

UNIVERSITY OF EDUCATION, WINNEBA

A SOCIO-CULTURAL ANALYSIS OF BIRFOR PERSONAL NAMES



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DECLARATION

STUDENT'S DECLARATION

I **TOLITEY EMMANUEL CHEDITEY** declare that this thesis is the result of my own research which I carried out at the University of Education, Winneba. I have duly cited all references. I further declare that I have not presented this work (either in part or in whole) anywhere for the award of any degree or certificate. I accept single-handedly and whole-heartedly, responsibility for any possible lapses that may be found in this work.

Signature:

Date:



SUPERVISOR'S DECLARATION

I hereby declare that this work was supervised in accordance with the guidelines for supervision of thesis as laid down by the University of Education, Winneba.

Supervisor: Dr. Cecilia Kotey

Signature:

Date:

DEDICATION

I dedicate this work to my lovely family especially my wife and my three children Wanaah Eric, Naa-eannah and Bob-maale. You are dear to me. You remain an inspiration and a pillar in my life respectively.



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I thank the Almighty God for all the favours He showered on me throughout the period that I was engaged in this study. It was stressful but through His mercy, love and grace, I was able to draw the curtain to the work.

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

DECLARATION	iii
STUDENT’S DECLARATION	iii
SUPERVISOR’S DECLARATION	iii
DEDICATION	iv
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	v
LIST OF TABLES.....	ix
LIST OF FIGURES.....	x
ABSTRACT	xi
 CHAPTER ONE	
INTRODUCTION	1
1.0 Background to the Study.....	1
1.1 The Burfor.....	3
1.1.1 Genetic classification of the Burfor.....	6
1.2 Statement of the problem.....	8
1.3 Objectives of the study/purpose.....	9
1.3.1The Specific objectives are:.....	9
1.4 Research questions.....	9
1.5 Significance of the study.....	10
1.6 Limitations of the study	10
1.7 Delimitations of the study.....	11
1.8 Organization of the study.....	11
1.9 Summary.....	12
 CHAPTER TWO	
LITERATURE REVIEW	13
2.0 Introduction.....	13
2.1 The concept of socio-linguistics	13
2.2 Culture as a concept.....	14
2.3 Personal names in relation to culture	16
2.4 The concept of a name	18
2.5 Naming systems	25
2.6 Names, personality and behaviour.....	28

2.7 Theoretical framework.....	29
2.8 Summary	30

CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY	31
3.0 Introduction.....	31
3.1 Research design.....	31
3.2 Population and sampling	32
3.2.1 Stratified sampling.....	33
3.2.2 Simple random sampling	34
3.2.3 Purposive sampling.....	34
3.2.4 Snowball sampling.....	35
3.3 Sources of data	35
3.3.1 Primary data.....	35
3.3.1.1 Consultants	36
3.3.1.2 Secondary data	37
3.4 Data collection procedure	37
3.5 Data analysis procedure.....	39
3.6 Administration (Interviewing process).....	39
3.7 Ethical considerations and other challenges	40
3.8 Summary	41

CHAPTER FOUR

PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS OF DATA	42
4.0 Introduction.....	42
4.1 The Burfor naming ceremony	42
4.2. Sources of Burfor personal names	43
4.2.1 Divination name	43
4.2.2 Day and place birth names.....	44
4.3 Classification of Burfor personal names	45
4.3.1 Cult names	45
4.3.2 Clan names.....	48
4.3.3 Circumstantial names	49
4.3.4 Reincarnated names.....	51

4.3.5 The uniqueness of Bibila, Tampuor, Sayuor and Tuu as reincarnated names.....	53
4.3.6 Proverbial names.....	54
4.3.6.1 Names describing God’s existence	56
4.3.6.2 Attributes and activities of God	57
4.3.6.3 Man’s opinion about God.....	58
4.3.7 Proverbial names related to death.....	59
4.3.7.1 Proverbial names that relate to societal deeds	60
4.3.7.2 Names for children born out of wedlock.....	60
4.4 Nicknames.....	62
4.5 Conclusion	64

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS	65
5.0 Introduction.....	65
5.1 Summary/Findings.....	65
5.2 Conclusion	67
5.3 Suggestions and recommendations.....	67
REFERENCES	69
APPENDIX 1	74
APPENDIX 2	75
APPENDIX 3	76
APPENDIX 4	78
APPENDIX 5	81
APPENDIX 6	83

LIST OF TABLES

Table 1: Lexical differences between Birtuor, Dagaare and Lobir	7
Table 2 Cult names	47
Table 3 Circumstantial names	51
Table 4 Reincarnated names.....	53
Table 5: The existence of God.....	56
Table 6: Names that describe the attributes and activities of God	57
Table 7: Names that show man’s opinion about God.....	58
Table 8: Nicknames based on physical structure and appearance.....	63
Table 9: Names based complexion.....	63
Table 10: Names based on height.....	64



LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 1 Map of the areas occupied by the Burfor people in the Wa West district 6



ABSTRACT

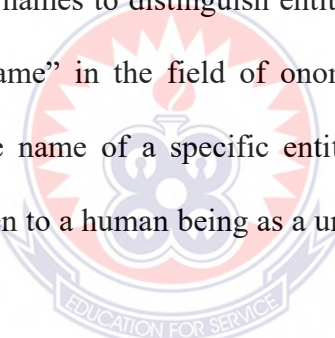
It is widely accepted that in all societies, personal name practices and cultures are intertwined (Ngubane and Thabathe, 2013). However, this reality is more pronounced in the African society where personal names are not just appellations bestowed on individuals to identify them in the community but rather words that reflect the world view of the people. This is also applicable to the Burfor people of Ghana. Among the Burfor, the name-giver chooses a name that truly not only identifies the child as a person, but reflects the socio-cultural context within which the child is born. The study investigates the social-cultural significance of personal names among the Burfor people of Ghana. It strives to discover the extent to which Burfor personal names influence the socio-cultural perspective of the people. The study discusses the typology of Burfor personal names. These include cult names, clan names, circumstantial names, proverbial names, reincarnated names, nicknames, colour names and bodily structure names. The study also examines the naming system of the Burfor people. The study examines the relevance of the names of the Burfor speaking people with reference to their meaning, it again looked at what calls for the selection of a name among the Burfor and ascertains how names are linked to the Burfor culture. This work made use of basic research techniques such as sampling (purposive, simple random, stratified and snowball sampling) to sample respondents and communities to conduct the study. Data was however collected through interviews (face to face) and open ended questions. The research found out that names in the given language are influenced by two main socio-cultural indicators-the spiritual and the physical. Some particular names in the Burfor cultural setting have some gender sensitivity collocations in them while others do not. It was observed that death dominates most of the Burfor personal names from the history of personal names *yoe* 'names' or *k. ù* 'death' as a prefix to the name. The study concludes that Burfor personal names sometimes have an effect on their bearers and other constituents of Burfor. Therefore, the study recommends that every Burfor community should inculcate the habit of giving Burfor names to their children to promote their identity.

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.0 Background to the Study

Personal naming is a universal cultural practice and every society in the world gives names as an identity tag to its inhabitants. However, the way and manner in which the name is selected and its coded meaning vary from society to society and from culture to culture. Names are necessary for a society to be able to operate. It is against the above assertion that personal names are adored in every speech community and society. Bean (1980: 305) states categorically that “in every society, people and places have proper names” He explains subsequently that all speech communities use proper names to distinguish entities in geographical, temporal and social space. “Proper name” in the field of onomastic and within the context of nomenclature means the name of a specific entity, which could be an inanimate thing or specifically given to a human being as a unique distinction for identification (Bright, 2003).



Bright (2003) adds that within the general category of names, people often use the word name for what we can more precisely call proper names. Within this subdivision, it is common to distinguish two principal types. One of these is place names or toponyms; another is personal names, for which we have no common used term derived from Greek, but which are sometimes called anthroponyms. In European societies, as well as China and Japan, every person is assigned a public, legal name, in written form, around the time of birth; part of this usually reflects the child’s father’s name. The individual normally has that same legal name throughout his life—with exceptions, for example, where married women take on their husband’s family names (Bright, 2003: 672). In addition, a person may have

informal “nicknames” during different parts of life. Sometimes these are used only by close relatives or intimates; in any case, they do not replace the public and legal names. Unlike the western culture where when selecting a personal name, people go through a dictionary of names to pick a name out of the lot that would give satisfaction, in non-literate societies in the Africa culture, personal names offer important insights into the social and cultural structures of the community. The name-giver conveys a message to the community through the name bearer. Traditionally, personal names in the Birfor context are unique in most instances and have meaningful connotations that emerge from these names. Grandfather and grandparents are usually the name givers. This however is not different from Zulu personal naming systems. Among the Zulu people, naming generally is considered to be significant and certainly an important activity. The Zulu naming process is linked to the culture, beliefs and customs of the people (Ngubane, 2013). Naming practices among the Zulus are traditionally based on either an event during the pregnancy or social activities.

There are a number of scenarios when it comes to name-bearing among the Birfor: a person can bear a personal name, family name and any other type of name in addition to any other type of name (such as a religious name depending on the religion of the person). Every well-meaning traditional Birfor has at least a personal name which is unique to him/her. It is not common for a truly indigenous Birfor not to have a personal name. Personal names across several cultural settings have significance that goes beyond just serving as a label for identification (Alford, 1988). Naming in the Western society is fundamentally, a primary system of reference and not a symbol, while in Africa; choosing personal name goes beyond the myopic limit and confines of seeing them as mere tags that differentiate one

person from another. Apart from giving names for identification, personal names in general and especially in Africa, are said to be informed by reasons and for a range of purposes. Jawa (1986: 80) intimates that names expressed in Arab communities manifest parents' wishes, expectations, likes or dislikes. Such names may become a model for the bearer to live up to expectations. He adds that "names reflect the cultural, psychological and social atmosphere of the bearer". Thus, names serve as an important component to both the people who receive the names and to the societies that give them. Akinnaso (1980: 76) affirms that the practice of personal name in all cultures is related to identity concerns, except that such concerns differ from one individual to another and from culture to culture.

The idea that personal names serve as a model (that is, they are purported as a guide) to the name bearer seems to fit into a strong belief among communities (at least the Burfor) that names could have an impact on the belief systems, attitudes and ultimately the behaviour of the bearer. There is usually a strong connection between some personal names and the name bearers, hence such names could influence both the name giver and the name bearer.

1.1 The Burfor

The Burfor homeland is a 2,000 square kilometer strip of land that borders Burkina Faso and Ivory Coast. The Burfor crossed the border from what was known as French West Africa into Ghana, which was called the Gold Coast, in about the mid-nineteenth century (https://joshuaproject.net/people_groups/10869/GH).

Burfor is an ethnic group currently located in Northern Ghana, specifically in the Wa Municipality, Lawra, Wa East and Wa West districts of the Upper West Region

and in the Sawla-Tuna-Kalba and Bole districts of the Savannah Region respectively (GSS, 2010).

They can also be found along the neighbouring Southern Burkina Faso, and Northern Côte d'Ivoire of Ghana. Rattary (1932) considers the Burfor and the Dagaare as belonging to the Lobi tribe. When one takes a look at the linguistic distance between Burfor and Dagara on one hand and Lobi on the other hand, Rattary's description is rather on groupings of settlement with relatively similar practices. It is true that the Burfor, Dagara and Lobi have quite a number of practices which are similar, which affirms Rattary's assertion that the Dagara and Burfor as belonging to the Lobi tribe. Some of the practices of these ethnic groups include the use of the xylophone mostly for their funerals and festivals. They also practise betrothal and elopement marriages and use other items like cowries and cattle as bride price.

