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SPEECH ACT OF GREETINGS IN GONJA

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SPEECH ACT OF GREETINGS IN GONJA

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APRIL, 2024

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DECLARATION

Student's Declaration

I, **IBRAHIM ALHASSAN**, declare that this thesis, with the exception of quotations and references contained in published works, which have been identified and duly acknowledged, is entirely my original work, and it has not been submitted, either in part or in whole, for another degree elsewhere.

SIGNATURE: ……..

DATE: …….

SUPERVISOR'S DECLARATION

I hereby declare that the preparation and presentation of this thesis were supervised in accordance with the guidance on supervision of thesis as laid down by the University of Education, Winneba.

NAME OF SUPERVISOR: **PROF. CHARLOTTE FOFO LOMOTEY**

SIGNATURE: ……..

DATE: ……..

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DEDICATION

I dedicate this thesis to Almighty Allah and my late Mum, Mma Masata Elupua Manka.

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I will first like to thank my sister Adia (Kontonko) for her support and encouragement throughout the period of my studies. Thank you so much and may Allah bless you for being my rock and making me believe in my abilities. I would also like to thank my elder Mum and my father for their prayers and advice.

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ABSTRACT

Greeting forms are considered as socio-cultural methods developed by humans to exchange pleasantries and good wishes with the view of advancing friendship, recognition, and solidarity in a particular speech community. This study examined the speech act of greeting in the Gonja speech community. It utilizes an ethnographic design using a qualitative approach to collect data from four (4) Gonja communities and employs a purposive sampling technique to collect data through observations, audio recordings, and focus group discussions with native Gonja speakers. It was discovered that Gonja greetings reflect the universality of the phenomenon, even though there are culture- and language- specific nuances in their meanings. The data analysis also uncovered the socio-pragmatic principles guiding greeting choices as well as shedding light on the socio-cultural facets of the people that are embedded in their greetings, including the use of non-verbal cues such as squatting and lying down in showing deference to the elderly and people in authority such as chiefs.

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.0 Introduction

In this chapter, the topic for the study is introduced followed by the problem statement, research objectives, and research questions respectively. The research's significance, as well as its limitations and delimitations, are also discussed in this chapter. The chapter concludes with the organization of the study.

1.1 Background to the Study

Greetings are "expressive speech acts performed in relation with the socio-cultural norms of the society where the performative verb triggers a sequence of interactional performances, both verbal and non-verbal, that conveys social meanings" (Austin, 1962; Searle & Vanderveken, 1985 cited in Agyekum, 2008, p. 494). They are considered as socio-cultural methods developed by humans to exchange pleasantries and good wishes with the view of advancing friendship, recognition, and solidarity in a particular speech community. Based on this it can be concluded that greeting is a universal phenomenon, an indispensable aspect of human existence. It is no wonder that there is no culture that does not attest to this socio-pragmatic phenomenon. Additionally, they are used as ritualized pre-sequences that come before the actual message in a lot of communicative interactions (Agyekum, 2008). This means that they serve us social signals that set the tone for interaction, establish rapport, and indicate readiness for communication. Hence, an interlocutor who starts a conversation without first greeting will not received the necessary attention in most speech communities and the Gonja speech community is no exception.

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Gonja is a language that belongs to the Kwa branch of the Niger-Congo phylum (Hall, 2010) and is spoken by the Gonja people in the Savannah region of Ghana. Braima (1962) posited that the term Gonja is believed to have its etymology from the Hausa sentence *Zaani gunja goro* meaning 'I am going to the place of the red cola nuts'. Gunja (at the place of the red) was picked out of the sentence to give the people the popular name Gonja. The indigenous name for the people is Ngbanya plural and Kagbanya singular while the language they speak is Ngbanyato which means "in Gonja".

Greetings communicate some crucial facets of the culture of the people (Ameka, 1991). This means they are a fundamental aspect of human communication, deeply intertwined with cultural identity and social behaviour. For example, non-verbal cues such as squatting or even lying down to accompany the verbal greetings in Gonja are a reflection of values of respect and humility for the elderly and people in authority such as chiefs. They also depict the social relationship between the interlocutors in the greeting exchange (Ahmad, 2015). In the context of the Gonja culture, greetings are deeply ingrained in social interactions and serve as an instrumental tool for establishing and maintaining relationships. The significance of greetings extends beyond mere verbal exchanges; it encompasses a complex interplay of linguistic, non-verbal, and contextual elements that convey messages about interpersonal dynamics. Gonja greetings may include traditional address terms that demonstrate respect and acknowledgement of social hierarchy. The choice of words and the manner of delivery can indicate the perceived social standing of each interactant and their relationship to one another. Also, the timing and frequency of greetings can provide insights into the nature of the relationship. Simple greetings may indicate a distal relationship while complex ones may indicate a close bond. For

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example, while close friends may use the lengthy type of greeting, strangers may use the short type. Greetings serve as a window into the intricate web of social connections and help individuals navigate their roles and obligations within the community. There is therefore the need to examine how greetings are enacted in the Gonja speech community to add to the literature.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

Since the time Goffman bemoaned the lack of research on conventionalised designs such as greetings and their dismissal as *empty* and *trivial* (Goffman, 1971), a lot has changed. In recent years; pragmatists and anthropologists have put a lot of effort into analysing greetings as both a universal activity and one that exhibits noticeable variation in various speech communities (e.g. Agyekum, 2008; Akindele, 2007; Ferguson, 1981; Obeng-Ofosu, 2020). In the literature, greeting is a distinctive exchange of gestures or utterances in which each person appears to signal to the other, directly and explicitly, that he has been seen and is frequently observed when people enter another person's presence.

Greetings have been examined from different perspectives by diverse scholars. For instance, Agyekum (2008, p. 995) identified them as "conventionalized, predictable, commonly owned and shared communicative daily activities that use certain linguistic items and performances in routinized encounters". Cheng (2005) views greetings as an aspect of a speaker's communicative and pragmatic competence. Kasper (1989) also considers greetings as semantically and propositionally empty and formulaic routine items and that those who exchange them do not actually mean what they say during greeting discourse. However, Foley (1997) identifies them as speech acts that are used to establish social contact among interactants while Obeng-Ofosu (2020) sees them as the general ritual for beginning

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social encounters in most speech communities. Additionally, greetings reflect certain socio-pragmatic principles such as age, gender, rank, and context, within speech communities, and the Gonja speech community is no exception (Odebumni, 2013). Hence, one must consider these socio-pragmatic principles before his or her greeting will be valid.

However, most people, particularly the youth in Gonja-speaking communities, no longer pay much attention to these principles, resulting in numerous face-threating issues. Furthermore, greeting expressions are closely tied to the social and cultural norms of a community, making them routine expressions (Obeng-Ofosu, 2020). This means that greeting is regarded as a customary and expected behaviour in human interaction that reflects the values and customs of a particular social group. Hence, anyone who ignores the cultural obligation of greeting or responding to greeting in the Gonja speech community is labeled as *mfel wura* (or disrespectful person). Additionally, the traditional form of greetings in Gonja is gradually losing patronage. Thus, many people may miss out on acquiring certain socio-pragmatic knowledge that can only be acquired by engaging in the speech act of greeting as it is considered as an interface between people and their cultural practices (Agyekum, 2008). For instance, an important observation within the Gonja speech community reveals that the Gonjas are slowly embracing the Islamic attention-getting device *asalamualeikum* in seeking permission to enter another person's residence, leading to the gradual decline of the traditional Gonja form *gafraachɛ*.

Greetings are linguistic activities that contribute to or hinder successful social interaction. This study is based on the assumption that various greetings and responses that Gonja speakers employ differ from one another with respect to certain socio-pragmatic principles such as age, gender, time, rank, and social circumstances.

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In studying and speaking any particular language, it is insufficient to master the language's grammar and vocabulary to claim communicative competence, but one needs to be well-informed with basic discourse rules such as those seen in greetings. Cheng (2005) asserts that understanding and producing speech in a given situation constitute a crucial aspect of pragmatic competence and the speech act of greeting is no exception. When successfully performed, greetings may result in positive feelings while failure to perform them when the social situation demands can result in negative repercussions.

Unfortunately, little attempt has been made to bring to bear, the cultural content of the Gonjas that are embedded in their greeting expressions. This to a larger extent obscures some crucial facets of the socio-cultural life of the people. This research therefore comes in to address this problem and by extension provide some insights into the aspects of the socio-cultural life of the Gonja speakers in the Northern part of Ghana. Despite the fact that there are some studies on the speech act of greetings, both inside and outside Africa, the researcher's review of existing literature did not turn up any studies that specifically focuses on greetings in any of the Guan languages spoken in Ghana. Obeng-Ofosu (2020), who focuses on routine expressions in general among Anum speakers, is the only piece of literature the researcher could discover for the study, confirming the paucity of research on greetings in Guan languages. Following this gap, there is the need to examine the various greeting expressions used by the Gonjas and to investigate the socio-pragmatic principles that influence their usage as well as discuss the pragmatic and socio-cultural aspects of the Gonjas that are embedded in their greeting expressions using the language socialization theory to contribute to the literature. This study, therefore, not only includes Gonja, a Guan language, in the literature on greetings, but

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also constitutes the first examination of Gonja greetings through the lens of language socialization theory.

1.3 Research Objectives

The objectives of the study are to:

1 examine the types of greeting expressions in Gonja;

2 investigate the socio-pragmatic principles that govern the choice of some greetings among the Gonja speakers;

3 discuss the socio-cultural beliefs of the Gonja people that are embedded in their greeting expressions.

1.4 Research Questions

The questions used to achieve the set objectives are:

1 What types of greeting expressions are found in Gonja?

2 What are the socio-pragmatic principles that govern the choice of some greetings among the Gonja speakers?

3 What are the socio-cultural beliefs of the Gonja speakers that are embedded in their greeting expressions?

1.5 Limitations

One significant hurdle in the research was transportation, as finding way to reach Sonyo was difficult due to infrequent vehicle access on the route. This lack of transportation slowed down the entire data collection process. Also, this study could not delve into the influence of tone of speech on the addressee during greetings. Additionally, the research does not focus on conducting a comparative study of the speech act of greeting in Gonja and other Guan languages.

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1.6 Delimitations

This research is delimited to the greeting customs among the Gonja speakers in Northern Ghana, specifically in the Communities of Bole, Mankuma, Busunu and Sonyo. These sites were chosen because they are known as traditional Gonja communities, with Mankuma and Sonyo being significant sites for Gonja beliefs. Additionally, these sites were chosen because of easy accessibility to data.

1.7 Significance of the Study

The findings of this study are significant in several ways. To begin with, this research contributes to the literature on the speech act of greeting more specifically on northern Guan languages. Also, this research will serve as a source of reference for both learners and teachers of Gonja culture and belief. Also, the findings from this study will serve as a guide to researchers who have a stake in cross-cultural studies. The reason is that it will reveal to them some aspects of the Gonja culture that are embedded in their greetings that set them apart from other speech communities. Moreover, because of language contact, there is fear that these cultural issues could elude the Gonja, and this calls for documentation to prevent the absolute loss of some important linguistic information in Gonja.

1.8 Organization of the Study

The rest of the thesis is organized as follows: Chapter 2 reviews two crucial constituents of the research. These include the literature review and theoretical framework. The literature review covers articles, book chapters, and thesis that are relevant to this current study. The language socialization theory by Schiefflin and Ochs (1986) which is the principal theory that reinforces this study was also discussed. Additionally, the speech act theory was discussed since greetings fall under expressive speech acts. Moreover, Brown and Levinson's politeness theory is

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assessed since the speech act of greeting is usually followed by politeness strategies. Chapter 3 presents the methodology used to collect data for the study. It found the study as qualitative and adopted the ethnography design. The chapter also discussed purposive sampling, and focus group discussions as well as data collection instruments. Additionally, some ethical considerations were considered.

Chapter 4 presents the analysis and discussion of the result. The speech acts of greeting expressions are transcribed, subjected to textual analysis, and discussed under themes. Juxtaposing the findings with other studies from different cultural backgrounds affirms the universality of greeting expression in the world's language. The chapter also brings out the socio-pragmatic principles that influence the use of certain greetings and the socio-cultural values of the Gonja people are embedded in their greeting expressions. Finally, chapter 5 summarizes the main findings from the study and suggests recommendations for further studies.

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CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.0 Introduction

Greetings are the exchange of expressions, pleasantries, or good wishes between two people interacting for the purpose of fulfilling social obligations or establishing social relationships (Akindele, 2007). Greetings are considered conventionalized, pre-patterned expressions whose occurrence is highly context-dependent. The expressing of greetings is realized differently in diverse contexts, and this is shared among members of a particular society. For instance, in Gonja, there is a difference between greetings on the funeral ground and those offered during a marriage ceremony. Also, greetings are one of the frequent ways through which humans exhibit their politeness to one another. Greetings are also considered as an interface between people and their culture hence, some of the cultural practices of the people are embedded in their greeting expressions. In this chapter, a review of the available literature on the area under study is presented. The issues presented comprise an introduction to the notions of pragmatic and communicative competence and speech acts. A highlight on greetings, as well as criteria for greeting identification and features of greetings, are also discussed in this chapter. The concepts of politeness and face are also discussed, as well as some socio-pragmatic principles considered during greetings. A discussion on the principal theoretical framework for the study is given. Finally, the chapter reports on studies on the speech act of greeting in other languages both foreign and within Africa.

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2.1 Communicative and Pragmatic Competence

The significance of language cannot be underrated since it enables us to express our feelings, desires, and questions to the world around us. Nevertheless, we need to be extra careful during the construction of such expressions so as not to cause any chaos or misunderstanding. De Valoes (2014) puts forward that human beings are unique from the rest of the animal kingdom due to their ability to form a continuing bond by communicating in different ways through spoken and written language. The way to successfully use language in communication is mirrored in pragmatics; a sub-discipline of linguistics that examines how context contributes to meaning. Crystal (1985), cited in Shleykina (2016), defines pragmatics as the study of language use from the point of view of the users, especially the choices they make, the constraints they encounter in using language in social interaction, and the effects their use of language has on other participants in the act of communication. Thus, for a message to be successfully encoded and decoded, both the speaker and the listener must be communicatively competent.

The term "communicative competence" was initially coined by Hymes (1966, 1972) as a reaction to Chomsky's (1965) concept based on rule-governed creativity. Hymes dichotomizes linguistic and communicative knowledge to highlight the differences between the knowledge of the language forms and the knowledge that aids an individual to communicate functionally and interactively. Communicative competence empowers language learners and users to convey and interpret messages and to negotiate meanings interpersonally within specific contexts (Shleykina, 2016). In other words, it enables the users to interact appropriately. A communicatively competent speaker can produce appropriate utterances and understand the immediate conversational content, and the overall socio-cultural context.

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Canale and Swain (1980) further developed the concept of communicative competence. They identified four components of communicative competence and added pragmatic competence to the category of sociolinguistic competence. These components are;

1. Grammatical competence: This is considered the knowledge of lexical items and the rules of morphology, syntax, sentence-level grammar semantics, and phonology. This type of competence is linked to mastering the linguistic code.
2. Discourse competence: This type of competence is viewed as a complement to grammatical competence. This is considered as the ability to form sentences and also interpret a series of utterances.
3. Sociolinguistic competence: this is the knowledge of the socio-cultural rules of language, including discourse. This type of competence requires an understanding of the social context in which a particular language is used.
4. Strategic competence: This type of competence is the knowledge of communication strategies that can compensate for weakness caused by a lack of knowledge and apprehension of grammar and/or sociolinguistic norms. It encompasses both verbal and non-verbal strategies.

Bachman (1990), in his model of communicative competence, talked about language competence. According to Bachman, they are two core components of language competence. The first is organizational component, which refers to abilities in the management of formal language elements such as grammar and textual information. Knowledge of grammar includes knowledge of phonology, morphology, syntax, semantics, vocabulary, and graphology. Textual knowledge concerns itself with the comprehension and presentation of actual texts. That is knowledge in the use of sentences and utterances, as well as knowledge in the organization of

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conversations. The second component of language knowledge is pragmatic knowledge, which refers to the ability of language users to interpret and create discourse. It is made up of two sub-fields of knowledge, namely, functional knowledge and sociolinguistics knowledge. Functional knowledge refers to the awareness of practical conventions, the presentation of appropriate language roles, and the understanding of the power of speech and discourse. Sociolinguistic knowledge, on the other hand, refers to the awareness of sociolinguistic conventions for the development and comprehension of language utterances that would be appropriate for a particular presentation of language. In a revision of this model, Bachman and Palmer (1996) maintained the relevance of pragmatic competence. In the most recent model of communicative competence, Bachman and Palmer (2010) also explain pragmatic competence as a component of language ability responsible for a speaker's ability to formulate and comprehend messages and relate their language use in specific settings.

Leech (1983) and Thomas (1983) dichotomize pragmatics into pragmalinguistics and socio-pragmatics. Pragmalinguistics refers to certain linguistic tools to produce and understand utterances, such as directness and indirectness, and modification devices to soften or intensify a speech act. Socio-pragmatics on the other hand, refers to social rules of linguistic behavior that influence speakers' linguistic choices and hearers' interpretations. It looked at principles such as social status, social distance, degree of imposition, and the like.

Numerous scholars have expressed their views about pragmatic competence. According to Barron (2003), pragmatic competence is the knowledge of the linguistic resources available in a given language for realizing a particular illocution, knowledge of the sequential aspects of speech acts, as well as knowledge of the appropriate

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contextual use of the particular language's linguistic resource. Kasper (1989) viewed pragmatic competence as a constituent of communicative competence, which is distinct from discourse, grammatical, phonological, and semantic competence, though it interacts with all of them, selecting and combining their elements.

With respect to the propositions by these scholars, pragmatic competence can be viewed as a distinct constituent of a language, necessary and crucial to achieving communicative competence. Also, a speech community would be thronged with chaos and confusion in the absence of pragmatically competent speakers. For example, a Gonja speaker will be labeled pragmatically incompetent in the Gonja language if, instead of accompanying his greeting by lying down while greeting a chief, he rather squats. Hence, briefly touching on pragmatic competence in this present study of the speech act of greetings in Gonja is a crucial step. This is because it aids us in our understanding that the ability to greet and respond properly to greetings in one's language is not just a formality, but an indication of competence in language use.

2.2 The Purpose of Communication

Purpose is the intention or aim of allowing something to happen. The purpose of a speaker is very instrumental in his or her communication strategies. Communication is the process through which information is exchanged between or among individuals through a common system of symbols, signs, and behaviour. Some of the purposes of communication include; exchanging information, conveying feelings and ideas, persuading, and enhancing friendship. The purpose is a throwback in a form of communication as society has a strong anticipation with regard to the ways people should behave in social encounters. To associate well with others, one must be conscious of the societal norms and values related to social encounters to achieve the desired effect of his or her communication. During greeting exchanges,

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the greeter must consider the reason he or she is expressing the greetings. For example, the kind of greeting exchange expressed at the funeral grounds cannot be expressed at the marriage ceremony in the Gonja speech community. If an interactant used the expression "nɛ anyebe kumu lɛla 'and our good luck', at the funeral grounds, such a person will be considered incompetent in the language or defiant because the purpose is heterologous to the context. In Gonja, the type of greeting expression stated above is used in situations when someone has attained some success. For example, given birth, marriage, passing exams, etc. The context plays an integral role in language use hence, speakers have to be cognisance of it during interactions to achieve the desired purpose of communication.

2.3 Speech Act Theory

Speech act is one of the major concepts in pragmatics. Chen (2005) posits that pragmatic competence is appropriately achieved when speech acts are produced and understood properly in a particular context. This is because the speaker's intention and the effect it has on the hearer is what qualifies the speech act. According to Bach (2014), diverse acts are employed in almost any kind of speech act and this is differentiated by different aspects of the speaker's intention. There is the act of saying something, what a speaker does in saying it, (e.g. apology, thanking, or request), and how the speaker intends to affect their hearer (s). According to Austin (1962), speakers produce three (3) types of acts in the articulation of words and utterances which are; locutionary act, illocutionary act, and perlocutionary act.

2.3.1 Locutionary act

According to Austin (1962), a locutionary act is defined as a generated sound of a simple speech act. These sounds are connected by grammatical conventions whose objective is to say something relevant. The locutionary act is not ambiguous

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like the other speech acts. Locutionary acts are the literal meaning of utterances produced by the speaker. Locutionary acts emerge in diverse forms such as questions, promises, and requests. For example,

1.Do you want some coffee?

The locutionary act here comprises the words used to form the question. In this case "Do", "you", "want", "some", and "coffee".

2. "I will go to the zoo with you tomorrow.

The locutionary act here consists of the words used to make the promise. in this sense, "I", "will", "go", "to", "the", "zoo", "with", "you", and "tomorrow".

3. Please close the door.

The locution here is the combination of words making the request to close the door. in this case, "Please", "close" "the", and "door".

2.3.2 Perlocutionary act

The second type of speech act is the perlocutionary act. A perlocutionary act is the effect of the meaningful utterance of the speaker on the listener. For example, it is cold in here might result in someone closing the door. A perlocutionary act can influence others to change their behaviour or their thoughts and feelings. For instance, if someone gives clear instructions or advice, the perlocutionary act may be to prompt the listener to take specific actions. Understanding perlocutionary acts is important because it helps us analyze the broader impact of communication beyond the mere words spoken. It also highlights the role of the listener in interpreting and responding to speech acts, as the same utterance can have different perlocutionary effects on different people due to cultural norms and specific contexts in which communication takes place. Additionally, the same word may have different perlocutionary effects depending on the situation.

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2.3.3 Illocutionary act

The term illocutionary act is the third aspect of speech act and is practically considered as the main theory of speech act. It is considered as the social function of what is said. While the locutionary act is seen as the act of producing a particular word or sentence with reference, the illocutionary act is the act performed by uttering the word or sentence. It is performed by expressing attitude with a particular force (known as illocutionary force). This confirms El Hiani's (2015) assertion that illocutionary acts as speech acts that has a specific force on the hearer. This force is conventional (shared and agreed upon by a social group). That is between the speaker and the listener. Brown (2005) defines an illocutionary act as the speech act of doing something else, such as offering advice or taking a vow or greeting, for example, in the process of uttering meaningful language. Searle (1976, p. 10) provided a list that he regarded as "basic categories of the illocutionary acts". The basic categories of illocutionary speech acts, according to Searle, include:

Representatives or assertives: Acts that commit the speaker to the truth of the expressed proposition: affirming, believing, stating, claiming, or asserting. An instance of representative or assertive is in the statement, "It is raining".

Directives: Acts that make the listener performs a certain action, e.g. asking, commanding, challenging, etc. An example is the statement "Eat the food". The illocutionary point of this, according to Searle (1976, p. 11), is that "there is an attempt by the speaker to get the listener to perform an action".

Commissives: These acts that commit the speaker to some future action: promise, pledge, or oaths, Searle (1976 p. 11) define commissives as "those illocutionary acts whose point is to commit the speaker (in varying degrees) to some future course of action"

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Declarative: Acts or utterances are those that have the potential to make changes and also change reality. Examples of declaration include baptism, blessing, or judicial activities such as sentencing (Schiffman, 1997). An instance of a declarative sentence is "I hereby pronounce you husband and wife".

Expressives: Acts that express the speaker's attitude and feelings. They are speech acts that have the potential to assess the psychological state of mind of the speaker. Examples of expressives are greeting, thanking, congratulating, and apologizing.

