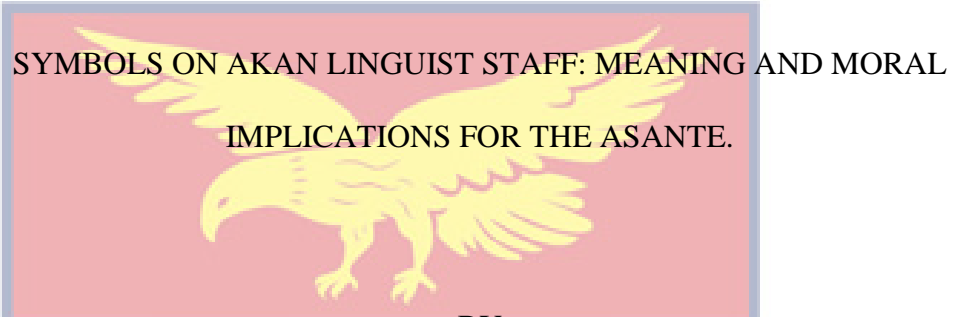


UNIVERSITY OF CAPE COAST



CANDIDA OLIVIA QUAINOO

Thesis submitted to Department of Religion and Human Values, Faculty of Arts,
College of Humanities and Legal Studies, University of Cape Coast, in partial
fulfillment of the requirements for the award of Master of Philosophy degree in
Religion and Human Values

2022

DECLARATION

Candidate's Declaration

I hereby declare that this thesis is the result of my own original work and that no part of it has been presented for another degree in this university or elsewhere

Candidate's Signature: Date:

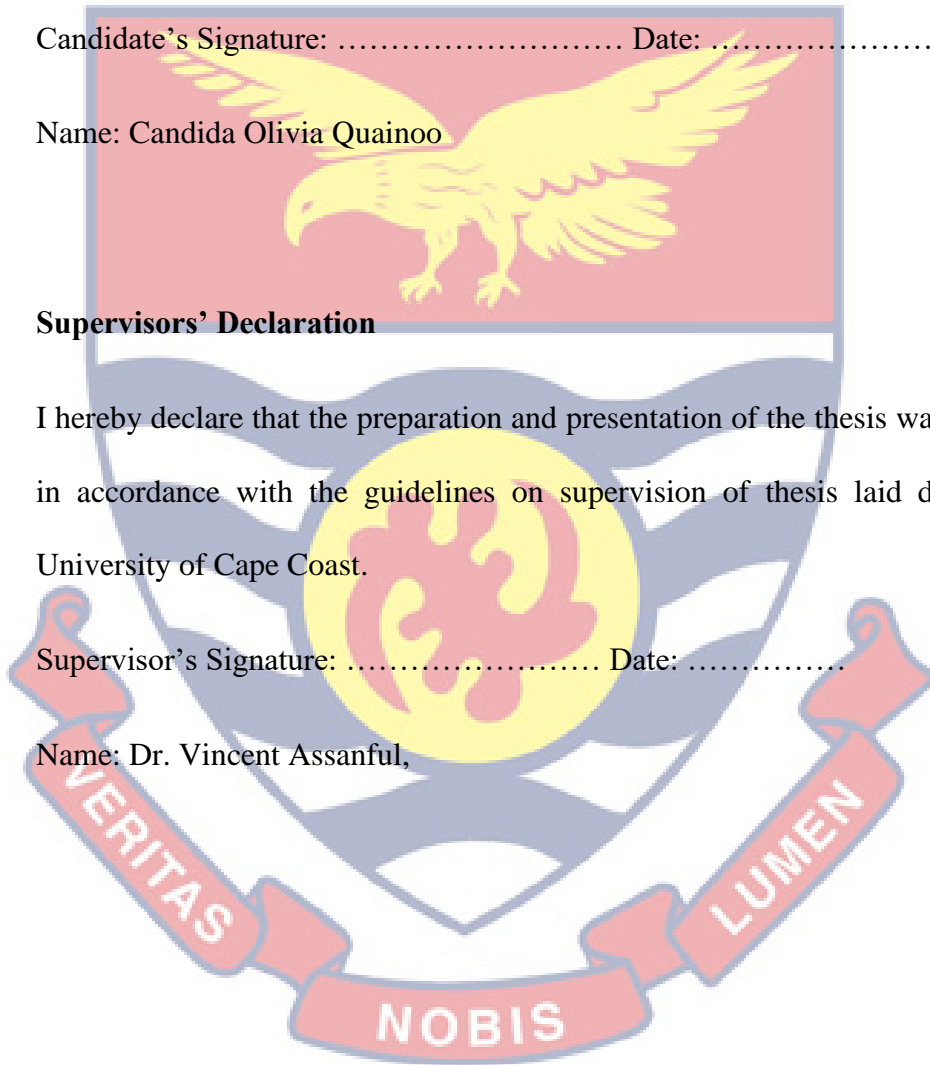
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Supervisors' Declaration

I hereby declare that the preparation and presentation of the thesis was supervised in accordance with the guidelines on supervision of thesis laid down by the University of Cape Coast.

Supervisor's Signature: Date:

Name: Dr. Vincent Assanful,



ABSTRACT

Today, symbols are the embodiment of the Akan of Ghana and are used to express what they stand for and their view of the world, life and co-existence. African Traditional symbols are pictorials or artistic expressions that represent some traditional knowledge in other forms. These symbols, therefore, induce the mind to correlate the pictorial image to the relevant representation of traditional knowledge. As such, the mind situates itself in constant search for meaning and actively explores, processes, and analyzes symbolic content. This study investigates the moral implications on some selected Asante linguist staff. The study concentrates on Asante traditional linguist staff symbols, particularly the eight clans and their moral implications. The problem therefore is, how the Asante, especially the youth, will find meaning in the linguist staff symbols with regards to the moral values and how the values can impact on their lives in the face of the infiltration of foreign culture and religions. The study adopted the qualitative research design to seek relevant information from respondents by using purposively sampling method to sample respondents who were targets as the population for the study. Interview guide was used to solicit responses from the respondents. The study found out that Asante symbols and the staff or the various items the chiefs use to adorn themselves also play important roles when it comes to sharing of information. The study concluded that much recognition is not given to the linguist staff because many individuals do not participate in indigenous cultural and traditional activities in their various Asante communities. The study recommends that linguist staff symbols be inculcated in education and tourism priorities for sustainable tradition.