Joshua (1993) asserts that there are also a number of Burfor in the western region of Ghana. The vast majority of educated Burfor settle in this region and do not typically return to their homeland on any permanent basis. The Burfor people he continued are predominately farmers. The men do a bit of hunting and the women often gather shea nuts and dawadawa pods for cooking and selling. Crafts such as pottery, baskets, mats and ropes are also produced. Burfor villages are typically less centralized than other villages. Farms are usually made around the compounds as well as in the bush up to five kilometers away. Typically, compounds house about ten people. A compound consists of many rooms, which are rectangular with flat mud roofs and supported by wooden beams. It is common for a man to have at least two wives and for a wealthy man to have up to four wives among the Burfor. The

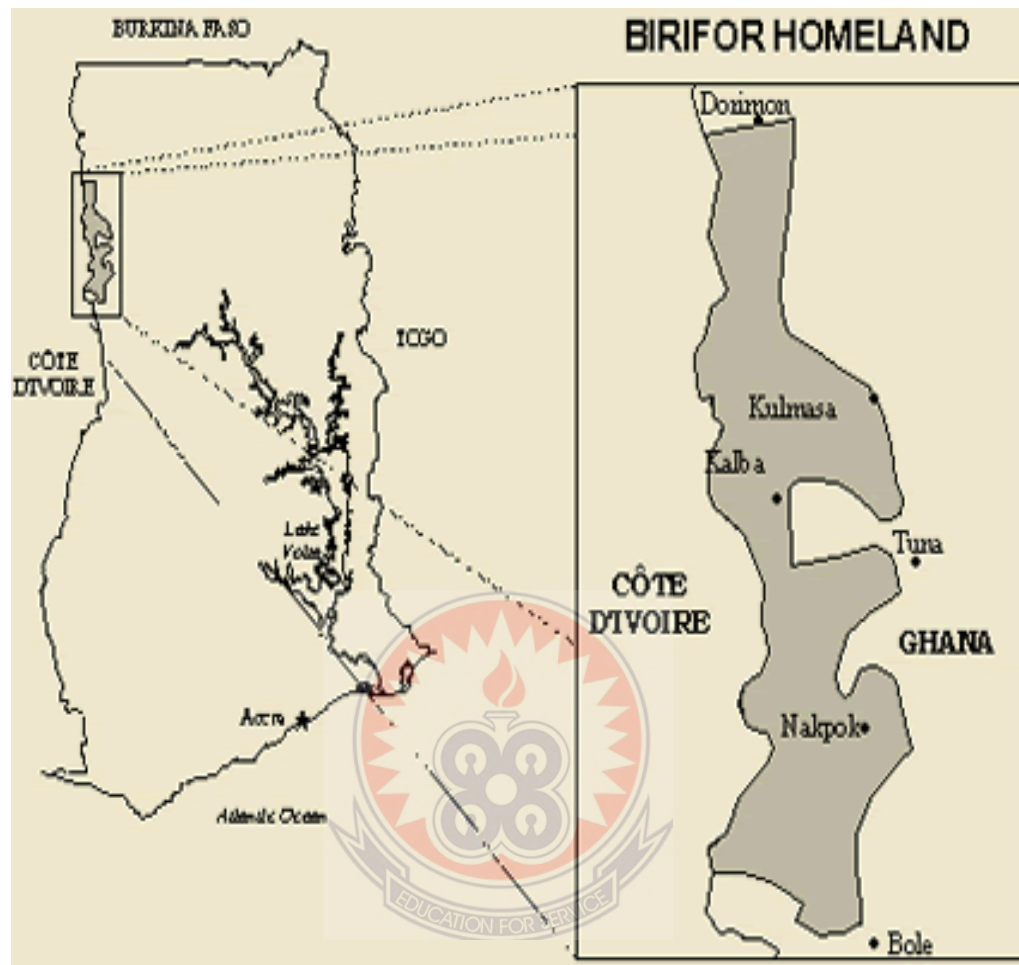
majority of Burfor follow African Traditional Religion. Currently, there are few Muslim Burfor and little Islamic influence in the area (https://joshuaproject.net/people_groups/10869/GH).

Burɔɔ¹ is one of the widely spoken dialects of Dagaare in the Upper West Region of Ghana. The language is widely spoken on local FM stations in the Wa Municipality and some parts of the Savannah Region. Public and social announcements are usually made in the language which in turn encourage the speakers to learn it. Another motivational factor that facilitates the use of the Burɔɔ is the conscious effort of the Complementary Basic Education (C.B.E), which is a DFID sponsored program that uses Burɔɔ as one of the languages to train community facilitators to teach in their respective communities. Most of the instructional materials used in teaching and learning are printed in Burɔɔ.

The first Burɔɔ Bible (New Testament launched in 2006 at the Sawla-Tuna-Kalba district in the Savannah Region) is also a motivational factor for the use of the language. This Bible is used in almost all the churches where majority of the people are the Burfor. The 2010 United Nations Country population report shows that Burfor in Ghana occupy a total landscape of about 145,000km². The Burfor celebrates the annual “*bɔɔ*” festival with dancing and feasting and worship of lesser gods. The map below shows the areas occupied by the Burfor in the wa West district.

¹ Burɔɔ is the language that the Burfor speak. It is a language that is similar to that of the Dagaare and Lobi.

Figure 1 Map of the areas occupied by the Burfor people in the Wa West district



Source: https://joshuaproject.net/people_groups/10869/GH

1.1.1 Genetic classification of the Burfor

Burfor is an ethnic group with a distinct dialect which is different from Lobi. The Burfor speak Burɔ́ɔ, a dialect of Dagaare while the language of the Lobi is Lobir (Bodomo, 1977). This research shows that Lobir is neither mutually intelligible to Dagaare nor Burɔ́ɔ as some people may construe. The comparison that follows shows the differences.

Table 1: Lexical differences between Burɔ̀vɔ̀r, Dagaare and Lobir

Burɔ̀vɔ̀r	Dagaare	Lobir	English
<i>nɪɛ</i>	<i>nɪɛ</i>	<i>tibil</i>	‘Human being’
<i>kvɔ̃</i>	<i>kvɔ̃</i>	<i>nyvɔn</i>	‘Water’
<i>nvɔ</i>	<i>nvɔ</i>	<i>yɔlɔ</i>	‘Hen’
<i>kpi</i>	<i>Kpi</i>	<i>duo</i>	‘Die’
<i>gber</i>	<i>Gbere</i>	<i>nɔɔ</i>	‘Leg’
<i>ara</i>	<i>Are</i>	<i>gyila</i>	‘Stand’
<i>gyĩ</i>	<i>zēē</i>	<i>tomin</i>	‘Blood’
<i>tan</i>	<i>tene</i>	<i>tii</i>	‘Soil’
<i>gyiɛ</i>	<i>ziɛ</i>	<i>tinlee</i>	‘Red’
<i>gangaa</i>	<i>Gangaa</i>	<i>bambãã</i>	‘Drum’
<i>kuor</i>	<i>kuori</i>	<i>bier</i>	‘Funeral’
<i>bvɔ</i>	<i>boɔ</i>	<i>bv</i>	‘Goat’
<i>dãã</i>	<i>dãã</i>	<i>taan</i>	‘Pito’
<i>puo</i>	<i>wee</i>	<i>lɔɔ</i>	‘Farm’
<i>saan</i>	<i>saan</i>	<i>kpalkpal</i>	‘Stranger’

Source: Field Work, 2019.

From the table above, it can be concluded that Burɔ̀vɔ̀r belongs to the Oti-Volta group of central Gur languages which according to Bodomo (1997: 2) is known as ‘*Mabia*’. The genetic features of the central Gur language is based on Bodomo’s suggestion that, ‘*Ma*’ and ‘*Bia*’ are central Gur languages where ‘*Ma*’ and ‘*Bia*’ mean mother and child respectively. Burɔ̀vɔ̀r and its immediate relations such as *Moore*, *Safaliba*, and *Fariɔ̀fari* found in the north-western part of Ghana are in the same language group. This therefore suggests that these languages together with the south-eastern languages such as *Kvsaal*, *Dagbani* and *Mampruli* constitute the Oti-

Volta or ‘Mabia’ sub group of Central-Gur languages, hence their mutual intelligibility (Schaefer, 2003: 2).

1.2 Statement of the problem

There is a piece of folklore among anthropologists regarding the question of whether personal names exist in all societies. Somewhere in the world, there is a society where people live in very small, isolated communities. In such a community, people have no personal names; that is, individuals have no name which other people use to refer specifically to them. Instead, they are referred to by descriptive expressions, for example, ‘the blacksmith’ or ‘the man who lives by the stream’ (Bright, 2003: 672 – 674). He adds that the use of personal names, having varying levels of descriptiveness, is a sociolinguistic universal of the human species. In many parts of the world, it is a common place that some place names have no etymologies that we can discover, for example, European names like Rome, Paris, and London.

Bright (2003: 673) continues that although there has been considerable amount of literature on onomastic across Africa, as far as the researcher is aware, there has been no literature on anthroponomy (the study of personal names) of the Burfor people of Northern Ghana and the Upper West region. The emergence of Western culture has rapidly taken over the ever rich indigenous Burfor names which in one way or the other places an adverse effect on the meanings of these names since people no longer value their traditional names thus resorting to the use of western names. These Western names have gradually erased the cultural value of the traditional personal names of the people of the Burfor so much so that the coming generations risk losing this beautiful heritage. The study will bring to the fore the

meanings of the names of Birfor people and this will help to showcase their rich culture in addition to adding to knowledge.

1.3 Objectives of the study/purpose

The main objective of the study is to analyse the socio-cultural implications of Birfor personal names and how these names promote a sense of identity for the people.

1.3 The Specific objectives are:

The specific research objectives of this study are:

1. To find out the relevance of the names of the Birfor speaking people with reference to their meaning
2. To examine what calls for the selection of a particular name among the Birfor and ascertain how names are linked to the Birfor cultural settings.
3. To analyse the socio-cultural implications of names of the Birfor speaking people

1.4 Research questions

The study intends to answer the following research questions;

1. What is the relevance of the names of the Birfor speaking people with reference to their meanings?
2. What calls for the selection of a particular name among the Birfor and how are these names linked to the Birfor cultural settings?
3. What is the socio-cultural implications of names of the Birfor speaking people?

1.5 Significance of the study

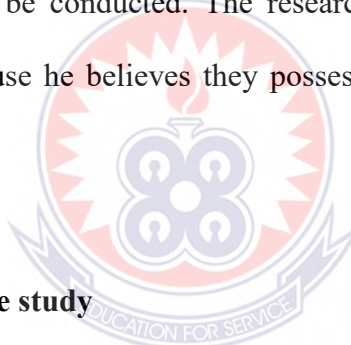
Little or not much has been done on Birfor nomenclature, let alone Birfor personal names which is believed, influence the cultural aspects of the people. This study will contribute greatly to the literature available on Birfor personal names. It will also add to the existing body of literature on personal names. It will serve as a written document on Birfor names that will help students as part of their studies on Birfor culture.

1.6 Limitations of the study

Despite the fact that the study was done within the stipulated time, there are some limitations it encountered, which is normal of any research. Difficulty in the processing of the findings of the study could be as a result of the techniques used in gathering the data. Perhaps, if the researcher had used different sampling techniques, the views would have differed. Data gathered were done basically through interviews and oral narrations by respondents which made the research tedious and risked distortions since oral narrations of people sometimes are subjective rather than objective. All these limitations notwithstanding, the findings in this research are credible. This is because the methods and techniques used are appropriately well balanced. The researcher took a number of measures to validate the results. He varied the selection of respondents in the population area taking into consideration their competency level. The researcher also sampled people who matter in the giving of personal names.

1.7 Delimitations of the study

In view of the challenges of the study outlined above, to obtain objectivity and reliability of the work, the researcher limited the research to some selected communities in the Wa West district and not all communities. The research focused on both name-givers and name bearers to solicit vital information. The study additionally is limited to people who have fair knowledge of Burfor personal names and can explain why particular names are given to their bearers. The reason for selecting these communities and the people is to minimize cost and to be able to access them easily for the study. This is because some communities were not accessible due to the deplorable nature of the roads of some communities as at the time the study was to be conducted. The researcher also decided to select these groups of people because he believes they possess the information needed for the study.



1.8 Organization of the study

This work is organized into five chapters. Chapter one touches on the introduction which is an overview of the main topic and a brief exposure on the Burfor as an ethnic group. It also contains the statement of the problem, the objectives, (general and specific) of the study as well as the research questions. The significance of the study, limitations and the delimitations are also discussed in this chapter.

Chapter two touches on the literature review, concept of sociolinguistics, culture and the concept of a name. The third chapter discusses the research methodology (design, sampling technique and target audience/population and sample) used in the study.

Chapter four dwells on the presentation and analysis, and discussion of the data.

The last chapter, chapter five, summarizes the study, draws conclusions based on the findings and makes recommendations for further research.

1.9 Summary

In this chapter, the research explored the historical overview of the problem in the background of the study and stated the problem that this research is conducted to address. Similarly, questions that will be raised from the topic of the study were outlined which is the basis for the designing of the objectives of this thesis. An overview of who the Burfor is and limitations as well as strategies adopted to surmount those challenges (delimitations) were looked at.



CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.0 Introduction

This section takes a look at some studies on the socio-cultural analysis of personal names. It takes into account the theoretical framework, both in relation to socio-linguistics, culture, the concept of name and the relation between language and culture in the society.

2.1 The concept of socio-linguistics

Language in the form of written and spoken as well as nonverbal communication are the most powerful tools society uses for human interaction/communication. In every human life in the society, the transfer of information is basically through the use of language and nonverbal communication cues (Anderson, 2018). Language is understood through the use of certain codes translated into symbols which make meaning to people and thus forms the basis for the exchange of information (Holmes, 2005). The term sociolinguistics has a relation to the study of human language in the society. Several scholars have given their views about what sociolinguistics is based on their perspective of the concept.

Holmes (2001:3), sees sociolinguistics as the study of the relationship between language and societies. She goes further to explain that people use language differently in various social contexts. This means that people use language to identify the social functions of language and the ways in which language is used to decode social meaning. This is the more reason why the same group of people use the same language differently in different situations in the society. For the Burfor, for example, the language code commonly used at funerals is quite different from the

one used in the market. Additionally, McGregor (2009:13), sees sociolinguistics as “the study of the effects of any and all aspects of society including cultural norms, expectations and context in the way language is used in the society.” To buttress this point, Coulmas (1997) cited in Anderson (1979) says that the primary concern of the sociolinguistics scholar is to study the correlation between language use and social structure. He tries to create a link between language and society stating what language has towards the development of the society by asking what language contributes in making society possible and how societies form their language.

With reference to the concept of sociolinguistics, Romaine (2002) cited in Animashaun (2011) says that sociolinguists aim towards a theory which provides a motivated account of the way language is used in a community and the choices people make when they use it. Unarguably, one can say that sociolinguistics is a branch of linguistics which studies language as a socio-cultural discipline, hence the mutual co-existence of language and society. This correlation shows that language does not exist in a vacuum, but rather in the society and hence their interdependency.

