopted the qualitative method. This research reviews twenty animal-related Ewe names to find the cultural, symbolic, and spiritual reasons for their use. The study reveals that these names relate closely to shared memory and views, acting as markers of identity, values, and knowledge passed down through generations. Ewe animal-based names show totemic links, ecological awareness, moral lessons, and expectations. As such, they act as a linguistic link connecting language, environment, beliefs, and social structure. This study adds to African onomastics by showing how naming practices hold native ways of knowing and keep cultural heritage alive.

1. INTRODUCTION

The cultural heritage and artifacts that characterize a certain culture-sharing community and provide information on the culture and concepts linked with them serve as proof of this variety (Pradhan, 2023). Ghana is home to numerous ethnic groups with diverse cultural origins and languages, each with its unique dialects. There are several different ethnic groups in Ghana, including the Ewe, who are mostly found near the country's eastern border with Togo. Ewe (Éve or Évegbe), a Kwa language, is spoken by the Ewe people. An estimated 3,320,000 people speak the Ewe language, according to the Ethnologue report on Ghana (Eberhard et al. 2020). The "out-dooring" (vihehedego) and naming ritual, which is held on the eighth day after birth, is one of the earliest rites of passage for a newborn among the Ewe ethnic group in Ghana. The child receives a name from the person bestowing it, who is typically the child's father or a selected paternal relative if the father passed away before the child was born. It is commonly

known that the Ewe-speaking people of Ghana have names that express a concept that the person who gave the name or bears it wants to convey.

According to Egblewogbe (1977), the Ewe people have 10 naming systems divided into four categories: dzɔdzɔmɛŋkɔwo (natural names), ŋkɔnanawo (given names at birth or later in life), ŋkɔtsɔtsɔwo (names adopted later in life or acquired names), and subɔsubɔŋkɔwo. According to Abdul (2014), a child's natural names comprise contextual names, which are provided depending on the circumstances surrounding their birth, and birthday names, which are given based on the day of the child's birth (azagbenkɔwo). A child is given their given names at birth, or occasionally they are adopted later in life. Later in life, the acquired names are considered to be adopted. The child's or parents' religious affiliation is indicated by their names. When talking about Akan birthday names, Agyekum (2006) described them as an automatic name that every Akan child receives based on the day of their birth, even before they are given an official name.

Other scholars put their interests to the study of the Ewe people and culture before and during the colonization. Authors like Gayibor (2011) and Aduayom (1975) have studied the origin of the Ewe and the dynamism that happened in their area. The main sources for understanding the development of these people and their language are the displays of the Ewe intelligentsia throughout the colonial era. Several studies have examined Ewe naming systems from different perspectives, including Abdul (2014), Aziaku (2016), Yevudey (2018), and Kuagbedzi (2019). The results of these studies have revealed intriguing details regarding the level of description that certain Ewe names, whether proper or common, hoTheir names indicate the child's or parents' religious affiliation. Some Ewe names have been examined from linguistic and sociological perspectives in these studies. None of these studies, however, have looked at how ewe names indicate their relationship to animals. The study focuses on literary etymology of Ewe names in relation to animals, in anticipation that findings will reveal pertinent information unique to the Ewe animal names chosen for this study as it connotative functions has on the socio-cultural setting in the Ewe community.

1.1.Statement of the Problem

"Every man carries his culture and much of his social reality about with him wherever he goes," claims Firth (1964:60). Sometimes, a person's language and given name might be used to identify these realities. Personal names are typically created historically, upheld socially, and derived from the common beliefs and expectations of society's members (Akinnaso 1980).

It uses Egblewogbe's 1977 thesis as background, in which he eloquently explains the several kinds of Ewe names, their linguistic structures, semantics, and functions. The goal of this study is to identify the connotative variables that drive people to give their children specific personal names by examining the sociolinguistic etymology of animal-related personal names among ewes.

Research is frequently conducted on the Ewe people's naming system because it is not just rich and varied but also fascinating. Numerous studies on Ewe personal names have been conducted; some of the most noteworthy ones are Egblewogbe (1977), Egblewogbe (1984), Atakpa (1997), Adjah (2011), and Abdul (2014). However, the study focuses on examining the origins of Ewe animal names and their meanings among Ghana's Anlo-Ewe ethnic group, utilizing language as a means of communication, as well as the sociocultural and connotative effects of these names.