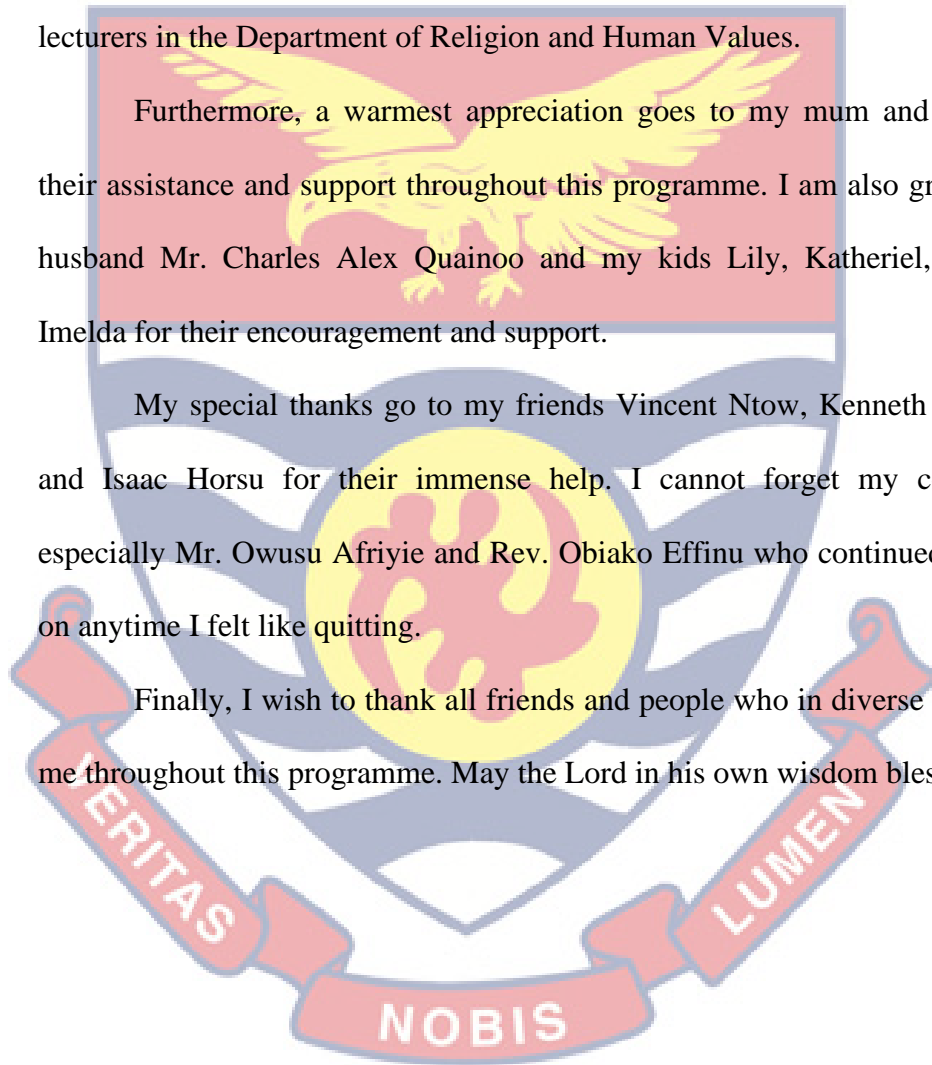
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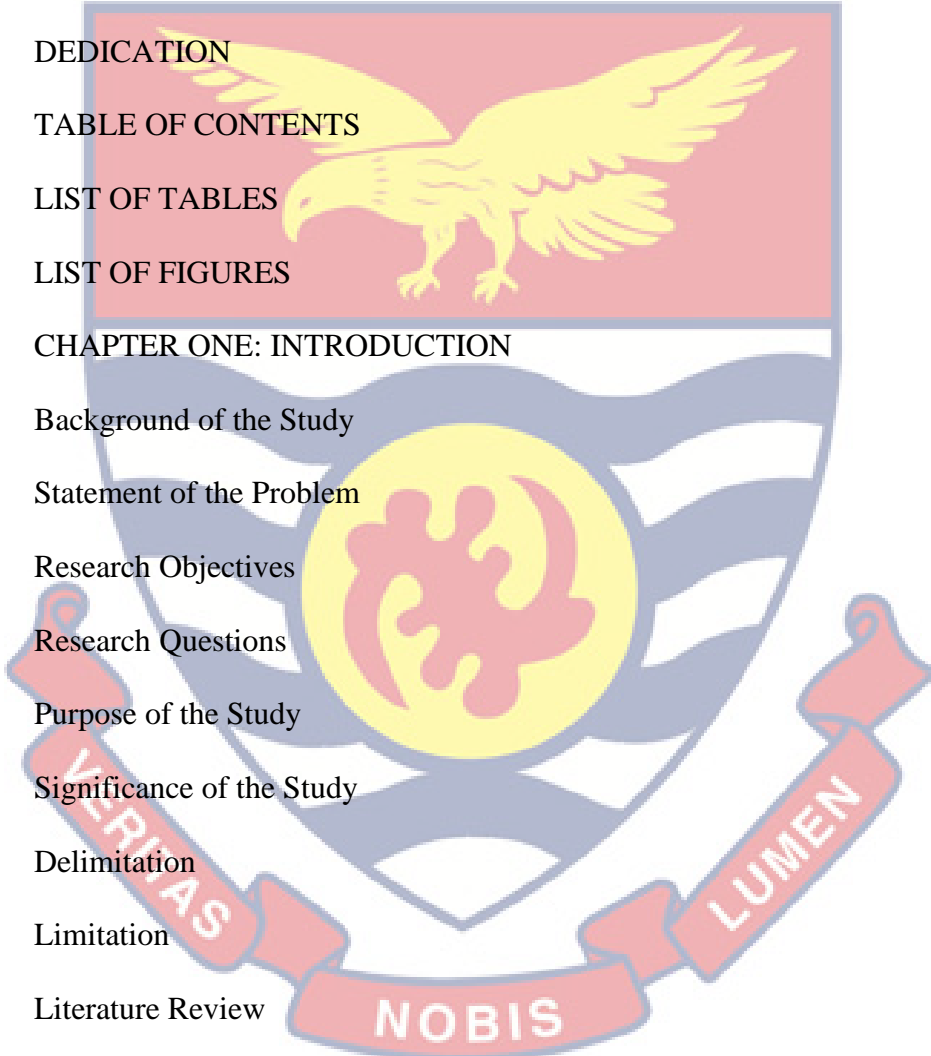
DEDICATION