2.2 Culture as a concept

Naming cannot take place without some cultural practices since naming itself is part of culture. Various scholars have defined the concept of culture in various ways. Among the lot is Liand (2011) who is of the view that culture is the cumulative deposit of knowledge, experience, beliefs, values, attitudes, meaning hierarchies, religion, notion of time, roles, spatial relations, concepts of the universe and material objects and possessions acquired by an ethnic group in their genealogy. They further go on to add that it is the total summation of behaviour that is acquired or learned by

the people through the generations of the old tradition. Hofstede (1994) contends that culture is the collective programming of the mind which distinguishes the members of one group of people from another. The activities of a group from one cultural setting are totally different from the activities of another group despite the fact that there might be some cultural resemblance. Again, Hofstede (2001) emphasizes that culture is not the same as identity and so populations that struggle for difference on the basis of their different “felt” identities may share the same values. Hence a shared identity needs a shared order.

The meaning of culture is also explained by Matsumoto (1996) as the attitudes, values, beliefs and behaviours shared by a group of people. Kluckhohn and Kroeber (1952) cited in Adler (1997) state that culture consists of patterns, both explicit and implicit, of and for behaviour acquired and transmitted by symbols, constituting the distinctive achievements of human groups including their embodiment in artefacts. What they mean is that the core value of culture includes traditional beliefs/ideas and cherished values. They further state that a cultural system may either be seen as the end results of an act or on the other hand as conditional components of future action.

In contributing to the debates on personal names, Agbedor (1991:39) asserts that among the African in general, and the Ewe in particular, personal names mean more than just a mere label. He says these names are the personification of Ewe in particular. He goes on to say these names embody Ewe philosophical thought and the reflections of the various circumstances surrounding the birth of a person. He is of the opinion that, the distinct features among African personal names from others

are: their linguistics structures, the complexity of their semantic content; and their relationship with the African value systems.

Agbedor further examines closely what a name is in Ewe when he delves into the social and grammatical analysis of Ewe personal names. In the social context, he posits that a personal name aims at identifying the name bearer in the society. Personal names to him, indicate the variation of individuals from each other, therefore, they serve as reference points in the society. On the aspect of grammar, he takes a look at the category of Ewe personal names that can be viewed at the morphological level. The hypothesis of the work reveals that they are a direct replica of various morphological and syntactic processes in the Ewe language (Agbedor, 1991).

Burfor personal names serve as an identification mark of the bearers in communication discourses. Burfor names signify the birth place of a person and under what circumstances the name is given to the child. Leyew (2003:181) on “Amharic personal nomenclature” presents a grammatical and sociolinguistic analysis of amharic proper nouns. In his work, names are described in the context of phonology, morphology and syntax.

2.3 Personal names in relation to culture

Every culture has personal names despite the differences in the process of naming. For example, Alford (1988:1) states that “personal names are often said to be culturally universal, meaning that in all human societies, people are given names and the bestowal of names follows a conventionalized rules”. He further asserts that before a name is given to a new born baby, the process of consciously selecting a

word to represent or refer to a new person or a word that might have a symbolic power, shows the identity of the person and sends a message as well. It also expresses a hope or prayer and facilitates a cultural tradition. This is not different in the Burfor personal naming systems which affirms the cultural universality of personal names in Ghanaian societies and the world at large.

In discussing names with respect to Farfari culture, Nsoh and Atintono (2010) observe that personal names are very important labels that seek to identify the individual and also signal the spirit, psychology and philosophy of the individual, the clan and the community as a whole. Their concern is basically that; names are given based on sacred entities like the shrine or guarding spirits. They state that every child born into the Farfari traditional home must have a *sigerε*, that is, a ‘guardian angel’ which they believe stays with the child forever. They further base their discussions on the fact that a diviner, who they call *Bakolego Daana*, is consulted to find out which of the ancestral cults a child should be named after. They assert that the child may be named after the title of the ancestor or given the actual name the ancestor had during his life time.

The cultural system may, on the one hand, be considered as products of action and on the other hand, as conditional elements of future action. From the above explanation of the concept of culture, one may draw a conclusion that culture exists with a particular society or community. The discussions show that there are differences in culture between one community and the other in the same way that there may be similarities in cultures among communities.

2.4 The concept of a name

Personal names in Africa are given to people on the basis of certain factors.

According to Bemile (1991:5), personal names are given;

- i. As a desire to express cultural values,
- ii. To communicate inherent feelings of one's heart,
- iii. To reject or acclaim affluence of which others boast, and
- iv. To warn people who fall out of the accepted norms of behaviour.

Bemile (2015) states that personal names serve as a social mechanism as they usually remind, warn or restrict people. Deluzain (1996) refers to a certain preacher as telling his congregation that a good name is a thread that is tied around the finger of a person to make him/her mindful of the errand he/she came into the world to do for the Master. He makes reference to the fact that a person's name and the way he behaves give the impression that names in a way affect their bearers. He cites researches from a human psychologist to support his claim that "coincidence" involving names thus have serious effect on the psychological health of the people.

One linguist, who also studied personal names based on the socio-cultural interpretation is Guma (2000). In his study, he finds that, the Basotho people of South Africa see naming practices as socio-culturally interpreted on event that embody individual life experiences, social values as well as personality and individual attributes. He emphasizes the cultural content and meaning of personal names, and the use of names acquired from school. He views the concept of 'person' and 'self' among South African societies as past social products.

Ogie (2002) concludes that Edo personal names are used to confirm certain aspects of Edo culture. This confirms the linguistic aspects of the study that categorizes names into the morphological parts to unveil their meanings.

Minna (2003) on the other hand emphasises that a common saying among the Ambos in Namibia that “names serve as a link between people”. He posits that names connect many people permanently together. To Minna, the changes in the anthroponomic system of the Ambo people, the largest ethnic group in Namibia, was caused by the Westernisation of the traditional Ambo culture. He draws the conclusion that significant changes in the Ambo naming system are the adoption of biblical and European names, the practice of giving more than one name to a person, and the adoption of hereditary names. The researcher finds this to be relevant to the study under discussion because (Burfor genealogy seems to revolt against Burfor traditional names which are influenced by the communication of the world through media, marriage and migration among other things). The influence of the outside world through communication of marriage and migration has affected Burfor traditional names (Burfor genealogy).

Pewisis (2008) describes names as a narrative in Chinua Achebe’s novel. According to him, names in Achebe’s novels go beyond a mere desire for identification of characters. Pewisis looks at the relevance and meaning of names across cultures and argue that;

Wherever we go and whatever culture we consider, proper names always mean something. And because names are said to make an impact on the bearers in many cultures, many people avoid giving names with negative meanings to their offspring for the fear that the implied meaning might haunt their lives.

Rosenhouse (2002) argues that personal names are part of any language and they obey most of its general rules, whether phonologically, syntactically, morphologically, orthographically or semantically. The study looks at similarities and differences between names in Hebrew and Arabic as lexical entities within their vocabularies. She emphasizes the importance of personal names for the study of these languages, and surveys older and more current names from phonological, morphological, syntactic, and semantic aspects. The viewpoint of this comparative study is basically lexicological and sociolinguistic. Three key things are discussed, the first two of which occur only in Hebrew, and these are:

First and foremost, the stress and the name's penultimate syllable which contrast the usual stress pattern.

Secondly, gender indication of the name (masculine vs. feminine). The third one was for both Hebrew and Arabic innovations in the name's inventory.

She observes that both Arabic and Hebrew tend to innovate names, but due to the different cultural and social structures, each language differs in several respects. This explains why Farb (1993) states that the language of the people is the exit valve through which their beliefs and thoughts, recognition and experiences are articulated. He concludes that the limit of one's language is the limit of his world, and that man is at the mercy of his language.

Another linguist who compares names in some languages based on their morphosyntactic and semantic roles is Anderson (1979). He examines the distribution and sub-categorisation of names within a framework of syntactic categories, and considers how the morphosyntactic behaviour of names connects to their semantic roles. He argues that names occur in two circumstances: one involving vocatives and their use in naming predications, where they are not definite; their use as arguments of predicators, where they are definite. His division is based on English, French, Greek, and Seri, and a range of other languages. His proof is that the semantic status of names including prototypical meaning, is key to understanding their morphosyntax and role in derivational relationships. Anderson (1979) further indicates that semantically, coherent subsets of names such as those referring to people and places are characterised by morphosyntactic properties which may vary from language to language.

Akintunde (2005) adds that personal names play a part in understanding the culture of the Yoruba people. He is of the view that teaching Yoruba personal names should go beyond a mere explanation of their meanings to include an exposition of the link between the names and their cultural context. The study also grouped Yoruba personal names based on their functional properties, exposing the principles that govern the composition of these names and examining the cultural traits that are embedded in them.

Awedoba (1996:11) citing Fortes (1995) asserts that a name is “a document epitomising personal experience, historical happenings, attitudes to life, and cultural ideas and values” and argues that Kasena personal names exhibit a varied structure and are amenable to several kinds of classifications. Thus, Kasena generally accept

that names are meaningful and that a name would not be a name if it does not have a meaning that is interpretable. The linguistic aspect of Awedoba's study divides names into their morphological constituents to reveal their meaning. The study further discusses another feature of Kasena names; that is, most of them, except for the reduced ones, exhibit forms that are derived from potential sentences. They may be regular statements, questions, commands or exclamations.

In every culture, the basic purpose of the personal name is "to provide a symbolic system of individual identification" (Akinaso, 1980:277). As naming is universal in nature, names are also universally classified as nouns in different languages (Van Langendonck, 1997:39), which means that their role in the linguistic system is the same everywhere. Per this argument, it will be baseless to discuss "the concept of name" without making mention of the interdependent relationship that exists between languages, cultures and names. This is because names exist in the society in which language and culture are, and the two expose names to the larger society. Thus, it is affirmed that Burfor personal names are also given on the basis of the socio-cultural concept around the birth of the person.

On the basis of circumstances, Adeniyi (2008) postulates that, naming a child is not a trivial pursuit in the Edo culture. According to him, names are bestowed on children depending on the prevailing circumstances before, during or even after birth. The mode of choosing a name for a child determines various events in both the immediate and extended families. They therefore resort to names that are directly linked with prosperity, long-life, success and fortunes and not those that have negative connotations. His work will be beneficial to the current study because Burfor personal names also denote the circumstantial basis of the birth of a child.

According to Oladunjoye and Adeyemi (2010), names are valuable sources of information which are transferred from the people to the society. These names indicate, place of birth, ethnicity, religion, nationality, and position within a family and even in the larger society. The above assertion will be appropriately fixed to the current work in the sense that Burfor personal names culturally also indicate gender, birth place and position of birth. Looking at names from the point of grammar, Anderson (1979) defines a name as a “mono-referential lexicalized noun phrase” this means that a name refers to only one entity which can mean a different thing when the individual words are taken in isolation. A name entails one word or can be a phrase or a sentence. For example, in Burfor the name “Deh” which means “take” is a noun while “Maasoyiri” is a noun phrase which is glossed as follows;

“*maa*” means ‘I’
“*So*” means ‘own’
“*yiri*” means ‘house’

The name is then interpreted literally as “I own house”

Algeo (1973:12-13) also states that in English, four criteria are used for the classification and definition of proper nouns and these are: orthography, morphosyntax, referential and semantics. He asserts that on the orthographic level, there are capitalized and uncapitalized ones; on the morphosyntactic level, there are proper nouns and common nouns; on the referential level, there are specific terms and general terms, and on the semantic level, true (original) names and common names (appellatives). He therefore concludes that names are, largely depend on which level of language one is looking at and whether one is concerned with the universals of naming or naming within a specific language.

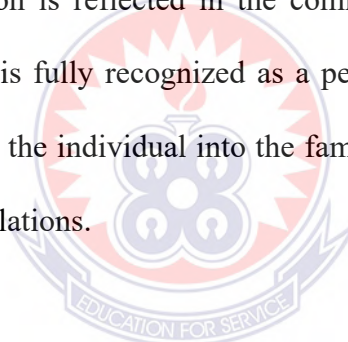
Algeo (1973) further states that “a name” is a symbol that everyone has and that most people have a vague idea about the meanings of their names. According to

Sarpong (1974), Europeans or Americans see names more as tags that show particularly who are responsible for the birth of a specific child. This work will show however that Birfor give personal names much thought than just identity tags. The “meaning of a name” to most people refers to etymology, which is the origin of the name. A name is not just a label for identification of the person but rather a form of communication or a message encoded by the name- giver in thoughts, feelings, hopes, moods and aspirations to the larger society.

To buttress the point that language plays a major role in culture, Mphande (2006) asserts that the vocabulary of a language plays a vital role as a window of hope into the universe of knowledge of its speakers and their view of the world around them. He says that words are taken as labels of culture, and are thus an index of the cultural world of society. It would not be appropriate if cultures do not have a term for a particular entity, it will therefore mean that entity is not that important in that particular culture. Also, if a language has a name to represent something, then perhaps that entity mirrors some cultural aspects of the people. He further went on to state that language is a guide to social reality, and human beings at times seem to be at the mercy of the language that has become a medium of expression for their society. Based on this view, language is basically determined by experiences in the community, and as such, each separate structure represents a separate reality.

Mensah and Offong (2013) also share similar view in their work on Ibibio death prevention names. They observe that “language mirrors society and Ibibio names are a reflection of who the Ibibio are as a people.” Personal names thus give the bearer an identity and a sense of uniqueness.

Harold (1959), says that a name is seen as a sign of contract that binds the society and the individual; the individual becomes a part of the history of the society, accepts membership of this society and promises to follow its laid down principles and customs. A personal name is vitally an affirmation of the individual's existence and the society's core mandate towards that individual. It is a symbol of differentiation of the individual who needs basic treatment, feeling and attention from others. The individual receives a personal name as an identification label within the society. This is not different from what Obeng (1998) also attests to; that the traditional African name is more of identification; it is an essential component of the bearer. He continues with the explanation that the intimate connection between the name and the person is reflected in the common idea in the African naming system when the child is fully recognized as a person only after he/she is given a name. The name ushers the individual into the family, unearths personal ideologies, family ties and social relations.