1.2.Objective of the Study

1. To examine the sociolinguistics etymology of Ewe names related to animals.
2. To determine the connotative factors which influence people to give particular personal names to their children.

2. THEORETICAL PERSPECTIVE AND LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1.Cultural Theory

Culture is "that complex whole which includes knowledge, belief, art, morals, law, custom, and other capabilities and habits acquired by man as a member of society," according to British social anthropologist Tylor (1871) (cited in Hatch, 1997, p.203). According to this definition, culture is the quality of man that sets him apart from other people because of the culture or society in which he lives. This can be attributed to a person's level of expertise, knowledge, or artistic ability, as well as how they express their religion or cultural practices. Therefore, one may trace a person's genealogy or lineage through their culture. In order to illustrate the socio-cultural anthropology of the Ewe people, the study focuses on examining the etymological ancestry of Ewe names. Culture is "the collective programming of the mind that distinguishes the members of one group or category of people from another," according to Hofstede (2001, p. 9). Hofstede (2001, p.9) defined culture as "the collective programming of the mind that distinguishes the members of one group or category of people from another". Hofstede considers the concept of cognition as affecting thoughts and feelings, beliefs, attitudes, and skills in a manner that is taught and nurtured by the environment of the person. This observation is further noted by Banks (2019) that culture may be deemed as the values, symbols, interpretations, and perspectives that distinguish one people from another, it is not

only material objects and other tangible aspects of human societies. People across cultures, usually construe the meaning of symbols and behaviours in the same or similar ways. According to Hofstede, cognition is the process by which an individual's environment teaches and develops their beliefs, attitudes, abilities, and thoughts and feelings. Wieder and Pratt (1990) stress that cultural identities are present in daily life; members of a group that is culturally identified use similar names, skills, art forms, and symbols; they also speak similar languages and share similar perspectives, ideas, and interpretations, which all serve to identify them as belonging to the same cultural background. The cultural theory, which emphasizes the aspects of ancestry and name etymology as part of one's culture, is related to this study and can therefore be justified in supporting the analysis of the study.

2.2.Socio-Semiotic Theory

Halliday coined the term "social semiotics" (1978). According to Halliday, language and society are inextricably linked. According to him, language is a "social semiotic," meaning that it must be viewed in the context of society as a tool for interpersonal communication. Since language and society are one and the same, they must be studied together. Halliday's socio-semiotic theory, which is essentially sociocultural, specific circumstances can cause meaning variations and provide valuable insights into the reasons and ways that a name's meaning changes depending on the culture in which it is used. The study of the genealogy and derivation of Ewe names is the main subject of the socio-cultural anthropology of the Ewe people. Individual humans join a group through language, as noted by Halliday (1978: 14). According to Halliday, a society is made up of relationships rather than members, and these relationships determine a social position. Halliday (1978: 15) explains the connection between language and social roles by stating that names in social roles can be combined and that a person, as a member of a society, fills several roles at once, always through language. Using language as a communication tool, this study looks at the origins of Ewe animal names and their meanings among Ghana's Anlo-Ewe ethnic group. It also looks at the sociocultural and connotative impacts of these names. The researchers would then use Ewe names associated with Anlo-Ewe animals as markers specifically designed for signification and decoding. In contrast to Western culture, where names are only tags or pointers that have no meaning in and of themselves, African Ewe names serve as the essence of an individual's existence and their license into the world of the living. Their symbolic-cultural function is not diminished by their use as signs (Adamic 1942: 72).

2.3. Ewes in Ghana

Ghana is home to numerous ethnic groups with diverse cultural origins and languages, each with its unique dialects. There are several different ethnic groups in Ghana, including the Ewe, who are mostly found near the country's eastern border with Togo. Ewe (Éwe or Éwegbe), a Kwa language, is spoken by the Ewe people. An estimated 3,320,000 people speak the Ewe language, according to the Ethnologue report on Ghana (Eberhard et al. 2020).