I dedicate this thesis to my late father, Mr. Joseph Jones Sackey



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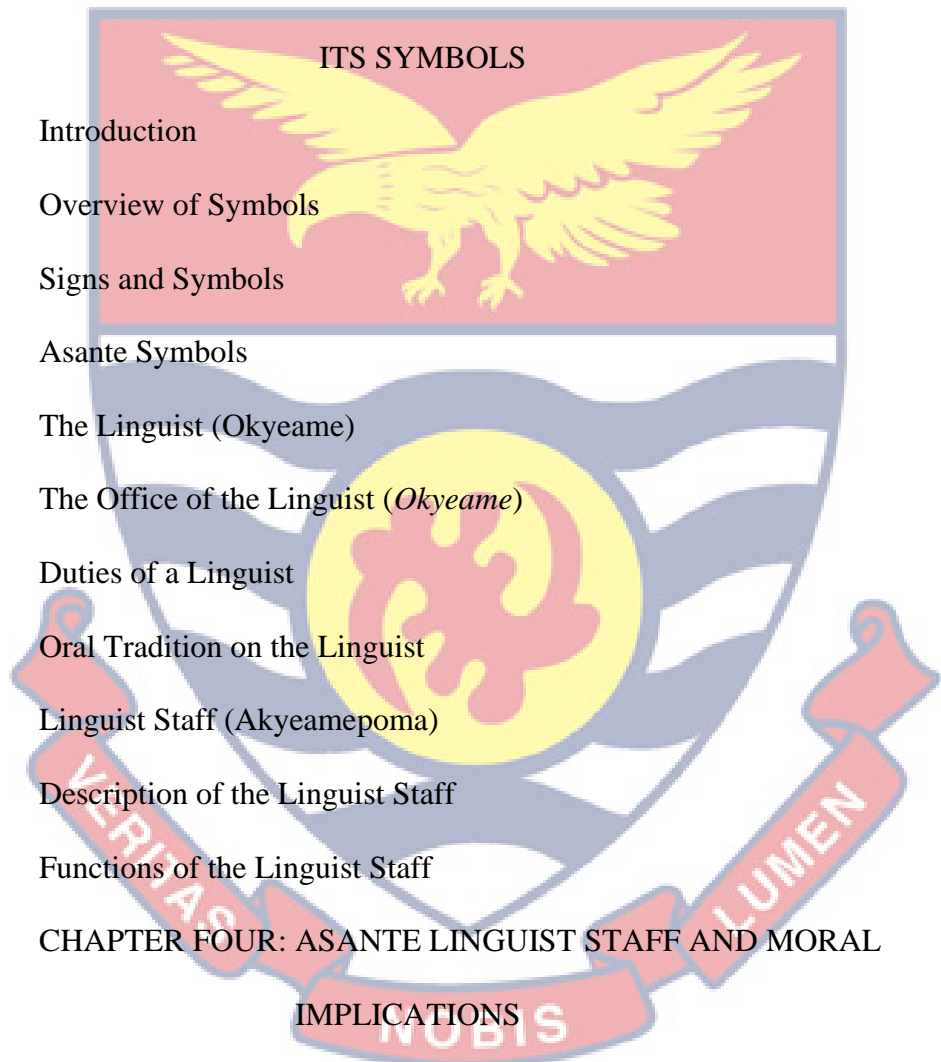
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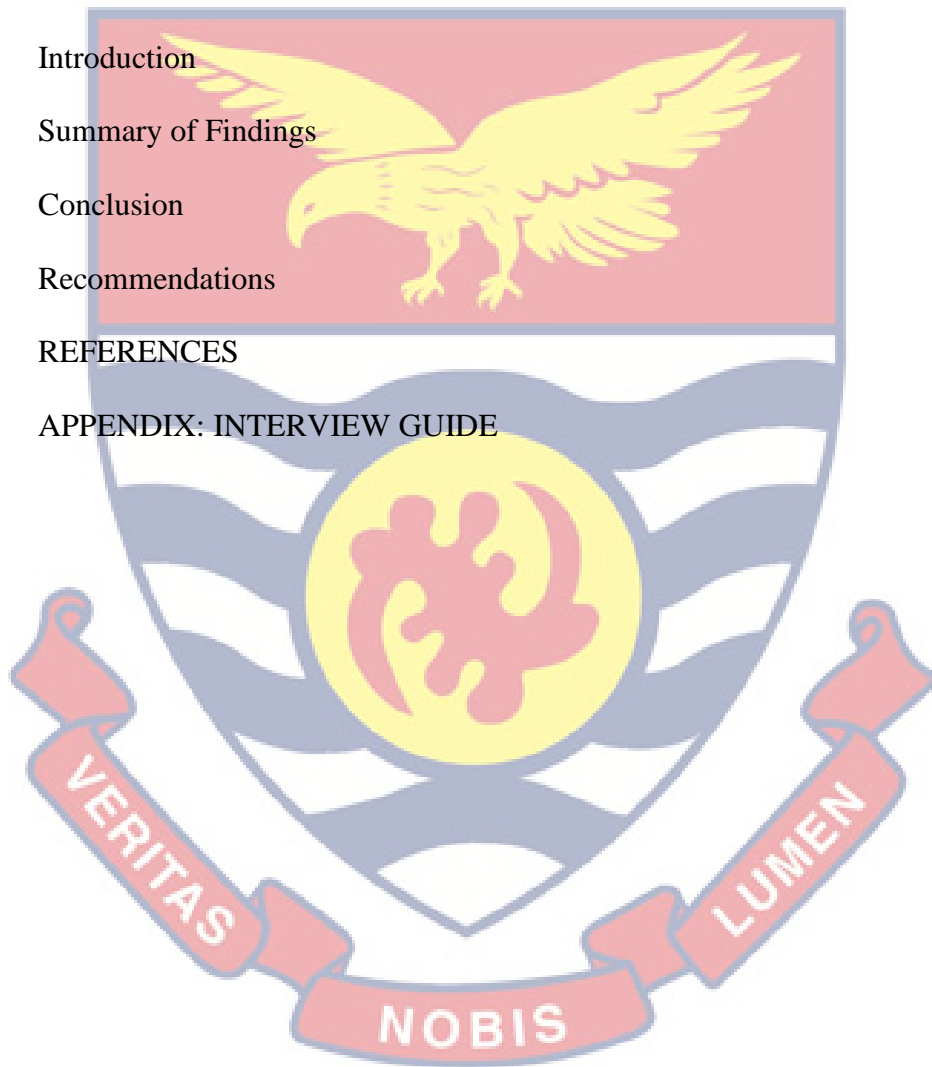
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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