2.5 Naming systems

The act of giving names to people is a universal practice in all speech communities. Kuukure (1985:13) observes that a naming system among societies is a customary right and that these customary practices are an integral part of the people's life. As a result, it will be pointless to "argue or even try to convince these groups that they should change their rights, customs and manners unless these are in evident contradiction to religion and morality." Jawa (1986:80) supports this assertion by stating that the main purpose of naming is to provide a symbolic system of identification and that it is usually "historically constructed, socially maintained, and based on shared assumptions of members of a particular community".

Deluzain (1996), just like Bean (1980), insists that in every society, names and naming systems exist and so personal names are part of every culture. Deluzain (1996), cites Brender (1963) as appropriately intimating that family tradition is an important factor in the specific names given to children. Sometimes, traditional names express the hope that a rich relative will remember the name sake generously in a will. In the view of Harold (1959), among preliterate peoples, for example, personal names are determined according to definite and specific rules. He contends that in a culture where there is a keen sense of ancestry, children generally get their names from the totems and family trees of their parents. These totems could be objects, plants or animals which have spiritual relationship with a person or group of people such as a family or clan and often serve as a reminder of the group's ancestry.

Similarly, totems are believed to protect the people and are said to connect the members to Mother Nature or a Supreme Being. The Burfor oral tradition has it that totems are usually animals that are said to have saved an ancestor or his clan member from a danger and whose clan members owe it a duty to protect. This explains the more reason why personal names are derived from totems, and through divination (magic and incantations) and to ward off evil spirits (Somé, 2013). Thus, desire and belief are key motivations for giving personal names among some communities. Personal names are also given to mark important milestones which are based on events during the time of pregnancy of the mother or after birth. Such events include the death of an influential member of the family or a death immediately preceding the birth of the baby, or a historical event (MEDA, 2015:11). This view is supported by Akinnaso (1980: 80) in his assertion that in African societies, the giving of a personal name depends on the prevailing social conditions

in the child's family at the time of birth of the child. It is a fact that the motives behind name giving are almost unlimited. As Bemile (2015:2) puts it "there is hardly any limit to the name-giver's motives, idiosyncrasy and invention or concoction ability. Consequently, we have a complex array of native names with different origins and categories and the most complex variety of uses, effects and goals."

Somé (2013) portends that every Burfor is given a name that reflects his/her destiny or purpose because the Burfor believe that each person is born with a destiny or purpose. Bemile (2015: 6) reiterates this belief in asserting that before the name-giving ceremony of the baby which usually takes place on the seventh day, the head of a traditional Burfor family "will have already sacrificed a fowl, goat or sheep to the ancestors and asked their opinion as to whether the new member of the family should be welcomed to the family and to become a permanent member or not".

Indeed, Somé (2009:1) gives an elaborate view in stating that it "is customary for a pregnant woman to go through a hearing ritual to listen to the incoming baby, to find out who it is, why it is coming at such a time, what is its purpose, what are its likes or dislikes; and what the living can do to prepare a place for this person. The child's name is given based on these information". This type of name is typical of a personal name. Based on this assertion, these two authors give the impression that the Burfor naming system (apparently of African societies) is both spiritual and philosophical. Their stance finds a place in Bekye's (1991:144) work which states that "the personal names which Burfor bear constitute an enormous source for the study of Burfor philosophy of life, and particularly their religious thinking". This view is also consistent with the assertion by Bemile (1991:1-2) that generally, the criteria for giving names depend on "old age, wisdom, and experience recourse to

the ancestors and to the God”. Naming at least among the Burfor then, transcends just a physical activity.

2.6 Names, personality and behaviour

Over the years, many communities have the belief that names have an influence over the people who bear them, and by extension, the community at large. Brownstein (2011:1) recalls that the idea that our names are intertwined with our destiny dates back to the book of Genesis when Abram had his name changed to Abraham which means ‘father of multitudes’ in Hebrew (Genesis 17:5, Revised Standard Version). This is a position Deluzain (1996) strongly takes insisting that certain ancestors certainly believed this. As a matter of fact, they selected names like ‘flee fornication’, ‘steadfast-on-high’, and ‘obedience’ for their children with the hope that the children would learn from their names and grow up to be perfect examples of strong virtues. The author makes it known that even in contemporary times, the idea that names can have effect on the way people behave and how they feel about themselves still lingers on and has even drawn the attention of researchers. He emphasizes that psychologists and those who study human behaviour have explored the feeling that names influence their bearers, and have come out with some remarkable psychological aspects of names. He cites examples of a certain Tonsillitis Jackson who was later in his life diagnosed of tonsils. Another example is one Dinkey Bent who later had his penis bent downwards because of some childhood activities. To him, when such histories are proved with evidence from the numerous experiments in psychology which are more objective and scientific. These natural occurrences help to explain the important effect names have on the psychological growth of the individuals, most especially the self-concept. Though

such discoveries may merely talk about feelings, the concept is still worth exploring since human beings behave according to their feelings.

Siebert (2015:1) warns parents, based on research findings, to be cautious of the names they give to their children because “baby names have a lasting effect on our behaviour throughout our lives and influence everything from where we live to what career paths we choose.” One key finding she came out with was that the names that babies bear at birth can actually have long-term effects on their lives. This conclusion is predicated on what she terms ‘implicit egotism’. That is, as people write their names continuously, the act can lead them to a certain kind of obsession with the letters and sounds of their names. This is referred to as the name-letter effect which reveals two interesting things: First, the quality of work a person who works with a group of people he/she shares the same initials with and secondly, the name-letter effect can also influence how people label their businesses and even their babies. Hence, this explains why there are more Georges in Georgia, more Louise’s in St. Louis and more Virginias in Virginia. This is a view that is firmly supported by Brownstein (2011) who states that recent researches in social psychology have connected people’s names to decision making in marital issues, what street to live on and what job to take up. It is observable that in Ghana, the name ‘Peter’ dominates the Catholic doctrines, while it is common to see that Johns have ruled Ghana in succession since 1992. It is questionable as to whether these examples are just a mere coincidence or they point to an effect of a sort of names.

2.7 Theoretical framework

The main theory which form the basis of this study is the Self- fulfilling Prophecy theory by Jahoda (1954). This theory states that there is a relationship between

personal names and behaviour. It maintains that personal names model the character trait of a person. This finds a place in Some' (2013) that states that, personal names own their bearers in their life stages, and hence she believes that there is a strong connection between personal names and their bearers. The theory sees name-influence as a process whereby members of a society set up a situation which compels a given name-bearer to behave accordingly. In effect, the theory stipulates that personal names have an effect on self-concept and character trait.

It is appropriate to adopt this theory in this study because; the objectives of this study is to explore personal names and the extent to which they are connected to the culture of the Burfor people which may lead to behavioural patterns which in effect is the core determinant of personality in Burfor societies and elsewhere.

2.8 Summary

In this section, the researcher reviewed the various works of other writers whose ideas are closely related to this study. The researcher consulted their works with regards to the following thematic areas; the area of sociolinguistics, the concept of culture, the concept of a name, naming systems and personal names in particular cultural perspectives. The above discussion reveal that the sociocultural study of names in the Burfor setting has not seen the light of day, hence, this present study gears towards closing this research gap.

CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

3.0 Introduction

This chapter of the research work discusses the methodologies employed to gather data in order to achieve the stated objectives of the study. It takes into account the research design, and sources of relevant data for the study. Additionally, it outlines the principles and philosophical orientation binding this research, the procedures and methods used for the data collection, the target population, the sample size and how the data is coded and transcribed.

3.1 Research design

Research design is a plan or proposal to conduct research. It involves the intersection of philosophy, strategies of inquiry, and specific methods to be used in the conduct of a study (Creswell, 2009). This study is an ethnographic approach which delves into a systematic analysis of the Birfor people and their culture of name giving. The collection and analysis of the data will adopt the qualitative orientation. Qualitative research as defined by Creswell (2009) is a means for exploring and understanding the meaning individuals or groups ascribe to a social or human problem. The process of research he adds involves; emerging questions and procedures, data typically collected in the participant's setting, data analysis inductively building from particulars to general themes, and making interpretations of the meaning of the data.

Bryman (2001:1) posits that the aim of a qualitative research is to have an insight into people's attitudes, beliefs, motivations, perspectives, feelings and behaviours and what lies at the core of their lives so as to explore a problem. The researcher

made use of semi-structured interview to solicit data from participants which were recorded and later transcribed. The data analysis procedure was purely descriptive with no quantification of numerical format. The researcher selected this method because the study seeks to investigate the implications of personal names in the Birfor socio-cultural context from the respondents' perspective.

3.2 Population and sampling

Since the main aim of this research is to analyse the socio-cultural aspect of the Birfor regarding personal names so as to investigate the possible implications of personal names on the cultural life of the people and the society in question, the people in the research area make up the primary population (sample frame²). Population according to Best and Kahn (2006) is a group of individuals that have one or more characteristics in common and are of an interest to the researcher.

A target population according to Best and Kahn (2006) is an accessible population; the constituents that are disposable to the researcher either due to time at the exposure of the researcher or the geographical description of some constituents of the target population. Based on this, the researcher decided to sample some nine (9) communities among the lot one hundred and twenty-seven (127) in the Wa West district and an individual in the Savannah region using stratified sampling. However, some of these respondents were selected using the snowball sampling because of their relevant knowledge in the study which is recognized by some of the respondents interviewed.

² Total population of the research area for which the sample size will be derived from. In view of this research, the total population of the Wa West district -81,348 with 40,227 males and 41,121 females will be considered.

Sampling is the process or the technique of selecting a suitable population size or a representative part of a population for the purpose of determining parameters or characteristics of the whole population. (Tuckman, 1999). A sample then is a portion of the larger population for a study. Sampling is necessary because the population of interest is too large and scattered geographically. So it is difficult to bring all into the study directly. Thus, the sample used for this study was elicited from the population of all personal names within the Burfor (Burfɔr) language areas in Wa West and Tuna. These are predominantly Burfor speaking areas but much emphasis was on the Wa West district.

3.2.1 Stratified sampling

Stratified sampling is a method of sampling from a population where the population is/can be partitioned into subpopulations with similar features. In statistical surveys, when subpopulations within an overall population vary, it could be advantageous to sample each subpopulation independently (Creswell, 2009). In using this method, the population was categorized into zones (north, south, east and west). This gave the researcher a total of thirty-one (31) communities per average in each zone. Within each zone, the communities were subdivided into north, south, east and west. This further reduced the number of communities into seven (7). Thus, approximately, 1/3 of the communities in the area was selected which gave a total number of communities to eight (8) communities including Tuna which was sampled using the snowball sampling. It is at this point that a simple random sampling technique was adopted to give equal chances to all the respondents to be selected from the various zones.

3.2.2 Simple random sampling

Simple random sampling is a sampling technique where every item or person in the population has an even chance and likelihood of being selected in the sample. Here the selection of items completely depends on chance or by probability and therefore this sampling technique is also sometimes known as a method of chances (Creswell, 2009). In using this technique, the lottery method was used. Papers were codified for respondents to pick, all respondents who picked yes formed part of the sample frame and those who picked no were not considered unless otherwise then the person will be considered using the purposive sampling techniques.

3.2.3 Purposive sampling

Purposive is a method in which respondents are chosen based on purpose of the study. This sampling technique is selected because, it gives persons with relevant information to the study topic a chance to contribute their knowledge to the study. In purposive sampling, the researcher samples with a purpose in mind. The researcher may conduct a study on the entire population of some limited group. Unlike other non-probability sampling methods, purposive sampling does not produce a sample that is a representative of a larger population, but it can be exactly what is needed in some cases- a study of a community, or some other clearly defined group (Owu-Ewie, 2017). The participants finally selected were both name bearers and name-givers who play vital roles in the process of naming in the various Burfor communities in the Wa West district. These people were selected based on the rich knowledge they have in relation to naming in general as well as their availability and accessibility. The researcher used the name bearers as the respondents because most Burfor take keen interest in knowing the meaning of their personal names.

3.2.4 Snowball sampling

In sociology and statistics research, snowball sampling is seen as a nonprobability sampling technique where existing study subjects recruit future subjects from among their acquaintances. Thus the sample group is said to grow like a rolling snowball (Creswell, 2009). Snowball sampling as explained in '[wikipedia](#)' is the type of sampling where research participants recruit other participants for a test or study. It is used where potential participants are hard to find. It's called snowball sampling because (in theory) once you have the ball rolling, it picks up more "snow" along the way and becomes larger and larger. It is in this direction that a respondent was referenced who was contacted in Tuna to assist in the gathering of the information for the study.

3.3 Sources of data

No research would be authentic and scholarly if one does not consider when, where and how to harness enough information for the intended research. It therefore behoves on every researcher to define in concrete terms where and how to get these data. In doing this, it is necessary to employ varied methods of data collection in order to get this required information for the research. For purposes of this research, the researcher collected data from both primary and secondary sources.

3.3.1 Primary data

Primary data are mainly collected at first hand or from primary sources such as relics or remains through interviews, surveys or by observing participants in their natural environments. They can also be in the form of questions and answers between the researcher and the researched. Primary data are direct results of events

of the records of eyewitness during data collection (McNeill, 1990:99). For the conduct of this study, primary data was collected through interviews with respondents using the interview guide and audio tape recorders to record respondent's narrations and discussions. These recordings were later transcribed into a written format for documentation. Those respondents for this study who were seen as authorities in the naming system were group into a unified set and referred to as consultants.

