

## THE PSYCHO-SOCIAL DYNAMICS OF EWE NAMES

### THE CASE OF AHANONKO

Daniel Avorgbedor

A close examination of the literature available on the Ewe of southeastern Ghana (Anlo Ewe specifically) reveals only cursory references to and general descriptions of Anlo Ewe names and name system.<sup>1</sup> The **Ahanonko**, a special category of Anlo names, has not received any significant investigation. This lack of specificity and critical analysis within a plausible theoretical matrix therefore leaves a gap in the understanding and appreciation of the different categories of names among the Anlo Ewe. The purpose of this paper is to focus on one category of Anlo names, the **Ahanonko** (literally translates "drinking name"), and to explain the various social and psychological situations within which the **Ahanonko** is realized. In other words, there shall be an investigation into how, when, and why the **Ahanonko** is performed. These basic questions shall be answered through an extensive and intensive exploration of the relationships between the **Ahanonko** performance and social ideals regarding Anlo personality, and to explain these relationships within the framework of personal and social interrelations. Specific social and personal mechanisms or acts that characterize and maintain the **Ahanonko** performance shall be analyzed in the following categories: visual, aural/verbal, tactile. Gestural, linguistic and paralinguistic sub-

categories will also be discussed, and both social and psychological aspects shall be involved in all the categories, although certain areas will be emphasized during specific analytic segments. The three major categories shall be explained in terms of their various emotive qualities and intermodalities, and how they draw forth and upon available contexts in the construction of a meaningful and an elevated social experience. For these reasons, analysis and discussions shall implicitly test and complement, in many respects, the sociolinguistic and ethnomethodological approaches currently pursued by the "performance school" in folkloristics.<sup>2</sup>

Names, as exemplified in other cultures, constitute an integral aspect of the socio-cultural processes involved in the making and unmaking of a person. Names, therefore, function at both social and psychical levels, and this dual function is necessary in societies where the material and immaterial aspects of man's constitution are acknowledged.

A few works from the field of onomastics which support the above assertion will include Joyce Hertzler, who defines name as,

A name does several things. First, it identifies, denotes, and signifies something, comes to be descriptive of it, and thus takes it out of the realm of the unknown or the amorphous. A nameless thing is something vague, incomplete, uncanny.<sup>3</sup>

Max Adler appropriately broadens this definition: "They endow their bearers with certain characteristics, they can exert their magic on others, they can become dangerous when known by any enemy..."<sup>4</sup> Names are so intricately bound with their bearers that taboos are sometimes placed on certain names,<sup>5</sup> and sometimes children are given derogatory names in order to avoid premature

deaths.<sup>6</sup> "To know the name of a man therefore means to know his real essence, and to grasp his soul."<sup>7</sup> In general psychoanalysis and in the domain of affectivity, it has been noted that,

The names of individuals play an important role in the organization of their ego defense patterns and are cathected and utilized from the point of view of ego defenses in a manner similar to an organ or body part. As a person becomes conscious of his or her name as a part of the self between one and two years of age, the fantasies and **Gestalten** formed around a name and its variations throughout the years will always tend to be intimately bound up with the vicissitudes in the development of the ego.<sup>8</sup>

Even in abstract contexts and literary works, names have been known to possess special significance and power.<sup>9</sup>

N'Sougan Agblemagnon, in his general study on the Ewe, lists fifteen categories of Ewe names, and this list is not exhaustive.<sup>10</sup> Most of these categories also have their parallels in other African cultures, but the **Ahanonko** seems to be a unique phenomenon among the Anlo Ewe.<sup>11</sup>

### General Description

An **Ahanonko** is normally given to a person when he is young, but the name is not performed until the bearer reaches adulthood, an age segment which is identified with the **Ahanonko** performance.<sup>12</sup> Women do not receive **Ahanonko** but where an exception exists, the name is not performed in the regular fashion.<sup>13</sup> There are visual, verbal and tactile components to the **Ahanonko**.

There is a vigorous handshake which accompanies the recitation of the name,

either simultaneously or immediately after the recitation, depending upon the nature of the personal encounter and the social situation. The interpersonal interaction also warrants some gaze or visual gestures which are essential to the totality of the performance.

The **Ahanonko** system can be described as a cognitive one which embraces modes of apprehending, appraising, acquiring, verifying, exhibiting, confirming, and discovering the necessary ingredients of social well-being. The term **Ahanonko**, by its etymological connotation (i.e., "drinking name"), describes a specific context, and that is, social drinking context. This description should not, however, lead us to believe that the performance is limited to drinking contexts only. The range of the available contexts (and their variations) is very extensive. Unlike musical performances whereby a lone musician can perform to himself, the **Ahanonko** must take place at least between two persons, and it is therefore intensely interactional.<sup>14</sup>

The performance is referred to in native terms as "**nkofofodo**" (literally, "moulding of name"). The active verb (moulding) involved here is an indicator of the special kind of behavior (or special experience) that characterizes the **Ahanonko** performance.