Background of the Study

African Traditional symbols are pictorials or artistic expressions that represent some traditional knowledge in other forms. These symbols, therefore, induce the mind to correlate the pictorial image to the relevant represented traditional knowledge. As such, the mind situates itself in constant search for meaning and actively explores, processes, and analyzes symbolic content. This undeniably, improves comprehension and retention of information. Some traditional symbols are universally recognized by a group of people, or personally, significant to an individual. A traditional symbol may be used as an identifier, a language of concepts, an iconic representation, express intangible truths, carry particular meanings, express something unknown, simply to represent something else, pass on stories from generation to generation, convey deeper meaning than words themselves and as a source of connection between members in a group (Lipinsky, 2001).

African traditional symbols are expressed through visual artistic means worldwide. It is generally maintained that most distinctive feature of the human being is the ability to create symbols. Before writing was invented, signs and symbols were used to communicate (Howard, 1988). They are still used today to indicate, identify and understand almost everything. They are essentially part of our cultural heritage. But it has taken years to understand, put them together and interpret them to the best of ability (Howard, 1988).

Symbols which are a crucial part of communication say more than words do. There are numerous types of symbols that surround us which are powerful enough to move people into involuntary behaviors than words because of the special meanings they portray. Symbols exist in every country, ethnic groups, families, political parties, football teams, academic and non-academic institutions and every sphere of life (Sarpong, 1971, Boateng, 1980). Countries for instance have national flags which give meaning to the political struggle and historical past of that country. Among the Akan both *abusua* (family) and *oman* (community) have symbols which have meanings to the people who use them (Abraham, 1991). Abraham noted that most Akan *abusua* staffs have totems (animal symbols) while the *oman* (community/town) symbols are diversified in nature. For example, the *Asona* uses the crow which depicts wisdom and *Agona* family uses the parrot which is a symbol for eloquence.

Today, symbols are the embodiment of the Akan people of Ghana and are used to express what the people stand for and their view of the world, life and co-existence. According to Amate (2011), Akan symbols signify co-operation and interdependence and the supremacy of God. Symbols also signify excellence, genius, authenticity, wisdom, knowledge and prudence. In addition, Amate indicates that Akan symbols express hope, trust and faith in God. From the political perspective, some symbols stand for participatory governance, democracy, pluralism, unity and strength.

Akan families have symbols popularly known as totems. (An object, such as an animal, serving as an emblem of a family/clan and often as reminder of its

ancestry). Each totem is an embodiment of the character and philosophy of the members of the family. It is their identifying icon. One needs not be told of a group in question when one knows their symbol. They carry messages which may have historical as well as proverbial in meaning.

The Akan symbolism consists of songs, dances, poetry, folktales, proverbs, idiomatic expressions as well as designs and patterns on clothes. Other symbols are found in crafts like mace, gold weights, stools, linguist staff etc. (Kyeremateng, 1964; Sarpong, 1971). In Ghana, some of these symbols can be seen on durbar grounds, at funerals, palaces and places of worships among others. Meaning of symbols or gestures is very important aspect of the Akan culture because their improper usage in the presence of elders and chief is an insult to them.

Two symbols that depict the supremacy and office of the Akan King or chief are the stool and the linguist staff. The linguist staff, for example, constitutes the principal symbol of the linguist office and facilitates his functions in and out of the Chief's court (Quarcopome, 1996). Most linguist staffs have a shaft (stem) painted with a symbol like an animal, human figure, an artefact or a combination of these on top of it. Most proverbs known and used by Akan can be seen represented on top of linguist's staff (Ross, 2002). Some of these symbols reflect the political authority, they communicate ideas about the chief and his rule. It is clear that the linguist's staff among the Akan has great import. It plays a significant role in the traditional system of the Akan. Their cultural and moral importance cannot be downplayed because of the power and respect they carry.

Statement of the Problem

Several scholars have done studies on the Akan symbols; however, they did not look at the moral implications of the Akan linguists' staff. This study, therefore, seeks to identify the meanings and moral implications of some symbols on the Akan linguist staff and how they can be harnessed to shape the life of the Akan especially the younger generation. Though, traditional symbols have a lot of parallel meanings in other countries and ethnic groups, this study discusses the Asante traditional linguist staff, their symbolism with their moral implications particularly the eight clans. The problem therefore is, how the Asante, especially the youth, will find meaning in the linguist staff symbols with regards to the moral values and how the values can impact their lives in the face of the infiltration of foreign culture and religions.

In Ghana, traditional symbols are found all over the country. They are found in the regions and the districts and are mostly connected to chieftaincy, political parties, families, ethnic groups and in every endeavor of life. Among the Asante of Ghana, traditional symbols can be seen in songs, dances, poetry, proverbs and patterns in clothes. Odotei and Awedoba (2006) contend that other symbols are found in crafts like mace, gold weights, stools and linguist staff etc.