3.3.1.1 Consultants

The primary data was collected from nine (9) consultants who are native speakers of Burfor through informal interviews with each of them at separate venues and times. The researcher took notes and some recordings during these semi-structured interviews. In all, one hundred personal names were collected through audio recordings and personal conversations. The researcher sometimes recorded the names manually in order to aid him to ask for further explanation and clarifications of certain names that were not clear. Also, he recorded the names and some explanations so that he can have ample time at home to listen to the recorded names and compare with the manual recording to strike out the mistakes in the written narrations by the researcher and transcribe what was left out. Being a native speaker and a native from the area of study, the researcher used his fair knowledge to add some personal names to the collected data.

The participants who were consulted for the data for the research were married men and women who had children or are into the centre of affairs when it comes to the naming system of the Burfor. Thus the respondents for the study were highly

respected men and women from the villages around the Wa West district who had adequate knowledge about the Burfor naming culture.

3.3.1.2 Secondary data

This data is obtainable from other sources and in several forms. Secondary data is usually produced and processed before the researcher lays hands on it (McNneill, 1990:99). According to Ary, Jacobs and Razavieh (2002), in secondary sources, the data is passed from a non-observer to the user or researcher. Journals, articles, artefacts and reviewed works of researchers are common examples of sources of secondary data from Kuukyileyiri Junior High School and Wehao-bao Junior High School in Kuukyileyiri and Wechao-bao respectively. These schools are Burfor dominated hence, some personal names were extracted from the school registers which was beneficial to the work. Some of the names were also found/collected from Burfor literacy books like Complementary Basic Education (CBE) books literacy primer one and two (Ukaid, 2017). The researcher manually recorded the Burfor traditional names in these books for the research. The researcher simultaneously used the two main sources of data collection (primary and secondary) to complement each other in the data collection process.

3.4 Data collection procedure

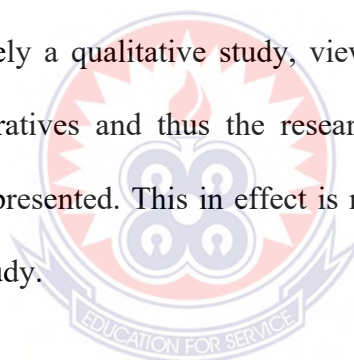
In any study, there are varied means of collecting data. Data collection may be slightly different in quantitative and qualitative researches. The researcher used qualitative techniques as tools to collect data since the work is an ethnographic study. The common means of gathering qualitative data include; interviewing, document analysis, participant observation, research dairies and real life stories. He

(the researcher) consulted people who were natives of the research area. The researcher conducted the study in nine (9) communities with nine consultants and one (1) person in Tuna. These nine (9) consultants were elderly persons in the selected communities who possess a rich knowledge of personal names. Additionally, a teacher from Sawla-Tuna-Kalba district education office in Sawla, who is a native of Gadi in the Wa West district was contacted using the snowball sampling technique. The motive for choosing the teacher was to get in-depth view about Birfor personal names which are purely traditional in context and at the same time educationally inclined for which some of the respondents made reference to him. This method was preferred because Patton (2002) contents that this type of interview has no predetermined questions before the interview but questions emerge from the immediate context and they are asked as the interview evolves. It is also noteworthy that whenever an interviewee developed lack of interest in the interview or did not “dance” to the tune of the objectives; the researcher redirected the questions around the study to sustain the respondent in the discussion. The questions asked during the interview made the interviewees open up to express their feelings and ideas freely. It also gave the researcher the freedom to digress from the scheduled questions to ask for better explanation and clarification by probing further during the interview sessions. The researcher conducted three semi-structured face to face (interviews) with each of the participants at their various homes on the traditional names and other given names to their children to know the meanings of these names.

3.5 Data analysis procedure

This aspect of the study deals with the procedures the researcher used to analyse the names. This goes to support the view of Frankel & Norman (2000:409) that a person or group's conscious and unconscious beliefs, conscious attitudes, values and ideas are often revealed in their communication. As a matter of fact, this data was gathered from the various consultants through elicitation. The names were analysed under these categories such as natural names, circumstantial names, proverbial names, nicknames and other names. The analysis also looked at the typology of the names. The selection of names was also discussed, that is the order in which names are given.

Since the study is purely a qualitative study, views and responses of respondents were presented in narratives and thus the researcher disassociated himself from judging the responses presented. This in effect is meant to reinforce the objectivity and reliability of the study.



3.6 Administration (Interviewing process)

Respondents were interviewed at different times of the year. This was done around September and October in Buli, Gadi and Wechao-bao. Specific questions were asked as they appear in the interview guide. There were follow-up questions when there was the need. In all cases, the interview was carried out within an exclusive environment with little or no interruption. This enabled the researcher and the respondents to have enough time to concentrate on the issues at hand without distractions. This specially gave the researcher the chance to have full control over the interviewing process. This approach helped the researcher to get answers to some probing questions such as the significance of the names given to children and

the socio-cultural implications of these names on the children and the communities at large. The researcher sometimes used Bɔ̃rɔ̃ to elicit some vital information since not all respondents could speak and understand the English language with which the study is conducted. However, some respondents chose to use either English or Bɔ̃rɔ̃ to express themselves whilst others preferred the Twi language. A good number of them code-switched between the two languages (English and Bɔ̃rɔ̃) for maximum effect. The researcher recorded all information in English, but wrote technical terms in Bɔ̃rɔ̃ (and sometimes translated them literally) so that the actual translations can be done after the interview. As the researcher is a native of Bɔ̃rɔ̃, he was able to cope with concepts (in Bɔ̃rɔ̃) and translated them into English.

The researcher sometimes switched to manual recordings during some of the interactions with the respondents and so he had to spend some amount of time to get every detail. He did audio recordings with some respondents which he translated later. However, some of the respondents were reluctant to allow themselves to be recorded. In one of the interview sessions, one of the respondents (an aunt) was reluctant to tell the researcher why she gave particular names to her grandsons. She reluctantly told him she did not know and that he could come back another time. The second time he went to her, she told him she was tired. The researcher advised himself and abandoned that interview and arranged with a different person.

3.7 Ethical considerations and other challenges

In every research, the moral integrity of the researcher and respondents are very vital aspects of ensuring that the research process and the research findings are trustworthy and valid. Based on this, the researcher was very mindful of certain

issues which were considered critical throughout the data collection process. Some of these key issues were lies, mistrust, forcing respondents and putting respondents at risk. Others were the confidentiality and anonymity of both the respondents and the information they gave. The researcher assured respondents that the information they offered would only appear in the study. They all gave consent, understood and accepted the explanation that the purpose of the study was purely academic in form and that it would be beneficial to the Brfor people and to academicians.

3.8 Summary

This chapter addressed some of the processes and procedure within which the data collected were gathered. In gathering the information for this study, the researcher adopted some sampling techniques like the purposive, simple random, stratified and snowball sampling techniques. These techniques were used to sample the respondents and the communities to conduct the study since all communities and individuals could not be included in the study considering the time and resources available. However, ethical issues such as the validity and reliability issues were given priority to validate the findings in the field.

CHAPTER FOUR

PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS OF DATA

4.0 Introduction

In this chapter, the researcher presents and analyses the collected data in order to address the problem. It shows how the findings address the research questions of the study and the necessary observations made whilst using the appropriate techniques to ensure that the objectives outlined are achieved for the study.

4.1 The Burfor naming ceremony

Among the Burfor, the practice of naming a child begins when the child is born. This practice applies to all African cultures as Agyekum (2006) states, while western names are predictable, African names are generally not predictable, for until a child is born and under what circumstances it is born, the name cannot be determined with accuracy. In Burfor culture, it takes one week after a child has been born before it is given a name. The one-week period is chosen in order to give the family enough time to find out whether the child in question will stay or not. The Burfor therefore believe that a child is not considered a human until it has a name. As a result of this belief, the child is called “*saan*” ‘stranger’ for both sexes until its name is provided. A child can only be seen by the public when it has a name. The reason is that, people are likely to ask for the name. The Burfor do not have any laid down procedures when it comes to naming. It can be stated that the naming ceremony in Burfor culture does not have any significant underscores. Naming in Burfor can be done by any other person provided the name-giver seeks approval from the child’s family. There is no structured or official ceremony for naming in Burfor. The ceremony is usually an informal one with just a few family members present.

Among the Burfor, the family head has the ultimate right to get an ancestral name for a newly born child. The family head gives the ancestral name because, it is only the family head that can determine and identify which ancestral cults the child belongs to. Also, there are other names that can be given to the child apart from the one that is sought from divination. Such names show the place of birth of the child, the circumstances under which the child was born, the period of the pregnancy, the situation during the birth of the child and the social-cultural conditions of the woman who gave birth to the child. The various types of names are discussed below.

4.2. Sources of Burfor personal names

Though personal names run through all languages in the African context, there is no universality in naming among the different cultures. Burfor do select personal names anyhow, for that reason, the idea of the origin of Burfor personal names does not matter most. Burfor acquire personal names from many sources.

4.2.1 Divination name

The family head or the child's parents can consult the diviner for the name of the new born. When the parent (usually the family head) goes to consult a diviner and a name is given, the child is now considered as a human being and is addressed by the name given by the diviner. The family waits till the seventh day when the name is given to the child. Because the Burfor only consider a child as human only after it has got a name, in case a child dies before the naming ceremony, no formal funeral is performed.

4.2.2 Day and place birth names

The Burfor child may be born on a particular special day, or the location or place of birth of the child, may serve as sources of Burfor personal names. For example, there are names that portray the powerful nature of death and how it can destroy human life. Based on this, names such as *Kuunibe* ‘death people’ or *Kũũbaar* ‘death has ended’ *Kũũso* ‘death is for it’, and *Kũũsoojie* ‘death has spoiled everything’ are given to children to prove God’s supremacy over mankind. To show how death can be unkind to life, names like *Kũũbaaryir* ‘death has finished the house’ *Kũũbaar-bvrɔ* ‘death has cleared the whole tribe’ are given to some children. A child born when there is a funeral in the village, is traditionally named “*Dabuo*” (‘funeral day born’). In the same vein, a child born after the death of its father or mother is also called ‘*Dabuo*’.

Burfor children have names to show that they are born in a different village other than their ancestral homes or villages. Children who are born in these villages are usually named after these villages. This can only be done when the child’s parents have relatives in that village. When this happens, the child is called *na* ‘chief’ with the name of the village added as a prefix. The (-*na*) is usually the suffix and literally means the child is the chief of the village of birth. For instance, a child born in Buli is called *Buli-Na*; while a child born in Wa is called *Wa-Na*. It is however not mandatory to ascribe a child’s name after the village or town it was born in.

That is why if twins are born in a different village other than their own village, they are still called the culturally accepted names, that is ‘*Jien*’ (the junior one) and *Naa* (the senior one). It must be noted that, the suffix-na attached to the name of a child

born in a particular village does not necessary means that the child will be the chief of that village but rather it is a naming practice that every Burfor follows.

4.3 Classification of Burfor personal names

Naming is done to strengthen the relationship between the name bearer, his/her immediate environment and the natural world. Naming among Burfor is done based on the beliefs, societal values and desires of the name bearer (destiny). A Burfor is naturally born into a socio-cultural community which is ruled by events and circumstances and these events are either cultural or social and thus may call for a given name for the child in that perspective. The classification of Burfor personal names is therefore done based on these events or beliefs. Names can be classified into various categories based on their meaning. Sometimes, the newly born child is given a name depending on the socio-cultural situation of the name giver. For research purposes, the researcher classifies personal names into cult names, proverbial names, circumstantial names, clan names, nicknames, reincarnated names, or a youthful name that portrays how one has been exposed to the outside environment.

4.3.1 Cult names

These names bind the name-bearer to a cult. They invoke fear, joy, honour and sorrow when they are mentioned. A cult member feels defiled when she/he is called by her/his pre-initiation name and this amounts to breaking a taboo on the side of the caller. The pre-initiation name is the cult member's original name before she/he joins the cult. The child is seen as a new being upon joining the cult and is given a new name, therefore calling her/him by the old name revokes the oath she/he has

taken during the initiation. When this happens, the defiled member is taken to the outskirts of the village and becomes *sɔ̃ɔ̃naa* 'defiled' until the offender pays a fine. The failure of the offender to pay the fine may cause the defiled member to face some deadly ailments.

Some names given to people in Birfor are names of shrines or cults. This comes as a result of some misfortunes a spouse might have gone through before a child is conceived. These misfortunes can be in the form of barrenness, persistent death of children without any serious cause of death. Due to this, the spouses may go to a shrine to consult from the deities to avert the situation. Sometimes, parents may decide to take a newly born baby to the shrine and entrust that child to the care of a god. The parents may even take an oath and promise to sacrifice things like animals, money (cowries) to the gods if the child survives, and other sacrifices for subsequent children to be born. When they get a new baby through the powers of a god, they will name the child after that god. These children who may be males or females are given names according to the gods as indicated by consultants in table 2.