The performance takes place in both structured and unstructured situations. Ordinarily, one person would, by the predicates of friendship ties, visit the other, and such visits are often spontaneous. This is an established customary behavior which is in fulfillment of Ewe social and moral dictates or obligations. Such friendly visits can also be construed as a form of ritualized behavior which must be frequently tolerated

among friends. In this manner, friendship ties are constantly renewed.

On sighting his visitor, the host immediately begins to recite his friend's (visitor) **Ahanonko**. Handshake, as earlier stated, is an integral aspect of the performance. After the performance has settled, the visitor is offered a seat and conversational interactions proceed as normal. The performance also takes place casually among friends when they meet each other at village corners, or at such formal events as musical performances, festive occasions, work camps, and at administrative councils. Other specific contexts include funerals, personal or social tragedy, arrivals and departures of friends, and so on. The level of intensity of the **Ahanonko** performance thus varies according to these personal and social contexts.

Anlo society thrives on reciprocity and commensality. This reciprocity should not, however, be understood to mean that the recipient is obligated in any way to return good gestures.<sup>15</sup> The process and the dynamics of giving and sharing rest upon an implicit assumption that can only be comprehended within a wider aspect of Anlo concepts and articulations concerning man and society.

The first context to be discussed regards the social drinking situation. This context falls within an aspect of Anlo reciprocal attitudes and modes of behavior which involve the sharing of drinks among friends.<sup>16</sup> As we shall later discover, this aspect of Anlo commensality transcends the physical, emotional, and psychical levels of the people involved in the drinking situation. In this drinking context drinks are freely offered, one person initiates it and the good gesture draws forth similar response from others, and the cycle continues. In this

context the **Ahanonko** performance takes place between two persons initially and its affective and sympathetic imports subsequently involve other pairs of performers.<sup>17</sup>

Alcohol is a depressant (but a stimulant initially at light dose) and the locally-brewed gin called "akpeteshie" is about 90% alcohol content. In terms of sociability and grounding of friendship ties, the participants are expected to freely provide drinks. Although within such atmosphere there is a temptation to take an overdose of the drink, Anlo moral and ethical standards demand that each person be always responsible for his behavior and actions as prescribed within the Anlo decorum and social mores. There is, therefore, this factor of restraint which guides each person in the level of intoxication that can be safely tolerated.<sup>18</sup> This is why the **Ahanonko** can still be performed successfully in such social drinking contexts. A majority of the participants would, therefore, consume the amount of alcohol needed to maintain a keen interest and enough consciousness in the social situation. Even in situations where there are teetotalers, the active and cathartic social interaction does provide enough stimulus which sufficiently engages persons of this category in the performance.<sup>19</sup>

Initial and average dose of **akpeteshie** provides the drinker with a certain amount of excitation due to the immediate and temporary effect of alcohol on the nervous system. When the nerves are charged in this manner, the entire person becomes very susceptible to an external stimulus.<sup>20</sup> This susceptibility is also coupled with quick review and recollection of past personal and social events within a complex system of reflection and introspection which transcends both the conscious and unconscious states. The events thus recalled are reinterpreted and reacted

to within the already affective drinking context. Situated within this multi-level and multiple stimulus-response process, the participant is raised to a level of sensitivity and awareness by which the performance of his **Ahanonko** is able to readily evoke positive and assertive response. It is also important to note that in certain cases where some individuals are intoxicated to a high degree of dullness, the inherent qualities of his **Ahanonko** are able to awaken him to a certain level of awareness when it (**Ahanonko**) is performed. To deepen that awareness, the addresser would also, apart from the recitation, perform a vigorous handshake, even sometimes accompanying this with willful shaking of the body of the addressee (i.e., the intoxicated one).