2.4.Ewe Language

According to the UNESCO classification of languages (1985), Ewe is an African community language, and its native territory includes Badagry in the Federal Republic of Nigeria as well as the Republics of Ghana, Togo, and Benin (Dahomey) in West Africa. Linguists believe that the Ewe language (Ewegbe) is a member of the Kwa family of Sudanic languages (Westermann and Bryan, 1952). Kwa languages are a sub-family of the Niger-Congo family of the Congo-Kordofanian language family of Africa, according to Greenberg (1970). There are several dialects, or variations, of the Ewe language that are spoken in Eweland. As with all dialects, the dialectical differences can be found in one or more of the following: speech sounds employed, word forms and synonyms chosen, pitch/tonal variations, and method of expression. Although it is challenging, several of these dialects can be understood by one another. The population of all Ewe-speaking people has always been a subject of debate. Awoonor (2014) writes, "According to various uncoordinated census accounts and estimates, the Ewes may number anywhere between two and five million".

2.5.Ewe personal names

The "out-dooring" (*vihehedego*) and naming ritual, which is held on the eighth day after birth, is one of the earliest rites of passage for a newborn among the Ewe ethnic group in Ghana. The child is given a name by the person who gave it, who is typically the child's father or a selected paternal relative if the father passed away before the child was born. It is commonly known that the Ewe-speaking people of Ghana have names that express a concept that the person who gave the name or bears it wants to convey.

Egblewogbe (1977) identifies ten naming systems among the Ewe people, which he groups into four, namely: *dzɔdzɔmɛɲkɔwo* (natural names), *ɲkɔnanawo* (a given name at birth or taken later in life), *ɲkɔtsɔtsɔwo* (names taken later in life or acquired names), and *subɔsubɔɲkɔwo* (religious names). According to Abdul (2014), a child's natural names comprise contextual names, which are provided depending on the circumstances surrounding their birth, and birthday names, which are given based on the day of the child's birth (*azagbenkɔwo*). A child is given their given names at birth, or occasionally they are adopted later in life. Later in life, the acquired names are considered to be adopted. The child's or parents' religious affiliation is

indicated by their names. When talking about Akan birthday names, Agyekum (2006) described them as an automatic name that every Akan child receives based on the day of their birth, even before they are given an official name.

There are four main ways that ewes are named (see Egblewogbe 1977). Dzodzomenkɔwo (natural names), ŋkɔnanawo (given names), ũkɔtsɔtsɔwo (acquired names), and subɔsubɔŋkɔwo (religious names) are the categories used to classify these systems. It is thought that the child's natural names are innate. They are the names with which he or she was born. These names could indicate the day of the week the child was born or the circumstances surrounding the child's birth. While acquired names are ones that a person adopts later in life, given names are given to a person at birth or later in life.

2.6. Etymology of personal names

The publications that discuss the typology and etymology of personal names will be reviewed in this part. In order to demonstrate the variety of personal names found in many civilizations and their naming systems, the research is evaluated. They are also examined to demonstrate the circumstances surrounding their issuance and the place of origin of the personal names.

One of the most important studies on personal names in Ewe is Egblewogbe's (1977) research. The etymology and typology of Ewe personal names are discussed in his book. Additionally, it explains the morphology and structure of Ewe personal names and demonstrates how they serve as speech actions that form elements of Ewes' sociocultural lives and ways of thinking. Egblewogbe claims that personal names in Ewe typically originate from the circumstances surrounding the child's birth as well as the individual experiences of the name givers and bearers.

He explains that a child's natural names are those that which they are born with. The child's birth order, the clan to which the father belongs, the day of the child's birth, and mode of birth are all reflected in these names. We have names like Mesa/Besa, which means "third male child," Tsatsu, which means "second male child whose father belongs to the Agave/Tsiame clan," Kofi, which means "a male child born on Friday," Ama, which means "a female child born on Saturday," and Awumee, which means "a boy who is born with the foetal membrane." Names for twins, triplets, and their offspring are also included in the list of natural names.

Children of Ewes are given names by their parents and other family members. Typically, these names are nicknames, occupational names, and allusive names. Allusive names 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 center around man in society, his general nature, his relationship with others, and with the gods, Egblewogbe makes this claim (Egblewogbe 1977:57). He clarifies that while most name givers disregard this criterion, names that fit within this group are meant to directly reference other people. In order to represent philosophical statements about life and the relationship between man and the gods, they instead provide allusive names.