2.3.4 Summary

This section discussed the speech act theory and the various sub categories of the speech act. According to Austin, speech act is divided into three which are the locutionary act, illocutionary act, and perlocutionary act. Among these three, the illocutionary act is considered as the main speech act theory. It has five sub-categories which are assertives, directives, commissives, expressives, and declaratives. The speech act of greetings which is the focus of this study is captured under expressive illocutionary acts since it is used to express the inner feelings of a speaker to another person.

2.4 Greetings as Expressive Speech Acts

The focal point of this present study falls under the category of expressive, with reference to Searle's taxonomy of speech acts. According to Searle (1976, p. 12), "expressive speech acts are speech acts that express the speakers' feelings about themselves or the world". An instance is a statement "I love to watch soccer". Norrick (1978, p. 279) observes that "expressive speech acts express psychological conditions, and thus not beliefs or intentions, which arise to given states of affairs". An expressive speech act must assume an embedded true hypothesis to specify that the speaker is expressing an inner feeling towards the listener that he considers to be true

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in the real world and that he is truly expressing his state of mind. Taavitsainen and Jucker (2010) define expressives as expressing the state of mind, attitudes, and feelings of speaker (s). Routine expressions such as greetings are manifestations of such expressives. Examples of expressive verbs include welcoming, greeting, thanking, and apologizing. The expressive speech act is used interchangeably by Austin and Bach as behabitives and acknowledgment respectively.

Greetings constitute a good example of what Malinowsky (1972) described as 'phatic communion' in which the mere use of words seems to create ties of social union. Lim (1988) considers greetings as a ritualized exchange that communicates politeness by way of encoding social approval. Meanwhile, Yahya-Othman (1995) views greetings as a "manifestation of polite behaviour". Along the line of Lim (1988) and Yahya-Othman (1995), I put forward that greetings can be considered as a crucial communicative strategy for polite behaviour in social interactions in the Gonja speech community. They may be seen as a way of fulfilling the general obligation of saving each other's face during conversations (Brown & Levinson, 1989; Goffman, 1967).

According to Dzameshie (1992, 1993), the social significance of using greetings may be considered from a wider perspective. As a goal-oriented actor, an interlocutor may use politeness strategies as an expression of his or her desire to present acceptable behaviour to achieve his or her communication goal. Brown and Levinson (1987) viewed positive politeness strategies as communicative strategies for establishing and reestablishing social relationships. In African communities more specifically in the Gonja speech communities, greetings are seen as an indicator of a good upbringing in the communities. Also, greetings are considered one of the most frequent interactional routines in the Ghanaian context and Gonja is no exception (Obeng-Ofosu, 2020). She argues further that greetings are crucially daily routines

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that frequently occur in social encounters. Moreover, Additionally, Firth (1972) viewed greetings with respect to their social sense as "recognition of an encounter with another person as socially acceptable". He considered greetings to be highly conventionalized and patterned routines which produce attention, identify interlocutors, and reduce anxiety in a social encounter.

Laver (1981) followed the same line and considered greetings as conversational routines and part of linguistic politeness. Laver's view is from the pragmatic perspective, greetings can be considered as illocutionary acts. Foley (1997, p. 504 cited in Agyekum (2008) posits that "greetings are used to establish social contact among interlocutor. In most languages, greetings are seen as rituals that are capable of appeasing and bonding people together and they also have the potential of establishing harmony and a peaceful atmosphere during face-to-face interactions (Agyekum, 2008). This is affirmed by Felecan (2015) who defined greetings as "a communicative behaviour, through which a speaker shows his/her availability towards the interlocutor". Every Gonja speaker must greet since it is necessary for performing several social functions. For instance, it helps in establishing and reestablishing social relationships. Among the Gonjas for instance, an individual who fails to greet is always denied the attention for social interaction since it is a sign of rudeness. Also, greetings are so frequent and crucial that when a person enters to greet, normal conversation and other communicative activities are put to a halt (Agyekum, 2008).

2.4.1 Criteria for identifying greeting

Some languages and cultures have peculiar words for greetings but others do not have, hence certain criteria are important to identify greetings (Duranti, 1997). Duranti (1997) identifies six criteria which are as follows:

1. Near-boundary Occurrence

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2. Establishment of a shared perceptual field
3. Adjacency pair format
4. Relatively predictability of form and content
5. Implicit establishment of a spatio-temporal unit of interaction
6. Identification of the interlocutor as a distinct being

Routinely, greetings are expected to occur at the beginning of a conversation, though they may not always be the very first words that are exchanged between interactants. This first criterion in greeting identification is related to their potential function as attention-getting devices and their ability to create a shared field of interaction (Duranti, 1997). Greetings in Gonja certified this criterion above where the failure to greet first has the potential of ruining any important conversation. Hence, greeting is expressed first to set the stage necessary for social encounters in the Gonja speech community.

Greetings either immediately follow or are constitutive of the parties' public recognition of each other's presence in the same perceptual field as indicated by the fact that they are usually initiated after the interactants sighted each other (Duranti, 1997). In some instances, making recognition visually available to the hearer constitute the greeting itself (Duranti, 1997). This is analogous to greetings in Gonja where at times you have to greet a person for him to recognize your presence. Therefore, refusal to greet a person in some instances in the Gonja community results in questions such as "fo maŋ wu ma naa"? –didn't you see me? Hence greeting is crucial in recognizing the availability of a person.

The adjacency pair format is another criterion for identifying greetings in speech communities and Gonja is not exception. Greetings are typically part of one or more sets of adjacency pairs, that is two-part sequences in which the initial pair part

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by one speaker (A) invites, constraints, and establishes the anticipation for a particular type of reply by another speaker (B) (Schegloff & Sacks, 1973) cited in (Duranti, 1997). Similarly, in the Gonja speech community, greeting is usually done by one person and requires an appropriate response by another person. Greetings as an adjacency pair format can be found in simple greetings; where it can take just one pair, as well as complex greetings; where they can go beyond any number of utterances.

What is said during greetings exchange is highly predictable compared to other kinds of interactions. This relative predictability of form and content predictability criterion is obvious in the Gonja greetings. Some of the greeting expressions in Gonja can be predicted by the level of social distance among the interactants and some non-verbal cues that accompany the greeting exchanges. This signifies that the respondent knows much about the culture of the other party. Sacks (1973) puts forward that the occurrence of greetings defines a unit of interaction, however, greetings could enter into the definition of larger units of analysis. This criterion is satisfied by the complex type of greeting among the Gonjas which will be explained clearly in chapter four. The complex greetings could be used to cover a range of activities within a day or an extended period such as a month.

The sixth criterion is the identification of the interlocutor as a distinct being worth recognizing. According to this criterion, the occurrence of greetings and how they are carried out typically identify a particular culture. This is very crucial in the Gonja speech community. Greetings in the social context of the Gonjas are done with respect to the social distance and status of interactants. It is inappropriate and rude to greet an elderly person without squatting or greeting a chief without lying down. The

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six criteria discussed above demonstrate important socio-pragmatic dimensions of greetings in Gonja.

2.4.2 Features of greeting expressions

The way and manner in which a speaker greets and responds to greetings determine his or her communicative competence. This is because greetings have some peculiar features which members of every speech community keenly adhered to. Therefore, the ability to greet properly following culturally accepted situations is very important. Some of these features include the formality of the setting, the rapport between interactants, the socio-pragmatics of the communication, and the purpose of the communication.

2.4.2.1 Formality of the setting

Formality is the limitations of the kind of behaviour that are acceptable and the amount of the allowable variation (conceived as deviation from a norm) (Rubin, 1968). Labov (1972, p. 245) describes "formality of situational context as what makes a speaker pay increased attention to his or her speech". The hypothesis is that the more formal or institutionally based the encounter is, the more elaborate the language used (Duranti, 2001) cited in (Agyekum, 2008). In institutionally based settings there are some rules to be followed; greetings in these settings are situation-bound (Agyekum, 2008). A formal greeting can be said to be a ritual where diplomacy, cultural norms, and values are keenly adhered to. According to Agyekum (2008), formal places include the palace and other formal public gatherings. Formal settings such as the palace and public gatherings like funeral grounds and festival durbars require a display of seriousness, politeness, and respect, whereas informal settings such as markets require less display of these courtesies.

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2.4.2.2 The kind of rapport

Rapport is a close harmonious link or relationship with another person. In most languages and culture settings, greetings are viewed as rituals that can appease and bond people together and they also have the potential of establishing harmony and a peaceful atmosphere during interactions. Building rapport is the process of developing mutual trust, friendship, and affinity with someone. At times, this rapport can happen naturally through a similarity in behaviour and interest. Rapport has a greater influence on the entire communication process. That is it culminates in making the entire communication process easier and more effective. Additionally, it makes a person feel respected and valued. Expressing greetings without taking note of rapport between and among interactants could lead to misunderstanding. Hence, the use of verbal and non-verbal cues such as squatting during greetings could lead to the maintenance of rapport. Consequently, the level of rapport between and among interactants has the potential of determining the ways and manners in which greetings are expressed in the Gonja speech community. For instance, children are to squat whiles greeting the elderly in the community. Also, subjects are to lie down when greeting a chief.

2.4.2.3 Socio-pragmatic aspects of the speech act of greetings

According to Thomas (1983), socio-pragmatics is the assessment of participants' social distance, the speech community's social rules and the appropriateness of norms, discourse practices, and accepted behaviours. Since the speech act of greeting is grounded on several cultural bases, the socio-pragmatic aspects of the study need to be taken into cognizance. Thomas (1983) opines that these socio-pragmatics principles include, gender, rank, age, power, and distance. These principles are expounded as follows:

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2.4.2.3.1 Gender

In sociolinguistics gender can be referred to as sexual identity in relation to culture and society. How words and behaviours are expressed reflects and reinforces social attitudes towards gender. However, the terms gender and sex have been used interchangeably over the years but their uses are distinct. Cameron (2006) states that "sex is a word used in connection with the biological characteristics that mark humans and other animals as either male or female, whereas gender refers to the cultural traits and behaviours deemed appropriate for men and women by a particular society." The World Health Organization (WHO) considered gender as the socially constructed characteristics of women and men, such as norms, roles, and relationships of and between groups of women and men. Wodak (1997) posits that gender is not a pool of attributes possessed by a person, but something a person does. That is it is not part of our physical appearance but something we do under societal norms.

Gender is not something we can't avoid as it forms part of how societies are ordered around us though there are language and cultural-specific dimensions with respect to the way in which this ordering is done (Wardhaugh, 2010). In every community, men have some choice of expressions and behaviours that are peculiar to them which women are aware of but cannot use themselves. There is this gender dichotomy concerning how greetings are expressed to chiefs by their subjects in the Gonja speech community. When greeting a chief in the Gonja speech community, females are expected to lie down on their right-hand side whereas males are to lie down on their left-hand side.

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2.4.2.3.2 Rank

Rank can be defined as the degree or the position of dignity, eminence, or excellence in relation to others. A person's place in society can be influenced by his/her social position as well as social role. An individual's rank in society depicts the kind of social interaction to engage with the person. Weber (2015) observes that the social rank of an individual is not limited to the material conditions of the person's life but extends to the person's prestige, social honor, or fame in society. Broadly, the ranks of people are shared among members of the community. For instance, the rank of a chief in the Gonja speech community is higher than the spokesperson and that of the spokesperson is higher than the drummer.

In every speech community, the ranks of members are hierarchical in nature and the Gonja community is no exception. Rank as a socio-pragmatics variable is very crucial in social interactions and should not be overemphasized (Agyekum, 2010). Again, Agyekum posited that rank is free of age as far as the speech act of greeting is concerned. He submitted further that irrespective of the age of a chief or a queen he or she is entitled to be addressed appropriately during social interactions. Hence, no matter the age of the chief, dignitaries like the Members of Parliament have to greet him in accordance with the socio-cultural norms and values of the greeting exchange.

In expressing greetings, one must take the rank of the greeted into cognizance. Thus, the titles of people in authority are usually adapted to hedge greetings. For example, the Gonja speakers usually address people of high rank with honorifics as an indication of respect. For instance, the Gonjas use titles such as garba and jira to distinguish between a sub-chief and a paramount chief. Also, the title 'Lajo' is given to a chief warrior whiles 'konya' is given to warrior. All this must be keenly adhered

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to during greetings in the Gonja speech community because failure to do so will be seen as a transgression.

2.4.2.3.3 Age

Age is a period of human history or human progress. Age is a very necessary socio-pragmatic principle that interactants must be conscious of during social encounters. The fact that greetings are performed under the socio-cultural rules of the speech community, it is expected on the part of interactants to toe certain accepted socio-cultural norms and conventions. Elders in every speech community are accorded with the maximum deference, and hence, children are expected to interact with elders in a certain way which signifies a mark of reverence for the elders.

Respect must be accorded to the elderly irrespective of the social relationship between interactants. For instance, in the Gonja speech community, it is expected of children to squat before greeting an elder. Also, the younger must remove his cup before greeting an elder. According to Dzameshie (2008 cited in Obeng-Ofosu (2020), children are not expected to enquire about the health of an adult interactant in the course of greeting exchange in the Ewe communities. Similarly, in the Gonja speech community, a child who enquires about the health of an elderly or his cohort during greeting exchange is considered rude and uncultured. Hence, children in the Gonja communities are trained not to enquire about the health condition of the elderly during greeting exchange, but on only one condition. That is when the elderly person is on his sick bed.

2.4.2.3.4 Power

Language can be viewed as a way of communicating ideas and asserting or maintaining power over others. Max Weber (1968) defines power as the probability that an actor will be able to realize his objectives against the opposition of others with

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whom he is in a social relationship. Elders are considered more powerful than children in every society (Obeng-Ofosu, 2020). The German sociologist Max Weber proposed a theory known as Weber's stratification. He defined stratification as the division of a society into distinct communities, which have varying assignments of "status honor" or prestige. He proposed that stratification is based on three factors that have become popularly known as "the three Ps of stratification". These are:

Property: This includes buildings, lands, farms, factories as well as other assets.

Prestige: The respect with which a person or status position is regarded by others in society.

Power: The ability of people or groups to achieve their goals despite certain obstacles.

He further argues that social stratification is the outcome of the interaction of wealth, prestige status, and power. Power is synonymous to rank. Consequently, people with high rank possess enough power than people with low rank.

Power is a crucial socio-pragmatic principle that needs to be taken into consideration during greeting exchange. An individual's power should not be undermined because they possess more bargaining power, specifically in ranked communities that are based on ideas of lifestyles and cultural beliefs (Obeng-Ofosu, 2020). For instance, at a gathering of chiefs in the Gonja speech community, the more powerful chiefs are seated on traditional pillows whiles the lower chiefs are seated on animal skins. Those who come to greet them will either remove their sandals, squat, or even lie down. This is done to signify respect and honor to the authorities. The Anum customs demand that no one talks directly to a chief during public gatherings. One has to channel the conversation through the spokesperson (Obeng-Ofosu, 2020). This assertion holds firmly among the Gonjas. In the Gonja culture, greetings and other talks are channeled to the King through the Dɔtɛ 'spokesperson'. An attempt to

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speak to the chief directly is considered uncultured and disregards to his power which comes with some repercussions.

2.4.2.3.5 Distance

Social distance refers to the extent to which people experience a sense of familiarity (nearness and intimacy). Distance can be viewed as a continuum with two ends, one of which is the closest such as classmates while the other is the opposite such as strangers. Hence, the closer the relationship between interactants, the more relaxed the conversation. Social distance can be influenced by the culture of the society in which a person lives. Age and gender can also influence distance. Interaction is very relaxed when interactants are of the same age group. Additionally, conversation is easily carried out among interactants of the same sex. According to Obeng-Ofosu (2020), an Anum child can greet family members without titles but cannot do the same to a stranger. This is similar in the Gonja speech community where in the greeting of a family member some titles can be ignored but the same cannot be done to someone you do not know. Hence, children are more obedient to strangers with regard to distance.

2.4.3 Classification and types of greeting expressions

Greetings can be classified based on the time and the situation that justifies them. For instance, there are time of the day greetings and circumstantial greetings such as childbirth and funeral greetings. Also, there are before-burial greetings and after-burial greetings. Additionally, there are activity greetings; for example, selling, eating, and cooking. moreover, certain expressions concerning any calamity could be classified under sympathy greetings. There are also greetings concerning the particular season of the year and these are known as seasonal greetings. Another

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classification of greetings is festive greetings which refer to greeting expressions during festivals where there is merry-making.

2.4.4 Summary

The section has discussed greetings as expressive speech acts since greetings are used to express the feelings of the addresser towards the addressee. the section also elucidates some criteria for greeting identification where it revealed that Gonja greetings supports the universal criteria as identified by Duranti (1997). Additionally, the section explained features of greetings which include formality of setting, kind of rapport and socio-pragmatic principles. Some of these socio-pragmatic principles talked about are rank, age gender, distance, social status, however, the age principle precedes all the other principle hence age is very during greetings among the Gonjas. All these features of greetings are very necessary in selecting a particular greeting among the Gonjas. Again, the section highlighted some classification and types of greeting in Gonja where it was established that in Gonja there are time of the day greetings, and circumstantial greetings such as childbirth greetings and funeral greeting.

2.5 Politeness and The Concept of Face

In human speech and conversation, usually, particular specifics are not remembered. However, an overall impression of the person and the conversation are remembered. Usually, the things that are remembered with respect to the conversation are whether the interactants were co-operative, friendly, and polite or they were standoffish or rude during their interaction, at times, it is vehemently presumed that the meaning of another person's view is correctly interpreted but it may not be always true. Some socio-pragmatic factors are required for comprehending the right intent of the speaker. Humans are not born with politeness but it evolves through the

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socialization process in a particular speech community. Hence, politeness develops as a consequence of ethnic and historical construction. Therefore, the word 'polite' means smoothness and refinement in conversation.

Capone and Salmani (2014) considered politeness as the expression of a speaker's intension to mitigate face threats carried by certain face-threatening acts towards the hearer. Lakoff (1990, p. 30), defines politeness as "a system of interpersonal relations designed to facilitate by minimizing the potential for conflict and confrontation inherent in all human interchange". Salmani Nodoushan (2013) explains politeness as a battery of social skills whose goal is to ensure everyone feels affirmed in a social interaction. Hence, being polite can be an attempt for the speaker to save his face or the face of the hearer (s) (Salmani Nodoushan, 2014). However, "linguistic politeness is the language usage associated with smooth communication realized through the speaker's use of intentional strategies that allow his or her message to be received favourably by the addressee, and (2) through the speaker's choice of expressions to conform to the expected and/or prescribed norms of speech appropriate to the contextual situation in individual speech communities" (Ide, 1989, p. 225 cited in Agyekum, 2008, p. 496). Greetings in Gonja satisfies the two conditions above in that the way and manner in which greeting in Gonja is expressed will determined its acceptance as appropriate by the addressee. This is why nonverbal cues usually accompany the verbal greetings in order to encode politeness.

According to Watt (2003, p. 85), the earliest theory of linguistic politeness propounded by Brown and Levinson came to fore in 1987 and it is considered as "face-saving" theory of politeness. The politeness theory identifies greetings as face-saving acts (FSA) since they display positive politeness, phatic communication, and establish social relationships in a non-threatening atmosphere. However, if greetings

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violate a variable of power (P) or social distance (D), they may turn into a face-threatening act (FTA). "Face" is very crucial in all the diverse definitions given by different scholars. This theory was used as a base for many relevant studies especially on speech act. However, it has been subjected to criticism. For example, Meier (1995) criticizes the theory for ignoring the face of the speaker and concentrating more on the listener's face.

2.5.1 The concept of face

Brown and Levinson adopt the concept of face formally propounded by Ervin Goffman in explicating the politeness theory. They considered politeness to be a universal phenomenon, taking into consideration the face needs of interlocutors. The speech act of greeting as an expressive speech act and politeness are intertwined. Greetings when performed in the appropriate context of the situation results in a positive face). The term face is defined as the public self-image that every member wants to claim for himself (Brown & Levinson, 1987). The theory identifies two opposite needs of humans. Firstly, a desire to be approved of and appreciated by others (positive face), and secondly, the desire to have one owns independent and freedom from imposition (negative face) (Brown & Levinson, 1987). In the Gonja speech community, face is taken into cognizance when expressing the speech act of greeting. For instance, meeting an elderly person on the way and greeting him/her accordingly promotes the positive face of the greeted while the refusal to do so results in a threat to his or her positive face.

2.5.2 The relationship between face and greeting expressions

Face is considered as the regality, esteem, respect, and honour of a particular person concerning the person's worth from the sentiments of other community members. Face is an important component of the Gonja speech community. During

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greetings, community members make conscious efforts to maintain face. The concept of face has its origin in China and was brought to the Western world by Goffman (1972). According to Goffman (1967), face is the positive social value a person effectively claims for himself by the line others assume he has taken during a particular contact. He submitted that social interaction consists of two fundamental principles; be considerate and be respectful, both of which play a significant role in face maintenance. Juxtaposing this to greetings in the Gonja speech community, there are certain similarities. A child greeting an elderly person has to accompany the verbal greeting by squatting and the elder also responds by telling the child to get up using the appropriate appellation term as an indication that the elder knows the culture background of the child.

2.5.3 Summary

This section discussed both the concept of face and politeness. This is so because both concepts are intertwined such that one cannot be explained in isolation. Brown and Levinson considered politeness to be a universal phenomenon, taking into consideration the face needs of interlocutors. Face is divided into two namely positive face and negative face. Also, the section discusses the interrelationship between face and greeting expressions. Face is held in high esteem during greeting expressions in the Gonja society. This is because the addresser must consider his/her face and that of the face of the addressee in order to avoid threatening his/her face or that of the addressee during greeting exchanges.

2.6 Theoretical Framework

The language socialization theory illuminated by Elinor Ochs and Bambi Schiefflin (1986) is the core theoretical framework for this investigation. According to this theory, language is viewed as a dynamic social practice that is persistently

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competed and fluxed among its users (Duff & Talmy, 2011). Hence this theory encompasses both a theoretical and methodical framework for studying human development within a cultural context (Schiefflin & Ochs, 1986, p. 3). The theory is grounded on the customs of human evolution and anthropological linguistics affiliated with "socialization through the use of language" (Schiefflin & Ochs, 1986, p. 163). The socialization theory foresees a cross-cultural stance to make clear the criss-cross between language and culture in the course of learning and teaching. Hence, this theory significantly acknowledges appreciable contrast as a result of cultural factors and socio-historical conditions. Also, this theory throws light on the close interconnectedness between the structures of language.

According to Ochs & Schiefflin (1986), the doctrines of the theory of language socialization offers valuable insights into the study of greetings, highlighting the interplay between language, culture, socialization, and socio-historical context. This is evident in Gonja, where greetings incorporate a lot of social and socio-cultural aspects of the people. Language socialization presumes that members of a speech community aspire and anticipate youngsters and other novices to demonstrate suitable forms of sociality and competence. Language becomes very instrumental in effectuating these closures through emblematic and performative capacities that connect human experience. Therefore, language socialization is seldomly obvious, depending rather on novices' ability to deduce meanings via routine indexical association between verbal forms and socio-cultural practices, relationships, institutions, emotions, and thought worlds (Ochs & Schiefflin, 1986).

Socialization is sometimes viewed as the process through which knowledge is passively transferred from experts to novices. Language socialization rather is considered the result of the communicative entanglement of novices with sources of

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knowledge, human or otherwise. Speech communities that routinely place infants as partners in dyadic interactions principally employ simplified speech in their presence. The speech act of greeting is one of the routine expressions in speech communities such as Gonja that are part of the evolvement of language in children and by so doing inculcate the culture of the community to the infants. Ochs and Schieffelin (1984) posited that language socialization is an inclusion of socialization through language and socialization in language.