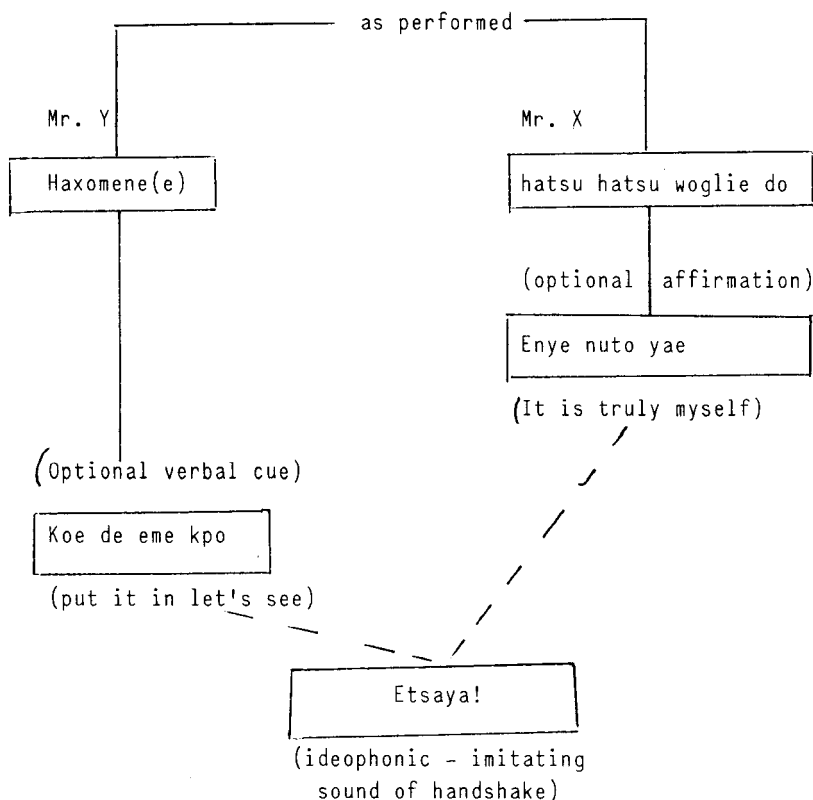
Apart from the role of alcohol, there are other factors that help define a person's level of participation in the social interaction and the **Ahanonko** performance, specifically. For example, a person with an unpleasant memory of a previous event would react in a more subdued manner to the performance of his name, especially when the sad memory is projected into the surrounding atmosphere. In this case his friends, being aware of his circumstances, would perform his name more than once in or to keep him from regressing into those unpleasant memories.<sup>21</sup>

The linguistic and paralinguistic characteristics of the **Ahanonko** are essential to its successful and meaningful performance. The concept of "sharing" and reciprocity is further elaborated in the surface linguistic structure and performance of the name. For example, the full name of Mr. X, **Haxomene(e); hatsu hatsu wogle do**, is binary in structure and content (see diagram 1.)<sup>22</sup> The first block represented in the performance constitutes a Noun Phrase (i.e.,

Diagram 1.

**Ahanonko** of Mr. X:

Full name: Haxomene(e); hatsu hatsu wogleie do  
(trans.: The nut in a sty; boars boars tried it but failed).



**Key to Diagram 1:**

The full name of Mr. X is divided between X himself and Mr. Y, as shown in the two blocks. Mr. X continues with a verbal affirmation which is optional. Y then continues with a verbal cue that invites X to do the handshake. The handshake is accompanied by the ideophone (last block) vocalized by one person or both simultaneously. The performance is consummated with a final snap made from the middle (medius) fingers of both persons.



Haxomene, diag. 1, and Ganya-menya-le-gbogblom-o (diag. 2) which can also be described as a Topic, and the second part Comment:

Noun Phrase/Topic	Comment
Haxomene	hatsu hatsu wogleie do

The addresser recites the noun phrase, and the addressee completes the recitation of his name. This aspect of the verbal component of the **Ahanonko** therefore underscores the interpersonal interaction which heightens the emotional experience in the performance. In addition, the concept of reciprocity is also exemplified in the manner in which the two persons are made to participate (share) in the performance of the name.

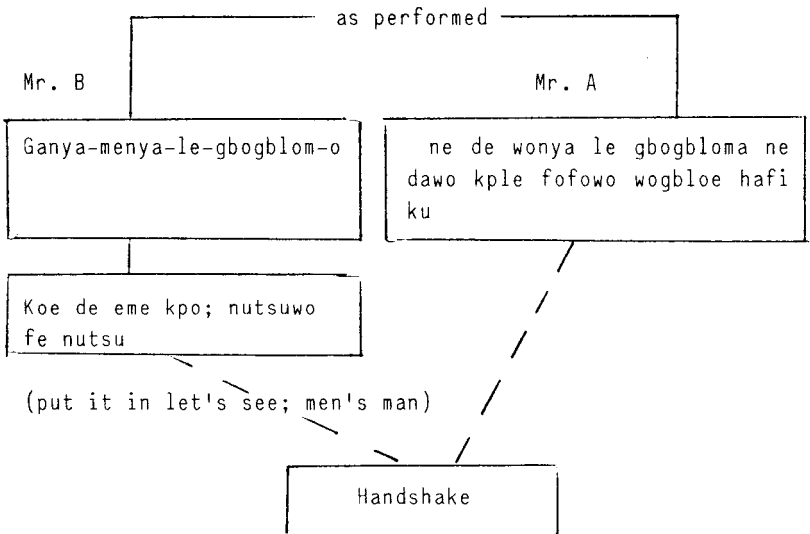
Another linguistic consideration of **Ahanonko X** also reveals an emphatic reduplication as in "hatsu hatsu." However, a critical analysis will reveal that this reduplication carries implications far beyond mere emphasis. The repetition actually gives the idea that not only boars but different kinds of boars have made the attempt (see translation). Male pigs (boars) are here preferred over female ones because of the "tougher strength" associated with male beings in Anlo society.<sup>23</sup> This reduplication, therefore, confers on the addressee the qualities of an indomitable or supreme one.