Some of the allusive names include *Dzreke* 'the quarrel is ended', *Senanu* 'it is God who gives', and *Domenyozuku* 'kindness has become death'. Conversely, vocational names are given to the bearer in relation to their profession or calling. Examples are *Titsa* (teacher), *Bigla* (mason), *dawola* (hairdresser), and *tela* (tailor/seamstress). A person is given a nickname (*megbenkwo*) because of their "abnormal or anti-social behaviour." They could also be used to characterize the individual's physical attributes. Nicknames are literally referred to as back-names in Ewe since they are typically avoided when the people they identify are around, because they could start a fight. Examples of nicknames in Ewe's writing include *Kadzavi*, which means "young ape," and *ngo*, which means "forehead," referring to a person with a long forehead.

The acquired names are ones that a person adopts as he matures and gains his own unique experiences. Usually, they are praise names, or *ahanɔkwo*, which translates to "drinking names." Peers, particularly men, are the ones who utilize these names the most when they hang out and drink. They are obtained or taken to demonstrate the might and power of the bearers as well as their fulfillment or disdain for life. Typically, they take the shape of appellations. Egblewogbe asserts that although praise names are learned by the person, a father can also offer them to a child, who would use them as an adult. He further explains that females do not take *ahanɔkwo* unless they reach their menopause. Examples of these names are *Ahiabu* 'a missing lover', its appellation goes as, *ahiabu gamado ne srɔwo bu nado ga* 'you cannot beat a gong when your lover is missing, you can only beat a gong when your wife is missing'. *Labaɖa* 'bad animal' and *Agbleke* 'farm soil'.

The Ewe people's beliefs and customs are the source of the religious names, according to Egblewogbe. Cult names (*hunɔkwo*) and baptismal names (*tsidetanɔkwo*) are examples of religious names. Children are given religious names according to their parents' respective faiths. While baptismal names are connected to Christianity, cult names are linked to traditional religious beliefs. The three cult systems, the Afa, Yeye, and Da cults that are prevalent among southern Ewes, are the sources of the cult names. According to Egblewogbe, baptismal names come in two varieties. There are two types of baptismal names: native and foreign. The foreign ones, including John, Peter, Naomi, David, and Jessica, are based on biblical ideas and other

European names. Local baptismal names typically convey God's good qualities. For instance, Elikplim says, "God is with me," while Mawudem says, "God delivers me." "God hears my prayers," Mawuse said.

Egblewogbe asserts that the circumstances surrounding a child's birth influence some personal names. He claims that the child's parents and other family members have no influence over these situations. Additionally, some of these names are derived from the individual experiences and dispositions of the persons who give or receive them. However, others, particularly the allusive names, are given in response to cultural and societal events.

In addition, Egblewogbe talks about the semantics of Ewe personal names and asserts that they have both denotative and connotative meanings in addition to referring to specific people. According to him, the basis of these names is linguistic elements that indicate physical objects, but the sociocultural behaviour of the people is where the implications of these names are found. According to him, the settings of man's interactions with others, his relationship with the gods, and his understanding of life and death may all be used to interpret the meanings of the names. The significance of man and the family, the difficult nature of man, the ingratitude of man, and the loss of relatives are all indicated by personal names that are interpreted in the context of man's interpersonal relationships. Examples of such names are: *Amewuho* 'man is more important than money', *Fomevɔ* 'relations are strained or finished', *Amenyedɔ* 'human being is a problem', *Amevɔ* 'man is finished', and *Nyuiabu* 'the good is hidden or loss'. 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 greater one', *Elɔm* 'He loves me', and *Segbɔnya* 'something that happened in the presence of God'.

He contends that the Ewes are socially constrained in their usage of personal names, and he attributes this constraint to social factors such as gender and age. He asserts that older individuals address younger people by their names, but younger people do not address older people by their personal names. Individuals of the same age might also refer to each other by their own names; males typically use their praise names. He adds that although males are allowed to call women by name, women are not allowed to do the same to men. When speaking to men, they are supposed to be respectful and add titles of address to their names.