Table 2 Cult names

Name	Meaning
<i>Maase</i>	'god of children'
<i>Gyebur</i>	'god of human blood'
<i>Mane</i>	'a river god'
<i>Tɪŋan</i>	'earth god'
<i>Tɔɔŋ</i>	'god of mountain'
<i>Sɔɔnkpi</i>	'god of destruction'
<i>Naachen</i>	'god of war'
<i>Dagyil</i>	'god of harvest'
<i>Tulo</i>	'god of confusion'
<i>Damol</i>	'god of unity'
<i>Wiε</i>	'god of hunting'
<i>Nyewil</i>	'god of separation'
<i>Gawul</i>	'god of blood'
<i>Dmerkɔbɔ</i>	'god of protection'
<i>Daduo</i>	'god of thorns'
<i>Nakɔ</i>	'god of rocks'

Source: Field work, 2019

In certain circumstances, a child may be sent to a shrine for the god to protect that particular child who is critically ill. When the god of the shrine is able to protect and the child becomes well because of the treatment he received from the shrine, he will be named after the god in the shrine to show appreciation. A child who bears a god's name owes it a duty to always take part in the rituals at the shrine of that god.

Sometimes even when the child grows up into adulthood, he still takes part in the pacification rites at the shrine. The child is usually tasked to bring animals such as fowls, goats, money (cowries) and grains during the pacification. This is done yearly to thank the god for protecting the child throughout the year. Sometimes, a child may be named after a god of a shrine not because the god was responsible for the birth of the child or health of the child, but because the child was born on the particular day the god was pacified. For instance, a child named “*Jebur*” does not necessarily mean the god “*Jebur*” was consulted for the birth of the child, but it could mean that the child was born on the day of pacification of the shrine in the community.

4.3.2 Clan names

A clan is a non-corporate descent group with each member claiming descent from a common ancestor without actually knowing the genealogical links. It depends on names, symbols, animals, plants, and tartans to provide social solidarity and a sense of identity. In the Burfor setting, one is expected to give protection and hospitality to one's fellow clan members. Clan names are said to carry and communicate information about a person's origin. These names are generally passed onto the next generation. Clan names are names of the old men and old women (ancestors) who were once members of the said clans, thus these names are bestowed upon newly born babies either by divination or by an elderly person in the clan who is familiar with old members of the clan and how some of them led their lives. Mostly, clans in Burfor use these names for their children through consultation with a diviner. Every clan, among the Burfor culture uses clan names. These are called *Dɔɔyuoɔ* (singular)

or *Dɔɔyoe* (plural). A *dɔɔyuor* is a name a child gets from his clan people. Such names portray the beliefs of that clan.

For instance, a child belonging to the *Pɔkɔryir* ‘widow’ clan bears a name ending with the suffixes *-tey* (male) and *-na* (female). Like *Chɔchiitey* ‘division of the family’, *Eribɔtey* ‘trouble searcher’, *Kɔmbɔtey* ‘mourn and find’ *Chɛdutey* ‘tribalism’ *Jɔrkaatey*, ‘brave man’ *Fihiiintey* ‘look back’ *Konhiintey* ‘cry and satisfy’, *Pinedaana* ‘lie down and sleep’, *Dosirena* ‘climb and touch’ and *Chɔsɔna* ‘destroy the house’ These names are strictly associated with the *Pɔkɔryir* clan. The bearers usually undergo an initiation rite before they are given such names. It is believed by the people that the bearers have gone through the accepted stages of life hence are qualified to bear these names.

The Birfor have about eight (8) clans and each of these clans have corresponding names they give to their children. The clans are; *Pɔnaa*, *Lenkaa*, *Seebile*, *Kɔjɔɔl*, *Banyɔɔl*, *Birifoɔr*, *Ferbaryirdeme*, *Ɔmelɛryirdeme*. Each of these clans has their naming patterns. For example, names like *Sansa*, (second son) *Sei* (first son) *Minmun* (first daughter), *Sesere* (second daughter) and *Ɔ-ƆƆ* (third daughter) are common with the *Lenkaa*, and *Pɔnaa* clans. Clan names traditionally carry the message of the clan in question and the historical events at the time.

4.3.3 Circumstantial names

Most Birfor names fall under this category. Names are given to children based on the circumstances prevailing around the child’s birth, from his/her birth to maturity as well as that of his/her family condition. Commenting on circumstantial names, Blum (1997) asserts that these names are viewed as governing the child’s fate in

some ways; they are harmonized with the time and often place of the child's birth. For example, among the Burfor, a child born when there is hunger is called *Kɔŋ* 'Hunger'. Also, a child born on a day of funeral is called '*Kuor*' 'funeral'. The Burfor people usually name their children based on every event that they think is memorable. In choosing names, the people are always careful and mindful because of the influence the name could have on the bearer. Thus, if a child's birth coincides with a misfortune that ever besieged the community such as, outbreak of diseases, the child will be named *Nindaar-yaan* for both sexes 'will die again', *Puryi* 'not mine', *Guvila* 'prevent' *Sintee* 'we alone' and *Baan-bo* 'survive with what'? On the other hand, a child who is born during some time of fortune is named *Junvma* 'lucky head' *Saanvma* 'father likes me' *Nvɔ* 'enjoyment' *Bɛlfv* 'blessed' and *Tuobaar* 'trouble has ended.' For example, those born during festive occasions such as a market day or Christmas day, may be given the names *Bornya*, 'Christmas' or *Daa*, 'market' and *Bɔɔr* 'festival.' The people, most often, quote these events whenever one asks for the dates of birth. The name-bearers therefore carry along the associated meanings with their names and thereby live up to the name by their behaviours. See the table below.

Table 3 Circumstantial names

Name	Meaning
<i>Nindaar-yaan</i>	‘Will die again’
<i>Kɔŋ</i>	‘Hunger’
<i>Tuobaar</i>	‘Trouble has ended’
<i>Baan-bo</i>	‘Survive with what?’
<i>Guvila</i>	‘Prevent’
<i>Sintɛɛ</i>	‘We alone’
<i>Junɔma</i>	‘Lucky head’
<i>Biɛlfɔ</i>	‘Blessed’
<i>Bɔɔr</i>	‘Festival’
<i>Daa</i>	‘Market’
<i>Bornya,</i>	‘Christmas’

Source; Field Study, 2019

4.3.4 Reincarnated names

Persistent deaths in a particular family may call for a special name. Traditionally, the Burfor have the belief that it is the same child who goes and comes back. Sometimes, it is believed that it may be a punishment for the family. In order for the family to recognise the child, the family usually make some visible marks on the child when it dies so that it may not come back for fear of it being shamed. In a situation where it comes back, it comes with the visible mark either a cut on the ear, chest, navel and finger, so that it is immediately recognised. This belief is proved right by consulting a diviner who decides who the child is and what it will be in future. Sometimes the diviner may reveal that the child has left certain possessions

before coming into the world so it needs to go back for them. In such a situation, the family is expected to provide those things. Those possessions can be in the form of animals, cowries (money), or any other earthly things. The child staying back on earth will largely depend on the family's ability to provide all these things. The child is likely to go back into the spiritual world if those things are not provided, the child cries mostly in the night. Some of these children are given the reincarnated names to inform the child that the living is aware of its evil incarnation and as such it is believed it deters the child from dying. Mothers suffering persistent deaths of babies is common throughout Ghana, if not Africa as a whole but there are variations in the semantic interpretation of the names and the reason behind these given names in every culture. Now because of modernization and the emergence of new religious practices this particular practice is dying out, but some Burfor children still have these marks on some parts of their bodies. These marks indicate that they are believed to have reincarnated. The table shows some selected reincarnated names for both sexes.

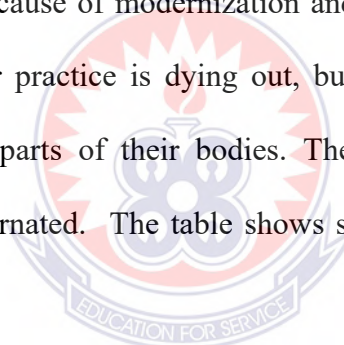


Table 4 Reincarnated names

Male	Female	Meaning
<i>Dar</i>	<i>Lawaa</i>	‘Born again’
<i>Bibila</i>	<i>Bibila</i>	‘Ant hill’
<i>Tampuor</i>	<i>Tampuor</i>	‘Midden’
<i>Sayvɔr</i>	<i>Sayvɔr</i>	‘Unstable’
<i>Sɔchara</i>	<i>Sɔchara</i>	‘Cross road’
<i>Nindaaryaan</i>	<i>Nindaaryaan</i>	‘Will die again’
<i>Yaaso</i>	<i>Yaaso</i>	‘Grave child’
<i>Tuu</i>	<i>Tuu</i>	‘Groove’

Source: field work, 2019

4.3.5 The uniqueness of *Bibila*, *Tampuor*, *Sayvɔr* and *Tuu* as reincarnated names

The Burfor cosmology has it that infants shuttle between the world of the living and that of the ancestors. This means that they can come into this world, return to the spirit world and return to the world of the living at their own will. In the process of this going back (dying) and coming back, the child may be buried alive if this child has any deformity or incurable sickness. In the case of *Bibila*, the said child is buried in an anthill either alive or dead different from other reincarnated children. Also, a child by name *Tuu*, is thrown into a groove when it dies. No serious funeral rite is observed. Sometimes, after the burial of this child, the mother is sent to a nearby community in order to prevent the child’s spirit from entering her womb again. This is because the Burfor believe that the dead child can come back and enter the mother’s womb to be reborn. When the mother has another child, the Burfor then

believes it is the one that was buried at the anthill (*Bibila*) or the one that is buried at the maiden (*Tampuor*) who has come back hence these names *Bibila*, *Tuu*, *Tampuor* are given to them.

4.3.6 Proverbial names

A proverbial name is a type of given name formation in some cultures of Africa. A proverbial name is a name which is a proverbial phrase or a philosophical statement. In many instances within the African context, proverbial names reflect what the Africans and how they live; what they abhor or uphold; what they think, what joys and what grief they experience. Proverbial names can be summarized into three categories. These are grouped into those that are related to God or death, and those that address social issues in the society. The Burfor have names that are couched in the form of innuendoes to depict a situation that took place before, during or after the woman has conceived or when giving birth. They may portray a bitter relationship between parents and community members, between a relative especially the woman and the spouse's family. For instance, if a woman who was barren for a very long time eventually gives birth, the child is named *Vi* 'shame', this name is given to convey a message to members of the community who used to ridicule the woman because of her bareness. In some circumstances, a child may be born unexpectedly. This child could be given the name *Naanminekoma* 'God has given me'.

Other proverbial names connote the life and conditions of the parents of the child. For example, a child can be named *Anseen* 'who is fit' if the parents went into a difficult situation like poverty but after the birth of the child things changed and they prospered. Most Burfor names depict death as an inevitable phenomenon and a

destroyer of human life. They hold the belief that aside God, death is the next controlling force in a human's life. Thus, it is feared by everybody. There are names that portray the powerful nature of death and how it can destroy human life. Based on this, names such as *Kuunibe* 'death people' or *Kũũbaar* 'death has ended' *Kũũso* 'death is for me' and *Kũũsɔ̃ɔ̃jie* 'death has destroyed plans' are given to children to prove the power of death over mankind. To show how death can be unkind to life, names like *Kũũbaaryi* 'death has finished the house', *Kũũbaar-bvrɔ* 'death has cleared the entire tribe' *Kũũgema* 'death has punished me' are given to children.

Proverbial names show both positive and negative deeds like; honesty, hatred, hard work, respect, love, enmity, anger, and peaceful living among others when they are expressed in names given to children. These categories of names are sometimes given based on the giver's perceptions about the deeds of the society. The mode of the givers of the names at the time of birth of the child with respect to such deeds will pre-empt a person to name the child accordingly. A name-giver may feel that gossiping has reared its ugly head on the day on which a child was born and this to him is not appropriate, hence he will name the child *an-ʼere* 'who is talking' or *Anseen* 'who is fit'. Sometimes, names are given to children in praise of the good works of God. For instance, names like *Naanminekoma* 'God's gift', *Ɔminesvno* 'God is helping' and *Ɔminekaara* 'God is watching' are within this category. There are also theophoric names which relate to God. These names are usually compound names with God (*Naanmine*) as prefix and sometimes abbreviated as *Ɔmine*. These names reveal the belief of the Birfor in God. Theophoric names, for the purpose of this study would be discussed under three types. These are names describing God's existence, activities of God and opinions of men about God.

4.3.6.1 Names describing God's existence

The issue of God's existence demands further explanation since God is not visible. Burfor naming system portrays that God is real. These names give statements that express real life situations, and people's daily interactions with God. In this work, these names are analysed in line with the existence of God, the omnipotence of God, the all-knowing nature of God, the oneness of God, the love of God and the happiness of God. These names that indicate theophoric names on the existence of God which were confirmed by consultants are illustrated in table 5 below.

Table 5: The existence of God

Name	Meaning
<i>Naaηminekvma</i>	'God gave to me'
<i>Naaηminenire</i>	'God's person'
<i>ηminekaara</i>	'God is watching'
<i>ηminesvno</i>	'God is helping'
<i>Naaηminebier</i>	'Unkind God'
<i>Naaηmineso</i>	'God is for it'
<i>Naaηminebiir</i>	'God's children'
<i>Naaηmineguma</i>	'God protects me'
<i>Naaηminnuur</i>	'God's hands'

Source: Field work, 2019

Certain names in Burfor are given to their bearers to make them feel the presence and existence of God in their lives. Such names are usually given with the belief that they invoke the power of God and therefore the names avert and prevent some misfortunes in the lives of the bearers. It is believed that should God fail to prevent

the misfortunes befalling them, the disgrace will fall on God and not the name-bearer. The name-giver entrusts all his/her hopes and trust in God. In case a misfortune befalls a person, he/she can name a child *Dminevi* (God's disgrace) to show that it is not he/she who is disgraced but rather God who failed him/her.