Length is also a factor in the effectiveness of the performance. In diagram 2 we have an instance where both Noun Phrase and Comment are quite elaborate. There is a practice whereby persons with **Ahanonko** are called only by the noun phrase, and this happens in very informal and domestic situations. However, due to the length of the noun phrase of the **Ahanonko** of Mr. A only the

Diagram 2.

**Ahanonko of Mr. A:**

Full name: Ganya-menya-le-gbogblom-o; ne de wonya le  
 gbogbloma ne fofowo kple dawo wogbloe hafi ku  
 (trans.: Money matter-hard-to-discuss; if it were easy to  
 discuss your parents (ancestors) would have done  
 it before dying)



first noun component of the noun phrase (i.e., **Ganya**) is recited in those informal contexts.<sup>24</sup> The advantage of the length factor resides in the fact that both performers are compelled to go through an intense emotional experience due to the extra effort involved in consummating a spatially-elaborated verbal engagement. Where shorter forms are involved (as in diagram 1), similar emotional involvement is attained through the instant reflections and perspective generated within the performers since the names are actually symbolic and cryptic ways of

encoding complex values and qualities. In addition, other components of the performance (e.g., handshake, gaze) also interact with the verbal in order to realize different levels of meaning and affect.<sup>25</sup> The longer time span gives the addressee a longer time to evaluate himself with regard to the implications of his name. The temporal dimension thus increases the affective domain created around the addressee.

Another length-related factor concerns the different but related stages that characterize the performance (see blocks in diagrams). In diagram 1 Mr. X positively reinforces himself through the use of the verbal affirmation tag, "it is truly myself." That affirmation is immediately acknowledged by Y, and Mr. Y further reestablishes that positive image projection by inviting X to seal that "fact" with a handshake. Mr. Y's verbal cue is necessary for maintaining a balanced situation (positive one) without which X would probably suspect Y of mistrust and ill-purpose. Most often both X and Y engage in the recitation of the verbal cues in the last block of diagram 1. The sound made simultaneously reinforces their unanimity and personal devotion as far as the goals of the **Ahanonko** performance is concerned.

There are other paralinguistic factors which increase the multi-sensory engagements involved in the performance. In Haxomene(e) the "e" in parenthesis is an emphatic one. Apart from employing the linguistic device, the addresser uses both eye and head gestures; he tenses his head and neck muscles, nodding his head, and also employing intermittent gaze with the eyes more widely opened than normal. He also accompanies these gestures by reciting the name at a higher voice register.<sup>26</sup> The recitation is done at a moderately fast tempo with breaks, especi-

ally where the name is a very long one. These gestures therefore involve a certain amount of effort that readily excite and illuminate the consciousness of both performers, and this seriousness is one of the key elements that define the **Ahanonko** performance.

During the moments of X's completion of his own name (diagram 1), there are complex but precise psychological transformations that situate Mr. X in a unique plane of personal and social experience. The addresser's initial recitation of the Topic (noun phrase) represents a direct and indirect means of challenging the addressee with the dictates of the social and personal responsibilities implied in his (addressee's) name. In other words, X is being asked: "Do you really possess the qualities of the indomitable nut as set forth in your name?" (see translation of **Ahanonko** X). Depending upon specific contexts and upon the addresser's intentions, this interrogative aspect (implicit) becomes an affirmative one stating implicitly that, "You are truly the indomitable one." The **Ahanonko** performance and its affective ramifications therefore help the addressee to successfully and happily mediate the implicit interrogative and affirmative exigencies to the wholesomeness of his (addressee's) ego. The interrogative form would normally be appropriate under situations where, for example, the addressee is depressed or won out physically. On the other hand, the interrogative is also valid under similar situations but with a difference-- in this case it serves as a subtle positive reinforcement technique calculated to energize or elevate the spirit of the addressee.<sup>27</sup>