Both the context of interaction and the culturally sanctioned roles of the participants are employed by the language socialization theory as principal determinants of language forms and strategies used in given contexts. Traditionally, the focal point of the language socialization theory is centered on how infants are socialized into the norms and patterns of their culture by and through language. Schieffelin and Ochs (1986) identified socialization through the use of language and socialization to use language as the two major interdependent areas of social and cultural development. It is concerned with the examination of the grammatical properties manifested in the evolvement and use of language in situated and culturally appropriate contexts.

2.6.1 Scope of language socialization theory

In the work of Ochs and Schiefflin (1979), they assert that the concept of language socialization has its roots in anthropology, driven by the idea that language is a pivotal tool in a child's development of social and cultural sensibilities. This concept differs from the traditional language acquisition. They go on to clarify that pragmatics, following Malinowski's (1935) terminology, traditionally confines itself to the context of a given situation focusing on verbal expressions, activities, sequences, turns, style, intentions, agency, and the flow of information. Alternatively,

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the study of language socialization delves into how children and novices grasp and engage with this context of situation, especially in relation to the broader context of culture. Ochs and Schieffelin (1984) further propose that language socialization refers to the dual process of children being both socialized through language and learning how to use language within their community.

In the view of Ochs (2002) and Schieffelin (1986), language plays a crucial role in both teaching individuals how to use it and helping them integrate into their community by understanding the culturally rooted social norms, values and the anticipation of the people in a particular speech community. This statement underscores the impact of language on socialization, not only in everyday communication, but also adhering to certain socio-pragmatic principles, cultural beliefs, values, and expectations that establish one's belonging within a community. This perspective aligns with the functions of greeting rituals in the Gonja culture, where language serves as as a vital tool for both individual development and community integration.

Shi (2006) emphasizes that language socialization is not restricted the early stages of language development but is an ongoing process that continues throughout an individual's life. This process remains relevant even when individuals encounter new socio-cultural environments, such as when they enter new communities like workplaces or schools, and even when they take on new roles in society or acquire additional languages. Consequently, mastering the ability to greet others appropriately is essential for fostering a sense of belonging in various contexts. Ochs (1996) supports this perspective by highlighting that any interaction involving an expert and a novice inherently incorporates elements of language socialization. This means that learning and adapting to language norms and behaviours are crucial aspects of social

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interaction across various settings. Initially, the field of language socialization predominantly focused on the acquisition of one's first language. However, as indicated by Shi (2006), it has since broadened its scope to encompass the study of bilingualism, multilingualism, and second language acquisition. This expansion reflects the recognition that language socialization applies not only to first language development, but also to the acquisition and adaptation of additional language throughout an individual's life. Furthermore, while early studies in language socialization primarily concentrate on small-scale, relatively homogenous, and monolingual communities, recent research has expanded its reach. This expansion encompasses linguistically and socioculturally diverse environments where individuals encounter contact between two or more languages and culture. This demonstrates the validity and applicability of the theory.

There are some research works that employ language socialization theory. Notable among them include Lee and Bucholtz (2005). Kim and Duff (2012) in a longitudinal multiple-case study of two female students, explain The Language Socialization and Identity Negotiations of Generation Korean-Canadian University students. Their study identified that through the complex interaction of their past, present, and future imagined experiences, the learners were socialized into diverse beliefs and ideologies about language learning and use. Another research was conducted by Schecter and Bayley (2017). Their study was on Language Socialization in Theory and Practice in long-term ethnographic research of home language practices in Mexican-background families in the United States. Their research revealed that language socialization is a dynamic and interactive process. Children and more importantly novices could be helped to converse using the speech act of greeting and by so doing get to learn the language and consequently assimilate the culture. Also,

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the language socialization theory was used by Obeng-Ofosu (2020) to examine routine expressions in Anum. Her research discovered that the Anum child is taught how to interact using these routine expressions. The routine expressions in Anum according her is an embodiment of the cultural values of the people hence, youngsters are thought to be of good behaviour more especially to the elderly through these routines. The preceding discussions have highlighted the veracity of the language socialization theory showcasing its application in studies involving foreigners as well as a Southern Guan language in Ghana. This suggests that this time is felicitous for utilizing this theory to conduct research in the context of Gonja within the Northern Guan language, uncovered that the language socialization theory has been used in studies of both foreign languages and Ghanaian language. Hence, this time is felicitous to apply the theory to conduct research in the northern Guan language more specifically in Gonja. This study thus seeks to apply the theory to give an in-depth Examination of how the speech act of greeting is expressed among the Gonja speakers to add up in the exploration.

2.6.2 Greeting as a form of language socialization

Basically, language is viewed as how people, more specifically children, and other novices, are socialized through the use of language. The speech act of greeting is the most pervasive routine expression in every speech community. Almost all speech communities in Ghana attest to this important aspect of speech act and the Gonja speech community is no exception. Adults anticipate novices to employ greeting expressions properly to effectively function in society. Language is thus the means through which the speech act of greeting is produced. Greetings are considered the main 'access rituals' in the communication process which aids in the initiation of conversation. That is it sets the conditions necessary for any social interaction. Poole

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(1992) explicates that, second language learners are guided to interact using routine expressions such as greetings. He again posited that it will enable them to socialize in the target language. in daily interactions within speech communities, individuals assume social roles, all of which rely on the use of language. Language use and its associated social meanings are indicative of the prevailing social and cultural norms. Therefore, children become proficient in both language and culture by engaging with caregivers and other knowledgeable members of their community. Through this process of language socialization, children acquire the behavioural patterns that align with their community's cultural expectations as outlined by Schieffelin and Ochs (1986).

2.6.3 Language socialization and the sense of belongingness

Language socialization hinges on the potential of embodied communication to engage youngsters and novices in comprehending and realizing familiar and novel ways of thinking, feeling, and acting with others across the life span. Sperry, Sperry and Miller (2015), defined it as the study of the socialization of language and socialization through language. It is an approach that presupposes that community members desire and anticipate children and novices to display appropriate forms of sociality and competence. Lee and Bucholtz (2015, p. 319), propounded that human "becomes socialized to act and interact culturally through the use of language". Belonging refers to the acknowledgement of an individual as a constituent or member, and a sense of belonging is an essential human necessity, akin to the basic requirements for (Hall & Cook, 2014). She again observes that the sensation of belonging hold utmost significance in perceiving the worth of life and managing profoundly distressing emotions. According to her, they are diverse ways in which a person can find belonging. For instance, some people can find belonging in church, or

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mosque, some with friends, some in school, some in social media, and some with family. However, some people too wrestle to find a sense of belonging because they feel they do not belong anywhere and loneliness is physically painful to them.

A sense of belonging within a broader community positively influences a person's motivation, well-being, and happiness. Social connections are nurtured through common routines such as the customary exchange of greetings. People socialize through interaction and as they interact, the build and maintain good rapport among themselves. Greeting is very fundamental in the expression of the cultural values of a group of people. This is because greeting sets a suitable stage for any kind of conversation. When people are greeted, they feel respected, honored, and belonged. Therefore, the inability to greet and greet properly will ruin any potential discourse.

2.6.4 Summary

This section has discussed the theoretical framework of language Socialization. It viewed language as a socializing element that promotes linguistic and cultural practices in society mostly among youngsters and novices. However, this language phenomenon can be achieved through the speech act of greetings which can be used to promote the sense of belongingness and social cohesion. Therefore, knowing how to greet and respond to greetings is not limited to just the use of grammatically correct sentences, but a reflection of the cultural values and norms of the community.

2.7 Related Studies

Notwithstanding the scarcity of research on greetings in Ghana's Guan languages, pertinent studies have emerged both globally and within Africa. This section reviews relevant literature that informs and contextualizes the present study. Nilson et al. (2020) investigated how greetings are utilized within the context of

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Sweden-Swedish and Finland-Swedish languages. The study adopted a variational pragmatic framework, which means it examined how language variations occur in different social and situational contexts. One key aspect of the study was to determine the extent to which nationality of participants influences their choice of greetings. While nationality is an important factor, the research also delves into various social factors such as age, gender, participant roles, as well as situational factors like medium of communication, region, and venue, which all impact the greetings people use (Nilson et al., 2020). Similarly, in Gonja, some socio-pragmatic principles such as age are very crucial in determining the selection of a particular greeting. For instance, the younger person must always accompany his or her greeting by squatting in order to show deference to the elderly. However, while this study is a comparative one, the current research is not comparing two languages but rather analyzing how native speakers of Gonja exchange greetings. Moreover, the study introduces an interactional analytical perspective, which sheds light on how the timing and sequence of greetings in conversations affect the choice of greetings. It demonstrates that variations in pragmatics emerge as a result of these interactions (Nilson et al., 2020).

Sithebe (2011) investigated the communication styles between siSwati and American English speakers, especially examining how they express requests and greetings using Blum-Kulka's (1989) Cross-cultural Speech Act Realization Model as the theoretical framework. The research involves native and non-native siSwati speakers, as well as non-native siSwati speakers using English. The participants consist of 10 Swazi individuals and 10 American Peace Corps volunteers residing in Swaziland at the time of the study. Data collection instruments included questionnaires and semi-structured interviews. The findings highlight significant variations in how American English speakers and Swazi individuals perform and

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interprete greetings and requests, largely attributed to their distinct cultural backgrounds. These differences occasionally lead to misunderstandings, underscoring the importance of promoting awareness of cultural disparities to foster better cross-cultural interactions and tolerance.

Kirdasi (2013) studied the speech acts of greetings of Arabs and Americans using the Cross-cultural Speech Act Realization Model as a theoretical framework. The aim of the study was to compare greeting strategies with respect to body language and speech performed by both Arabs and Americans. Socio-pragmatic principles such as gender, social distance, and situation were studied to find out if they have an influence on the strategies of greetings. The data collection instruments were natural observation and discourse completion text (DCT), which consist of six situations to test different principles. The participants of the study were made up of 60 Arabs and Americans. Also, the researcher employed interviews in order to comprehend how greeting strategies are perceived by the respondents. 18 participants were interviewed. The findings of the research show more use of oral speech greeting strategies than body language by both Americans and Arabs. Notwithstanding, Americans used more oral speech than Arabs. Additionally, body language was used more by Americans than Arabs. Furthermore, there is a different between the greeting patterns in oral speech and body language employed by both American and Arab speakers. Moreover, the Americans tended to use a variation of strategies of greeting and language, while the Arabs used routine ones. On the contrary, Arabs tended to use a variety of body language strategies while Americans did not.

A study carried out by Rababa'h and Malkawi (2012) analyzed the Jordanian Arabic linguistic etiquette, including the speech act of greeting using the Cross-cultural Speech Act Realization Model as the theoretical framework. Also, it analyzed

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what sociolinguistic factors were responsible for their structures. Data were collected by the researchers from conversations that occur naturally in different settings. Results of their study revealed that the factors responsible for structuring the speech act of greeting were age, sex, situation-context, and time differences. Similar factors are considered in the Gonja speech community and will be explicated further in the data analysis. For instance, among the Gonjas, greetings among age mates are more relaxed than greeting among interlocutors of different age groups. The study further showed that there are rules related to the initiations of greeting that are socio-cultural and socio-religious. The greeting phrase asalaamu alaykum, meaning 'peace be upon you', is considered a crucial socio-religious, polite, and common greeting.

Akindele (2007) investigated the socio-pragmatics of the greeting forms of Sesotho employing the language socialization theory. In his study, he stated that greetings form an integral part of the Basotho etiquette imposing on each member an obligation on how to conduct oneself in a particular way toward others. The findings of the research revealed that the speech act of greeting in this community is routine and that the goal is to establish good interpersonal relationships. Greetings are also seen as a serious conversational development, as it involves asking about the wellbeing of a person, that of his or her family and friends. The findings of the research further revealed age, time, and context differences. Homologously, greetings among the Gonjas are considered an aid to peaceful social relations because it forms an integral part of the daily experience of the group members. It helps to establish rapport with another person; to recognize his or her presence and to demonstrate friendliness. Hence, greetings are crucial and are regarded as a display of appreciation for another person and good rapport among members and it also shows concern about

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the well-being of the people, as if to say "you are your brother/sister's keeper" (Akindele, 2007, p. 2).

Omolola (2023) investigated the pragmatic analysis of greetings within the Yoruba culture, with the core objective being the classification of these greetings based on their contextual relevance utilizing Grice's (1975) Cooperative Principle as the framework. Their study also emphasizes the pivotal role that these greetings play as a tool for socio-pragmatic communication success. It sets forth several specific goals, including an examination of the proficiency of participants in engaging in greeting exchanges, the resolution of potential ambiguity in social greetings, a detailed exploration of the politeness aspects inherent in greetings concerning linguistic meaning, and comprehensive explanation of the broader social importance and functions that greetings fulfill within the Yoruba context.

To gather data for the research, a combination of participatory observation, non-participatory observation, and interviews were employed. The interviews were conducted with six Yoruba native speakers (4 males and 2 females) from Ile-Ife, Ibadan, and OwodeYewa. This current study also utilized participant observation as an instrument in collecting data for the since the research is an ethnography study. The findings derived from this study underscore that greetings within the Yoruba cultural framework serve a multifaceted purpose (Omolola, 2023). That is they not only convey social approval but also act as a means to express the specific situation at hand and the dynamics of interaction between the individuals involved. Furthermore, the study reveals that determining the exact meaning of Yoruba greetings can be a complex endeavor, unless one takes into account the rich cultural context and the specific circumstances of the people involved (Omolola, 2023). comparatively, in Gonja, the cultural setting and situation of the interactants is very significant in

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determining the kind of greeting to exchange. Hence, greetings during festivals are different from greetings from greetings during a naming ceremony.

Mbenzi and Amakali (2018) researched on the less explored socio-pragmatic aspects of Oshiwambo greetings with the aim to shed light on the current state of Oshiwambo greeting using the Speech Act Theory, which underscores that utterances are not mere words but are spoken by specific individuals in specific situations for specific purposes. in this context Oshiwambo greetings are examined as a means to convey particular messages from the speaker to the listener (Mbenzi & Amakali, 2018). This current study of greetings in Gonja will also take some cues from the speech act theory since greetings are considered as expressive illocutionary speech act by Searle. To gather data for the study, two distinct approaches were employed: ethnography was used to assess how Euro-western culture has influenced Oshiwambo greetings, while documentation was utilized to dissect the socio-pragmatic context of different forms of Oshiwambo greetings. The study places a significant emphasis on the purposes, settings, and various types of greetings within the Oshiwambo language (Mbenzi & Amakali, 2018). Also, the purpose and setting plays a crucial role in how greetings are made in Gonja hence, greeting a market returnee is different from greeting someone coming back from the farm. Additionally, the study scrutinizes the paralinguistic and extra-linguistic elements that complements these greetings. Similarly, in Gonja certain nonverbal cues occur concurrently during greeting exchanges and this is done with respect to age, gender and rank. For example, youngsters are supposed to squat while greeting and elderly and subjects are to lie down when exchanging greetings with the chief.

The analysis conducted in the study underscores that greetings play an integral role in interpersonal communication and serve as an introduction to establishing

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social connections. these greetings can vary depending on factors such as the age of the interlocutors involved and specific circumstances in which the greeting occur and also the study revealed that they are situations where no formal exchange of greetings is anticipated (Mbenzi & Amakali, 2018). Correspondingly, in Gonja greetings and responses in Gonja are expressed by taking cognizance of some socio-pragmatic principles such as age. For instance, while the elderly can respond with *keladaa*? 'did you say good bye to sleep?' or *karehɛ aa*? 'daybreak' to the morning greeting and *saŋɛ fo aa*? 'is it time?' to the afternoon, evening, and night greeting respectively, the younger can only respond '*awoo'* to this time of the day greeting and will be labled as rude or impolite when an attempt is made to respond in the elderly manner.

Ekanjume-Illongo (2013) conducted a study on the behavioural patterns within the sociolinguistics context of Akoose, from the point of view of greetings, which form part of the cultural identity of the people. The paper has examined two types of greetings found within this community using the interactional sociolinguistic theory by Gumperz, the nature of these greetings and the factors that lead to the choice of one greeting over the other. The study has equally tried to bring out the functions of greetings in the lives of the Bakossi people. According to Ekanjume-Illongo (2013, p. 44), "age factor, time, and context of situation determines the choice greetings in Akoose as well as who greets first but that age is the dominant factor that determines who greets first and to extent what type of greeting to use at a particular instance". The Gonjas have a similar phenomenon where by the way and manner to greet and respond to greetings considers certain socio-pragmatic principles. For instance, greeting an elderly person without squatting is considered as rude in the Gonja speech community. Also it is considered asocial when a youngster g enquires about the health condition of the elderly during greeting exchanges. Also, the greeting expression

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during misfortunes such as the death of a member of the Gonja community is different from the one that is offered during the success of a member such as enskinment as a chief or child birth. Hence, like the Bakossi people, context plays a major role in determining the type of greeting to be offered among the Gonjas.

Obeng-Ofosu (2020) studied the linguistics of routine expressions in Anum utilizing the language socialization theory (Ochs & Schiefflin, 1986) and considered greetings as one of the pervasive expressions in the Anum speech community. Again, she views greetings in Anum to be similar to that of Akan as explained by Agyekum (2008); hence, greetings in Anum are categorized into simple and complex, based on their form. Anum simple greetings may have a full form and a shortened form. The complex greetings in Anum, according to her, go beyond a mere simple greeting to enquire about the health and other social concerns of the interactants. Consistently, among the Gonjas greetings can be simple or complex where the complex one is lengthy and rigorous, the simple one is very brief. Again, the findings of the research showed that the Anum always use a metonymic expression "wo tiri nkwa"-'life to your head to greet a woman who has successfully given birth (Obeng-Ofosu, 2020). Similarly, the Gonjas also have the same metonymic "nɛ anyebe kumu lɛla"-'and our head good' hence, the head is used as a metonymy for the entire body. Greetings that are offered the next day after burial in Anum, according to Obeng-Ofosu (2020), pragmatically changes from expression of sympathy to that of congratulations. That is, the bereaved family is congratulated for living up to expectation to give the dead a befitting burial. Among the Gonjas, the greeting expression "nɛ asaŋ ndre" 'Thanks for yesterday is expressed by sympathizers to the bereaved family to congratulate them for having the courage to withstand the calamity that befalls them and also able to give the deceased a befitting burial.

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Additionally, her study reveals that there are some socio-religious rules for initiating greetings in virtually every speech community; and the Gonja speech community is no exception. That is the younger should greet the older, the walking person should greet the sitting person, the guest should greet the host, etc. Among the Gonjas it is mandatory for the younger to always greet the older and when you are walking and you meet a person (s) sitting down you are supposed to greet as well. Also, under no circumstance should you enter a person's house and expects the person to greet you first. It is incumbent upon you to initiate greetings immediately after you enter a person's house irrespective of your age, rank, status, etc. Failure to consider these universal socio-religious rules during greetings will render a speaker an outcast or incompetent in the language. Also, the findings of the study revealed that greetings in Anum shared most of the universal features of greetings as identified by Duranti. These features include near-boundary occurrence, the establishment of a shared perceptual field, adjacency pair format, relative predictability of form and content, implicit establishment of a spatio-temporal unit of interaction, and identification of the interlocutor as a distinct being worth recognizing. Greetings in Gonja also tallies with these universality features of greeting outlined by Duranti.

Obeng-Ofosu (2020) further revealed that there are some socio-cultural values that are embedded in the Anum routine expressions, for instance, superstition. One of such superstitious believes among the Anum is that it is not acceptable for one to greet while on his way to the toilet. Gonjas have a similar believe in that the one going to the loo is unclean to engage in any meaningful conversation. However, such a person can use the statement "mee yɔ nɛ n ya churɔ Yagbongwura"-'am going to greet Yagbongwura' to mean that he or she is unfit to exchange the proper greetings with the addressee. Yagbongwura is the paramount chief of the Gonjas. As two

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distinct Guan languages, this study will also adapt the the Language Socialization Theory (SLA) and some data collection instruments which are recordings, observation, and focus group discussions used by Obeng-Ofosu which are recordings, observation, and focus group discussions.

Ameka (2010, pp. 127-128), analyzed access rituals in West African communities using the speaking model proposed by Dell Hymes' model as the framework. Access rituals are verbal and nonverbal communicative acts that demarcate boundaries at the opening and closing phases of social interaction. He explicates that greetings and farewells are part of social interactions instead of being the conventional openings and closing of social interactions. Schegloff (1968) posited that openings and closings are phases embedded in interaction in which mutual access is negotiated, and they are comprised of several sequences. Also, he advances that though the boundaries of social interactions are demarcated through ritual communicative acts, these ritual acts do not just have social (for instance appreciation) and phatic functions. Nevertheless, he characterized this as expectations, norms of interaction, cultural ideologies, and values with reference to access rituals and ways of interpreting them in cultural scripts. (e.g. Goddard & Wierzbicka, 2004).

He addressed a particular issue with regard to routinized greeting questions and their answers. Ameka argued that most theorizing about the ritualistic nature of greetings, and more especially about greeting questions, has been based on Anglo and Western attitudes towards such questions. Ameka (2010, p. 129) postulated that among some cultural-linguistic groups in West Africa, greeting questions are genuine questions that need to be faithfully and felicitously answered. The difficulty of openings and closings everywhere relies heavily on different factors. For example, age, social status, period of absence of interlocutors, and more importantly, the kind

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of interaction with respect to social-cultural conventions. Hence, he states diverse types of encounters that may transpire between interlocutors in West Africa. Therefore, he describes a particular type of encounter known as a social visit, bringing out its constitutive factors and explicating the linguistic routines that may be applied in such encounters. He lays emphasis on diverse conventional opening acts for initiating interaction, positing that "greetings" are but a subcomponent of openings. He again puts forward that the enactment of well-being inquiries is a direction for exhibiting cultural norms such as inclusiveness and harmony in West African speech communities. Again, he asserts that the expectancy with respect to the questions has cross -cultural variation. Lastly, he suggests changes due to language contact and the norms associated with greeting behaviour in West Africa. This current research also aimed at investigating these among the Gonja speakers.

Dzameshie (2002) worked on the form, function, and social value of greetings among the Ewes. He asserts that even though scholars appreciate the routine nature of greetings as phatic communion, they also put emphasize on the crucial social function they perform. He propounded that greetings must be seen as a crucial communicative strategy to determine polite behaviours in social encounters. They may be seen as a way of achieving the general obligation to save each other's face (Brown & Levinson, 1987; Goffman, 1967). Dzameshie again stated that a speaker may sign up to a politeness strategy as a powerful sociolinguistic gesture to strengthen an already existing relationship or establish a new one. For example, positive politeness strategies (as put forward by Brown & Levinson, 1987) serve as communicative strategies for fostering social relationships. This is possible in that, these strategies encode social approval or appreciation. Greeting is one most crucial socio-cultural routine that serves this function. In African communities and the Ewe speech

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community to be specific, greeting is seen as a "mark of proper behaviour" (Dzameshie, 2002, p. 183).

Moreover, he asserts that among the Ewes, greeting is considered an expected sociolinguistic behaviour that failing to greet when the social context beckon is considered as a serious transgression. Furthermore, he averred that withholding greetings is adjudged impolite due to the fact that the potential recipient feels neglected. The withholder stands the risk of receiving negative social remarks. This is similar among the Gonjas. For instance, the withholder receives such negative remarks as kebia jaga 'ill-mannered person', nfel wura 'disrespectful person', etc. Hence, greetings in the Gonja speech community are considered as an indication of good upbringing therefore it is expected to be performed by every member of the society.