A symbol can only have importance if its viewer is aware of its meaning. This implies that it is necessary for one to understand what that symbol represents in order for it to be of any benefit. Also, in trying to know the meaning of a symbol, it is necessary to look back at its traditional origin and the culture it is coming from so that one can get its meaning right (Asamoah-Hassan, 2011). The

older generation is dying with the knowledge of these symbols which the youth are to benefit from. A gap on moral implication on Asante linguist staff, is created as to how to learn the accumulated knowledge and values from the symbols.

Research Objectives

- 1) To identify and discuss the various symbols on the Asante linguist staff.
- 2) To discuss the moral values associated with the symbols on the Asante linguist staff.
- 3) To identify and discuss the various ways by which these symbols can be used to impart morality to the youth in the face of globalization.

Research Questions

The study basically seeks to answer the following questions:

- 1) What are some of the symbols on the Asante linguist staff?
- 2) What are the moral implications of symbols on the Asante linguist staff?
- 3) How can these symbols be preserved to make an impact on the moral life of the Asante?

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of the study is to identify some symbols on the Asante linguist staff.

The study also seeks to bring out the meaning and moral implications of some symbols on the linguist staff.

The study finds ways by which these linguist staffs can be made more popular and appreciated in the face of globalization and how they can be used to inculcate or instill moral standards in the Asante society.

Significance of the Study

The relevance of the study is based on addressing the knowledge gap on symbols on some Akan linguist staffs that focus on meaning and moral implication for the Asante. Bringing light on this grey area will ensure that tourist, educationist and bodies charged with the responsibility of promoting the culture will be exposed to knowledge on symbols on some Akan linguist staff. Using Akan symbols, knowledge gaps will be explored into the culture of other ethnic groups and their associated symbolism with the aim of unearthing the moral values embedded in them.

The study is relevant in terms of the tools, approach, techniques and methods used in undertaking the study. The nature of the study makes it difficult to apply accurate research methods to ensure validity and achieve accurate research findings. The methodology applied in the study provides a reference point for researchers in similar research area. The strength, weakness and limitation encountered and the means of addressing such setbacks and enhancing the strengths will serve as guide for future research works to broaden knowledge on the subject.

Findings from the study also provide indebt knowledge on moral values and norms especially among the Akan in general and Asante in particular. There is the perception that there is moral decadence among the youth of Ghana and something needs to be done to arrest it. Ghana, as a country, has great respect for her cultural values and beliefs. The findings on the symbols on the linguist staff will go a long way to promote societal regard for the traditional values and beliefs

in the symbols and subsequently enrich the moral life of the people, especially the younger generation. The importance of the symbols on the Asante linguist will be brought to the fore. The messages, proverbs, morals and wisdom of the said symbols will be understood and people will begin to appreciate the moral philosophy of the traditional people especially the Asante. The findings of the study add to the existing literature on symbols and will also serve as a resource material for other researchers who would want to delve deeper into the culture and traditions, history, morals and wisdom behind the linguist staff with particular reference to Kumasi Traditional Council.

Delimitation

The study is delimited to the Asante Linguist Staff symbols and their moral implications on the life of the Akan especially the Asante Youth in shaping their moral up-bringing. Again, it specifically looks at the Linguist Staff Symbols of some Chiefs in the Kumasi Traditional Councils, their history, their meanings and the moral implications drawn from them. The study should have covered all the paramountcies in the Asanteman Council but that would have been too wide, looking at the time within which I have to work.

Limitation

Leedy (1997) points out that during a research process, the researcher cannot avoid having data contaminated by one form of bias or another. It is however unethical and unprofessional to fail to acknowledge the possibility of such limitations. The most significant challenges to the study were some traditional institutions failing to permit the researcher to collect specific data for

the study and the fact that the researcher did not have enough time in collecting the data and resources to cover as much information in relation to the topic. Further was the sheer reluctance of some interviewees to release samples of the linguist staff because they are brought out only on occasions. These challenges delayed the collection of the data, therefore the thesis as a whole.

Literature Review

Creswell and Creswell (2018) are of the view that knowledge accumulates and for that matter people are able to study and build on what has been done already. This literature review helps to determine whether the topic is worth studying, and it provides insight into ways in which the researcher can limit the scope to a needed area of inquiry. The literature review accomplishes several purposes. According to Cooper (2015), Marshall and Rossman (2016), it shares with the reader the results of other studies that are closely related to the one being studied. It relates a study to the larger, ongoing dialogue in the literature and extending prior studies and provides a framework for establishing the importance of the study as well as a benchmark for comparing the results with other findings. As identified by Neuman (2003), the aims of a literature review include; to demonstrate a familiarity with the body of knowledge and establish credibility; show the path of prior research and how a current project is linked to it; to integrate and summarize what is known in an area; and to learn from others and stimulate new ideas.

In relation to this work, the section presents important definitions, theories and outline of empirical evidence of existing literature on the subject matter to

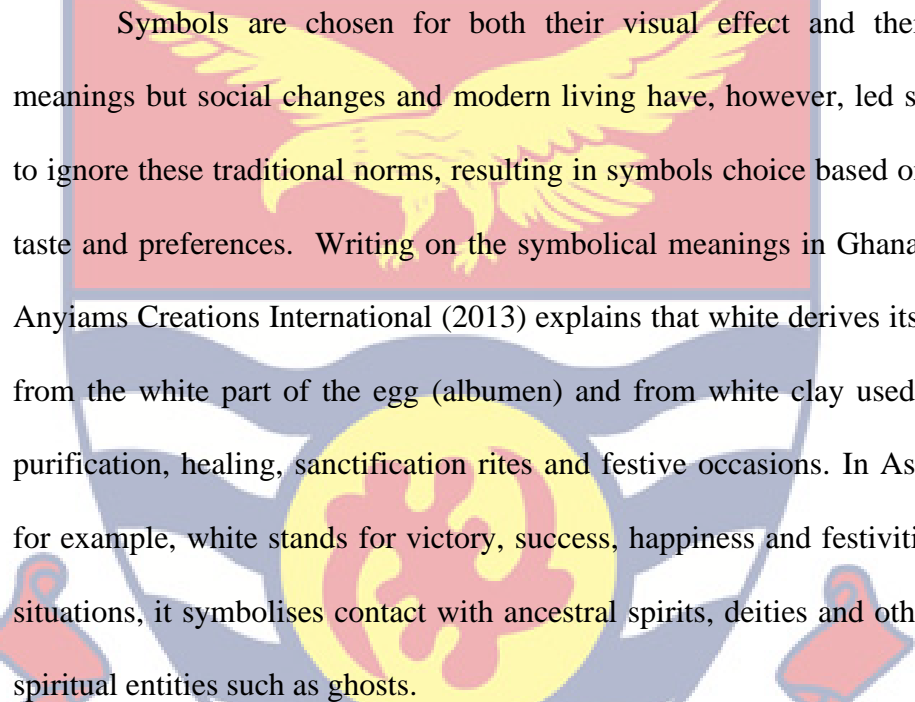
present the progress of the research conducted in finding symbols on some Akan linguist staffs; meaning and moral implication for the Asante. Literature was reviewed on the following themes; the concept of symbols, symbols and symbolism, traditional symbols, oral literacy symbols, uses and significance of symbols and cultural theory.