One can safely argue that the addressee will be readily charged emotionally the moment he participates in the performance of his own name. The reason can be explain-

ed in this fashion: calling of one's name, either wholly or partially, instantly transports one into a higher state of consciousness. The name, as we have discussed before, is uniquely (spiritually, physically and emotionally) attained to its bearer, and calling of that name by oneself therefore critically and momentarily reviews the implications of the name. To avoid a morbid reaction (which every normal person tries to avoid with the help of human involuntary neurological defense mechanism), the reviews which the addressee goes through are positive ones. Consequently, the addressee's tendency to overtly assert positive qualities contained in his name is further enhanced. This positiveness is also facilitated by the addressee's original formal taking-up of his name, especially in cases where naming ceremonies are involved.<sup>28</sup> The addressee, by virtue of the above experiences, has therefore been led to consolidate his belief in and focus on these positive qualities to such an extent that it amounts to self-destruction to deny these qualities inherent in the **Ahanonko** performance. In this manner, we see that the addressee is not merely reproducing a ritual formulaic pattern (i.e., the performance); the psychological and social factors responsible for the qualities described above run deep and these are tied up with the life experiences of the participants. Since the name is integral to his psyche, the addressee must therefore evaluate each variant context in relation to the characteristic goals of the total person, and the psyche is central to the cultivation of an ideal ego.

Handshake, as previously reported, is an integral component of the **Ahanonko** performance. Through the handshake two persons are brought into body contact, and they thereby become submerged in a special kinaesthetic experience afforded by the tactile

means. The touch mode affords a larger amount of visibility spatio-temporally. This act of touch takes place within a high level of consciousness, especially when we consider the fact that a certain amount of strenuous effort is exerted during the handshaking process.

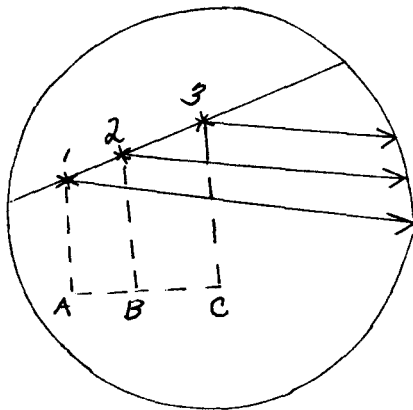
The handshake is made by both persons striking their right palms together and the striking generates both friction and a noise level of approximately 45db.<sup>29</sup> The resultant heat due to the friction is also responsible for a certain amount of excitement which pervades the emotional core of both performers. As discussed under "paralinguistics," visual gaze also accompanies and intensifies the performance components, and this gaze is not usually a fixed focus. One can therefore conclude that visual, aural-verbal and tactile means are employed as kinesthetic and intermodal strategies in the **Ahanonko** performance (see composite diagram 3). These mediums are then able to sensitize the human voluntary and involuntary response mechanisms through their (mediums) mutual engagements.<sup>30</sup> The total performance situation then becomes a deeply affective one, involving the participants at a higher level of social and interpersonal experiences. Also, the addressee in each context gains a deeper involvement in the performance due to the addresser's larger storehouse of stimulus directed toward the addressee (for example, the addresser initiates the recitation, provides the cue for the handshake, and is also responsible for most of the direct tactile stimulation done to the addressee).

It is also important to stress the cultural and social functions of handshake in relation to the **Ahanonko** performance. Both sharing of drinks and shaking of hands are some of the means and processes by which

two persons are brought into reconciliation after having been separated by a misunderstanding or quarrel. Handshake, therefore, reestablishes, consolidates, and renews friendship in Anlo society, and its similar role in the **Ahanonko** context cannot be overstressed.

Diagram 3.

Composite Diagram of **Ahanonko** performance



**Key to Diagram:**

The circle represents the social and cultural environments.

The diagonal with asterisks (points in time) represents the synchronic segment of the performance.

Horizontal lines 1, 2, and 3 represent Visual, Verbal and Tactile components, respectively. The asterisks indicate point in time at which each component enters the performance.

Broken lines (ABC) represent the diachronic segment of the performance (note that spaces occupied by the broken lines cut across the three components progressively).

An analysis at the aural level reveals that there are three types of sound phenomenon enacted during the performance. The first one regards the spoken forms (i.e.,

recitation) with their performance characteristics as earlier described. The second one involves the explosive sound produced by both palms during the handshake. The third one is the final sound produced by the snapping of fingers. Although all of these sound components are unique in their own qualitative categories, their different tymbal effects are united to create a kaleidoscopic sound frame. This sound frame is in turn identified with by the participants (performers) in progressive and in interrelated ways. While the verbal form dominates, those produced by the handshake lend their distinctive qualities which interact and aesthetically diversify the performance at different levels and stages. These levels and stages are characterized by the slightly different but related types of emotional responses evoked by the three sound types and forms. This aesthetic dimension is therefore an essential factor in establishing the performance as meaningful, satisfactory and pleasurable.