Dzameshie (2002) postulates that in the Ewe speech community, the length of greetings, their content, and the way and manner in which they are exchanged are dependent on certain social variables. Specifically, the social value attached to interpersonal relationships. For example, while friends and close relations usually resort to lengthy types of greetings, strangers on the other hand normally receive short forms of greetings. Hence lengthy greetings are a display of solidarity, warm, and cordial relationships. Other factors influencing greetings according to Dzameshie (2002) depend on the time the interactants last met as well as their age. These factors are also used to determine the length of greetings in the Gonja speech community.

Dzameshie (2002) again proposes that there are some social norms that serve as a direction for interlocutors to use greetings appropriately in a socio-cultural way. He assumed that these norms are the social enactment of underlying socio-cultural rules that are labeled as part of the communicative competence of members of the

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Ewe speech community. Similarly, Gonjas also have some social conventions that interlocutors follow during greeting exchanges. For instance, when greeting an elderly, one is supposed to accompany his greeting by squatting. Also, under no circumstance should a person greet another person with the left hand. All these are to be observed in order not to threaten the positive face of another person.

Egblewogbe (1990) investigated the social and psychological aspects of greetings among the Ewe of West Africa. He explicates the different kinds of greetings used by the Ewe people of West Africa and some aspect of social and psychological that triggers their use. He puts forward that greetings and conversations have been viewed as being part of socially relevant linguistic categories. They are part of the major categories of sentences we apply in different social roles. Thus, learning to greet and converse becomes part of the socialization process in every society. Firth, (1957, p. 28) asserted that "through the period of our growth we are progressively incorporated into our social organization, and the chief condition and means of their incorporation are learning to say what the other expects us to say under the given circumstance".

Egblewogbe (1990) proposes that knowing how to greet appropriately is not just a requirement by every member of the community, but it is viewed as a mark of good upbringing. He again postulates that greeting among the Ewe speakers is considered as a right and responsibility. It identifies the individual with his group and also acts as a direction to express solidarity and love as well as show respect and deference to superiors. Egblewogbe (1990) advances that refusal to greet a person or respond to his or her greetings can be hurtful.

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Even though the expressions used in greetings are conventional in form as well as content, they, however, have some social, cultural, and psychological implications. The people's fear and aspiration, their attitudes to others as well as to diverse life situations, concern for one another in the society, aspects of social structure as well as social and cultural values are greatly reflected in and are the focus of greetings. Refusal to greet, and greet appropriately, maybe clarify as a rejection of social recognition which may be viewed as a transgression and possibly lead to serious repercussions (Egblewogbe, 1990, p. 17). Toeing the discussion of Egblewogbe, I argue in this study that the Gonja speakers have similar greeting terms as the Ewe speakers which this study aimed to bring to fore. Like the Ewes, in Gonja, an individual who refuses to greet is considered as rude and an oddball in society.

Agyekum (2008) views greetings as one of the most frequent linguistic interactional routines among the Akans of Ghana. Agyekum studied the functions, situations, as well as the main forms of Akan greetings using the Ethnography of Communication Model proposed by Dell Hymes (1972). He pointed out some major functions of greetings. For example, the creation of social rapport, commitment to one another during social encounters, and a display of a person's communicative competence. Similarly, in the Gonja speech community, greetings are used to establish good social relationships and the way and manner in which they are offered is a mark of an individual's communicative competence. Again, he analyzes the taxonomy of Akan greetings with respect to simple and complex, formality periods, events, and activities as well as greetings in modern Akan society. He posited that greetings are expressive speech acts performed in relation to the socio-cultural norms of the society where the performative verb *kyia* (greet) brings about a sequence of interactional performances, verbal and nonverbal actions that carries social meanings.

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Agyekum (2008) explicates further that greetings bring about a phenomenon that have explain by conversational analysts such as turn-taking, adjacency pair format, pre-sequences, overlapping, and repair. Greetings in the Akan speech community are used as ritualized pre-sequences that precede the actual message in several communicative interactions. They are used as signals, attention-getters, and elementary grounds for the possible openings of conversations, discussions as well as public speeches (e.g. Mey, 1993). This contention holds firmly in the Gonja speech community. Among the Gonjas, greetings are the first words expressed when interactants recognize their presence. Hence, without greetings, no meaningful conversation can be possible in the Gonja society.

Additionally, Agyekum argues that language is dynamic in nature hence any change in the dynamics of the society, be it politics or culture comes with a correspondent change in language use and style. A speech community may shift from one cultural practice in favor of another. For instance, a community may completely reject a particular cultural practice and replace is with a foreign one. The conventional roles with respect to greetings in Akan have been affected due to changing trends in the Akan communities. There is a feature of diachronic change, which culminates to the structure, and the application of politeness formulas such as greetings propagated to other elements of other cultures.

Moreover, Agyekum (2008) submitted that urbanization and education made most inhabitants in the cities use the English version of greetings such as Good morning, afternoon, evening, etc. Some of the traditional greetings and responses have become obsolete in the minds of the youth, and this resulted in weakening their usage and form. The traditional form such as wo ho te sɛn?, 'How are you/ your body', wo mpɔmu te sɛn? 'how are your joints' have diminished to ɛte sɛn, 'how is

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it?'. The noun phrases (NPs) wo ho, 'your body', and wo mpɔ mu, 'your joints' have been abandoned and replaced with 'ɛti'. A similar issue among the English was investigated by Ferguson (1976). He posited that in the past half-century, it has been possible to view the diminishing of the form from *How are you* to *Hi*! among the American English speakers.

Agyekum foregrounds the fact that some youth in the Akan communities cannot and do not know the Akan greetings. The prevailing phenomenon revealed that they are communicatively incompetent with respect to a crucial interactional routine such as greetings. Lack of knowledge in Akan greetings is more intense among the Akans living in the cities such as Accra, Takoradi, Koforidua, etc. than their rural counterparts. Also, it is more deep-rooted in public sector institutions such as educational institutions, ministries, banks, etc. than in the informal sectors such as the open markets. I will explicate later in this study that similar issues among the Gonja speakers particularly the youth and specifically those living in the cities, are losing this significant component of interactional routine in Gonja. Furthermore, I shall align this to the influence of foreign religions such as Islam and also Western Education.

Notwithstanding, some people view English language as prestigious and have the mentality that only those living in the rural areas and illiterates who use the traditional greetings in Gonja. Additionally, I will show and argue by following Agyekum (2008) who notes that among the Akans the use of activity greetings has also been diminished and most people resort to using everyday time greetings. The use of the right address honorific forms is also an unfortunate area that has been diminished in the Akan greetings. Agyekum (2008) stated that most Akan students greet without using the address terms. They are not conscious of the social variables.

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Muslims and Christians use certain greetings for their group members. Similar conclusions would be drawn in Gonja.

2.8 Conclusion

Some relevant literature with respect to the discussion on greeting expressions used for daily communication in diverse speech communities has been reviewed. It discussed the relationship between greetings and the culture of the people with regard to their language. Also, the chapter explained Brown and Levinson's concept of politeness and how it is associated with face as well as greeting expressions. Moreover, it discussed the concept of pragmatic and communicative competence since greetings are a crucial aspect of gaining competence in every language. The speech act theory has been talked about in this because greetings are an aspect of illocutionary expressive speech acts used to express familiarity with another person. Additionally, the chapter expounded on the principal theoretical framework adopted for the research; Language Socialization Theory proposed by Schiefflin and Ochs (1986). The chapter further explained some socio-pragmatic principles including rank, gender, age, distance, and power. Some classifications of greetings which include time of the day greetings, situational greetings activity greetings, festive greetings, and seasonal greetings were also talked about. Some foreign and -related studies on speech acts of greetings have been discussed. The universal view demonstrates in most of these studies is the need for a socio-cultural perspective to the explanation of greeting expressions. Nevertheless, the foreign studies are mainly comparative studies whereas the African studies are based on the socio-cultural values of the people in their greetings.

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CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

3.0 Introduction

Research methodology refers to procedures or a step-by-step process that is followed when conducting research. The aim of this chapter is to describe the methodology adopted for this research. The chapter, therefore, expounds on the research approach and design and attests to the choice. Again, it elucidates the research site, population, and sampling techniques employed for the research. Additionally, the data collection instruments, data collection techniques, data analysis plan, and some ethical considerations are also explained in this chapter.

3.1 Research Approach

De Vaus (2001) considers a research approach as the overall procedure that the researcher adopts to unite the diverse constituents of a study into a clear and logical form. This is done to make sure that the research problem is successfully addressed. A qualitative approach was adopted for the study. Creswell (1998) defined a qualitative research approach as an approach where the research problem is studied in its natural setting rather than having participants studied in the laboratory. Meanwhile, Ary et al (2010) view a qualitative research as a research approach that explains human and social behaviour in a specific cultural background. The focal point of qualitative research is to describe, understand, and clarify a human experience Dörnyei (2007). Consequently, this study sets out to describe, understand, and clarify the types of greetings in Gonja and the socio-pragmatic principles that govern the choice of some greetings among the Gonja speakers as well as to discuss the socio-cultural aspects of the people that are embedded in their greeting expressions.

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Qualitative research is commonly characterized as being emergent in nature. This is because every aspect of the qualitative research approach is made flexible to create room for details that may emerge in the course of the investigation. Also, the researcher is at liberty to work with different data such as recorded data, various types of text including documents, field observation, diary entries, and images such as pictures and videos. Additionally, qualitative research approach allows the researcher to take views of the social phenomenon from the views of the "insiders" or respondents (Dörnyei, 2007).

3.2 Research Design

A research design is a sequential process under which the research is conducted, to contribute towards the achievement of the set objectives. Fouche and De Vos (1998, p. 123) define a research design as a "plan or blueprint of how one intends to conduct research". Hence, in this study, the researcher adopted the ethnographic design in gathering data for the study. Ethnography is a qualitative research design that looks at the social interaction of language users in a given cultural setting. Calhoun (2002) defines Ethnography as the study of the culture and social organization of a particular speech community. Since ethnography has its origin in anthropology, the researcher is immersed in the community of the target participants to observe their behaviour and interactions up close. This enables the researcher to have direct access to the culture and practice of the group under investigation. Also, by immersing yourself into the social environment of the participants, the researcher may have access to more authentic data and spontaneously observe dynamics that could not have been found out simply by asking. Thus, ethnography was adapted to enable the researcher to collect empirical data on the speech act of greetings from the point of view of the native speakers of Gonja.

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3.3 Research Site

The research was conducted in Bole, a town in the Savannah Region of Ghana. The Bole town shares boundaries with the Sawla-Tuna-Kalba to the North, the West-Gonja district to the East, the Wenchi Municipality to the South, and La Cote D'Ivoire to the West. A significant majority of individuals who speak Gonja as their native language can be located in the vicinity of Bole. Additional data were subsequently gathered from some villages where the primary language spoken was Gonja, including Mankuma, Busunu, Sonyo, Maluwe, and Jintilpe.

3.4 Population

To successfully accomplish one's goal in a study, the population is very crucial. Population is "the collection of all individuals, families, groups, or organizations, communities, and events that will participate in a study" Mark (1996, p. 105). Meanwhile, Bless and Higson-Smith (2000, p. 85) define population as "the set of elements that the research focuses on and to which the obtained results should be generalized". The target audience of every research is the population, or the group to which the study's conclusion should be applied (Gay, 1987). Native speakers of Gonja made up the population for this study. They were sampled from Bole in the savanna region.

3.5 Sample and Sampling Techniques

A sample can be described as a constituent of the overall population under study. Brink (2001, p. 133) defines a sample as "part or fraction of a whole, or a subset of a larger set, selected by the researcher to participate in a research project". Creswell (2012) defines a sample as a subgroup of a target population that the researcher plans to study for generalizing about the target population. Arikunto (2010) on his part considers the sample as representative of the population studied. People

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that are selected for a study are known as participants. Sampling is the process of selecting a group of people, events, or other elements with which the researcher wants to conduct the research. A total number of (36) males and females as well as (5) social events were purposively sampled to participate in this study. To take the sample needed to be studied, the researcher must use a sampling technique.

A purposive sampling technique was adopted for the study. According to Dornyei (2007, p. 125), "the main goal of sampling is to find individuals who can provide rich and varied insights into the phenomenon under investigation so as to maximize what we can learn; this goal is best achieved by means of some sort of 'purposeful' or 'purposive' sampling". Arikunto (2010) defines purposive sampling as a non-probability sampling technique that involves the selection of samples based on a specific purpose. Meanwhile, Bless and Higson-Smith (1995) consider it as a non – probability sampling technique that is based on the researcher's own judgment regarding the characteristics of a representative sample. The participants of this study were chosen due to their possession of the necessary information required for the study. Hence, certain factors were considered in the selection of the participants. These factors include; age (that is those above adolescence), and the length of time that one has stayed in the speech community (that is those who have stayed virtually all their lives in Gonja speech community were selected). This to a large extent helped in recording less diluted Gonja variety in the face of globalization and the phenomenon of language contact.

3.6 Instruments and Data Collection

In order to obtain data in a study, research instruments are very crucial. Wilkinson and Bermigham (2003, p. 3) defined research instruments as devices for gathering and measuring information relevant to a study. According to Arikunto

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(2010, p. 203), research instruments are tools used to gather data in order to make the work easier and obtain valid results. Fraenkel and Wallen (2009) aver that a researcher should consider certain variables such as validity, reliability, usability, and objectivity when designing or selecting a good research instrument. They are different kinds of instruments such as interviews, field notes, observation, recording, etc. However, taking into account the ethnographic description of this research, the three (3) principal instruments employed to obtain data for this study were observation, focus group discussion as well as recording.

3.6.1 Observation

Observation is the process of gathering data by watching people or events in their natural settings. It can also be adopted in gathering data about people and cultures. There are two main types of observation: participant observation and direct observation. With participant observation, the researcher has to immerse him or herself in the setting where the respondents are and acts a dual function of both observer and a participant while taking notes or recording. On the other hand, direct observation involves the researcher observing without participating. This study made use of both participant and direct observation, but the participant observation was used more since I am a native speaker and resident of the research site. However, the direct observation was done overtly with the consent of the participants sought. This aids in the gathering of empirical data.

3.6.2 Focus group discussion

Focus group discussions are facilitated discussions held with a small group of people who possess some specialist knowledge or interest in a particular topic. They are used to identify the perceptions and attitudes of a defining group of people. Morgan (1996) defined focus groups as a data collection technique that gathers data

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through group interaction on a topic determined by the researcher. Focus groups are usually employed to solicit the views of those who would not be ready and willing to speak in larger groups. Hence, some of the participants were purposively chosen with respect to age and language background and put into various groups for discussion. Diverse topics on festivals, customary rites, and common daily greetings were discussed in the groups. The participants were kept into three groups each constituting six members. This is done to guarantee the cross-checking of data. The natural discussions were effectively moderated by the researcher. Well-prepared topics were initiated by the researcher who made sure that the participants participated uniformly throughout the discussion.

3.6.3 Audio recording

Spontaneous language and conversations were captured through audio recordings. The recordings are associated with discussions on festivals, customary rite performances, and speeches at social and other religious gatherings where the speech acts of greetings usually occur.

3.7 Validity

Validity in research is "concerned with the accuracy and truthfulness of scientific findings (Le Comple & Goetz, 1982, p. 32). Therefore, a valid research work should demonstrate what actually exists and valid instrument should actually measure what it is supposed to measure. Denzin (1970) distinguishes between internal and external validity. Internal validity is a term used to refer to the extent to which research findings are a true reflection or representation of reality rather than being the effect of extraneous variable. External validity addresses the degree or extent to which such representations or reflections of reality are legitimately applicable to all groups.

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3.8 Data Analysis

Data analysis is very important in bringing order, structure, and meaning to the data gathered. The data recorded from the various social encounters as well as the focus group discussions were transcribed and subjected to content analysis. The data gathered for this research were analyzed using the language socialization theory (Schiefflin, & Ochs, 1986), speech act theory (Austin, 1962), and the politeness theory (Brown & Levinson, 1987). The three research questions served as the basis under which the data were analyzed. The structure and types of greetings in Gonja were the focal points of the data analysis. These include simple and complex greetings, greetings according to the period of the day, and activity greetings. Secondly, the socio-pragmatic principles governing their usage are analyzed under themes. Lastly, the socio-cultural underpinnings of greeting expressions are analyzed. The data recorded from the various conversational encounters as well as the focus group discussions were transcribed and themalized accordingly for interpretation.

3.9 Reliability

Reliability is concerned "with the consistency, stability and repeatability of the informant's accounts as well as the investigator's ability to collect and record information accurately" (Selltiz et al., 1976, p. 182). In other words, it entails that a researcher using the same or similar methods consistently obtained the same or similar results every time he uses the methods on the same or similar subjects. The researcher conducted the inter-rater reliability test to ascertain the reliability of the data by categorizing greetings. Three raters were chosen to participate in the test and each obtained the values 9, 10 and 12 and the overall coefficient reliability was 0.90.

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3.10 Ethical Considerations

Ethical considerations constitute a fundamental component of research hence, failure to follow a specified code of conduct when conducting a study can invalidate your findings because it is hard for others to trust your data if your methods are morally questionable. Since this research has some social and cultural connections, consideration was given to some ethical issues. An in-depth explanation and discussion with regard to the issues in the study were given to the participants with their acquiescence sought. Protection of their identities and responses was guaranteed. Also, their freedom and independence to withdraw from the study whenever they wish were guaranteed. Furthermore, permission was solicited from some religious leaders including chiefs before data was gathered from them. Audio recordings at funeral grounds, festivals, and proceedings at the chief palace were done openly with the extreme consent of the people involved.

3.11 Conclusion

This chapter has discussed the methodology adopted for the research. A qualitative research approach is considered as the most appropriate approach for the study. This was handled descriptively using the ethnographic design. The population for the research focused on the Gonja speakers of Bole. However, simple random and purposive sampling techniques were used in the selection of participants for the research. The instruments used in gathering the data for the study include observation, recording, and focus group discussions. Suggestions on how the data collected would be analyzed were established and issues on ethical considerations were also given.

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CHAPTER FOUR

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

4.0 Introduction

This chapter presents the data and discussion of the data collected on some greeting expressions in Gonja. The qualitative analysis is guided by the language socialization theory (LST) (Schiefflin & Ochs, 1986) alongside the speech act theory to answer the research questions. The recorded and observed greeting expressions are grouped under types and themes after the focus group discussions and analysed according to the research questions. The types include simple and complex greetings, time of the day greetings, circumstantial greetings, seasonal greetings, activity greetings, and parting and leave-taking. The discussion will also take into consideration the non-verbal cues and some address terms associated with greeting expressions. Furthermore, the socio-pragmatic principles that influence the choice of some greetings as well as the socio-cultural practices of the people that are embedded in their greeting expressions will be examined. Greetings communicate some crucial facets of the culture of the people (Ameka, 1991). This means they are a fundamental aspect of human communication, deeply intertwined with cultural identity and social behavior.

4.1 Types of Greeting Expressions in Gonja

In this section, various greeting expressions in Gonja are discussed using the study's data. The discussed greetings were chosen from among the many others that are common in Gonja communities because they are the ones that are used the most.

4.1.1 Simple and complex greetings

Depending on the amount of time and the topics discussed, Agyekum (2008) asserts that greetings might be simple or complex. Those that are shorter are simple

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while the longer ones are complex. The hypothesis is that brief and immediate greetings represent routine and casual interactions, while longer and delayed pleasantries represent unique interactions, some good or bad news, and the social standings of the parties. In the course of this study, examples of a comparable phenomenon in Gonja will be provided.

4.1.1.1 Simple greetings

This kind of greeting is so short and straightforward that it can simply end with "How are you?" or perhaps even earlier (Agyekum, 2008).

(1) (a). A: **Toto anshumaa**
'Father good morning'

B: **Fo kela daa?**
Fo kela daa
2SG goodbye sleep
'Did you say goodbye to sleep?'

laŋto ebi du nuso?
Laŋ to ebi du nuso
House EMPH people AUX INT. ADV.
'How are the house people?'

A: **Bu ko alemfia**
Bu ko alemfia
3PL AUX health
'They are fine'

In the exchange, speaker A initiates the greeting by using the address term Toto 'father' which in Gonja refers to one's biological father or any elderly man of one's father's age. If not in specific circumstances, it is disrespectful for a young person to inquire about the welfare of an elderly person, as was previously said. As a result, in the interaction above, when speaker A greeted speaker B, speaker B responded with fo keladaa! Which means 'Did you say goodbye to sleep? Before

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positing a query about the welfare of A's family, laŋto ebi du nuso? 'How are the occupants of the house doing?' When A responded bu ko alemfia 'they are fine', he couldn't ask about the well-being of B because it would be impolite and a threat to the elder's face if B did so. This greeting is only in four turns and that makes it a simple greeting. It also reveals the status of the greeter and the greeted. That is a younger person and an elderly person. Examples (1b-d) also consist of some forms of simple greetings in Gonja.

(b). A. **Ebore e ya saŋɛ**

Ebore e ya saŋɛ

God FUT go untire

'May God give you good luck in your sales'

B. **Awoo!/Ami!**

(c) A. **Karechɛ aa?**

'Daybreak'?

B. **Karechɛ**

'Daybreak'

(d) A. Ashuŋ du nuso?

ashuŋ du nuso

work AUX INT.

'How is work'

B. Awoo!

The greeting in dialogue (1b) is expressed when an individual meets another person going to the market to sell. This style of greeting is intended to wish the person going to the market good luck with their sales. Due to the addressee's impending business transaction and the limited amount of time available to the participants, this sort of greeting is very brief. Discourse (1c) is expressed in the morning to denote that the day has begun however; it is very colloquial and is often exchanged among the youth.

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The greeting in the adjacency pair in (1d) is mostly expressed in the afternoon when a majority of manual labor is ongoing in the Gonja communities. Due to this, it become one of the most common ways of greeting during that time hence, the addresser will greet the addressee in that manner even if he/she (addressee) is not doing any work at the time of the exchange.

4.1.1.2 Complex greetings

Gonja has a structure resembling Akan and Anum for its complex greetings (Agyekum, 2008); (Obeng-Ofosu, 2020). In Gonja, the complex greeting further delineates the communal nature of the society as they go beyond a mere simple greeting to enquire about the health and other social concerns of the interlocutors. The conversations in (2a-b) illustrate complex greetings between two focus group participants Amadu and Abu who arrived before the other participants in the group and two friends who, although not having met for a very long time, had the good fortune to cross paths at a funeral for a member of their native community, respectively.

(2) (a). Loŋna **: Anshumaa, Jonyen**
'Good monrning, Jonyen'
Jonyen**:** **Awoo! Loŋna**
Edesekpa du nuso?
'How was your sleeping place?'
Loŋna **: Awoo!**
Laŋto ebi di aa?
'Did the household sleep?'
Loŋna**: Bu kɔ alemfia**
'They are doing well'
Kaman du nuso?
'How is back'

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Jonyen **: kama bɔ**

'Back is fine'

Kujunkpar du nuso

'How is front'

Loŋna **: kujunkpar bɔ!**

'Front is good'.

(b) A**:** **Eii, nkpa, fo nde aa?**

'Eii, chale, are you the one?'

B: **Nkpa, ma nana**.

'Chale, am the one'.

Nɛ anyebe nchenyɔ

'And our two days'

A: **Nchenyɔ gbagba na.**

'It is really two days'.

Abɔ aa?

'Is it good?'

B: **Abɔ**

'It is good'.

Naniere nnɛ nɛ fo wɔ?

'Now where are you?'.

A: **Mbaa wɔ Accra.**

'Am just in Accra'.

B: **Tɔ ku walɛ**

'Ok, it is good'.

Malɛ baa wɔ Takoradi.