The concept of symbols

Symbol as defined by Deacon (2011) is applied exclusively to spoken utterances, inscriptions or other culturally formed meaningful artefacts and behavior explicitly produced for representational purposes. Among countless other ways such cultural phenomena include talismans, ceremonial events, religious objects, military insignia, spoken words, and typographic characters. Deacon (2011) also notes that, words in general are linguistic but there are nonverbal markers, including flags that stand for countries as well. According to Nabofa (n.d) as quoted in Ofuafo (2013), symbol is “an overt representation of what is behind the veil of direct perception”. (p. 13). He states that, communicating his inner experience, sight or hallucinations and spiritual or religious experience in symbols is very common for a perceiver. Words, stories, proverbs, parables, icons and masks are strong and enduring representations of religious conveyance. Symbol can also be described as something such as an idea, object, conventional or non-conventional that is used to represent something else.

According to Asmah, Frimpong and Asinyo (2021), the philosophy of Ghanaian symbols may not be fully appraised without eliciting the symbolism in Ghanaian culture which may best be understood in the context of its usage and association.

He states that symbols in Ghanaian art culture often conveys particular messages. Symbolism is also the use of symbols as a representation or meaning of something that is usually specific to a particular culture or society. It has symbolic meaning in African culture and each symbol conveys peculiar information when worn or displayed at significant places or situations.



Symbols are chosen for both their visual effect and their symbolic meanings but social changes and modern living have, however, led some people to ignore these traditional norms, resulting in symbols choice based on individual taste and preferences. Writing on the symbolical meanings in Ghanaian society, Anyiam's Creations International (2013) explains that white derives its symbolism from the white part of the egg (albumen) and from white clay used in spiritual purification, healing, sanctification rites and festive occasions. In Asante culture for example, white stands for victory, success, happiness and festivities. In some situations, it symbolises contact with ancestral spirits, deities and other unknown spiritual entities such as ghosts.

It is used in combination with black, green or yellow to express notion, spirituality, vitality and balance. Gopaul (2007) also posits that symbolism is very important to the culture of the people of which "White is associated with purity, virtue, joy, and the "spiritual entities such as God and the deified spirits of the ancestors. Black according to Anyiam's Creations International (2013) derives its significance from the notion that new things get darker as they mature and physical aging comes with spiritual maturity and most Akan blacken their ritual objects to increase their spiritual potency. Black therefore depicts sadness or

melancholy and mourning, an intensified spiritual energy, communion with the ancestral spirits, antiquity, spiritual maturity and spiritual potency. Gopaul (2007) agrees that black is related to deep feelings of melancholy, the devil, death, and old age.

Gopaul (2007) however explains that the differences in Ghanaian and Western symbols are most apparent. Red symbolises occasions of melancholy such as any loss through death of a close relative, an act of war, national anger, sudden calamity, boisterousness, violence, and a show of dissatisfaction. Anyiam's Creation International (2013) is also of the view that red is associated with blood, sacrificial rites and the shedding of blood. Red is therefore used as a symbol of heightened spiritual and political mood or agitation, sacrifice, danger, alarm, unrest, mourning and struggle. Symbols are sometimes used in speaking for example; red eyed mood means a sense of seriousness, readiness for a serious spiritual or political encounter. Also, yellow and its related symbols variations are associated with the yoke of the egg, ripe and edible fruits and vegetables and also with the mineral gold. In some spiritual purification rituals, mashed yam is rendered yellow with oil palm and served with eggs during traditional purification and other cultural practices. It symbolises sanctity, preciousness, royalty, wealth, pageantry, power, spirituality, vitality and fertility whilst gold derives its significance from the commercial value and social prestige associated with the precious mineral. Gold dust and gold nuggets are used as medium of exchange and for making valuable royal ornaments. Gold represents royalty, wealth, elegance, high status, supreme quality, glory and spiritual purity. Gopaul (2007)

considers Gold's symbolic meaning above all colours. In Ghana it stands for royalty, the presence and influence of God in society and the rule of the king.

In terms of the colour blue, Anyiams Creations International (2013) associated it with the blue sky, the abode of the Supreme Creator and therefore used in a variety of ways to symbolize spiritual sanctity, sincerity, good fortune, peacefulness, harmony, female tenderness, serenity and love related ideas. Gopaul (2007) is also of the view that blue, especially indigo blue, is related to "love, womanly tenderness and calls to mind early dawn the crescent moon".