To increase the social and psychical dimensions of their ego, some persons are known to have taken more than one **Ahanonko**.<sup>31</sup> This increased nominal means of personal and social identification has a qualitative aspect which serves to increase the bearer's social visibility, stability and dynamics of the ego. For example, one of my uncles has the following two names, the first one being the most commonly used:

Name 1: <sup>32</sup>	Topic	Comment
Tagbolo(e)		metsoa'hliha o

(trans.: A head without cushion does not carry **ahliha**)



Name 2:                      Topic                                      Comment

Ama-mu-megafoe-o

ne efoe ko efo de nuwo

(trans.: The Person has fallen do not lift him/her up;  
if you do he/she will be lifted against you)<sup>33</sup>

A deep level analysis involves the fact that in Anlo social relationships friendship ties are indispensable in mediating difficult issues or in the performance of difficult tasks. The strategic choice of **ahliha** (special thorny stone about a foot in diameter) in the Comment is described in the overt vulnerability posed by the physical properties of **ahliha**. In addition, this stone possesses certain ritual properties as demonstrated by its frequent use in traditional religious practices.

Since head transportation is commonly employed in Anlo villages, care is taken to provide the head with enough cushion (made from cloth or other piece of soft material) upon which the load is balanced. This cushion is the crucial missing element alluded to in the name (name 1). This **Ahanonko**, therefore, emphasizes the need for a mediator, a trusted friend in the successful performance of very difficult tasks at the societal level. With these qualities in mind, the bearer of this name indirectly and psychologically assumes the position of the "cushion," the indispensable one in the society. My uncle, the bearer of this name, would therefore exhibit positive sentiments and tacitly confirm that his personal role is unique and indispensable to the society, and I have witnessed the performance of his name(s) on several occasions, noting his reactions and enthusiasm with interest.

A superficial analysis of the second name reveals an important aspect of Anlo social philosophy. In contrast to the implica-

tions of the first name above, we are here enjoined to help a person in a dire need. As previously discussed, Anlo society provides us with strong examples of cooperation and reciprocity through the establishment of friendship ties. To reach the bit of truth contained in this name, some meta-linguistic explanation is necessary.

In this name "the person" in the Topic gives only a vague reference, no identification of a particular person. The definite article, "the," is here employed to serve an ambiguous purpose (indefinite article "a" would normally serve the unambiguous purpose), and this device heightens the indirectness sought. This vagueness therefore cancels out any possible amicable connections between the name-bearer and the imaginary "person." The Comment tells us that the natural consequences of helping such a person can be described as suicidal-- whatever help is received, it is used to victimize the donor.

This name actually speaks to the Anlo people on the dangers of offering help to needy persons indiscriminately. Such "needy" persons potentially include personal enemies or persons who are on the destructive side of the society. These "enemies," since they tend to devalue or destroy good social values,<sup>34</sup> must be critically assessed in terms of maintaining friendship ties with them. In other situations the name speaks uncompromisingly to friends and indirectly advises them to amend their ways, otherwise they cannot receive help when they need it. In this case, this name is an ideal one in the many ways in which it guides social and personal relationships.

Since a detailed analysis of several names will be impossible in this paper, a number of names (**Ahanonko**) will be appended with their English translations and brief

comments where necessary. It should be kept in mind that the **Ahanonko** assumes many linguistic features, including being allegorical, proverbial, topical, discursive, and cryptic.

In all, we have seen how the **Ahanonko** represents a unique social and personal phenomenon in Anlo society. Its performance is intensely intermodal, involving the visual, verbal/aural and tactile components. The **Ahanonko** involves at least two persons, who are led through different levels and stages of emotional experience.<sup>35</sup> The performance is pervasively affective, and it is a special kind of social behavior with its own prescribed rules of procedure. The name significantly contributes to the social well-being of the bearer, and the **Ahanonko** system appraises, regulates, displays, and reframes the total Anlo social order.

## NOTES

1. The literature includes one rare and out-of-print book which only listed samples of **Ahanonko**. The last leaves of this book could not be traced. Dr. E. Y. Eglewogbe has done a doctoral dissertation (University of Ghana, Legon) on the sociolinguistics of Ewe names, but the approaches adopted and lack of special focus on the **Ahanonko** make this work less relevant to my inquiry. Other general works include J. Spieth, **Die Ewe Stämme: Material zur Kunde des Ewe-Volkes in Deutsch Togo** (Berlin: D. Reimer, 1906); F. N'Sougan Agblemagnon, **Sociologie des Societes Orales D'Afrique Noire: Les Ewe du Sud-Togo** (Paris: Mouton & Co., 1969), pp. 71-92.