'am also just in Takoradi'

A: **Ebɔrɛ e lɔŋɛ n sa ekama.**

'May God make it possible for all"

B: **Ami!/Awoo!**

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In the interaction in (2a) above the greeting goes beyond the simple time of the day greeting to enquire about conditions in the previous night, the family, and the prevailing condition in the addressee's house. This reveals how the Gonjas have much concern for one another which leads to social harmony. This is consistent with Ameka's (2010) argument that implementing well-being inquiries is a way to demonstrate cultural values such as inclusivity and peace in West African speech communities. According to Obeng-Ofosu (2020), complex greetings always begin with the simple time of the day before it extends to cover other facets of life. This is analogous to the greetings in Gonja as expressed in dialogue (2a). However, it is not always the case as demonstrated in dialogue (2b) where the greeting form is complex but does not begin with the simple time of the day.

Depending on the time of the day, setting, participants, and time available, among other factors, the substance and length of the complex greeting typically vary. A complex greeting in the afternoon or evening, for instance, would not inquire about the previous night, but rather about household and work-related matters. For instance, farmers may inquire about their farming activities and hunters may inquire about the current hunting trends. Therefore, greetings play a key role in language-based socialization. According to Dzameshi (2002), several social elements in the Ewe society have an impact on how long greetings are, what they say, and how they are presented. One of these factors is the social emphasis placed on interpersonal connections. This claim is true for the Gonjas, in that, whereas friends receive the extended types of greeting, strangers often receive the short form.

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4.1.2 Time of the day greetings

It is possible to categorize greetings among the Gonjas based on the time of the day. The Gonjas use the terms chupurso 'morning', kapayidi 'afternoon', and kaseso/kanyiso 'evening/night' to demarcate the various times of the day. These distinctions are in contrast to that of the English concepts of greetings where the words used to greet different times of the day are identical as the words used to describe those times of the day such as morning-good morning, afternoon-good afternoon, and evening/night-good evening. However, the greetings at different times of the day do not always correspond to the traditional daytime boundaries. The locals simply infer the time correlation of these pleasantries based on their observation of the day's weather. According to the focus group discussions, the phrase anshumaa 'good morning' is recognized to begin the morning however; people sometimes use it later in the day because of changes in the weather conditions. Also, *antiree* 'good afternoon' and *anulaa* 'good evening' are not particularly specific to the time boundaries set by the traditional people. Only a small percentage of educated individuals occasionally greet following the day and time boundaries as revealed from the focus group discussions. Generally, individuals in rural areas spend the majority of their time participating in a variety of activities such as farming, fishing, and hunting during the afternoon hence, occupational greetings are employed more frequently in the afternoon than the time of the day greetings antiree 'good afternoon'.

4.1.2.1 Chupurso (Morning)

In Gonja, a person can say *good morning* from the time they get up from bed in the morning up to sunset. During this time, when two or more persons cross paths, one of them will start the greeting while the other(s) respond. The following is the method to greet someone in the morning.

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3. a) A: **Gafra achɛ**

gafra a chɛ

Sorry PRE step

'Sorry to step' (Can I please step my foot into your room?)

Ekpa wɔtɔ

Ekpa wɔ tɔ.

road AUX PRE

'Road is there' (Permission is granted)

Anshumaa

'Good morning'

Karechɛ aa?

karechɛ a:

daybreak INT.

'Daybreak?'

OR

Fo keladaa?

Fo kela daa

1SG goodbye sleep

'Did you say good bye to sleep?'

Edikpa du nuso?

edi kpa du nuso

sleep throw AUX INT. ADV

'How was your night?'

A: **Edikpa kɔ alemfia**

Edikpa kɔ alemfia

sleeping place AUX Health

'There's health in the sleeping place'

In the Gonja speech community, these daily greetings have their origin and are not just seen as greetings and responses. That is why in the morning members will greet one another as *anshumaa* 'good morning' and not *antiree* 'good afternoon' or

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anulaa 'good evening'. Every member of the Gonja Society is aware that dawn will undoubtedly arrive before the day will break. The Gonja word for the dawn is **'Maa'**. Like other cultures such as Anums (Obeng-Ofosu, 2020), in the past, the cocks crow was one of the main methods used by the Gonjas to calculate the time and the morning. The cock will crow three times, according to the Gonjas, just before dawn. As a result, they utilize the phrases **koshi be kushu** 'cock's crow' and **maa** 'dawn' to establish how greetings should be made in the morning, giving rise to the phrase anshumaa 'good morning'. Anshumaa 'good morning' is a compound word made up of the prefix –**an** which stands for 'cock' plus the words **shu** 'cry', and **maa** 'dawn' which in the actual sense means **koshi shu maa** 'the cock has crow dawn as seen in Dialogue 3.

Usually, children at home start this greeting out of respect for the elderly. In the Gonja culture, children and other family members typically go to elders to greet them in the morning. **Gafra achɛ** which translates as 'sorry put' is typically the first thing any of them will say when they approach the elder's door. 'Gafra achɛ' is the shortened form of the statement **gafra achɛ nɛ n ta ma kiya n fara chɛ fo ebuto** 'sorry to start to put my leg into your room', the response, in this case, is, **ekpa wɔtɔ** 'road is there' (permission is granted), indicating that the greeting party has been permitted to enter the elder's room. For this reason, every competent Gonja speaker will use the expression 'gafra achɛ' whenever he or she visits a fellow member's home. Entering another person's home or room without this expression will render a speaker rude and incompetent in the use of the language. This is in line with the assertion made by Agyekum (2008) that the Akans also have a similar attention getter known as 'koko' that is used in gaining attention when approaching a person's house.

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However, most Gonjas have adopted the Islam term 'salamualaikum' hence the application of the term 'gafra achɛ' is gradually fading out.

The next thing the visitor will say to the elder after being allowed to enter is *anshumaa* which means 'Good morning'. The elder will then reply, **karechɛ aa?** 'Daybreak?' or **fo keladaa** 'Did you say goodbye to sleep? which means that the addresser wants to find out whether the addressee had a pleasant night and then go ahead to inquire about the state of the younger person's sleeping place hence the statement **edikpa du nuso** 'how is sleeping place' as seen in dialogue (3a) above. That is, he is interested in knowing whether or not the younger person slept soundly. It is important to note that it is unacceptable in the Gonja culture for the younger one to ask about the welfare of and sleeping state of the elderly. This is synonymous with the claim made by Dzameshie (2008) that children are not expected to enquire about the health of an adult interactant in the course of greeting exchange in the Ewe communities.

For this reason, when the elderly person inquired about the younger one's sleeping habits, the latter responded awoo! but he was unable to pose the same question. It is considered rude and disobedient to inquire about the well-being of the elderly because it is culturally believed that it is the elderly who take care of the young and have the right to ask about his/her well-being. As seen in example (3a) above, the greeting is initiated by the younger one, however, when two individuals of the same age group or two friends meet, any of them may start the conversation. While it is customary for the person who meets the other to start the greeting sequence, it is less important who does so when the two persons are close friends or family members. The conversation in (3b) shows a sequence of greetings between two friends.

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3. b) A: **Nkpa karechɛ.**
'Chale daybreak'.

B: **Karechɛ**
'Daybreak'

Menye di aa?
Menye di aa?
2PL sleep INT.
'Did you people sleep?'

A: **An di nkpa**
An di nkpa
2PL PAST-sleep chale
'Chale we slept'.

Nɛ menye ai?
CONJ 2PL
'And you?'

A: **Anye gba bee di**
1PL also PROG sleep
'We are also sleeping'.

The greeting exchange in (3b) shows two friends who met in the early hours of the day and asked each other how well they slept the previous night. Their inquiry is motivated by their concern for one another given that they are mutual friends. Such a greeting exchange can last longer and even include discussions of events from years ago. Additionally, if you pay close attention to the dialogue, you will see that both parties were able to inquire about the condition of the previous night, indicating that they are of the same age bracket. This is different from the example in (3a).

4.1.2.2 Kapayidi (Afternoon)

In Gonja, **kapa** means 'afternoon', and **yi** is the short form of the word **kiyi** 'tree'. **Di** also means 'climb'. Together, these three words make up the word **kapayidi** which means 'afternoon tree climbing'. My respondents asserted that a tree without

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branches will always stand upright. As a result, to climb such a tree, you do not need to balance anywhere, rather, simply proceed straight. Therefore, the word **kapayidi** 'afternoon' in its actual sense means 'afternoon tree climbing' to describe how the sun has climbed the tree since it is always seen above the tree. For Gonjas, **katire** 'garden egg' is a common vegetable whose ripening is largely dependent on the sun. Therefore, you can now walk pass a farm of garden eggs, and when you get there again, they have already began to ripen. Thus, Gonjas use the term ntire 'garden eggs' plus the word pre 'ripe' to determine greetings in the afternoon. As a consequence of this, the greeting term **antiree** 'good afternoon' in the discourse means **ntire pre oo** 'garden eggs are ripe'. The appropriate response here is **saŋɛ fo aa?** 'is it time'? meaning is it time for the garden eggs to rip?. Q with this, the addresser will respond **awoo**!

In contrast to the morning greetings which will inquire about the previous night and the current state of the addressee's home, the afternoon greetings will instead inquire about occupation and domestic issues leading to the response **kushuŋ du nuso** 'how is work' in 4. This is true because in the Gonja community, the commencement of the day prompts individuals to prepare for their various responsibilities, such as tending to farms, the river, or managing businesses. With most people returning in the evening, encountering someone in the afternoon prompts a customary inquiry about their work, as the cultural norm dictates that a healthy adult in Gonja is expected to be actively involved in some form of labour during that period. As a result, anyone who is spotted sleeping at that time is labeled as **etɔlpo** 'lazy person'.

4) A: **Antiree**
'Good afternoon'

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B: **Saŋɛ fo aa?**

Saŋɛ fo a:

time reach INT.

'Time reach?' (Is it time?)

Kushuŋ du nuso?

Ku shuŋ du nuso

NOMZ Work AUX INT. ADV.

'How is work?'

A: **Awoo!**

b. A: Antiree

'Good afternoon'

B: **Awoo!**

Epeŋi du nuso?

Epeŋi du nuso

sun AUX INT. ADV

'How is the sun'

A: **Awoo!**

The addressee's use of the statement *epeŋi du nuso* 'how is the sun' reflects his/her concern for its intense heat and how it affects the addresser.

c. A: **Antiree**

'Good afternoon'

B: **Awoo!**

Wolwol du nuso

wolwol du nuso

disturb AUX INT. ADV

'How is disturbance?'

The statement wolwol du nuso 'how is disturbance'? by B is a reflection of how uncomfortable it is in the afternoon as a result of the challenging conditions in the afternoon, characterized by the sun's intense heat.

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4.1.2.3 Kaseso/Kanyiso (Evening/Night)

A locally created lamp made of cotton, shea butter, and calabash is what Gonjas relied on most in the past when there was no power to provide light in their homes. The expression 'fitina' is the name of this lamp. When you are required to enter the room at night to pick something, you will bump into things with your feet since the lamp cannot adequately illuminate the room. Hence, before you will be able to identify the thing you are sent to go and pick you must put your five fingers on the ground in search of the thing. The way these five fingers move on the ground in search of what you are looking for is what Gonjas use to determine greetings in the evening/night. Anulaa 'good evening' means *it is now time to touch the ground with all five fingers*. Anulaaa, like anshumaa, is a compound word that comprises the words anuu 'five' and laa 'touching' to give it the name anulaa 'good evening'. The response to this time of the day greeting is the same as that of the afternoon greeting; hence, **saŋɛ fo aa**? 'is it time?' as observed in (5a). However, only the elderly can respond in that manner. **Saŋɛ fo aa** in this context means *is it time for the touching of the five fingers on the ground*? Notwithstanding, Gonja and Yoruba diverge in their evening and night greetings. While Gonja maintains a consistent greeting for both, Yoruba distinguishes between evening and night greetings with separate expressions (Omolola, 2023). However, this assertion is in line with the Akans who also have the same greeting for both evening and night (Agyekum, 20008).

5) A: **Anulaa**
'Good evening'.
B: **Saŋɛ fo aa?**
Saŋɛ fo a**:**
time reach INT
'Time reach?' (Is it time?)
A: **Awoo!**

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It is important to note that among the Gonjas, age affects how people respond to the various times of the day greetings. The younger ones respond '**awoo**!' to all the greetings when greeted by an elderly, so do the elderly reply '**kareche aa'**?/'**fo keladaa**?' for **anshumaa** 'good morning' and **saŋɛ fo aa**?!! for **antiree** 'good afternoon' and **anulaa** 'good evening/night. Nevertheless, the elderly are at liberty to respond with the standard 'awoo!' to any of the time of the day greetings just like the younger ones hence, 'awoo'! is the default reply to the time of the day greetings among the Gonjas. This is most likely one of the linguistic variances brought about by aging. The greetings of the various times of the day are specific but the responses are the same irrespective of the time, the only difference is age in the response.

4.1.3 Circumstantial greetings

Aside from the daily time-of-the-day greetings which are quite frequent in the Gonja community, other greetings are based on the circumstances under which the addressee(s) find(s) themselves. According to Omolola (2023), circumstantial greetings can be used for commending efforts, showing sympathy, or for appreciation. Several greetings are specifically oriented toward certain situations or circumstances in Gonja communities. However, this circumstance or situation could be an empathetic type such as greeting the bereaved, or a joyous one such as childbirth or marriage. This section explicates some of such greetings that are circumstance or situational-oriented.

4.1.3.1 Childbirth greetings

Members of the Gonja society consider pregnancy as sickness, so during this period, a pregnant woman is provided with herbs and other locally manufactured medicines as well as other antenatal counsel that will promote both her health and that of the unborn baby's. You are fortunate if you can get through all of these and deliver

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successfully. Since a pregnant woman is already regarded as sick, the moment she goes into labour is considered to be the day when her illness is at its worst. Sickness is universally considered as a battle for life. Due to this, every competent elderly Gonja speaker will not tell you that go and inform this person that my wife or daughter has delivered, he or she will say go and tell them that **an nye kumu lɛla** 'We had good head' or **Ebɔrɛ lara anyebe elɔpo na** 'God has removed our patient'. Kumu 'head' in the statement '**nɛ anyebe kumu lɛla**' is metonymically used in place of the complete body. This is quite comparable to Obeng-Ofosu (2020) and Agyekum (2008) who both use the phrases **wo tiri nkwa** 'life to your head' and **afrimu** 'you have come out' in Anum and Akan respectively.

The felicitations extended to the fortunate woman reflect the joy of the woman's and her husband's family members as well as the entire community. The name for a woman who gave birth fresh is known as **etɔlpo** which means 'lazy person' among the Gonjas. This is because such a woman is not strong enough to do any labour-intensive job. Hence, members of the community visit the nursing mother at daily intervals for seven days to support her by fetching water and firewood for her. The seventh day is the official day for the actual naming of the newly born baby and this is a day of jubilation for the family and the entire community. During this period, community members and loved ones usually greet the nursing mother as **nɛ anyebe kumu lɛla** 'congratulations' and **nɛ Ebore ka lar fo** which means 'God has removed you'. The dialogues in 6(a) are the expressions of childbirth greetings among the Gonjas.

6. a) A: **Nɛ anyebe kumu lɛla**

nɛ	anye	-be	kumu	lɛla
CONJ	1PL	POSS	head	good

'And our head good' (congratulation)

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Nɛ Ebore ka lar fo

nɛ	Ebore	ka	lar	fo
CONJ	God	AUX	PAST-remove	2SG

'And God have removed you'(We thank God for saving you)

B: **Awoo!**

The majority of pleasantries related to birth are intended for adults only among the Gonjas. These compliments have nothing to do with youngsters. Children do not greet adults or other kids with these greetings. Children typically utilize the time-of-day greetings in these circumstances. When a youngster tries to exchange the circumstantial greeting regarding giving birth, it could be interpreted as disrespectful. This demonstrates why Gonjas accord a great deal of dignity to age. The dialogues that follow are some greetings addressed to both the nursing mother and the newborn child.

6. b) A: **Ebɔrɛ e yigɛ kebia na n sa anye**

Ebɔrɛ	e	yigɛ	kebia	na	n	sa	anye
God	FUT	leave	child	DEF	CONJ	give	1PL

'May God leave the child and give us' (May God give the child long life)

B: **Ami!/Awoo!**

OR

A: **Ebɔrɛ e ta mo n kii echefoso be kebia**

Ebɔrɛ	e	ta	mo	n	kii	echefo	be	kebia
God	FUT	take	3SG	CONJ	turn	tomorrow	POSS	child

'May God take him/her and turn tomorrow's child' (May God bless the child)

B: **Ami!/Awoo!**

The Gonja cultural worldview is reflected in the aforementioned greetings. The talk in (6b) appears to wish the newborn baby a long life and good prosperity. Members of the community expect one to meet them with the appropriate gladness

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since these are happy times. Moreover, it is made clear that these greetings can begin with simple time-of-the-day greetings such as good morning, good afternoon, and good evening respectively and end with the appropriate childbirth greetings. Being able to express these pleasantries well will reveal a person's level of language competency. As may be seen from the language, the greetings above are more like prayers than actual greetings. Hence, it is culturally understood that praying to God for wisdom, favour, and blessings in situations is a key component of solidarity. Participants engage in prayer exchanges as part of their greetings to the nursing mother and the entire family. The alternative response **ami**! associated with these greetings is what qualifies them as prayers.

4.1.3.2 Marriage greetings

Marriage is viewed as a social obligation between the families of a man and a woman within the Gonja traditional communities. The couple's social standing is raised as a result of this social commitment and people now view them as more highly responsible than they were before. Most young people desire to participate in this social ceremony at some point in their lives. This kind of greeting is provided to newly wedded couples with great care and gladness. The pleasantries that are typically exchanged during marriage ceremonies are explicated as follows:

7. a) A: **Nɛ anyebe kumu lɛla!**

nɛ anye -be kumu lɛla

CONJ 1PL POSS head good

'And our head good' (congratulations)

B: **Ami!/Awoo!**

7. b) A: **Ebɔrɛ e lɔŋɛ benye kachina**

Ebɔrɛ e lɔŋɛ benye ka- china

God FUT make 2PL NOMZ sit

'May God make your sitting' (May God bless your home)

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B. **Ami!/Awoo!**

7. c) A: **Ebɔre e sa nɛ kafɛ ba saŋɛ ere nɛ fo kii ebompo**

Ebɔrɛ	e	sa	nɛ	kafɛ	ba	saŋɛ	ere	nɛ	
God	FUT	give	CONJ	year	come	time	DET	CONJ	
	fo	kii	ebompo						
	2SG	Turn	mad						

'May God make you mad next year by this time' (May God bless you with kids)

B: **Ami!/Awo!**

Among the Gonjas, a newly-wed woman is considered a stranger in the husband's house. She is seen as a member of a different family whom a man has married to add to his family. Her arrival will bring new members into the family because she will give birth and consequently enlarge the family size. Also, her coming will increase the number of hands to assist with home chores and farming. All the above are good fortunes to the Gonjas; thus, the greeting **nɛ anyebe kumu lɛla** 'and our good head' in line 1 of dialogue (7a). The first person inclusive plural possessive pronoun **anyebe** ('our') in line 1 of dialogue (7a) is used to convey that the interactant is sharing the fortunate circumstance embraced by the couples. Due to the woman's status as a stranger in her husband's home, when they want to inform another community member of her presence, they will say *go and tell this person that* an **nye efo anyebe laŋto** 'we have a stranger in our house', and the person will be asked, **nuso be efo nna**? 'what kind of stranger is that?', The response will be **eche nɛ eta** 'he has married'.

Like birth greetings, marriage-related greetings are essentially prayers sent to newlyweds by well-wishers to encourage and honour them as they embark on a new life path in the neighborhood and the wider world. However, because of their jubilant

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nature, well-wishers cause amusement by teasing the couple. Also, **Ebore e loŋɛ benyebe kachina** 'May God bless your home' in line 1 of (7b) is supplication by the visitor to God for the couple to have a happy living since at times marriage can become sour for the couple. Additionally, the visitor's comment in line 1 of (7c), 'May God make you mad next year by this time', does not necessarily imply that the visitor wants the couple to be mad; rather, the comment is intended to express the visitor's desire for God to bless the couple with children. Since the disruption of the children will allow them to create noise, any couple with children in Gonja society is considered mad. Nevertheless, the standard time of the day greetings can also be used to initiate the marriage type of greetings.

4.1.3.3 Festive greetings

Festivals are events, and social phenomena, encountered in virtually all human cultures. Festivals can be thought of as communal rituals that enhance social cohesion and uphold the shared values of a community (Durkheim, 1947). Durkheim (1947) underscores the unifying function of festivals in promoting solidarity among individuals in a community. Over the years, Gonjas have celebrated a variety of festivals; they gather at these festivals to socialize, share similar interests, and forgive one another, to foster communal unity and peace. As part of this socialization, they must exhibit the socio-pragmatic norms of the group to which they belong. Greeting is a socially accepted socio-pragmatic practice that is used by families, neighbours, and friends. The dialogues in 8 are examples of some greetings that are expressed during festive seasons and they may be initiated by the time of the day greetings.

8. a) A: **Antiree**
'Good afternoon'

B: **Awoo!**

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A: **Nɛ anyebe kafɛ**

nɛ	anye	-be	kafɛ
CONJ	1PL	POSS	year

'And our year' (How is the celebration?)

B: **'Awoo!'**

Ebɔrɛ e sa anye mfɛ damata

Ebɔrɛ	e	sa	anye	mfɛ	damata
God	FUT	gives	1PL	years	many

'May God give us many years'

OR

Ebɔrɛ e sa anye mfɛ chambɔ

Ebɔrɛ	e	sa	anye	mfɛ	cha	mbɔ
God	FUT	give	1PL	years	dance	round

'May God give us years dance round ' (May God give us more years)

A: **Awoo! /Ami!**

8. b) A: **Anshumaa**

'Good morning'

B: **Awoo!**

A: **Nɛ anyebe edakana nɛ kafɛ**

nɛ	anye	-be	da	ka	na	nɛ	kafɛ
CONJ	1PL	POSS	taste	leave	it	CONJ	year

'And our taste and leave it and year' (How is the dead year?)

B: **Awoo!**

The dialogues constitute how Gonjas greet one another during festivals. In line 3 of (8a), the phrase **Nɛ anye be kafɛ** 'and our year' denotes that A is extending the greeting in reference to the particular festival they are now celebrating. In other words, he wants to know how B is handling the celebration; so, in an actual sense, it means how is our festival? B responds'awoo!' and declares that **Ebore e sa anye mfɛ damta** 'May God give us many years' or **Ebore esa anye mfɛ chambɔ** 'may God

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allow years to dance around us' which means *May God extend our lives to be able to experience numerous festivals in life*. The greeting sequenceS in (8) incorporated the funeral greeting term **edakana** 'taste and leave' in the exchange. This simply means *you will experience the year and leave it; you can't be in it forever*. Festivals occur annually; thus, it is presumed that the one they are currently remembering has already passed. For this reason, conversation (8b) uses the phrase '**nɛ anyebe edakana nɛ kafɛ**' which translates to *as the year is dead*.