Green on the other hand symbolises "newness, fertility, vitality, and newness in growth". Grey relates to ashes and used to personify "blame and various degrees of degradation and shame". Anyiams Creations International (2013) associated green with vegetation, planting, harvesting and herbal medicine. Green tender leaves are usually used to sprinkle water during purification rituals. Green symbolises growth, fertility and vitality in life, prosperity, fruitfulness, abundant health and spiritual rejuvenation. Anyiams Creations International (2013) further explains other colours like Pink as female essence of life. It is viewed as red rendered mild and gentle, and therefore associated with tenderness, calmness, pleasantness and sweetness. pink colour is generally considered as essential aspects of the female essence. Purple is sometimes viewed in the same way as maroon. It is considered as earth associated symbols used in rituals and healing purposes. It is also associated symbols that is used in rituals and healing purposes or with feminine aspects of life and royalty. Purple cloths are mostly worn by females. Grey on the other hand derives its symbolism from ash. Ash is

used for healing and spiritual cleansing rituals to re-create spiritual balance when spiritual blemish has occurred. It is also used in rituals for protection against malevolent spirits. Grey is therefore associated with spiritual blemish but also with spiritual cleansing. Silver is associated with the moon which represents the female essence of life. Silver ornaments are usually worn by women and are used in the context of spiritual purification, naming ceremonies, marriage ceremonies and other community festivals. It symbolises serenity, purity and joy. Maroon has a close resemblance to red -brown which is associated with the colour of Mother Earth. Red - brown is usually obtained from clay and is therefore associated with healing and the power to repel malevolent spirits. Brown is related to the earth and decay. It is used as a colour for mourning and so brown clothes are customarily worn to funerals and memorial services. It could be inferred that every colour has a meaning and what it symbolises depends on the country and the culture of the people.

Symbols and symbolism

Symbolism is the use of symbols as a representation or meaning of something that is usually specific to a particular culture or society. It has symbolic meaning in African culture and each symbol conveys peculiar information when worn or displayed at significant places or situations.

Abstract objects are those not contingent on their specific material content. They are abstract entities capable of abstracting themselves, freeing themselves, purifying themselves from their actual concrete content (Ifeanyi, n.d). In this case any person can easily recognize or acknowledge the actual symbol. Symbol is

often known as a material expression or form standing conventionally for a concept, belief, method, or act (Ayiku, 1997). Amate (2011) says, symbols are visible and can be in a two- or three-dimensional entity shape that reflects something else that is invisible.

Turner (1967) claims a sign is a blaze or landmark and something that connects the unknown to the known. Agbo (2006) puts it that, symbol is a mark, sign, object which considers something to represent. In this statement, Lumor (2009) agrees that, symbols are pictures or artifacts that indicate or refer to something else. The cross for example is a sign of Christianity.

Symbolism, on the other hand, is the depiction of concepts in place of reality by using signs, literary and creative creativity to convey thoughts, emotions and abstractions (Agbo 2006). It can also be defined in this way as the act of using a word, location, character or object. Appiah (2014) notes that, symbolism plays a major role in African art, especially in Akan society. He further insists that all of Akan's symbolic designs are omnipresent, meaning they appear everywhere including funeral grounds, in plaster designs, on old shrines, on applied cloths of rulers, on linguistic staffs, summit tops, swords, jewelry, and all other paraphernalia stool pieces. They are printed on textiles that are so common today in Ghana, on pottery, bracelets and Adinkra cloth. Until recently, symbolism in Ghana had no written evidence since it is believed that it is part of the oral culture of the people (Glover, 2004).

As mentioned, symbols and symbolism are typically a sign, form, or object that can represent a person, a community, or authority; it can also convey a

concept, importance or quality. In any religion, whether Christianity, Islam or Traditional Religion such religious icons in the form of a motto, emblem, totem and color has a significant link to the union's creation or history, vision and purpose. This is clearly seen from the discussion that something defines faith, organization and community of people and also to convey knowledge through them.

Traditional Symbols

Traditional symbols are pictorial or artistic objects in other forms which reflect some traditional knowledge. Hence, these symbols cause the mind to associate the pictorial image with the conventional information depicted in it. As such, the mind situates itself in constant search for meaning and actively explores, processes, and analyzes symbolic content. This undeniably increases understanding and knowledge retention. Many traditional symbols are known universally by a community of people, or personally important to an individual. A traditional symbol may be an identifier, a language of concepts, a symbolic representation, communicates intangible truths, carries particular meanings, expresses something unknown which represents something deeper in meaning than words themselves. (Lipinsky,2001).

Traditional symbols are often classified into two main domains: tangibles and intangibles. While the tangibles are considered as material form, intangible symbols are seen as non-material.

In describing the intangible symbols, Aquandah (2009) considers them as:

“...intangible or non-material form: for instance, in terms of language, dialects, philosophical thought, cosmology, morals, and ethics, religious beliefs and rituals, oral traditions, folklore, festivals, political ideas, music and dance, social customs relating to birth, puberty, marriage, family life, work, death etc”. (p. 14).

Sarpong (2011: 7) writes on traditional symbolism as:

Something that stands for a truth or a reality that otherwise is very difficult to conceive in concrete terms. Symbols represent abstract, reality, not concrete things.... You cannot have a symbol of tables; but you can have a symbol of obedience... The Asante have their symbols that stand for all kinds of values and concrete realities. We do have symbols for God's power (*Gye Nyame*), Hope (*Biribi wo soro ma me nsa nka*), Sanctity (*Krapa*), Strength (*Dwenninmen*) Courage (*Hye a enhye*), Authority (*Akofena, afena*), Unity (*Funtumfunafu ne Denkyemfunafu*), Reconciliation, (*Mpatabo*), Wisdom (*Nyansapo, m'ate m'asie*).

Though, traditional symbols have a lot of parallel meanings in other countries and ethnic groups, this study concentrates on Ghanaian traditional symbols, particularly, Asante linguist staff symbols.

Oral Literary Symbols (Proverbs)

Marfo (2007) explains oral literary symbols on speaking and thinking as forms such as fables myths, maxims and proverbs which are used in the traditional society to express beliefs, values and feelings. Proverbs are normally short and pithy sayings which are very popular devices used to state metaphorically certain general truths about life. For example, one Yoruba proverb states that "A proverb is a horse which can carry one swiftly to the discovery of ideas". Dzobo further clarifies that; proverb, normally has primary and secondary meanings, sometimes referred to as denotative or manifest meaning and on the other hand connotative or latent meaning. For examples in the proverbs that state that, "The lion and the antelope live in the same forest yet the antelope has time to grow," the lion and the antelope firstly denote carnivorous and herbivorous quadrupeds, respectively; connotatively, however, the "lion" represents "forces of destruction" while the "antelope" represents man in his powerlessness. The main point of the proverb is that "there is a power in the universe that preserves the life of the weak and helpless in the face of all that threatens it" (Dzobo n.d, cited in Marfo, 2007).