4.3.6.2 Attributes and activities of God

The fact that human beings believe in the existence of God is also seen in the lives of the Burfor who believe God is the creator all things and so He has power over everything. They therefore give names to show some attributes and activities of God. Some of these are listed in Table 6

Table 6: Names that describe the attributes and activities of God

Name	Meaning
<i>Dminetvmo</i>	'God's activities'
<i>Dminekaara</i>	'God watches'
<i>Naanminebom</i>	'God's thing'
<i>Naanminenuma</i>	'God loves me'
<i>Naanminegema</i>	'God has punished me'
<i>Dminemɛfo</i>	'God's mould'
<i>Dminepire</i>	'God guards'
<i>Naanminebie</i>	'God's child'
<i>Naanmineso</i>	'God is for it'

Source: Field work, 2019

4.3.6.3 Man's opinion about God

The Burfor have the belief that God does a lot of good things in man's everyday activities and also that man engages sometimes in certain activities which are considered evil. For this reason, Burfor give names to their children to reveal their opinions about God. These names usually portray certain values that men perceive about God. Some of these values are reverence, confidence, trust, obedience and love for God. Some of these names also reveal that man's ways are not God's ways and as such, people should serve God with all their hearts. The names below show how man values God.

Table 7: Names that show man's opinion about God

Name	Meaning
<i>Imintoma</i>	'God sends me'
<i>Bɔɔɛmɪn</i>	'Know God'
<i>Sɔɔɛmɪn</i>	'Beg God'
<i>Jorɔɔmɪn</i>	'Fear God'
<i>Puɔɔɛmɪn</i>	'Thank God'
<i>Iminebie</i>	'God's child (another name for God)'
<i>Imintara</i>	'God possesses'
<i>Bɔɔɛmɪn</i>	'Love God'
<i>Iminebaguro</i>	'God does not sleep'

Source: Field work, 2019

It must be noted that most of these names are usually shortened in their pronunciation.

For instance, the name *Naayminebie* ‘God’s child’ is pronounced as *Iminebie* ‘God’s child’.

4.3.7 Proverbial names related to death

Death which is a natural phenomenon in every human society cannot be avoided. All the faithful of every religion agree that everybody on this earth will definitely die one day. However, people have different perceptions about death from the point of view of their religious belief and from culture to culture. The Burfor, (like any other culture) and as earlier stated, agree that death is a destroyer of human existence. They hold the belief that apart from God, death is the next controlling force of every society hence everybody fears it. They give names to express the powerful nature of death in the society. Some of these names portray how cruel death is. Such names include *kuĩsɔ̃yir* ‘death has destroyed the house’, *Kũĩgema* ‘death has punished me’. Sometimes, these names seem to question death as if death is being threatened. Names such as *An-kũĩ* ‘whose is death’, *Kũĩ-erevi* ‘death is disgraced’, *Kũĩsanɔ̃* ‘death is better than poverty’ *kuuɲmine* ‘death what?’ and *An-jorokũĩ* ‘who fear death?’ shows the belief of the Burfor that going through any form of ordeal and suffering on this earth is better than death. Such names include *Dɔ̃mɔ̃sakũĩ* ‘an enemy is better than death’ *Al-sakũĩ* ‘this is better than death’ *Kũĩpoma* ‘death has passed me’ and *Wvɔ̃rsakũĩ* ‘suffering is better than death’. Other names which are related to death as confirmed by the consultants are found in Appendix 3.

4.3.7.1 Proverbial names that relate to societal deeds

There are also proverbial names that explain certain societal deeds. Deeds like love, hatred, anger, laziness, truthfulness, peace, and malice. These deeds are rather subjective; hence they depend solely on the situation in which the birth occurs or aspirations of the name-giver in collection with social happenings at the time of the birth of the child. A few such names can be found in appendix three (3) of this work.

4.3.7.2 Names for children born out of wedlock

In the Burfor culture, it is expected that only women who are traditionally married have children. The reason is that every child must traditionally have a father who is considered the head of the nuclear family. However, there are situations where women who are not married have affairs with men and give birth to children. A pregnancy resulting from such a relation is considered illegal because men who are responsible for such pregnancies did not perform any customary rites to lay claim to the women and for that matter the pregnancies belong to them (the woman's family). Among the Burfor, the payment of a bride price, is a pre-requisite that qualifies a man to claim ownership of a child and as such, a man is deprived of his child with a woman if he has not performed such a rite. Children who are born without the performance of the marriage rite are culturally referred to as *Saayirbie* 'father's house child' or *Jankpvlabie* 'child born to a mother who is customarily not married'.

The word *Saayirbie* in Burfor implies that the child in question is not recognised traditionally in the woman's family. As a result, such a child is not named according to laid down procedure like consulting a diviner since it is not accepted into the families. The reason why the child cannot be named after any of the ancestors in the mother's house is that it is believed that the ancestors are clean and worthy to be

emulated and since the child is seen as an illegal child, it is an affront to the ancestor if the child is named after it. When such a child grows up in the maternal uncle's house, the family assists him to get a wife and pays the dowry of the woman for him if he is not capable of doing so. Traditionally, uncles are supposed to pay for the dowry of their nephew's wife.

On the other hand, when a female child is brought up by her maternal uncles, her dowry would go to them. Items for such dowry in the form of animals, money and cowries considered as *bipulo* 'bitter dowry' can only be used as bride price but not to use for any purpose like selling the animals or spending the money by the girl or by any member of her uncle's house because the girl is not considered a member of the family in which she was born and raised. The items collected can be used to take care of the girl's mother.

The Burfor do not recognise courtship as marriage hence one cannot claim ownership of a child during courtship until the man pays the bride price after the birth of the child. If the man fails to pay the bride price and the child dies, the corpse would not be buried in the man's compound as custom demands unless he pays the bride price.

These days, because of modernisation and the penetration of the customs by other cultures, children born outside marriage feel uncomfortable in the maternal family with the derogatory remarks and names such as *Saayirbie* 'a child born in the father's house' given to them. It is usually a disgrace to the family of the woman since these children produced out of marriage are considered bastards. Family heads usually give proverbial names to such children to deter other women from such acts. Such names include *Dɔmɔnɛɛ* 'enemies mouth' *Anso* 'who is for it?' *Dɔmbala*

‘enemies will be tired’. The enemy in this case refers to the man who impregnated the woman and failed to properly marry her.

4.4 Nicknames

Birfor, like other tribes sometimes use nicknames to name their children. These are names usually given by people within the same age brackets that identify themselves with particular names whilst growing together in society. As the names imply, they are sometimes given at birth based on the physical outlook of the person by the parents or other relations. They are socially related names that most youth and sometimes adults in the community use regardless of the age of the person. The behaviour of a person may call for such names by his peers. Some of these names are sometimes offensive to the bearers since they are coined from the person’s physical appearance. Bekye (1991: 146) classifies nicknames into two, that is, anatomical and conditional names. He asserts that anatomical names are connected with the physical structure of the child while conditional names are related to the colour of the child at birth.

As far as this work is concerned, both anatomical and conditional names are called nicknames. Although nicknames can be given at birth, they are not used in official documents. Most nicknames are usually given by peers in the society. Nicknames are given to children in addition to their traditional names which are used for official purposes. In Birfor for instance, nicknames come in various forms. They might describe the person’s height, complexion and physical appearance. Such names are listed in tables 8, 9 and 10 below according to the characteristics mentioned.

Table 8: Nicknames based on physical structure and appearance

Name	Meaning
<i>Dakpaar</i>	‘Man with long occiput’
<i>Dagɔba</i>	‘Left-handed man’
<i>Danyuo</i>	‘Man with big navel’
<i>Pɔɔnyuo</i>	‘Woman with big novel’
<i>Pɔɔnyɛɛ</i>	‘Woman with long nose’
<i>Dakoo</i>	‘Slim man’
<i>Pɔɔber</i>	‘Fat woman’
<i>Pɔɔlie</i>	‘Slim woman/lean woman’
<i>Dagbim</i>	‘Very tiny man’

Source: Field survey, 2019

Table 9: Names based complexion

Name	Meaning
<i>Pɔɔjɛ/Dajɛ</i>	‘Woman/man fair in complexion’
<i>Dasɔɔlaa/Pɔɔsɔɔlaa</i>	‘Man/woman dark in complexion’
<i>Jujɛ/Dafɔl</i>	‘Albino’
<i>Dapɪla/Pɔɔpɪla</i>	‘Man/woman whitish skin’

Source: Field Survey, 2019

Table 10: Names based on height

Name	Meaning
<i>Da-ηmaa</i>	‘Short man’
<i>Pɔɔ-ηmaa</i>	‘Short woman’
<i>Da-woo</i>	‘Tall man’
<i>Pɔɔ-woo</i>	‘Tall woman’

Source: Field Survey, 2019

4.5 Conclusion

From the data collected and presented, it can be observed that Burfor personal names have some connotative meaning in the socio-cultural setting of the people. This connotative meaning relates to their history, religious practices, and belief systems.

This chapter in effect categorised names in Burfor under specific headings based on the meaning of the names. It was established that every Burfor child is given a name only after the naming ceremony and that although sometimes the names would have already been selected based on the circumstances surrounding the pregnancy or birth of the child. The sources of names for Burfor children were discussed and it is evident that apart from the clan name which is given to every child at birth to show his or her clan, children are given names to show time, place and circumstances of birth. Apart from nicknames which are not documented all other types of names given to children at birth are usually officially written.

The relevance of these names with reference to their meanings is that it makes the people to know why certain people are called certain names without necessary inquiring about them from others. For example names given to children born out of wedlock will send a lesson to other teenagers to live moral lives. Again circumstantial names, proverbial names and cult names help the people to maintain and show cultural setting of the people. Lastly, the sociocultural nature of the people makes it possible for them to accept nicknames in good faith.

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.0 Introduction

This section presents a summary of the major findings, conclusions, and recommendations. The study set to find out how personal names can be analysed from a socio-cultural perspective. The study specifically looked at what personal names in Burfor are, the sources of Burfor personal names, how personal names are classified in the Burfor culture and under what circumstances the names are given. Burfor personal names have cultural links with the people, hence the typology of a name in the study revealed that social practices and beliefs influence the selection of personal names.

5.1 Summary/Findings

The study revealed that names given in the area under study are influenced by two main socio-cultural indicators. These are the spiritual and the physical. It was revealed that the people believe that a child born into a traditional Burfor home should in most instances bear a clan name that reflects the lineage of the clan. This name is sought from a diviner. It was also pointed out that, a child who is believed to have been reincarnated is given a reincarnated name. Additionally, some particular names in the Burfor cultural setting have some gender sensitivity collocations in them while others do not. For example, names such as *Lawaa*, *Mimine*, *Sesere* and *Ɔɔ*, are solely given to females while names such as *Jɛbur*, *Sei*, *Dare* and *Sansa* are male sensitive.

One other finding of the study is that, Burfor are now foreign and religiously inclined and as such names like Christian and Islamic names are preferred to the detriment of

Burfor indigenous names. Some names in the Burfor society have been abandoned in the name of modernization and education as people perceive such ‘names as primitive such as *Da-Balorro* ‘no tribe is inferior’, *Kuudoyir* ‘death has climbed the house’ and *Dɔɔye* ‘suffering.’ Some Burfor also change the meanings and forms of the original names. The major reason such people change these names is that the original names are derogatory and therefore they have adverse effects on the bearers.

Another observation from the study was that a person can have an additional name apart from his/her clan or ancestral name. Sometimes these names are not written in full in official documents but they are usually abbreviated thereby defeating the purpose for which they were bestowed on their bearers. For instance, *lie* ‘chick’ and ‘*Kpaa-emzɛ*’ ‘punish myself’ *Yelbebe* ‘misfortunes’, *Deku-ana*, ‘give to who’ are names Burfor usually abbreviate because of their negative implications the names have on the bearers. The study also showed that personal names have some socio-cultural significance on their bearers and even the name-givers. Personal names give an insight into the socio-cultural world view of the Burfor people and these names are expressed in the form of proverbs (proverbial names). These names may be attributed to God’s work, death, man’s opinion towards God and general societal deeds. It was also observed that death dominates most of the Burfor personal names from the history of personal names *yoe* ‘names’ or *Kũũ* ‘death.’ *Dɔɔɔmɔ/Dɔmɔ* ‘enmity’ also feature predominantly in some of these personal names. This is the more reason why some Burfor personal names have *Kũũ* as both prefix and suffix. Names such as *Kũũdoma* ‘death has climbed me’, *Kũũbaar* ‘death is finished’, *Dɔmɔsakũũ*, *Saayirkũũ* and *Andaarkũũ* portray how death dominate in the history of the people that called for such names. Enmity also features in some personal names like *Diedɔmɔ* ‘enmity’ *Dɔmɔbarma* ‘the enemy has left me’, *Dɔmbille* ‘the enemy is

changing’ and *Dɔm-kvmayɛɛ* ‘the enemy has confused my mind’ The study also showed that a Burfor personal name could be accorded to a person based on his/her physical structure, complexion or the height. Such names are termed nicknames because they determine the physique, complexion or height of a person.

5.2 Conclusion

It can be concluded that names in Burfor are held in high esteem. Children who are even denied by their fathers are given names to show that they are part of the society. Names are very important in the lives of the people that give their children names based on the circumstances, clan and even physique of bearers. Similarly, names in the Burfor setting has enhanced the identity of individuals and the circumstances within which they were born and even what society expects from them. This in event has to some extent influenced those individuals to live in accordance to the dictates of their names. In Ghana and elsewhere, it is therefore necessary to at least include a local name to the names of children to preserve and project the cultural heritage of the society within which he/she comes from. Thus Burfor is no exception.