2. Germainal and most important works in folkloristics concerning the Performance School include Dell Hymes, "Breakthrough into Performance," in Dan Ben-Amos & Kenneth Goldstein, eds., **Folklore: Performance and Communication** (The Hague: Mouton & Co., 1975), pp. 11-74; Dell Hymes, "Models of the Interaction of Language and Social Life," in J. J. Gumperz and Dell Hymes, eds., **Directions in Socio-**

**linguistics** (New York: Holt, Rinehart, Winston Inc., 1972), pp. 35-71; Richard Bauman, **Verbal Art as Performance** (Rowley, Mass.: Newbury House Publishers, 1977); Marcia Herndon & Roger Brunyate, eds., **Form in Performance** (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1975); Marcia Herndon, ed., **The Ethnography of Musical Performance** (Norwood, Pa.: Norwood Editions, 1980).

3. Joyce Hertzler, **A Sociology of Language** (New York: Random House, 1965), p. 270.

4. Max K. Adler, **Naming and Addressing: A Sociolinguistic Study** (Hamburg: Helmut Buske Verlag, 1978), pp. 93-94.

5. Several examples are cited in James Frazer, **The Golden Bough**, abridged edition (London: Macmillan, 1950); and Clyde Kluckhohn & Dorothea Leighton, **The Navaho** (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1946), p. 66.

6. This belief practice is found among the Ewe, and it is also reported in Elinor Keenan, "The Universality of Conversational Postulates," **Language in Society**, 5 (1967): 72; Paulus Mohome, "Naming in Sesotho," **Names**, 20:3 (1972): 171-185.

7. Toshihiko Izutsu, **Language and Magic** (Tokyo: Keio Institute of Philological Studies, 1956), p. 22.

8. William Murphy, "A Note on the Significance of Names," **The Psychoanalytic Quarterly**, 26 (1957):91-106. See also W. E. Walton, "Affective Values of First Names," **Journal of Applied Psychology**, 21 (1973):396-409; Brenda Myron, "Some Hypotheses about the Psychodynamic Significance of Infant Name Selection," **Names**, 2:1 (1963):1-9.

9. Examples of such literary contexts are cited in W. F. H. Nicolaisen, "Names as Verbal Icons," **Names**, 22:3 (1974):10-110.

10. N'Sougan Agblemagnon, op. cit., p. 75.

11. For African parallels, see Paulus Mohome, op. cit.; William Wormsely, "Tradition and Change in Imbongu Names and Naming Practices," **Names**, 28:3 (1980):183-219; Malaika Marapara, "Wazeruri Names and Their Meanings," **NADA**, 31 (1954):7-9.

12. Even when an adult calls the **Ahanonko** of a young person, this calling cannot be described as true performance since this is merely done to make the young one become familiar with his name before he reaches adulthood where the performance formally takes place.

13. I know of a woman who was given an **Ahanonko** by her grandmother. However, the name is not frequently or fully performed and only the verbal component is involved. Incidentally, this woman sometimes exhibits some "manly" mannerisms and emotional reactions when her name is recited. An informant also gave me a similar example regarding a woman with **Ahanonko** and who displays some "manly" characteristics.

14. The problem of audience-performer dichotomy is addressed by Richard Bauman and Roger Abrahams in Marcia Herndon & Roger Brunyate, eds., **Form in Performance**, op. cit. Unlike Abrahams' position whereby a lone person can put up a performance, the **Ahanonko** requires at least two persons. Except in social drinking contexts, the two persons involved in the **Ahanonko** performance provide an audience for each other, and they are at the same time performers.

15. Readers will gain further insight into the subject of reciprocity and commensality in African societies by reading Ivan Karp's "Beer Drinking and Social Experience in an African Society," in Ivan Karp and Charles Bird, eds., **Explorations in African Systems of Thought** (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1980), pp. 83-119.

16. See note 15.

17. It is also possible for an individual to engage different persons in the performance sequentially.

18. Social regulations concerning intoxication levels are also reported in Ivan Karp, op. cit.

19. Not everybody in Anlo society is a drinker. The social context involves vigorous discussions and argumentations on various topics, and there is a consequent noise level which sympathetically involves those immediately concerned with particular topics of discussion.