Agozie (2000) is another publication that examines the etymology of Ewes' personal names. Agozie focuses on the naming systems connected to three esoteric cults: The Yeve, Da, and Afa cults. She discusses the etymology of indigenous religious names and the feelings these

names evoke in the name bearers and name callers in the Weta traditional territory. He claims that personal names associated with these cults are selected based on how many cult spirits emerge in the initiates, but cult members can also employ rituals and ritual materials as personal names. Ritual items such as ase, agozi, agbayiza, sokpe, sofatasi, and avlaya, for instance, have unique appellations and can be employed as personal names. Ase is a metal rod with bells fastened to it and a V-shaped top. Only the Midawo "head priest" uses it, and it symbolises the position of the cult priest. The Agbayiza, also called the adodo, is a metal rattle that cult members use during cult celebrations, while the Agozi is a small perforated jar used in rituals. The male cult members wear the awlaya, a skirt created from scraps of cloth, and the sokpe, a sacred stone connected to thunderbolts.

According to Agozie, members are named according to how the spirits appear in them on the day of their initiation, and the names of the Yeve are drawn from two Yeve spirits: Agbui (the feminine spirit) and So (the male spirit). On the day of initiation, a new member is named after the So spirit if they fall with their face up, and the Agbui spirit if they fall with their face down. The six categories into which the So names are divided show how the people relate to and see the spirit.

3. METHODOLOGY

To examine the chosen Ewe names associated with animals, the study used a qualitative research methodology. Twenty (20) Ewe animal names from the Anlo populations were purposefully sampled for the study. In order to accurately transcribe the chosen names, the researchers also reached out to Ewe language experts. They also looked for traditional local beliefs that could explain the chosen names. The study examines the chosen names from an ethnographic perspective using critical connotative literary interpretation. Within a 'transfer-conduit' perspective, Reddy (1993) indicates that text analysis aims at providing expert tools such as literary criticism, philology, or content analysis to decode the texts which would otherwise be inaccessible to a simple reader. Again, text analysis aims to observe and discover the attitude, behaviours, concerns, motivations, and culture of the text producer from an expert point of view. In this study, the analysis process goes hand in hand with the reading and re-reading of the texts under analysis. The analysis of the broader context is used to conclude and answer the research questions. The gathered data was analyzed using data analysis methods as annotation, segmentation, transcription, and translation (documentation corpora). According to Geertz (1973) and Riceour (1973), social action can and should be read as text because the text is the model of social life. The study uses critical connotative literary textual analytical interpretation to analyze the selected Ewe animal names from the Anlo ethnographic perspective.

4. ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

4.1.Sociolinguistic Functions of Animal-Based Names

Animal-based names in Ewe are firmly rooted in cultural belief, nature, and metaphorical identification. They have a range of sociolinguistic functions, such as conveying values, identity, and community knowledge. These include:

Totemic identifiers

Some names, such as Dzakpata (black cobra whose venom is fatal), are mystical or spiritual icons representing ancestral or clan identity and fear and respect evoked.

Personality or destiny descriptors

Names like Avugla ("jaw of a dog") can be used to name extrovert or chatty people, and Agbovi (lamb) describes innocence and softness. The names have a tendency to foretell the nature that is expected to be seen in the child.

4.2.Symbols of survival, sagacity, or strength

Dzata (lion) and Agbodzi (ram's heart) represent bravery, leadership, and inner strength. Likewise, Avuwoada (a wild dog) represents toughness against adversity, and Agama (chameleon) represents flexibility, changing in nature and cunning action.

4.3.Social standing or clan history symbols

Agbomefia (ram king) signifies high-standing or nobility leadership combined with power and softness. Names like Agboga (giant) also suggest communal duty and leadership.

These names assume further significance by way of oral culture, narrative, and proverb, where animals are apt to become metaphors for human action. To give a child one of these animals' names is more than symbolic; it is a cultural assertion of identity, values, and relationship to family and environment. By means of these names, Ewe society retains and transmits its common worldview from generation to generation.

4.4.Etymological and Cultural Analysis of 20 Ewe Animal-Based Names

Name	Meaning	Animal	Etymology & Cultural Insight
Dzata	Lion	Lion (Dzata)	signifies strength and courage.
Agboga	Huge ram	Ram (<i>Agbo</i>)	Symbolizes Leadership in community