5.3 Suggestions and recommendations

Language development largely depends on the study of linguistics and the literature of the particular language and the number of people who document it. It is however sad that many Ghanaian languages have not been exposed to the world as compared to other languages like English and French. This is evident for instance, from the periods allocated to them on the pre-tertiary school teaching time table. When one takes a look at the periods on the time table, Ghanaian Languages have the least

periods. Culture is not encouraged in the schools except when there is an occasion and pupils are hurriedly prepared for dancing and drumming but culture is not only dancing and drumming. Based on these inequalities, the researcher recommends that subsequent researchers in the study of languages should put write ups of the cultural and linguistic materials in Burfor to enhance the development of the rich literature of the language.

Personal name is an important component of the life of the child especially the new born child. This is because the family and the society do not recognise the child until it has a name. Scholars can further research into naming in Burfor from a cultural perspective. It is also recommended that every Burfor community to encourage the youth to attach importance to their ancestral names and the need to give their children Burfor cultural names in addition to other names. This will inform the youth to value the indigenous personal names to that of the foreign names such as the Christian and Islamic names currently infiltrating our societies.

Curriculum developers are recommended to include a topic on personal names in the Ghanaian Language syllabi. This will motivate learners to value their own culture.

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APPENDIX 1

CULT NAMES

Name	Meaning
<i>Tulo</i>	‘god of destruction’
<i>Nako</i>	‘god of rock’
<i>Saan</i>	‘god of black-smith’
<i>Kola</i>	‘river god’
<i>Saache</i>	‘god of children’
<i>Sɔ̃ɔ̃kpi</i>	‘god of harvest’
<i>Naachen</i>	‘god of strength’
<i>Saa</i>	‘god of thunder’
<i>Tibe</i>	‘god of riches’
<i>Tɔ̃ɔ̃n</i>	‘god of mountains’
<i>Damol</i>	‘god of unity’



APPENDIX 2

THE EXISTENCE OF GOD

Name	Meaning
<i>Naaηmine</i>	‘God’
<i>ηminevi</i>	‘God’s disgrace’
<i>Naaηminebɔb</i>	‘God’s will’
<i>Naaηminepono</i>	‘God is sharing’
<i>Dekoηmin</i>	‘Give to God’
<i>Naaηminesɔr</i>	‘God’s way’
<i>Naaηmintɛɛ</i>	‘Only God’
<i>Naaηminebom</i>	‘God’s thing’
<i>Naaηmineso</i>	‘God’s own’
<i>Joroηmine</i>	‘Fear god’
<i>ηminetvma</i>	‘God’s work’



APPENDIX 3

PROVERBIAL NAMES RELATING TO DEATH

Name	Meaning
<i>Kũutelma</i>	‘Death has surprised me’
<i>Kũũgema</i>	‘Death has punished me’
<i>Kũũpoma</i>	‘Death has passed’
<i>Kũũsɔ̃yir</i>	‘Death has destroyed the house’
<i>Kũũbibir</i>	‘Day of death?’
<i>Kũũpɛɛyir</i>	‘Death has washed away the house’
<i>Kũũsanɔ̃</i>	‘Death is better than poverty’
<i>Kũũbepilem</i>	‘Death is beneath’
<i>Kũũtuor</i>	‘Facing death’
<i>Kũũsɔ̃jie</i>	‘Death has destroyed all my plans’
<i>Kũũturo</i>	‘Death follows me’
<i>Kũũkaar</i>	‘Death car’
<i>Kuunibe</i>	‘Death’s people’
<i>An-sɛɛnkũũ</i>	‘Who is fit to die?’
<i>Kũũdoma</i>	‘Death has climbed me’
<i>Kuunɲmayir</i>	‘Death has divided the house’
<i>Kũũbarema</i>	‘Death has spared me’
<i>Kũũsɛɛma</i>	‘I am satisfied with death’
<i>Kũũsvsvlɔ</i>	‘Death is ready’
<i>Kũũbaar</i>	‘Death is finished’
<i>Kuunvma</i>	‘Death likes me’
<i>Kũũsebe</i>	‘Death’s book’

Name	Meaning
<i>Kũĩyɔɔ</i>	‘Death is moving round / Death moves round’
<i>Antɔɔrkũĩ</i>	‘Who over comes death?’
<i>Kũĩfama</i>	‘Death has cheated on me’
<i>Kũĩbaaryir</i>	‘Death has finished the house’
<i>Baapeɛɛkũĩ</i>	‘Death is not borrowed’
<i>Kũĩsɔɔ</i>	‘Who questions death?’
<i>Kuunaa-egvɔ</i>	‘Death would have been like sleep’
<i>Kũĩsema</i>	‘Death has summoned me’
<i>Andaarkũĩ</i>	‘Who buys death?’
<i>Sããyirkũĩ</i>	‘Death in the family’
<i>Kũĩ-nyɛma</i>	‘Death has seen me’
<i>Kũĩ-oor</i>	‘Death discriminates’
<i>An-nvkũĩ</i>	‘Who loves death’
<i>Kũĩbere</i>	‘Death days’
<i>Kũĩtayir</i>	‘Death has reached the house’
<i>kũĩsɔɛ</i>	‘Death paths’
<i>An-jorokuu</i>	‘Who fears death?’

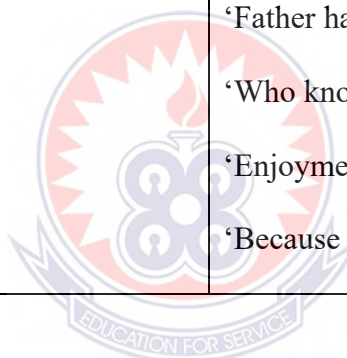
APPENDIX 4

PROVERBIAL NAMES THAT RELATE TO SOCIETAL DEEDS

Name	Meaning
<i>Sããwayir</i>	‘Father has come home’
<i>Diedɔmɔ</i>	‘The enemy of the home’
<i>Sɪnso</i>	‘It is ours’
<i>Fama</i>	‘Cheat me’
<i>Anseen</i>	‘Who is fit?’
<i>Yirsɔ̃ɔ̃</i>	‘The home spoiled’
<i>Dɔmɔgbɛɛ</i>	‘The Enemy’s leg’
<i>Sɔɔltɔɔ</i>	‘Hide and insult/insult secretly’
<i>Dɔmɔbala</i>	‘The enemy will suffer’
<i>Dɔɔye</i>	‘Suffering’
<i>Ankaama</i>	‘Who take care of me’
<i>Nɔɔbile</i>	‘Enjoyment changes’
<i>N-maalbo</i>	‘What should I do?’
<i>Sããkyɛnɛ</i>	‘Father is alive’
<i>Guma</i>	‘Protect me’
<i>Anfaasvɔ̃</i>	‘Who is not a witch?’
<i>Puorima</i>	‘Greet me’
<i>Nɔma</i>	‘Love me’
<i>Yirpɔɔ</i>	‘The Empty house’
<i>Sɔ̃ɔ̃ma</i>	‘Help me’
<i>Yɛŋ-baar</i>	‘Wisdom has exhausted’
<i>Yelyɔɔ</i>	‘Plenty problems’

Name	Meaning
<i>N-pɛnɛ</i>	‘I should be borrowing’
<i>Tɔndi</i>	‘Work and eat’
<i>An-bɔɔn</i>	‘Who knows’
<i>Teeguma</i>	‘Society protects me’
<i>Yitire</i>	‘The Home is heavy’
<i>Pinyine</i>	‘Hide where?’
<i>Dɔmɔnɛɛ</i>	‘The Enemy’s mouth’
<i>Nɔɔsɔɔ</i>	‘Enjoyment has spoiled’
<i>Yurwere</i>	‘Name is wasting’
<i>Dɔnkɔmayɛɛ</i>	‘The Enemy has destroyed my mind’
<i>Yikaa</i>	‘Go out and see’
<i>Sɔɔrpɛnɛ</i>	‘Witches are relaxing’
<i>Maasoyir</i>	‘The house is mine’
<i>Nyɔɔkw</i>	‘Catch and kill’
<i>Nɔɔngarma</i>	‘Poverty is above me’
<i>Sãã-sɔvɔnɔma</i>	‘Father helps me’
<i>An-e</i>	‘Who is good’
<i>Chellewono</i>	‘Listen’
<i>Nɔɔtara</i>	‘Enjoyment is approaching’
<i>Yirguma</i>	‘The House protects me’
<i>Yir-ɛɛ</i>	‘The House is talking’
<i>Yirwel</i>	‘The Home/house is scattered’
<i>Wa-ɔɔ</i>	‘Will you fly’
<i>Yirtuo</i>	‘Bitter house/home’

Name	Meaning
<i>Pin-Er</i>	‘Hide and talk’
<i>Lenbe</i>	‘Enrich people’
<i>Tawayir</i>	‘Don’t come to the house’
<i>Junvmo</i>	‘Lucky head’
<i>Debe</i>	‘Dirty’
<i>Anwiledomɔ</i>	‘Who shows the enemy’
<i>Saapɔɔyir</i>	‘Father has covered the house’
<i>Saatvma</i>	‘Father has sent me’
<i>Saakaarbiir</i>	‘Father is taking care of the children’
<i>Saawelyir</i>	‘Father has divided the house’
<i>Ambɔɔn</i>	‘Who knows?’
<i>Nvɔbile</i>	‘Enjoyment changes’
<i>Vigar</i>	‘Because of shame’



APPENDIX 5

INTERVIEW GUIDE

NAME – BEARERS

I am **TOLITEY EMMANUEL CHEDITEY**, a final year Master of Art in **Ghanaian Language Studies (Dagaare option)** student at the graduate school of the University of Education, Winneba with student registration number **7170260013**.

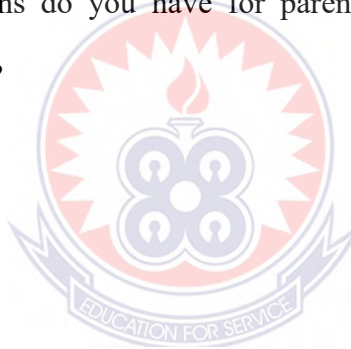
I am currently conducting research on the topic: **A Socio-Cultural Analysis of Burfor Personal Names** as part of the requirement for the award of an MA Degree at the university, and wish to solicit your views and knowledge relating to this topic in the Wa West District.

This study is intended to accomplish four objectives: to find out the relevance of the names of the Burfor speaking people with reference to their meaning, to examine what calls for the selection of a particular name among the Burfor and ascertain how names are linked to the Burfor cultural settings, to analyse the socio-cultural implications of names of the Burfor speaking people and to find out how these names can be documented to promote their usage.

I wish therefore to assure you that confidentiality is guaranteed for your responses and thus your response will be treated purely for academic purposes only.

1. Are you a resident of the Wa West district?
2. Kindly confirm whether you are a Burfor maternally or paternally or both.
3. Do you use your local personal name you were given?
4. Is that the name everybody everywhere identifies you with?
5. Do you wish to be identified by that name by your spouse?
6. Do you think your name is relevant to you within the society you reside?
7. Why is it relevant?
8. Do you think the name influences your actions and inactions in the society?

9. Do you know the meaning of the name and why you were given that name at birth?
10. Does the name link you to a clan or decent group?
11. If yes, what clan is it and what cultural heritage is upheld by that clan, lineage or decent group?
12. Is your Birfor personal name officially used and documented?
13. If no, how do you feel?
14. Would you want it to be documented?
15. Would you promote the use of Birfor personal names by naming your children with those names?
16. What suggestions do you have for parents to promote the use of Birfor personal names?



APPENDIX 6

INTERVIEW GUIDE

NAME-GIVERS

I am **TOLITEY EMMANUEL CHEDITEY**, a final year Master of Art in **Ghanaian Language Studies (Dagaare option)** student at the graduate school of the University of Education, Winneba with student registration number **7170260013**.

I am currently conducting research on the topic: **A Socio-Cultural Analysis of Burfor Personal Names** as part of the requirement for the award of an MA Degree at the university, and wish to solicit your views and knowledge relating to this topic in the Wa West District.

This study is intended to accomplish four objectives: to find out the relevance of the names of the Burfor speaking people with reference to their meaning, to examine what calls for the selection of a particular name among the Burfor and ascertain how names are linked to the Burfor cultural settings, to analyse the socio-cultural implications of names of the Burfor speaking people and to find out how these names can be documented to promote their usage.

I wish therefore to assure you that confidentiality is guaranteed for your responses and thus your response will be treated purely for academic purposes only.

1. Are you a Burfor maternally, paternally or both?
2. Do you have a Burfor local personal name you were given at birth?
3. Is that the name everybody everywhere around the community identifies you with?
4. What criteria do you use in finding names for children?
5. What processes are involved in the naming of children?
6. Are these processes a formalized process for everyone in the community?
7. Do you think these Burfor personal names are relevant to you and the children who bear those names within the society?

8. If yes, why are they relevant?
9. Do you think the Burfor personal names given to these children influences their actions and inactions in the society?
10. Do you name your children with these names?
11. Mention some of the Burfor personal names you have given to your children and the meaning of those names
12. Why did you give them those names at birth?
13. Do those Burfor personal names link the children to a clan or decent group?
14. What cultural heritage do these names promote?
15. Are those Burfor personal names you give to children officially used and documented?
16. If no, why do you still give those names?
17. Would you want it to be documented?
18. If yes, how did you do it as an ethnic group?
19. What suggestions do you have for parents to promote the use of Burfor personal names?
20. Do you foresee an increased use of these names in the coming future or their extinction?