4.1.3.4 Funeral greetings

Gonjas generally hold the cultural belief that no human can escape death. Hence, they normally say **ekama be e yɔ kpa na** 'it is a going place for everyone'. With respect to this background knowledge, they ascribe much value to greeting the bereaved family for the reason that death will eventually reach everyone, regardless of how long they live on earth. The notification of a member's passing by another is crucial in human communities. Gonjas exhibit a high degree of cohesion due to their sense of camaraderie. Particularly at the time of death or any other type of misfortune, the confirmation of this togetherness becomes more obvious. When a member of the Gonja community passes away, the entire community assembles, offers their condolences to the grieving family, and afterward provides the required support, both in cash and in kind. According to Ameka (1991) and Dzameshi (2002), Agyekum (2002), and Dorvlo (2008), this cash donation is made mandatory in the Ewe, the Akans, and the Logba speech communities. This greeting is as follows:

9.) A: **Nɛ anyebe edakana**

nɛ anye -be da ka na

CONJ 1PL POSS taste leave it

'And our taste and leave it.' (and our condolence)

B: **Awoo!**

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A: **Ebɔrɛ e yaa yigɛ ashɛŋ n sa mo**

Ebɔrɛ e yaa yigɛ ashɛŋ n sa mo

God FUT go leave things CONJ give 3SG

'May God go leave things and give him/her' (May God forgive his/her sins)

B: **Awoo!/Ami!**

The word **edakana** 'taste and leave' is the most fundamental way of greeting in the Gonja community during the times of death. This simply means that death is something every soul will experience and leave because it is circular and will definitely reach everyone. This statement is usually used to console the grieving family so that they will minimise it. The sympathizer, after saying this, goes on to say **Ebore e ya yigɛ ashɛŋ n sa mo** which means 'may God forgive the sins of the departed soul' as seen in line 2 of (9) and receives the response **ami!/awo! Alt**hough this is the basic way of greeting during the events of death, funeral greetings in Gonja can further be categorized into different types from fresh death to the celebration stage. These stages are (i) Before burial greetings, (ii) After burial greetings, (iii) The next morning after burial greetings, and (iv) The celebration period greetings. The types of greetings performed before burial are different from those performed after the burial and that of the next morning after the burial as well as the celebration period. Funeral greetings do not necessarily include the time of the day greetings. One is free to use the time of the day greetings as opener.

4.1.3.4.1 Before burial greetings

Before burial greetings are a sub-category of funeral greetings that are usually expressed at the time the death is still recent. This type of greeting can be performed when one visits the funeral home and encounters those sitting. The statement **nɛ anyebe kachina lubi** which translates to 'and our bad sitting' in (10a) implies that the

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reason for their sitting is a sorrowful one. Additionally, the addresser also employs an inclusive plural possessive pronoun **anyebe** 'our' to indicate that he or she is equally grieving with the bereaved family. They can also be exchanged with the bereaved family with respect to the time of the day the sad event occurred. In this greeting, the time of the day is specifically stated to convey how unpleasant that time is as in (10):

10. a) A: **Nɛ anyebe kachina lubi**
nɛ anye -be ka- china lubi
CONJ 1PL POSS NOMZ sit bad
'And our bad sitting' (How is our sad sitting?)
B: **Awoo!**

10. b) A: **Nɛ anyebe chipur/kapa/kanye ere**
nɛ anye -be chipur/kapa/kanye ere
CONJ 1PL POSS morning/afternoon/night DET
'And our morning/afternoon/night' (How is our sad morning/afternoon/night?)
B: **Awoo!**

4.1.3.4.2 After burial greetings

These greetings are performed immediately when the burial is complete and those who went to carry out the burial have just returned from the cemetery. This type of greeting is in two distinct folds: Firstly, one is usually extended to the bereaved family as well as everyone else who is impacted. Secondly, one is typically extended to the individuals who went to the cemetery to dig the grave as well as give the deceased a befitting burial.

11. a) A: **Nɛ anyebe edankana**
nɛ anye -be da ka na
CONJ 1PL POSS taste leave PRE
'And our taste and leave' (our condolence)
B: **Awoo!**

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11. b) A: **Asansaŋ Ebɔrɛ e lɔŋɛ ekama piyɛ**

asansan Ebɔrɛ e lɔŋɛ ekama piyɛ

Thanks thanks God FUT make everyone own

'Thanks thanks may God make everyone's own' (May God bless everyone)

B: **Ami!/Awoo!**

A: **Koji bee churɔ**

Koji bee churɔ

Koji PROG greet

'Koji is greeting'

With regard to the after-burial greetings, (11a) is typically expressed by sympathizers to the bereaved family and all those affected while (11b) is expressed by the bereaved family and other sympathizers to those who have just returned from the graveside. Additionally, line 1 of (11b) is essentially a request made by the family of the deceased for God to bless those who went to dig and bury the corpse for God to make their burials just as honourable as what they did for the deceased. This is because Gonjas believe that death is unpredictable since a person may pass away without their loved ones being able to view the body; thus, the response Ami!, suggesting that it is essentially a prayer. Again, the bereaved family usually greets those from the cemetery on behalf of the departed as in line 3 of (11b) with **Koji bee churɔ** 'Koji is greeting'. In this context, Koji is the departed, and members of the bereaved family are extending his gratitude to those who gave him a befitting burial on his behalf.

4.1.3.4.3 The next morning after the burial greetings

This type of greeting is usually performed the next day after the deceased has been interred. It is mostly exchanged in the morning and the time of the day greeting is usually used as an opener; thus, **anshumaa** 'good morning', in 12.

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12.) A: **Anshumaa!**

'Good morning'!

Asaŋ ndre

asaŋ ndre

Thanks yesterday

'Thanks yesterday' (Thank you for yesterday)

B: **Awoo!**

A: **Ebɔrɛ e tii kagbene**

Ebɔrɛ e tii kagbene

God FUT close heart

'May God close heart' (May God console your heart)

B: **Awoo!/Ami**

A: **Ebɔrɛ e ya yigɛ ashɛŋ n sa mo**

Ebɔrɛ e ya yigɛ ashɛŋ n sa mo

God FUT go leave things PRE give 3SG

'God should go leave things for him/her' (May God forgive his/her sins)

B: **Ami!/Awoo!**

The first pair of greeting in (12) commends the bereaved family for having the courage to endure the sad moment that struck them and also congratulates them for giving their loved one a befitting burial. This is analogous to the Anum, according to Obeng-Ofosu (2020, p. 71), where "the greeting from the sympathizers pragmatically changes from an expression of sympathy to that of congratulations". Hence, the statement **ɛ́yábʊɛ̀ ɔ̀ɔ̀** 'you have done well'. The second and third pairs are both prayers where sympathizers ask for God to console the hearts of members of the affected family as well as ask for forgiveness from God on behalf of the departed soul.

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4.1.3.4.4 Final funeral greetings

In the quest for a funeral, Gonjas celebrate it in stages. The first stage is the **nchɛ sa be kali** 'three days funeral rite' which occurs three days after burial. The second is the **nchɛ shunu be kali** 'seven days funeral' which happens seven days after burial. From this, we have the **nchɛ kuduanyɔ**, **nchɛ adena**, and **kafɛ be kali** 'twelve days, forty days, and one-year funeral rites' respectively. The greetings in all the stages are the same; hence, (13a) - (13d) can be observed in all the stages.

13. a) A: **Nɛ anyebe kalɔŋɛ!**
nɛ anye -be ka- lɔŋɛ
CONJ 1PL POSS NOMZ make
'And our making' (How is the funeral performance?)
B: **Awoo!**

13. b) A: **Kawɔrɔ du nuso?**
Ka- wɔrɔ du nuso
NOMZ do AUX INT. ADV.
'How is perform?' (How is the funeral performance?)
B: **Awoo!**

13. c) A: **Kekata du nuso?**
ke- kata du nuso
NOMZ keep AUX INT. ADV.
'How is keep?' (How is the care given to the guests?)
B: **Awoo**

13. d) A: **Ebɔrɛ e ta n fo mo**
Ebɔrɛ e ta n fo mo
God FUT PRES-take PRE reach 3SG
'May God take to reach him/her' (May God be pleased with him/her)
B: **Ami!/Awoo!**

All the greeting expressions highlight the importance of sensitivity, empathy, and support when communicating with someone who is grieving. The language used aims to provide comfort and acknowledgment of the loss while being culturally

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appropriate and respectful. While the sympathizer(s) in (13a) and (13b) want to know how the grieving family is coping with the funeral performance, some of the conversations are to congratulate them for being able to take care of the guests that attended the funeral with the expression **kekata du nuso?** 'how are our guests?' in (13c). Additionally, the exchange in (13d) is a prayer expressed by sympathizers for God to be pleased with the soul of the deceased.

4.1.3.5 Greeting a woman who experiences stillbirth

The nine-month pregnancy of a mother in which the unborn child will not survive the delivery is seen as sorrowful and mournful. Despite the fact that this is a sad and depressing situation, it is fascinating to note that in the Gonja community, greetings to the heartbroken woman and her husband incorporate the jubilant circumstantial greetings such as marriage or successful delivery; hence, the term **nɛ anyebe kumu lɛla** 'Congratulation'. The reason, according to the focus group discussions, is that Gonjas value the life of the woman more than the life of the child because they think the latter has chosen to leave them and is therefore not regarded as a member of the community. Since the woman could have also died during delivery but has survived, they consider her fortunate because she still has the chance to bear more children. In Gonja, this form of demise is referred to as **e laŋɛ**, which means 'He/she has returned.

14) A: **Nɛ anyebe kumu lɛla!**

nɛ	anye	-be	kumu	lɛla
CONJ	1PL	POSS	head	good

'And our head good' (congratulations)

B: **Awoo!**

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4.1.4 Seasonal greetings

The two main seasons, **kichale** (rainy season) and **ketar** (dry season), serve as the natural geographical borders for Gonjas. Along with the two major seasons, Gonjas have other sub-seasons, which will also be covered in this discussion. Different types of greetings are used throughout the year according to the various seasons in the Gonja society. Nevertheless, seasonal greetings can be opened with the time of the day greetings. Gonjas execute the several forms of greetings to the various seasons:

4.1.4.1 Kichali (Rainy season)

Kichali which means 'together' in Gonja refers to the way that rainwater always gathers in the clouds during this season, which causes heavy downpour. The way this rainwater gathers is the same way they gather a lot of farm work for the community members. Since members experience torrential rainfalls in this time, it prevents them from weeding in their farms thereby piling the work for them, thus, **kichali** 'together'. The weather remains moist even after the rain stops for a few days which is what inspires the greeting **nɛ anyebe koyul** 'and our moist weather' as in (15b).

15. a) A**:** **Nɛ anyebe bɔrɛ**
nɛ anye -be bɔrɛ
CONJ 1PL POSS rain
'And our rain?' (How is the rain?)

B: **Awoo!**

15. b) A**:** **Nɛ anyebe kayul**
nɛ anye -be kayul
CONJ 1PL POSS mosit
'And our moist' (How is the moist weather?)

B: **Awoo!**

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The type of greeting in (15a) is a general greeting during the rainy season while the one in (15b) is expressed during the rain when it finishes raining and the weather is wet. Even when the rain stops for some days, the weather will still be wet and members will still greet the same.

4.1.4.1.1 Dɔchubɔrɛso 'rainwater for farming'

This season is one of the sub-seasons of the **kichali** 'rainy season'. Although there is rain during this period, it is not severe as compared to that of the major rainy season. This rain is purposely mended for farmers to aid them in preparing their farmlands for planting, hence, the name **dɔchubɔrɛ** 'farm water from rain'. The appropriate greeting during this season is **'nɛ anyebe dɔchubɔrɛ'** as seen in 16.

16). A: **Nɛ anyebe dɔchubɔrɛ**

nɛ anye -be dɔ chu bɔrɛ

CONJ 1PL POSS farm water rain

'And our farm water from rain' (How is our rain water for farming)

B: **Awoo!**

4.1.4.1.2 'Kpachaŋɛ'

Gonjas define **'kpachaŋɛ'** as another sub-category of the rainy season. This comes when the major rainy season is about to elapse. Farmers always inspect the farmlands during this time to determine which ones are fertile for the upcoming growing season. The standard greeting during this period is discussed in 17.

17.) A: **Nɛ anyebe kpachaŋɛ**

nɛ anye -be kpa chaŋɛ

CONJ 1PL POSS throw bisect

'And our 'kpachaŋɛ'? (How is 'kpachaŋɛ?')

B: **Awoo!**

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Members of the community experience both rain and sun throughout this period, but the rain is not heavy like that of the main rainy season and only sometimes falls, hence, the name **kpachaŋɛ** which means 'occasional'. However, this type of greeting is very common among adults and most especially farmers since all these conditions have an influence on their farming activities. Nevertheless, children resort to the daily time of the day greetings during this time, and it is even considered rude when a youngster tries to exchange this greeting.

4.1.4.2 Ketar 'Dry season'

The **Ketar** 'dry season' is the period when there are no more rains, thereby making the land very dry; thus, the name **ketar** which means 'dry'. Members frequently use the word **ketar** 'dry' in their conversations as a result of the dry weather and its effects as shown in 18.

18.) A: **Nɛ anyebe ketar**

nɛ	anye	-be	ketar
CONJ	1PL	POSS	dry

'And our dry weather' (How is the dry weather?)

B: **Awoo!**

That notwithstanding, there are other sub-categories of 'dry season' in the Gonja community. These are gbaŋgbaŋ 'harmattan' and kibleŋ 'hot' seasons as discussed in (19) and (20):

4.1.4.2 .1 Gbaŋgbaŋ 'Harmattan'

19. a). A: **Nɛ anyebe gbangbaŋ**

nɛ	anye	-be	gbangbaŋ
CONJ	1PL	POSS	gbangbaŋ

'And our harmattan' (How is the harmattan?)

B: **Awoo!**

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19. b) A: **Nɛ anyebe awoo!**

nɛ anye -be awoo

CONJ 1PL POSS cold

'And our cold' (How is the cold weather?)

B: **Awoo**!

19. c) A: **Nɛ anyebe afuu**

Nɛ anye -be afuu

CONJ 1PL POSS wind

'And our wind' (How is the wind?)

B: **Awoo!**

The greetings in (19a), (19b), and (19c) can be expressed specifically during the harmattan phase of the dry season. Nevertheless, examples (19a) and (19b) can be equally applicable in the rainy season as well since they also usually experience both wind and coldness during the rainy season. Due to the lack of care for these weather conditions, youngsters typically do not use these forms of greetings. A speaker's communication skills are demonstrated by how they articulate these pleasantries.

4.1.4.2.2 Kibleŋ 'Hot season'

The greeting in (20a) and (20b) is another sub-type of seasonal greetings that are conveyed during the dry season though they can also be found in the rainy season since they are periods when the weather might get hot/warm.

20. a) A: **Nɛ anyebe kibleŋ**

nɛ anye -be kibleŋ

CONJ 1PL POSS sweat

'And our sweat' (How is the hot weather?)

B: **Awoo!**

20. b) A: **Nɛ anyebe ebu be zigizigi**

nɛ anye -be ebu be zigizigi

CONJ 1PL POSS room POSS uncomfortable

'And our room's comfortableness'

B: **Awoo!**

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Furthermore, the word **zigizigi** from (20b) conveys how uncomfortable it is for people to be in the room because the room is frequently hot during this period. Most of the time, members of the Gonja communities sleep outside their rooms in the night. The expression of seasonal greetings among interactants in the Gonja society is an indication of solidarity with each other with respect to who is being affected by the weather conditions. The interactants are conscious that the weather condition has a collective effect on members of the community. These phenomena affect the totality of humans. This is why they use the first person plural possessive pronoun **anyebe** 'our' in all their conversations.

4.1.5 Activity greetings

In the Gonja speech community, an activity greeting refers to the operation the interactant(s) are engaged in at the time of the exchange. At the time of the greeting exchange, the addressee might be engaged in some activity that the addresser will have to acknowledge. This serves as a compliment and solidarity with the addressee that the activity he/she is engaged in is appreciated. In the Gonja society, it has been noted that practically every action has a specific greeting that accompanies it. The activity greetings are of two categories among the Gonjas: when the addressee is still engaged in the action and secondly when he/she has completed or is returning from the performance of the activity. However, in both instances, the greeting is the same. Some of the activity greetings in the Gonja speech communities are illustrated as follows:

4.1.5.1 Farm greetings

The farm greetings are the same whether the addressee is still on the farm working or is coming from the farm. Both '**asaŋ nɛ ndɔ**' or '**asaŋ-saŋ**' are acceptable greetings.

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21. a) A: **Asaŋ nɛ ndɔ**
asaŋ nɛ ndɔ
thanks PRE farm
'Thanks for farm' (Thank you for the farm work)
B: **Awoo!**

21. b) A: **Asaŋ-saŋ**
Thanks- thanks
'Thanks thanks' (Well done)
B: **Awoo!**

However, asaŋ-saŋ is the colloquial form of greeting that is applied to any type of work. This type of greeting is intended to show appreciation for the addressee's hard work and to encourage them to keep working.

4.1.5.2 Market greetings

The marketplace is a recurring ceremonial event when people get together to conduct various kinds of trades. It can be viewed as nothing more than a place where businesses execute their operations. Convergence and leave-taking happen at this time as people finish up their businesses and get ready to leave. In this kind of communication, using the various times of the day pleasantries is optional. Since there are no established guidelines for how they should be exchanged, as such, these greetings are seen as less formal. It is not necessary to extend an invitation to sit and to offer food and water. These greetings can also be exchanged with any person involved in selling even if the selling is not taking place in the market. Some of the market greetings available in the Gonja are found in (22a):

22. a) A: **Asaŋ nɛ kibɛ**
asaŋ nɛ kibɛ
Thanks PRE market
'Thanks for market'
B: **Awoo!**

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Depending on who will be participating in the exchange, these greetings will vary in formality. Though the dialogue in 22a) is not peculiar to children, it can, however, be expressed by youngsters and adults with an address term to indicate politeness as expressed in (22b):

22. b) A: **Asaŋ nɛ kibɛ mma.**

asaŋ	nɛ	kibɛ	mma
Thanks	PRE	market	mother

'Thanks for market mum'

B: **Awoo!**

Here, the addresser has shown civility to the addressee by using the address term **mma** which means 'mother'. The term mother (pronounced *mma* in Gonja) is used to refer to one's mother or a woman who is roughly the same age as your mother, but it does not always refer to a parent. A youngster will typically use this form of greeting when they are greeting a woman who has just returned from or is still in the market.

The dialogue in (22c) is an inclusive one and uses the inclusive plural possessive pronoun **anyebe** 'our' indicating that the addresser is equally transacting business in the market like the addressee. Hence; he or she needs to include himself/herself in it.

22. c) A: **Nɛ anyebe kibɛ**

nɛ	anye	-be	kibɛ
CONJ	1PL	POSS	market

'And our market' (How is the market?)

B: **Awoo!**

The greetings exchange in (22d) and (22e) demonstrate two instances. Firstly, the interactant is just arriving in the market and is greeting those he or she has met there. Secondly, one of the interactants is returning from the market while others exchange this greeting with him or her. Age is taken into cognizance in these types of

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greetings. As a result, young adults cannot exchange it with elders. Anyone who attempts to exchange this greeting with an elderly is considered an outcast and communicatively incompetent.

22 d) A: **Nɛ fo/benye kibɛ du nuso?**

nɛ	fo/benye	kibɛ	du	nuso
CONJ	2SG/2PL	market	AUX	INT. ADV

'And how is your market?'

B: **Awoo!**

22. e) A: **Nɛ fo/benye kafa du nuso?**

nɛ	fo/benye	ka-	fa	du	- nuso
CONJ	2SG/2PL	NOMZ.	sell	AUX	INT. ADV

'And how is your sale?'

B: **Awoo!**

The dialogues in (22a), (22c), (22d) and (22e) involve adult or colleague interactants. However, the conversations in (22d) and (22e) indicate that the addresser is not a seller or has not been to the market earlier as the other(s) while the addressee(s) is a seller or has been to the market earlier than the addresser; hence, the use of the exclusive singular or plural pronoun 'fo/benye'. Except for the greeting expression in (22b), youngsters do not employ the greetings in (22a), (22c), (22d) and (22e). In the market context, the sellers mostly greet their customers instead of the customers doing so, though the reverse is also possible at times. This is to demonstrate politeness on the part of the sellers to attract more customers to purchase their goods. Sellers are seen calling customers with certain address terms as as **nsiponyen** 'my brother', **nsipoche** 'my sister' and **nteri** 'my friend' to come and buy their goods. However, this is common among females.

Market days take place every week since they are considered ceremonial events in the Gonja speech community. Some people attend the market as a ritual

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even when they are not selling or purchasing anything. Therefore, two significant concerns come up as a result of a greeting of this kind. First, the interactant(s) may choose to exclude him/herself or themselves from the conversation, in which case the exclusive singular and plural pronoun **fo** 'your SG' and **benye** 'your PL' will be used, respectively. Secondly, the interactant(s) may also involve himself/herself or themselves in the conversation which is why the inclusive pronoun **anye** 'our' is employed. The non-participant would utilize the former when exchanging pleasantries with market returnees(s). All these represent courtesy among Gonjas. However, the age of the interactants is a major socio-pragmatic principle that influences the selection of such greetings in Gonja.

4.1.5.3 Eating greeting

When one is eating, there is a way of greeting such a person among the Gonjas. Such a greeting is usually very short since it is taboo to engage in a lengthy conversation during meals. The reason is that the addressee may be choked with the food. Hence, such types of greetings can be ignored and done after eating. According to Egbelewogbe (1990), the statement **Asi le gba me** 'hand in the plate' which is an invitation to a meal is considered a formality than an invitation. Thus, anyone who fails to extend this greeting to people when he is eating is seriously considered selfish and antisocial. Similarly, in Gonja, anyone who fails to offer an invitation to a meal when eating is considered as **kijimuni wura** 'a stingy person'. The dialogue in 23 is an illustration of eating greeting.

23.) A: **Kɔnɔ maŋ china**
kɔnɔ maŋ china
Mouth NEG sit
'Mouth does not sit' (you are eating)

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B: **Ma/anye enɔ wɔ kaba to**
ma/anye enɔ wɔ kaba to
1SG/1PL hand AUX bowl PRE
'My/our hands are inside the bowl'
Or
B: **Fo/menye tu ma/anye**
fo/menye tu ma/anye
2SG/2PL PAST-meet 1SG/1PL
'You met me/us'

A: **Ji n sa ma**
ji n sa ma
PRES-eat CONJ PRES-give 1SG
'Eat and give me' (Eat for me)

The greeting **kɔnɔ maŋ china** 'mouth does not sit' is used to serve as an indication that the addresser may be unable to have a lengthy conversation since the addressee is eating. Since the Gonjas cherish the lengthy type of greeting, the term **kɔnɔ maŋ china** is used to show the busy nature of addressee's mouth which he will use in the interaction. Should the addresser be a visitor to the addressee's house, after these pleasantries, he will wait and exchange the proper greeting after the host is done with the meal. The response **Ma/anye enɔ wɔ kaba to** 'my/our hands are inside the bowl' is a polite and accepted way of inviting a person to a meal. One will be considered communicatively incompetent if he/she uses the term **ba ji** 'come to eat'. If the addresser wants to eat, he/she will just join the addressee; but, if he/she does not want to eat, he/she will say **ji n sa ma** 'eat for me as expressed in line 4 of the dialogue.

It must be noted that **ji n sa ma** 'eat for me' is used by taking cognizance of some age, status, and rank of the interactants. Adults can respond to children in that way but children cannot respond the same to adults. This must be followed by **asaŋ kushuŋ** 'thank you' by the addresser. According to Agyekum (2008, p. 506), "in a

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purely traditional setup, family members need not be invited to a meal before they join the host; they have to depict the family ties by just joining their hosts". He again observes that one must take a bite even if he/she is not going to participate in the meal. These assertions hold firmly in the Gonja community. In Gonja, it is impolite and uncultured to say a blunt 'no' to an invitation to a meal. The host at times even thinks he/she holds grudges against the visitor or the visitor thinks he/she is a wizard or witch. Hence, customarily, the addresser needs to at least take a bite of the meal they are invited to, to demonstrate that there is no problem. Also, the response **menye/fo tu ma/anye** 'you (PL)/you (SG) met me/us' is similar to the Akan eating greeting **'woato me'** Agyekum (2008).