20. This description is relevant for the initial stages of the stimulating effects of the alcohol. Too much of the drink would eventually dull the senses.
21. This shows that the kinds of experience each person brings to the performance significantly alters or defines the structure and level of the performance.
22. The bearer of this name is still alive in my village, Seva.
23. Coconut grits are the pigs' favorite food in Anlo-land. Sometimes whole portions of the nut slip into and get lost in the grits. When the pigs cannot eat or break the nut into pieces it is thrown aside and left in the sty for a long period of time. Weatherization therefore further hardens or solidifies the nut, thus making it more impossible for the pigs to break.
24. This is my father's name and, like any other Ewe, he also has other names (e.g., day-name, and name given according to specific belief and circumstances). However, the **Ahanonko** is used among his peers (adults) only.
25. All the components shall be given a detailed analysis later in this paper.
26. "Register," as used here, is a musical term indicating the relative position of a group of pitches in a high and low spectrum.
27. This process is also an aspect of the tacit communication that goes on and whereby intention and meaning are read into the other participant's acts. For a confirmation of the above, see Harold Kelley, "Interpersonal Accommodation," **American Psychologist**, 26:6 (1968):399-410; Eddy Avermaert & Aricky, "Interpersonal Learning in Minimal Social Situations," **Behavioral Sciences**, 26:3 (1981):229-242.
28. Names are given in Anlo without special ceremonies or rituals; these are optional, and sometimes formal offering of drinks might suffice.
29. "db" refers to decibel, a unit for measuring the volume of sound, equal to the logarithm of the ratio of the intensity of the sound of an arbitrarily chosen stan-

dard. At 0-db, it is impossible to hear anything (in normal persons), and at 120-db, the hearing mechanism can be damaged.

30. The roles of these components in working out emotions are verified in Charles Kimble & Robert Fort, "Non-verbal Communication of Enacted Emotional Intensity and Positivity: Visual and Vocal Behavior," **Journal of Personality**, 49:3 (1981):271-294; R. V. Exline & B. J. Fehr, "Applications of Semiotics to the Study of Visual Interaction," in A. W. Siegman & S. Feldstein, eds., **Nonverbal Communication** (Hillsdale, N.J.: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, 1978).

31. Even when a person has more than one **Ahanonko**, he is more often associated with one of the names.

32. In short names like this one, the addresser can recite the whole name all by himself. However, the addressee still has something to say by way of paraphrasing or elaborating verbally on his name in an affirmative way.

33. "him/her": the Ewe language has no grammatical gender.

34. Ewe value systems distinguish between "good" and "bad," and evil or the "bad" is punished in various ways.

35. The **Ahanonko** may also be recited between strangers (each one taught in turn) in order to establish acquaintance and familiarity.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I wish to thank Mary Jo Arnoldi and Alex Dzameshie for their invaluable criticism and suggestions. The former is a Ph.D. candidate in Anthropology (Indiana University), and the latter is a Lecturer in Linguistics at University of Ghana.

## APPENDIX

1. Poda gedewo; ebe yedzra molakpa towo do  
 Trans.: Your too much powder; that it (powder) has beautified persons with ugly faces  
 Comment: A satirical comment on the role of cosmetics among Anlo women
  
2. Kpama dzaka; ne dawo dziwo medze deka o la ele be wo lame na se  
 Trans.: "Kpama dzaka" (untranslatable); if your mother brought you forth ugly your body must be strong  
 Comment: The sounds of the untranslatable segment are recited and reacted to in a way which describes the bearer's "strong body" alluded to in the second segment of the name. One must be of some use (at least in one respect) to his society.
  
3. Agbogli mate; fiawo tem zuwo le bobom  
 Trans.: A fortress (wall) which cannot be compacted; kings are trying it but their hammers are bending  
 Comment: This name is similar to that analyzed in the paper, i.e., Haxomene
  
4. Agbomatodzuie; ebe yefo agbo gawo le ayeme ayeme  
 Trans.: It is a hornless ram; it said it has conquered big rams through cunning  
 Comment: There are some hornless rams which adopt a strategy in fighting. They lean against a wall or a tree and when their enemy rushes to knock, the hornless ram dodges and the enemy gets hurt by knocking the wall or tree. A person handicapped in any way must be able to make maximum use of his potentials and thereby gain admiration and confidence from the rest of the society



5. Agbogbleamenuie; mefa ta fe avi o

Trans.: It is a ram which destroys personal property; it does not cry for its head

Comment: Since the ram used its head in destroying the property, there is no reason why it should worry about the damage done to his head. Consequences for the property damage are more important. Warning to people to examine the consequences of wrongdoing. Also, such consequences should be accepted as a form of self-correction

6. Agbedoe; metsia agbeto o

Trans.: A dull life; it does not tire the owner

Comment: All human lives are greatly valued in Anlo society. Even the loafer considers himself useful in some ways to the society. This name is also a proverb used against personal criticism.