Datsomor	Ambushing snake	Snake (Da)	Stealth, strategy, caution
Avugla	Jaw of a Dog	Dog (Avu)	Protective speech, boldness
Agbovi	Lamb	Lamb (Agbovi)	Gentleness, innocence
Agbota	Sheep head	Sheep (Agbo)	Possibly leadership, sacrifice
Avudzivi	Dog has given birth	Dog (Avu)	Loyalty, fertility, family bonds
Avuwoada	Dog struggle	Dog (Avu)	Seen as resilient survivors
Agama	Chameleon	Chameleon (Agama)	Adaptability
Gbõgla	Jaw of a goat	Goat (Gbo)	Refers metaphorically to talkativeness, stubborn speech, or cheekiness.
Klogo	Tortoise shell	Tortoise (klo)	Emblem of wisdom and strategy; valued for patience and protection
Akpata	Fish head	Fish(Akpa)	Represents endurance and fearlessness in water.
Agbenoxevi	Living bird	Bird(Xevi)	Implies chilling,survivor,endurance and living
Akpa	Fish	Fish (<i>Akpa</i>)	Represents endurance and fearlessness in water.
Dzakpata	Name of a venomous snake	Black Cobra (<i>Da</i>)	Name of venomous snake Powerful, dangerous, and spiritually feared; often a totemic or mystical name
Agalã	Crab	Crab (Agala)	Symbolizes hardness, defensiveness, and sometimes indirectness (as crabs move sideways).
Ado	Ground squirrel	Ground squirrel (Ado)	Symbol of quickness and agility
Agbodzi	Ram's heart	Ram (Agbo)	Symbol of strong leadership and bold and courageous leadership.
Agbomefia	King of Rams	Ram (Agbo)	Refers to leadership with gentleness and sacrificial character.
Agbo	Sheep	Sheep (Agbo)	Gentleness, innocence and calmness

4.5. Connotative Factors Impinging on Naming

The sociolinguistic implications of the names under consideration from animals reflect underlying deeper connotations:

Symbols of strength and leadership: Names such as Dzata ("lion") and Agbodzi ("ram's heart") emphasize boldness and courage. Agbomefia ("king of rams") and Agboga ("great ram") represent leadership of a group and authority in terms of traditional values.

Personality types and social commentary: Avugla ("dog", "jaw of a dog") and Gbɔ̃gla ("goat", "jaw of a goat") refer metaphorically to talkative or assertive individuals. Avuwoada ("dog", "struggle of a dog") suggests strength and resilience in hardships.

Mystical and spiritual associations: Dzakpata, referring to deadly black cobra, is marked by strong spiritual and feared connotations. These names are usually totemic or provide spiritual power and prestige.

Adaptability and wit: Agama (chameleon) symbolizes survival in adapting to change, and Afivi ("pup mouse") symbolizes young life and early growth and venerability.

Family and fertility meaning: Avudzivi ("dog has given birth") embodies fertility, loyalty, and the value placed on family bonds in Ewe culture.

Observation of nature and endurance of the environment: Akpata ("fish head") symbolizes courage in water environments, and Adɔ (ground squirrel) implies agility and fleetness.

Gentleness and innocence: Agbovi (lamb) and Agbota ("sheep head") represent gentle, sacrificial, or soft temperaments.

Wisdom and strategy: Klogo ("tortoise shell") is the icon of patient and strategic thinking, as tortoises are valued for their slow and determined approach.

Liveliness and freedom: Agbenoxevi ("living bird") is the representation of animation, activity, and the dynamic nature of life.

These name choices aren't arbitrary, rather, they are linguistic expressions of nature relations, religious beliefs, values, and metaphors that encapsulate the Ewe worldview.

5. CONCLUSION

In conclusion, this work has shown that Ewe animal names carry deep cultural meanings and are not just random words. Looking at twenty names using language and origin, the study explains how names show identity, belief, ethics, and environmental awareness. Animals in names show that people and nature are linked, which is very important in Ewe culture.

The results confirm that Ewe names are cultural texts that hold shared memory and tradition. They keep old knowledge alive, strengthen values, and show how language and nature interact.

These names do more than label; they actively shape society, share family ties, and pass on ideals.

By focusing on what these names mean and how they communicate, this study adds to the knowledge of African naming and local ways of knowing. It stresses how language and culture shape life and keep identity alive in groups.

5.1.Recommendation

This research suggests that Ewe animal names carry substantial cultural, social, and spiritual value. It is important to document and preserve these names because they show the Ewe people's view of animals and nature. Incorporating this knowledge into educational settings and local programs can aid in keeping these customs active.

Future studies could examine more names from various Ewe-speaking areas to better grasp their meanings and applications. Compiling a collection or database of these names would aid researchers, teachers, and leaders in protecting and promoting Ewe heritage.