4.1.5.4 Cooking greeting

Another type of activity greeting to be discussed is cooking greeting; this type of greeting is expressed to a person who is cooking or has just finished cooking. The dialogue in 24 is an illustration of the cooking greeting as a type of activity greeting.

24. a) A: **Asaŋ nɛ ɛdɛ**
asaŋ nɛ ɛdɛ
Thanks PRE fire
'Thanks for fire' (Thank you for the courage)
B: **Awoo!**

24. b) A: **Asaŋ nɛ katipo**
asaŋ nɛ katipo
Thanks PRE ladle
'Thank for ladle' (Thank you for the delectable meal)
B: **Awoo!**

Women are typically given this form of greeting because they are the ones who are in charge of cooking in any traditional Gonja community. The discourse in (24a) is intended to convey gratitude to the cook for having the bravery to sit in front

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of the fire because everyone is aware that doing so is inherently risky and difficult. In (24b), the woman is complimented for her dexterity with the laddle which allows her to prepare delectable meals. Hence, the terms **ɛdɛ** 'fire' and **katipo** 'laddle' are symbolically used to represent courage and a delectable meal in the conversation. Notwithstanding, these pleasantries are typically fairly brief because conversing in depth while cooking is considered unhealthy.

4.1.6 Prefatory exchanges

Prefatory exchanges are types of simple greetings where there is very little conversational engagement between the interlocutors. This type of greeting frequently occurs in the Gonja speech community. This style of greeting is also seen in English (Laver, 1981) and Wolof greeting, which Irvine (1974) refers to as passing greetings. It also appears in Sesotho greetings, which Akindele (2007) terms as casual greetings. This type of greeting exchange transpires between interactants that are not intimate, or between relations, friends, or acquaintances who see each other regularly, but who are in haste for some justifiable reasons (Akindele, 2007). This greeting may start with the time of the day greeting with respect to the particular time at which the interactants meet. The dialogues in (25) are an illustration of passing greetings.

25. a) A**:** **Benye bee dii aa?**
benye bee dii aa?
2PL PROG sleep INT
'Are you sleeping?' (Do you have peace?/do you have good health?)

B**:** **Anye bee di**
anye bee di
1PL PROG sleep
'We are sleeping' (We have peace / we have good health) or **Awoo!**

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25. b) A: **Ebɔrɛ e chɛ kushuŋto?**

Ebɔrɛ e chɛ ku- shuŋ to

God FUT help NOMZ work LOC

'God should help work inside' (May God blessed your work)

25. c) A: **Ebore e ya saŋɛ**

Ebore e ya saŋɛ

God FUT go untire

'May God give you good luck in your sales'

B: **Awoo!/Ami!**

In dialogue (25a), the addresser expresses interest in knowing about the health of the addressee and their family, which explains the use of the pronoun '**benye**' in the second person plural. The interrogative statement **benye dii aa?** 'do you sleep? was used since it is widely accepted that someone who is not in excellent health does not also sleep well. The addresser chooses to simply inquire about the addressee's well-being and go on because there is not much time for them to exchange lengthy pleasantries. In spite of this, doing so is still polite and this confirms the concern of Gonjas for the wellbeing of one another. On the other hand, dialogue (25b) is a greeting exchange between a passerby and a person who is working on a specific task. Such greetings are typically brief because the person doing the work is busy and will not have time to chat. As a result, the passer will acknowledge the task being carried out by stating, **Ebɔrɛ e chɛ kushuŋto** which means 'God should help you in the work you are doing'. This demonstrates the value that Gonja speakers place on people who engage in labour-intensive tasks. Also, the dialogue in (25c) is expressed when an individual meets another person going to the market to sell. This greeting is intended to wish the person good luck with their sales. Due to the addressee's impending business transaction and the limited amount of time available to the participants, this sort of greeting is very brief.

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4.1.7 Parting and leave-taking

Human beings greet one another when they meet and take leave of (bid farewell to) one another. These behaviours are considered a universal phenomenon across cultures (e.g. Brown, 1991, 2000). In the parting of social encounters, it is mandatory that interactants may meet to interact to achieve the social goal of the interaction. However, when interactants meet, they will equally part from each other since they are done with their discussions. Parting and leave-taking mark the end of a discussion between interactants. This is a crucial linguistic norm that has the pattern it must take in the Gonja speech community. The dialogues in (26) illustrate parting and leave-taking expressions among the Gonjas

26. a) A: **Nɛ fo churɔ laŋto ebi**
nɛ fo churɔ laŋto ebi
CONJ 2SG greet home people
'And you greet house people' (then extend my greetings to your household)
B: **Awoo!**

26. b) A: **Ebɔrɛ e ya wushi kegben**
Ebɔrɛ e ya wushi ke- gben
God FUT go rest NOMZ tire
'May God go rest tiredness' (May God aid you to rest well)
B: **Awoo!**

26. c) A: **Kumo ere fo kaŋ fo**
kumo ere fo kaŋ fo
ADV CONJ 2SG FUT reach
'Then if you reach'
B. **Awoo!**

26. d) A: **Ebɔrɛ e sa anye karechɛ lɛla**
Ebɔrɛ e sa anye karechɛ lɛla
God FUT give 1PL daybreak good
'May God give us daybreak good' (May God grant us pleasant morning)
B: **Ami!/Awoo!**

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In the analysis in (26a), the addresser is telling the addressee to extend their pleasantries to members of his family on their (addresser's) behalf whereas in (26b) the addresser is telling the addressee to go and have a good rest. Hence, Example (26b) is frequently expressed in the afternoon or evening when most members of the community are returning from their workplaces. Example (26c) is expressed when the addressee is traveling or on their way to a particular place while the expression in (26d) occurs in the night when the interactants are optimistic that they will not meet again until the next day.

4.1.8 Summary

This section discussed activity greetings, prefatory exchanges, as well as parting and leave-taking types of greetings in Gonja. It was revealed that diverse activities in Gonja beckon appropriate greeting terms which are used as acknowledgements and morale boosters to those involved in the activity and also seen as a mark of communicative competence on the side of the addresser.

4.2 Socio-pragmatic Principles that Govern the Choice of Greetings among the Gonjas

The greeting protocol in the Gonja speech community is comparable to other speech communities in Africa (e.g. Agyekum, 2008; Akindele, 2007; Obeng-Ofosu, 2020). The choice of a particular greeting exchange in the Gonja speech community is influenced by a variety of socio-pragmatic principles. They consist of power, age, context, gender, and rank. Members of the Gonja society accord respect and deference to those who deserve it, which is evident in their greeting exchanges, despite what appears to be cultural presumptions of equality. These socio-pragmatic principles are explained as follows:

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4.2.1 Power

In many cultures worldwide, greetings are not just polite exchanges; they are an intricate display of social power dynamics. The way people greet often reflects their status, authority, and relationship with one another. The language used during greetings can subtly reinforce power differentials. In many languages, there are specific honorifics or formal expressions reserved for addressing individuals of higher status, further emphasizing their authority and importance within the social hierarchy. Additionally, the reciprocity of greetings can play dynamics. In Gonja, the person of higher status may expect a more elaborate greeting from those of lower status, while reciprocating with a simpler greeting themselves. This asymmetrical exchange reinforces the power dynamic between individuals. This power variable is mostly reflected in other variables such as age, social status, gender, and rank as will be seen in the course of this greeting:

27) A: **Anshumaa Jira** 'Good morning Jira'
B: **Awoo! Jira** 'Response, Jira

The greeting in 27 involves two chiefs, one of whom holds the highest rank (paramount chief) while the other is of a lower rank (sub-chief). It is customary for sub-chiefs to accompany their verbal greetings to the paramount chief by lying on their left side. However, certain sub- chiefs possess the authority as king makers, granting them the power to appoint or remove paramount chiefs, exempting from the requirement to provide any form of non-verbal cues during greetings. Hence, despite the addresser being a sub-chief, he holds the authority to bestow and revoke chieftaincy titles from the paramount chief. Therefore, he is unable to adhere to the customary practice of lying down to greet someone from whom he holds the power to appoint or remove.

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Another example is seen in 28):

28) A: **Antiree nwɔpa** 'Good afternoon uncle' (while squatting)
B: **Awoo ebi** 'Response, my child'

The exchange in 28 occurred between a younger individual and an elderly stranger who happened to cross-path in the afternoon. It is culturally accepted that when two persons meet on the way, any of them can initiate a greeting. However, it is culturally believed that when one of the participants is an older person and the other younger, the younger must initiate the greeting with squatting in deference to the elderly as seen in 28. This is because older citizens are considered as more powerful than younger citizens due to their age. Another instance is illustrated in 29:

29) A**:** **Toto anshumaa** (while squatting)
'Father good morning'

B**:** **Fo kela daa?**
Fo kela daa
2SG goodbye sleep
'Did you say goodbye to sleep?'

A: **Awoo!**

Conversation 29 occurred between a son and the father in the morning. The son, who is considered as less powerful in the house, starts the greeting out of respect for the father. It is widely known among the Gonjas that fathers are considered the most powerful in every home and every child must greet the father each and every morning, even if the child is married. Also, irrespective of a child's age, he is considered as less powerful in the face of the father and cannot inquire about the welfare of the father during greeting exchanges. This is why when the father asked about the sleeping condition of the son, he responded "awoo!" without quizzing same.

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4.2.2 Age

Among the Gonjas, age has a significant impact on the form and choice of greetings, which is an extremely crucial socio-pragmatic principle. The Gonja culture system places a strong emphasis on the idea of respect, and one-way area in which this respect is displayed is their manner of greeting. The language socialization theory examines how individuals learn and acquire language within their cultural context. In the context of age during greetings, this theory delves into how cultural norms and expectations shape the language used when addressing individuals of different age groups in diverse cultures and the Gonja culture is no exception. When greeting an old person, Gonjas typically utilize the address terms mma or 'my mother' toto 'father'. Nevertheless, using the terminologies 'my mother' and 'father' to address someone does not suggest that they are mothers or fathers in the traditional sense. Regardless of whether they have children or not, they are simply the fundamental terminologies used to address older people. The dialogue in 30 is a greeting exchange involving the use of address terms in Gonja.

30.) A. **Anshumaa mma**

Anshumaa	**m**	**ma**
Good morning	1SG	mother

'Good morning my mother'

B. **Awoo!**

In a normal Gonja community, the younger individual is the one who starts greeting when the situation necessitates it. This is a gesture of respect shown to the elderly. The appreciation conveyed by an act of deference, according to Goffman (1956), suggests that the addresser has a sentiment of respect for the addressee, frequently involving a broad assessment of the addressee. However, it is not typical for the younger person to reach out and shake hands with the senior citizen. If a

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handshake is to take place, it will be started by the elder. If the young person tries to, it will be considered as impolite. Additionally, younger people must squat and take off their hats when greeting older individuals.

Despite Goffman's assertion that people who show respect to others might believe that they are doing so merely because they see the person as an example of a category or a representative of something and that they are doing so despite their opinion on a *personal level*-this is not the case with greetings in the Gonja community. The Gonja people will show respect to someone if they believe that they merit it based on their status or age. Contrarily to Goffman, deference is thus practiced by Gonjas in a manner that conveys the addresser's attitude toward the addressee. Also, age plays a crucial role in the response of the daily greetings among the Gonjas. The elderly are at liberty to respond to the morning greetings as kareche aa 'daybreak?' or fo keladaa 'have you said goodbye to sleep?' and saŋɛ fo-aa 'is it time?' to the afternoon and evening/night greetings and can also resort to the standard response 'awoo!' if he/she desires. However, the younger can only respond 'awoo' to the elderly and an attempt to respond kareche-aa 'daybreak?' or fo keladaa 'have you said goodbye to sleep?' to the morning greetings and saŋɛ fo-aa 'is it time?' to both the afternoon and evening/night greeting to the elderly will render him or her insolent.

The exchange described in 31 transpired between an elderly female interactant and a younger man when the older female encountered the younger one sitting beneath a tree.

31) A: **Antiree mma** 'Good afternoon mma'
B: Awoo!

As earlier explained, females are typically expected to initiate greetings with their male counterparts. However, if the female is older than the male, the tradition flips, with the male initiating the greeting out of respect for the female's age. This

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demonstrates how age takes precedence over gender in greeting conventions in the Gonja speech community. So the address term 'mma' in the greeting exchange is an indication that the younger one is expressing respect to elderly by first greeting even though it is universally accepted that the walking person must greet the sitting as outlined by Obeng-Ofosu (2020). The exchange in 32 is another example:

32) A: **Toto anshumaa**
'Father good morning'

B: **Fo kela daa?**
Fo kela daa
2SG goodbye sleep
'Did you say goodbye to sleep?'

laŋto ebi du nuso?
Laŋ to ebi du nuso
House EMPH people AUX INT. ADV.
'How are the house people?'

A: **Bu ko alemfia**
Bu ko alemfia
3PL AUX health
'They are fine'

In the conversation, A initiates the greeting with the address term "toto" which holds significance in Gonja culture, referring to one's biological father or an elderly man of similar status. It is considered impolite for a younger person to inquire about the welfare of the elderly during greetings. Therefore, when speaker A greeted speaker B, B responded with fo keladaa meaning "did you bid farewell to sleep?" before asking about A's family. In turn, when A responded awoo, he refrained from asking about B's well-being out of respect for the elder, as it would be deemed impolite and disrespectful.

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4.2.3 Context

Context is another socio-pragmatic principle that determines the choice of a greeting and who greets first in Gonja. Context as a socio-pragmatic principle refers to the significance of taking the social and situational aspects into account when developing and interpreting language. Understanding how context impacts meaning and communication is a fundamental component of greetings. This covers both the social context, which includes the relationships between the interactants and the physical context, which includes the interaction's location and setting. A greeting at a funeral, for instance, would be more formal and courteous than one at a casual get-together. Also, the greeting 'edakana' at a marriage ceremony may appear bizarre because this is a greeting closely associated with funerals among the Gonjas. Additionally, in the Gonja speech community, close friends may greet one another with greater warmth and favour, whereas acquaintances may do so with more restraint and courtesy. In most situations, if a person finds themselves among a group of people, they are expected to greet first. In such circumstances, the greeting is typically as shown in 33, regardless of the time and location.

33) **VISITOR:**

Gafra achɛ

Gafra	a	chɛ
sorry	PRE	put

'Sorry to put' (Can I come in?)

HOST:

Ekpa wɔtɔ

ekpa	wɔ	tɔ
1PL	AUX	PRE

'Road is there' (Permission is granted)

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The age factor, however, may occasionally take precedence over this. When an elderly person enters and sees a gathering of young people, they will swiftly greet him/her instead of waiting for him/her to do first in the Gonja speech community. This is in line with Agyekum's (2008) assertion that one of the greeting principles in the Akan community is that younger individuals initiate greetings to elder people or lower-rank personalities to higher-rank ones. Hence, the greeting sequence will be metamorphosed to the dialogue that we have in Example 34 if an elderly person meets a younger person or someone of higher status meets someone of lower status.

34) **HOST:**

Asaŋkaba

asaŋ ka- ba

thanks NOMZ come

'Thanks coming' (Welcome)

OR

Marahaba

'Welcome'

VISITOR:

Benye bee di aa?

benye bee di a**:**

2PL PROG sleep INT.ADV

'Are you sleeping?' (Are you in good health?)

HOST:

Toto anye bee di

Father anye bee di

father 1PL PROG sleep

'Yes, father we are in'

In the same vein, it is customary for visitors to greet before entering someone's home, regardless of their age. When someone is at the door of the house or room, they say this greeting. The inhabitants will reply to their greeting and provide

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an offer to enter the house or the room. According to Agyekum (2008), this style of greeting is attention-seeking as displayed in line 1 of Example 33. To show the importance of greetings in the Gonja society, after the greeting sequence in 34, the visitor comes in and still greets the people as follows:

35). **VISITOR:**

Mee churɔ

mee churɔ

1SG PROG-greet

'I am greeting'

HOST:

Asaŋ keba

Asaŋ ke- ba

Thanks NOMZ come

'Thanks for coming'

Depending on who is visiting, the others may continue the greeting by enquiring first about the visitor's family and close friends before they disclose the real reason for the visit. However, as every Gonja youngster is aware that the younger ones should greet the elders, it is rather typical to find that in the Gonja, the visitor would still be greeted first if he/she is older than the host. Greetings can be considered, within the Gonja community, as rituals that follow certain routines and habits. This supports Firth's (1972) claim that greetings could be regarded as *rituals* because they adhere to set patterns. According to Firth, rituals are formal, arbitrary, communicative procedures that have the power to regulate or manage social situations. The conversations in 36 and 37 are also greetings offered to a bereaved family and to a woman who has successfully given birth.

36) A: **Nɛ anyebe edakana**

nɛ anye -be da ka na

CONJ 1PL POSS taste leave it

'And our taste and leave it.' (and our condolence)

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B: **Awoo!**

37) A: **Nɛ anyebe kumu lɛla**

nɛ anye -be da ka na

CONJ 1PL POSS taste leave it

'And our taste and leave it.' (and our condolence)

B: **Awoo!**

If you take a look at conversations 36 and that of 37, you will find that when the addresser in 36 is expressing his/her condolence to the bereaved family, he/she is congratulating the nursing mother in 37 for successfully delivering. This makes the context under which 36 occurs as a sad context while that of 37 a happy context; hence, the greeting expression in 36 cannot be applied in the context of 37. This is in line with Ochs and Schieflin's (1984) language socialization theory which provides a comprehensive framework for understanding how children and other novices acquire and use language in the context of their social and cultural environments. Hence, children are taught when, where, and how to greet during grieving events such as funerals and that of joyous events such as naming ceremonies. Thus, greetings can be considered, within the Gonja community, as rituals that follow certain routines and habits.

4.2.4 Gender

Additionally, the gender variable is another socio-pragmatic principle that accounts for the choice of greetings as well as who greets first in the Gonja speech community. In general, women are expected to greet the men first. However, if the female participant is an older person and the male is younger, it is the male who greets first. Ekajume-Illongo (2013) observes this when he indicates that in the Bakosi community, females initiate greetings to males unless where the female is older than the male, and then the male will initiate the greeting by using a kinship term "ma" in

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deference to the age of the female. This implies that the age variable surpasses the gender variable.

According to the language socialization theory, individuals are socialized into gender roles that dictate appropriate behaviours, including how to greet others. The theory emphasizes that, there are distinct expectations in many cultures regarding how males and females should greet each other. These distinct expectations usually reflect the broader beliefs about gender roles. It is important to note that greeting exchanges between males and females in the Gonja community are generally limited and brief except where the female is a relative to the male. Also, wives are expected to say good morning to their husbands first in the morning. Additionally, females lie on their right side whereas males lie on their left side when greeting a chief as a gesture of deference to the chief due to the authority he possesses. The conversation in 38 is a greeting between a wife and her husband in the morning while 39 and 40 are greetings of a male and female subjects and a chief respectively.

38) A: **Anshumaa kowurnyen**
'Good morning house man' (Good morning landlord)

B: **Awoo! lanka** 'Response, lanka'
Edikpa du nuso 'How is your sleeping place'
Awoo!

39) A: **Anshumaa Jira**
'Good morning Jira' (while lying on the left side)

B: **Awoo! baa koso loŋna**
'Response, get up'

40) A: **Anshumaa Jira**
'Good morning Jira' (while lying on the right side)

B: **Awoo! baa koso wandiga**
'Response, get up'

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The non-verbal cues that the interlocutors in the discourse 39 and 40 is an indication that whereas the addresser in 39 is a male, the addresser in 40 is a female signaling the difference in gender roles during greeting exchanges in the Gonja community. Also, the address terms Loŋna and Wandiga differentiate gender among the Gonjas; males from royal families are addressed Logna while females are addressed Wandiga as seen in 39 and 40.

4.2.5 Rank 9

Additionally, in most speech communities, including Gonja, the decision to choose one greeting over another is influenced by rank. The way Gonjas greet one another reflects their hierarchy or social rank. The word choice, tone, and accompanying body language can all be used to infer a person's relative rank in a conversation. For instance, members in the Gonja community use more formal language and gestures when greeting someone of higher rank, while adopting a more relaxed and casual approach when interacting with peers or subordinates. This illustrates the idea that people in positions of authority are treated with more respect and regard. For instance, greetings to chiefs must be accompanied by lying down. In formal settings such as the outdooring of a freshly enskinned chief, or in the chief palace, the chiefs always sit according to their ranks. In such instances, subordinate chiefs are required to greet the superior chiefs by taking off their hats and lying down respectively. Agyekum (2008) posits that rank is free of age and has no bearing when it comes to the speech act of greeting. Therefore, regardless of a chief's age, it is customary for you to accompany your greetings to him by lying down among the Gonjas. Also, shaking the hands of chiefs in formal settings is considered impolite and disregard for his authority which comes with serious repercussions. Additionally, due to the authority associated with the skins that a Chief sits on, he is not supposed to

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respond to greetings from his subjects; nevertheless, the linguist will do so on his behalf. Extracts 41 and 42 are greeting exchanges between a subject and a chief in his palace.

41) A: **Anshumaa Jira**
'Good morning Jira' (Hat removed whiles lying down on the left)

B: **Loŋna, baa koso**
'Loŋna, rise up'

42) A: **Anshumaa Gariba**
'Good morning Gariba' (Hat removed whiles lying down on the left hand

B: **Loŋna baa koso**
'Loŋna, rise up'

In the instance of 42, the same individual is addressing another chief with the term "Gariba" as a mark of respect towards the chief's status. However, since the addressee is not a paramount chief that, the term "Gariba" is used instead of "Jira" as observed in 41. Utilizing these titles interchangeably would be viewed as a significant breach and would label one as an inept communicator.

43) A: **Anshumaa Jira**
'Good morning Jira (whiles squatting)'

B: **Awoo Jonyen**
'Response, Jonyen

In the interaction, the individual greets a paramount while squatting, signifying that despite being a subject to the chief, he maintains his rank and power as a warrior. It is culturally believed among the Gonjas that a warrior should always be vigilant and prepared for combat; hence, they do not lie down to greet a chief. Squatting instead demonstrates their readiness.

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4.2.6 Summary

This section explicated some socio-pragmatic principles that influence the selection of a particular greeting over another among the Gonjas. It is important to note that these socio-pragmatic principles are deeply embedded in cultural norms and can vary significantly from one culture to another. These socio-pragmatic principles discussed include power, age, context, gender, and rank. However, the age variable takes precedence over some of the variables. Therefore, even when it is universally accepted that the visitor must greet the host, it was revealed in the focus group discussions that younger persons usually initiate greetings to the elderly whenever he joins a group of young individuals. However, these norms may change over time due to various factors like globalization, generational shift, and changing social dynamics.

4.3 The Socio-cultural Beliefs of the Gonja Speakers that are Embedded in their Greeting Expressions

This section focuses on the socio-cultural beliefs of the Gonjas that are embedded in their greeting expressions. The appropriate use of greeting expressions forms an essential part of a speaker's communicative competence. Greetings in Gonja are expressive speech acts that express how an addresser feels about an addressee (Austin, 1962; Searle, 1969). This is because the socio-cultural implication of these greetings enacts specific emotions and thoughts among the people. Some of these socio-cultural beliefs of greetings among the Gonjas include social concord, idea about time, ethical standards, encouragement, social strata, and mystical faith.