REFERENCES

- Adamic, L. (1942). *What's Your Name?* New York, Harper and Brothers.
- Abdul, R. E. (2014). *A synchronic sociolinguistic analysis of personal names among Ewes* (Doctoral dissertation, University of Ghana).
- Adjah, O. A. (2011). What is in a name? Ghanaian personal names as information sources. *African Research and Documentation*, 117, 3-17.
- Aduayom, AM (1975). *Borders versus peoples in black Africa: the Ewe case* (Doctoral dissertation, University of Paris I).
- Agyekum, K. (2006). The sociolinguistic of Akan personal names. *Nordic journal of African studies*, 15(2).
- Agozie, E., K. (2000). *Cult Names and Appellations in the Socio-cultural Milieu of the People of Weta Traditional Area*. MPhil thesis, University of Ghana.
- Akinnaso, F. N. (1980). The sociolinguistic basis of Yoruba personal names. *Anthropological Linguistics*, 22(7), 275-304.
- Atakpa, F. K. (1997). Naming Practices of Ewes. *A Handbook of Eweland*, 1, 177-194.
- Atakpa, F. K. (1997). The Ewes of Southeastern Ghana.
- Awoonor, K. (2014). *The promise of hope: New and selected poems, 1964-2013*. U of Nebraska Press.
- Aziaku, V. E. (2016). *A Linguistic Analysis of Ewe Animal Names Among the Ewe of Ghana*. Rüdiger Köppe Verlag.
- Banks, J. A. (2019). *Multicultural education: Issues and perspectives*. John Wiley & Sons.
- Eberhard, David M., Gary F. Simons & Charles D. Fennig (eds.). (2020). *Ethnologue: Languages of the world*. SIL International. <http://www.ethnologue.com>.
- Egblewogbe, E. Y. (1977). *Ewe Personal Names: A Sociolinguistic Study*. P.hD thesis, University of Ghana.

Sociolinguistics Etymologies of the Ewe Names Denoting the Relationship with Man and Animals

- Egblewogbe, E. Y. (1984). The Structure and Functions of Ghanaian Personal Names. *Universitas* 10, pp. 1-17.
- Firth, J. R. (1964). On sociological linguistics. *Language in culture and society*, 66-70.
- Gayibor, T. N. (2011). Sources orales et histoire africaine: approches méthodologiques.
- Greenberg, J. H. (1970). Some generalizations concerning glottalic consonants, especially implosives. *International journal of American linguistics*, 36(2), 123-145.
- Halliday, M. A. K. (1978) Language as Social Semiotic: the social interpretation of language and meaning. London: Arnold.
- Hatch, M. J. (1997). Irony and the social construction of contradiction in the humor of a management team. *Organization Science*, 8(3), 275-288.
- Hofstede, G. (2011). Dimensionalizing cultures: The Hofstede model in context. *Online readings in psychology and culture*, 2(1), 8.
- Kuagbedzi, S. (2019). *Morphology of plant names in Anlo* (Doctoral dissertation, University of Cape Coast).
- Pradhan, J. B. (2023). Ethnomathematical Study on Cultural Artifacts: An Ethnographic Field to Classroom Practice. *Journal of Mathematics Education*, 5(1), 98–103. <https://doi.org/10.3126/jme.v5i1.60856>
- Pratt, S. (1990). D. LAWRENCE WIEDER. *Cultural Communication and Intercultural Contact*, 45.
- Reddy, J. N. (1993). An introduction to the finite element method. *New York*, 27, 14.
- Tylor, E. B. (1871). *Primitive culture: researches into the development of mythology, philosophy, religion, art, and custom* (Vol. 2). J. Murray.
- Westermann, D and Bryan, M. A. (1952). *Languages of West Africa*. London: Oxford University Press for International African Institute, 1952. Pp. 215, map. 21s.
- Wieder, D. and Pratt, C. (1990). On Being a Recognizable Indian among Indians. New Jersey: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.
- Yevudey, E. (2018). The representation of African languages and cultures on social media: a case of Ewe in Ghana. In *The Routledge Handbook of African Linguistics* (pp. 343-358). Routledge.
- UNESCO. (1985). Overcoming obstacles to the integration of culture. In R. Hurst (Ed.). *Copenhagen, Denmark: UNESCO*.