4.3.1 Social concord

One of the sociocultural values ingrained in the greetings of the Gonjas is social concord. It alludes to the cohesion and esteem that the Gonjas transmit through their varied types of greetings. Greetings are more than simply words; they are a

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crucial component of interpersonal relationship that communicates social ties, cultural norms, and values. The duration of greetings in Gonja reflects the nature of the relationship between the interlocutors. In the Gonja community, for example, close friends will utilize a sophisticated form of greeting while strangers use a simple form of greeting. This is comparable to the Akan culture (Agyekum, 2008). Additionally, the discussions from the focus groups showed that the usage of the first-person plural pronoun **anye** 'our' in all the circumstantial types of greetings among Gonjas as seen in 43 and 44 is a sign of their community's solidarity and camaraderie. The addresser(s) try to convey to the addressee(s) that they share in their sorrow or joy equally. According to the language socialization theory, greeting practices help individuals to develop the habit of compassion in their speech communities and the Gonja community is no exception.

43) A: **Nɛ anyebe edakana**
nɛ anye -be da ka na
CONJ 1PL POSS taste leave it
'And our taste and leave it.' (and our condolence)
B: **Awoo!**

44) A: **Nɛ anyebe kumu lɛla!**
nɛ anye -be kumu lɛla
CONJ 1PL POSS head good
'And our head good' (congratulations)
B: **Ami!/Awoo!**

45) A: **Nɛ anyebe epeŋi!**
nɛ anye -be epeŋi
CONJ 1PL POSS sun
(And our sun)
B: Awoo!

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The extract in 45 is mostly expressed in the afternoon when the sun is usually hot to indicate the collective effect that the radiation of the sun is having on every member of the community. When examining social concord during greetings through the lens of language socialization theory, it is observed that individuals are taught not only the linguistic structures of greetings but also how greetings serve as important rituals to establishing and maintaining social relationships, and mastering the appropriate greetings is crucial for fostering social concord in speech communities and the Gonja speech community is no exception.

4.3.2 Idea about time

In the historical Gonja society, telling time was not done through clocks since they did not have it. Instead, people relied on natural cues such as shadows and the crowing of the roosters to navigate the passage of time. According to the discussions from the focus groups, it is believed among the Gonjas that the rooster crowed three times before the day would officially be broken. How Gonja greetings reflect their idea about time can be seen in the three various times of the day greetings as in 46:

46)	A:	**Anshumaa**	'Good morning' (Awoo! response)
	B:	**Antiree**	'Good afternoon' (Awoo! response)
	C:	**Anulaa**	'Good evening' (Awoo! response)

The greeting "anshumaa" in (46A) translates to "has the cock crowed dawn?". This greeting usually occurred in the morning and reflects the belief among the Gonjas and other communities, like the Anum, that the crowing of the rooster signals the arrival of dawn. This is because the rooster is considered as one of the methods that Gonjas rely on mostly to tell the time in the morning.

Also, the term "antiree" in (46B) serves as a traditional Gonja greeting in the afternoon, indicating an inquiry into whether the garden eggs have ripened, as their readiness is indicative of the time in the afternoon, reflecting the influence of the

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sunlight in their growth. The evening greeting “anulaa” in extract (46C) is employed by the Gonjas, highlighting their dependence on a locally crafted lamp to illuminate their homes in ancient times. Due to the lamp’s limited brightness, they would still resort to feeling the ground with their fingers while searching for objects within their rooms at night. Therefore, the greeting term **anulaa** means it is time to feel the ground with the five fingers.

4.3.3 Ethical standards

The term *ethical standards* refer to the rules or guidelines that specify what constitutes morally appropriate or acceptable behaviour in a certain situation. The Gonja community is not an exception to how frequently these criteria direct people, organizations, or societies in decisions that are consistent with their beliefs and principles. The Gonja culture has many rules that govern how greetings should be exchanged and what acts are appropriate and inappropriate. In Gonja, it is considered rude and immoral to enter someone’s home or room without first employing the attention-getting as seen in 47, which signifies that the addresser is seeking permission to enter the addressee’s home or room.

47) A: **Gafra achɛ**
gafra a chɛ
Sorry PRE step
‘Sorry to step’ (Can I please step my foot into your room?)
Ekpa wɔtɔ
Ekpa wɔ tɔ.
road AUX PRE
‘Road is there’ (Permission is granted)

According to the focus group discussions, any effort to enter someone’s home or room without first employing this attention-seeking device is considered rude and is interpreted as the addresser seeking to claim possession of the house or room.

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Because of this, anyone who downplays the attention seeker is frequently questioned **ma nɛ fo be ebu naa?** 'does the room belong to you and me?'. Culturally, engaging a cook in a protracted chat is not acceptable among the Gonjas because it is viewed as unhealthy. The implication of this, from the focus group discussions, is that the saliva of the cook might enter the dish, and saliva is universally regarded as filth in all cultures. This is the reason a greeting exchange with a cook is usually short as seen in 48:

48) A**:** **Asaŋ nɛ ɛdɛ**
asaŋ nɛ ɛdɛ
Thanks PRE fire
'Thanks for fire' (Thank you for the courage)

B**:** **Awoo!**

49) A: **Kɔnɔ maŋ china**
kɔnɔ maŋ china
mouth NEG sit
(Mouth does not sit)

The greeting phrase "kɔnɔ maŋ china" is morally accepted among the Gonjas as a polite way to greet someone who is eating. It signifies an understanding that although the Gonja people appreciate lengthy greetings, it is considered morally improper to engage someone in extensive conversation while they are eating, as it may pose a risk of choking.

4.3.4 Encouragement

Gonjas, acknowledging their history of hard work amid past conflicts and traditional occupations, extend encouragement to individuals involved in laborious tasks such as farming, fishing, and hunting. This supportive sentiment is communicated through congratulatory greetings initiated by passers-by regardless of whether the individual is actively working, taking a brief break, or returning from

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their exhaustions. The cultural ethos underscores the idea that engaging in these activities contributes to the well-being of the community. Even if the individuals have already exchanged daily greetings earlier in the day, the congratulatory greetings persist as a reaffirmation of the communal spirit. The insights gathered from the focus group had it that individuals do not embark on farming, hunting, or fishing for leisure; rather, the understanding is that such endeavours are undertaken with the intention of contributing to the welfare of the community once one it is in the field. This is the main reason why activity greetings, as explained previously, are very crucial in the Gonja speech community. The greeting exchanges in 50, 51, and 52 are expressed to people who engage in fishing, farming, and hunting to encourage them for that effort.

50) A. **Asaŋ nɛ eboŋto**
Asaŋ nɛ eboŋto
Thanks PRE. river
'Thank you for the fishing'
B. **Awoo!**

51) A: **Asaŋ nɛ ndɔ**
Asaŋ nɛ ndɔ 'Thank you for the farming'
Thanks PRE. farm
B: Awoo!

52) A: **Asaŋ nɛ kekpaŋ**
Asaŋ nɛ kekpaŋ 'Thank you for the farming'
Thanks PRE. hunt

The discourse in 50, 51, and 52 acknowledges the addressees' presence and contributions to the community, affirming their significance and worth. Hence, they are encouraged to work more. Also, greeting them reflects empathy and understanding of the challenges they face in the course of executing their work. For instance, farmers and hunters encounter perilous wildlife, whereas fishermen risk drowning. Therefore, it is important to show appreciation for their labour and

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dedication by offering heartfelt greetings. This fosters connections rooted in mutual respect and uplifts morale and motivation.

4.3.5 Mystical faith

Additionally, it is morally wrong for an individual who is on his way to the loo to exchange pleasantries. The majority of the Gonja settlements today make use of the toilet which was a common feature in the past. There is a societal idea that certain activities are unclean and this perception was discussed in the focus groups. The Gonjas consequently have the belief that the left hand is dirty as a result of some of the behaviours it engages in. Cleaning the rump is one example. Therefore, using the left hand to shake someone's hand when greeting is extremely impolite. The cultural inference is that the addresser considers the addressee as less important.

In a similar vein, a person on the way to the toilet is considered unclean and hence should not interact with others. However, such a person may use the statement **mee bulɔ ekpa nɛ n ba** as seen in the conversation 53 'I'm passing road to come' because the addressee may not know whether the addresser is on the way to the toilet and may consider him/her as impolite for ignoring the social obligation of greeting. Additionally, a person in the mood of prayers or in the bathroom is not supposed to greet or respond to greetings as seen in dialogue 53 and 54:

53) A: **Mee bulɔ ekpa nɛ n ba**
'Am passing road to come'
B: **Tɔ** 'Ok'

Nevertheless, this is limited to adult interactants. Obeng-Ofosu (2020) affirms this notion of cultural uncleanness by stating that "women who are in their menstrual period are never to shake hands with a chief" (p. 94) in the Anum community. Agyekum (2008) also holds a similar opinion that "it is a taboo to greet while going to

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the toilet" (p. 2005) in the Akan culture because it is considered unclean to engage in a conversation. All this supports Gonjas' mystical religious nature.

54) **Fo wɔ champol to**

Fo	wɔ	champol	to
1SG	AUX	bathroom	EMP

'You are in the bathroom'

55) **Fo kraa bu**

Fo	kraa	bu
1SG	ADV	pray

'You are still praying'

The conversations in 54 and 55 are some instances that an interlocutor may not be obliged to greet in the Gonja speech community. However, the addresser may use the expressions **fo wɔ champol to** 'you are in the bathroom and **fo kraa bu** 'you are still praying' to signal to the addressee that due to the circumstances he finds himself, he cannot exchange proper greetings with him. Additionally, the addressee is not to respond say anything in these two instances; hence, the exchanges in 54 and 55 are only in one fold. This is because according to the focus group discussions, a person in the mood of prayers is already communicating and it is inappropriate to engage in communication with different interlocutors at the same.

4.3.6 Social strata

In the Gonja community, there is a profound reverence for age and authority, evident in the way greetings are extended, particularly to the elderly and those with significant social status or power. This respect is conveyed through accompanying gestures, including actions like squatting, lying down, and removing of sandals and hats. The specific gestures employed depend on factors such as age, gender, rank, power dynamics, and the distance between the individuals involved, all guided by face face-saving and politeness strategies. Consequently, maintaining appropriate

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social distance plays a crucial role in the execution of greetings within the Gonja culture. In Gonja, married women are obligated to greet their husbands every morning, underscoring the husband's role as the household head responsible for the wife's well-being. When addressing a paramount chief, men, including sub-chiefs, display deference by removing their hats and lying on their left side, while queenmothers and women lie on their right side. Notably, a chief refrains from direct greetings with subjects in the palace, attributing this to the chief's elevated status due to the symbolic significance of the skins in their possession. Instead, the interactions within the chief's palace involve greetings and responses facilitated by a designated spokesperson known as 'Dɔtɛ'.

The extracts in 56 and 57 are greetings that were exchanged between married couples in their house and a sub chief and a paramount chief in the palace as well as a younger person and an older person.

56) A: **Anshumaa kowurnyen**
'Good morning house man' (Good morning landlord)

B: **Awoo! lanka**
'Response, lanka'

Edikpa du nuso
'How is your sleeping place'

A: **Awoo!**

In the Gonja culture, it is customary for a woman to greet her husband each morning, regardless of her age. The exchange in 56 occurred between a married couple, where it is customarily believed that the husband is the one with the highest status in the household. According to the Gonja tradition, the husband is accorded utmost respect, and it is expected that the wife initiates the morning greeting by using

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the address term **kowurnyen** 'landlord' as a sign of respect and adherence to cultural norms.

57) A: **Anshumaa Jira**
'Good morning Jira while lying on the right'

B: **Awoo! baa koso Garba**
'Response: get up Garba'

The exchange in 57 entails a formal greeting between a paramount chief and a sub-chief, where the sub-chief respectfully addresses the paramount chief as "Jira" and assumes a posture of deference by lying on his left side. This protocol underscores the hierarchical structure, with the paramount chief holding a superior status. Furthermore, the paramount chief's response is mediated through his spokesman, Dɔtɛ, reinforcing his esteemed position within the Gonja community. Another example is found in 58:

58) A: **Antiree Toto**
'Good afternoon Father' (while squatting)

B: **Awoo! Ebi**
'Response my child'

In the Gonja community, age is deeply intertwined with social status and respect, especially during greetings. When people greet each other, the manner in which they address one another is often dictated by their respective ages. Older individuals are typically accorded greater respect and honour, so younger people often initiate greetings by using honorific titles, such as *my father*, even though it does not necessarily mean the older person is a father but he is a father figure. They younger individuals also accompany their greetings with gestures such as squatting. This reflects the cultural value placed on age and wisdom within the Gonja community. The response by the older person '**awoo! ebi** which is a response addressing the

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person as a son does not necessarily mean his biological son, but he is of the status to also have a son like him.

4.3.7 Summary

This section has highlighted the sociocultural beliefs that are embedded in Gonja greetings. This has been done under social concord, ethical standards, encouragement, social strata, idea about time, and mystical faith. The social concord reveals the social bond and cohesion that exist among Gonjas while the mystical belief of the people in the past is seen in the use of the term **Mee bulɔ ekpa nɛ n ba** 'I'm passing road to come' to hedge greetings when going to the toilet which is considered as unclean.

4.4 Conclusion

The language Socialization Theory (Schiefflin & Ochs, 1986) has been utilized to examine the prevalent greeting customs within the Gonja communities. This exploration highlights the significance of greetings in fostering social unity and integration. According to the Language Socialization Theory, greetings serve as a fundamental aspect of language learning and acquisition, which is evident in the Gonja community where children are encouraged to embrace greetings in their everyday interactions to enhance social harmony. Greeting expressions in Gonja encompass a variety of forms, including those based on time of the day, circumstances, seasons, activities, and more. These greetings are tailored according to socio-pragmatic principles like age, gender, rank, power, and context. Furthermore, verbal greetings and non-verbal cues are typically employed simultaneously in Gonja communities as a sign of respect to elders and those in positions of authority. This discussion strongly supports the idea that greetings are deeply rooted in culture and cannot be fully understood without considering the socio-cultural context and the

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specific circumstances in which they occur. This is particularly evident when analyzing the choice of words, linguistic structures, and other performative aspects, especially circumstantial greetings.

The examination presented here significantly questioned the perspectives of Searle (1969), Kasper (1989) and Sacks (1975), among others, which imply that greetings lack meaningful content and that users do not genuinely intend what they express in greeting exchanges. The study actually confirms the perspectives of Duranti (1997) and Agyekum (2008), among others, emphasizing the significant role of greetings in the socio-cultural fabric of a community. Additionally, the discussion in this chapter has unveiled the historical influences that shape the formulation of greetings among the Gonja people, such as the concept of time reflected in greetings specific to different times of the day. Consequently, Gonja greeting expressions convey rich layers of meaning, social nuances, and cultural significance.

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CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS, RECOMMENDATIONS, AND CONCLUSION

5.0 Introduction

This chapter summarizes the study's findings, offering general recommendations, and proposing suggestions for future study. The study successfully achieved its primary objectives, exploring various greetings in Gonja, investigating socio-pragmatic principles influencing greeting choices, and discussing the socio-cultural aspects of the Gonja people that are embedded in their greeting expressions. The qualitative approach and ethnography design methodology, along with purposive sampling and focus group discussions, provided a comprehensive understanding of Gonja greetings. Recordings were utilized to validate the results through double-checking of data. Section 5.1 provides an overview of the findings, while Section 5.2 discusses the interrelationship of culture, context, and greeting expressions in Gonja. Section 5.3 presents the implications of the results while 5.4 suggests avenues for future research.

5.1 Summary of Findings

The study's primary focus was to analyse the speech act of greeting in Gonja. The objectives were to identify some of the numerous types of greeting expressions used in the Gonja communities and then evaluate the socio-pragmatic principles that influence the choice of one greeting over the other as well as some sociocultural values that are embedded in the Gonja greeting expressions. Answers to the research questions were helped by the data that was gathered and analysed. These are discussed as follows:

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5.1.1 Types of greetings in Gonja

When the data for research question one were analysed, it became clear that Gonja was no different from other languages in terms of how greetings are shared between languages, as detained in the literature. The daily time of the day greetings anshumaa 'good morning', antiree 'good afternoon', and anulaa 'good evening' are the most frequently used. In addition to greetings at specific times of the day, greetings are also made according to circumstances, activities, and seasonal differences. The circumstantial types of greetings are circumstance-oriented, in that they are expressed based on the circumstance the addressee (s) identified him/herself or their selves. This circumstance could be a happy one such as childbirth, marriage, and festive celebrations, or an empathetic one such as the death of a member of the community. Seasonal greetings on the other hand are expressed in accordance to the particular season of the year while the activity greeting is oriented towards the action that the addressee is found doing at the time of the exchange. That is at the time of the exchange, the addressee could be farming, cooking or even eating. Also, greetings in Gonja could be simple or complex depending on the relationship of the interactants as well as the time available. Parting and leave-taking are also an aspect of the Gonja greeting since interlocutors will depart after the necessary conversation.

5.1.2 Socio-pragmatic principles influencing greeting choices in Gonja

Regarding the socio-pragmatic principles of greetings, it was discovered that age, gender, time, context, and rank are some of the socio-pragmatic principles that influence the choice of a particular greeting exchange over another in the Gonja communities with the age factor as the dominant one hence, when an elderly person visits a group of young individual, they will initiate greeting with him first even

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though, it is universally accepted that the visitor should first greet the host (Obeng-Ofosu, 2020).

5.1.3 Socio-cultural aspects of the Gonja people that are embedded in their greetings

Additionally, greetings reveal details about the sociocultural aspects of the Gonjas that are ingrained in their greeting expressions. Greetings demonstrate the level of civic unity and team spirit that existed among the populace. The majority of the complex greetings and the circumstantial as well as the seasonal greetings, draw attention to this. Because of this, most greetings employ the inclusive plural possessive pronoun anye 'our' to show that the addresser(s) is equally sharing the feelings and emotions of the addressee(s) whether good or bad. Also, greetings indicate the Gonja people's mystical beliefs. For example, greeting someone while heading to the loo is considered impolite because someone going to the loo is viewed as filthy. Moreover, the focus group talks revealed that shaking hands with the left hand is ill-mannered because it is considered dirty due to some impure actions it is commonly employed for. In the Gonja communities, greetings order the folks to behave in certain standard manners. It is considered discourteous and unethical to enter someone's room or home without using the attention-seeking device gafrachɛ which means 'can I come in?'.

5.2 The Interrelationship between Culture, Context, and Greeting Expressions in the Gonja Speech Communities

The results showcased in 5.1 are an obvious illustration of the interconnection between culture, context, and greeting expressions in the Gonja communities. This attests to the language socialization theory (LST) (Schiefflin & Ochs, 1986) which emphasizes on how socio-pragmatic competence is built through regular engagement

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within speech communities where greeting serves as the opener for every fruitful discourse to transpire. That is one of the ways by which infants are socialized through the use of language within the Gonja society. It should be emphasized that the inappropriate exchange of these pleasantries will portray one as a social outcast, impolite, and an incompetent speaker. The Gonjas are known for their high sense of social cohesion. The concept of self-centered life is not supported by the culture. This is evident in the majority of their greetings where the inclusive plural possessive pronoun anye 'our' is prevalent.

In the society, greetings are practically essential. Constantly, assistance is given to the needy through their demonstration of sympathy and empathy to the afflicted family during death and their emotions of excitement to the nursing mother and the entire family after the birth of a child. The congratulatory remarks asaŋ-saŋ 'thanks thanks' to someone who engaged in labour-intensive work like farming also reflects their cultural emphasis on hard labour. Address terms are also an essential aspect of Gonja greetings that are used to show respect and hedge greetings. Also, the interrelationship between culture, context, and greeting expressions in the Gonja speech communities highlights the intricate ways in which language and social norms intersect to shape communication practices. By understanding these dynamics, individuals can navigate social interactions with sensitivity and respect for cultural traditions. Additionally, greeting expressions in Gonja can serve as a means of communication beyond words, conveying emotions and intentions. The facial expressions and body language accompanying greetings provide additional layers of meaning that may vary depending on the cultural context and individual relationships.

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5.3 Implications for Communicating in Gonja

Communication in Gonja carries deep cultural significance and plays a pivotal role in societal hierarchies, community and inclusion, and conflict resolution. These are explained as follows:

5.3.1 Hierarchy and social status

The formality of communication in the Gonja culture can indicate the relative social status of the interlocutors involved. This is evident in their greeting expressions. For example, the address term *Jira* is used when greeting a paramount chief whiles *Garba* is used when greeting a sub-chief. Also, Non-verbal cues that are used in communication imply a lot of meanings in the Gonja community. For instance, a younger person must accompany his greeting by squatting in deference to the elderly. An attempt to downplay this is considered disrespectful.

5.3.2 Sense of community and inclusion

Communication in Gonja is not solely about individual interactions but also reflects a sense of community and belonging. An instance is the use of the inclusive first person plural pronoun *anye* 'our' in most of their circumstantial greetings which means the addresser equally shares the feelings of the addressee.

5.3.3 Conflict resolution

Conflict resolution is another implication of communicating in the Gonja speech community. Clear and open communication channels are essential for resolving disputes and conflicts within the community. A greeting serves as one of such mechanisms in the Gonja speech community. The Gonjas emphasize greetings amid squabbles between and among members of the community. Among the Gonjas, it is commonly believed that when greetings continue over time, the squabbles will

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vanish. Also, greeting one's nemesis first is a display of maturity and forgiveness as well as forgetfulness.

5.4 Suggestions for Future Studies

The speech act of greeting is common to all human languages and serves socialization purposes. Hence, it is recommended that scholars should pay close attention to this distinctive element of language use. I also recommend that linguists and anthropologists, particularly in the Guan languages, should probe more into these greeting expressions as a way of bringing to bear the sociocultural practices of a group that are ingrained in their greeting expressions. This study serves as the starting point for further investigation into the speech act of greeting in Gonja hence, future researchers can delve into the influence of tone on the addressee during greetings and comparative study of the speech act of greeting in Gonja and other Guan languages.

5.5 Conclusion

Gonja is one of the Northern Guan languages in Ghana which has received relatively little research. Notwithstanding, the language has several distinctive characteristics that offer valuable linguistic information for examination. The speech act of greetings which has been the subject of this study is one of such linguistic traits. Greetings are utterances that are used to initiate and maintain social contact between interlocutors, according to several definitions in the literature (e.g Agyekum, 2008; Akindele, 2007, Foley, 1997, Firth, 1972). There are many different types, including time-of-the-day greetings, circumstantial greetings, seasonal greetings, activity greetings, prefatory exchanges, and parting and leave-taking.

This ethnography research employed the qualitative approach incorporating the purposive sampling technique to select the participants for the study. Data were gathered through observation, focus group discussions, and recordings. The analysis

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has been conducted to examine some types of greetings in Gonja, socio-pragmatic principles that influence the choice of one greeting over another, and some sociocultural values that are embedded in the Gonja greeting expressions. Certain facets of the Gonja cultural system have been made clearer by the study. It has also provided some insights into the significance of some socio-pragmatic principles that should be considered during greeting exchanges. Moreover, it has attested to the language socialization theory and to some degree contests some ideas that claim that greetings are semantically and propositionally empty, and frozen or formulaic routine items and those who exchange greetings do not really mean what they say during greeting discourse (Kasper, 1989; Sacks, 1975; Searle, 1969). The study's results highlight the significance of considering greetings as a vital linguistic element to understand a social group within their cultural context. This is essential because many of their cultural values, integral to their lives, are explicitly conveyed through their greetings.

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