Use and Significance of Symbols

Symbols are multi-functional. According to Agbo (2006), symbols are admired for both their artistic and communication qualities, and are non-verbal example; proverbs, parables and maxims that represent a specific group of people's philosophical thought and way of life and icons which are valued mainly only for their aesthetic qualities. This is because a lot of people don't understand

their cultural significance. Symbols are used as a communication tool; typically, visual. Symbols act as communication shortcuts which convey one or more messages that both the sender and the recipient have learned beforehand. Symbols have been used since time immemorial to express concepts and convey meanings in depth (Amate, 2011). In Africa, symbols are used symbolically in the form of visual images and ordinary objects to express information, feelings and values. Such images are found in art works such as appliques, sculptures, leather and textile work that represent their life's history (Wahlman 1993).

Basically, symbols are for identification. They are used to identify various entities and activities in life and are therefore synonymous with the things they represent within national, community or town. Artists use marks, signs and objects to represent ideas, institutions, nation, ethnic groups, and companies. In Christianity, religious symbolism is important especially in public worship. Examples are the candles, incense and the cross. In modern patriotism the flag, coat of arms and the likes are examples of symbols. Corporate institutions also use logos for their identification.

A stool, in the Akan traditional council system, is a symbol that identifies a chief or king, whereas, in the Northern part of Ghana, the leopard or lion skin identifies the chief. A typical example is the golden stool of the Asante, which is their symbol of the highest authority and kingship. At the mention of the golden stool, there is a reflection of the ruling king and his authority, as the leopard's or lion's skin are also the highest of traditional authority or chieftdom in the North.

Symbols are used to express concepts, abstract facts and concrete ideas about life. Symbols are used in many ways in Ghana. Often, they are used to classify people's ethnic groups, tribes, communities, power, thoughts and values. Symbols also play important roles in the African conception of truth, a sound interpretation of African patterns of thinking and feeling that involves an awareness of the essence and purpose of symbolism in African culture as a tool for communication.

Symbol acts as a powerful medium of thinking of an abstract idea that makes the creation of an entity, enabling us to conceive of an entity or to shape a view. It helps to provide explicit details about people's feelings about the environment and brings out the correct reactions as well as hides and protects some essential secrets. It gives information in a similar way, but if not properly used, they can transform to misinform the person and lead to a serious danger. Hence, they must be used deliberately in certain respects not to misinform the public (Amate, 2011). The symbols have a decorative function but also represent objects that encapsulate evocative messages conveying traditional wisdom, life or environment aspects (Mawuna, 2013).

The Linguist Staff

The office of the linguist as an institution has been in existence for centuries. The use of the staff as an authority of the linguist is more of a recent development in Ghana because previously a small cane was used for the purpose (Ampene, 1975). The early Europeans as part of their custom presented staffs to Akan chiefs who represented them. From the 19th century, the use of linguist staff

has become common not only to the institution of chieftaincy but people who represent other institutions, musicians and other artisans.

An earlier writer, Tschumi (1978) opines that, the Akan are the descendants of the Jews and that may have accounted for the reasons they have certain things in common. According to him, Jewish leaders and Judges like Moses, Aaron and Elijah used to walk with staffs. In the book of Exodus of the Holy Bible, it was the staff that God asked Moses to cast down and it became a serpent (Exodus 7:10). He continues to say that the staff is not only common among the Akan or Asante but the tradition is also common among the Ga and Ewe of Ghana.

Elsewhere in Africa, a staff is carried by very important personalities as a sign of office. In the Zulu tribe of South Africa, one will find *Credo Mutwa* carrying a Staff/Sceptre with a bird on top of it (www.marshall.edu/poma.com). This is symbolic and means that his initiation has a link with the Enki / Ptah faction. *Ptah* is Egyptian Deity who is referred to as the Noble *Djed* because of the staff he carried around. The *Djed* were towers used in erecting the energetic quarantine field around the planet. They were controlling towers of some kind through which frequency pulses could be sent. In the past, those linguists who translated the words of the *Netru* Ptah had staff as holder of office in the traditional set up. Inferring from the literature, it therefore appeared that, the staff carrying had been a historical phenomenon. Tschumi says, the Jewish staff did not have any symbol on it and this is what may have informed the Akan to do same. In the past, some wicked rulers could send messengers to different kingdoms to

warn their rulers of impending danger. In all these situations the messengers went with staffs to show their power and might.

Theoretical Framework

According to Gall and Gall (2005), theory can be defined as an explanation of just certain existing things in terms of underlying constructs and set of basic ideas which relate constructs to each other. Examining linguist staff and its moral implication require theoretical antecedents on how symbols portray the cultural issues of Ghanaian societies. The discussion of this thesis, however, relies on the cultural studies or theoretical discourse for its data analysis.

Cultural Theory (Cultural Studies)

According to Castle (2007), the theory of culture or cultural studies first emerged as part of a tradition of British cultural analysis. It exemplified by the works of Raymond Williams, *Culture and Society: 1780-1950* (1958) and *The Long Revolution* (1961). It marked the decisive point at which an Arnoldian idea of culture as a coherent and self-regulating tradition of serious artistic achievements are cut off from historical conditions, and undergo a radical transformation. These works were revolutionary in that they sought to analyze culture by way of a concept of Totality that had been refined by new ways of conceiving the relationship between base and super-structure. Williams addressed the unique forms of cultural and ideological hegemony that characterize advanced capitalist societies. He also pioneered the analysis of “Structure of feeling” that create and sustain complex organic communities. When relating this assertion to analyzing contemporary culture, any change in tradition such as establishing new

ties or breaking existing ties with the past is viewed as a type of radical contemporary change.

Williams (1961), as cited in Bertens (2014), argues that in any given society, we will find more than one single culture – which in his use of the term signifies “a whole way of life that is ultimately characterized by its ideas and the nature of social relationships. Williams delineates three categories in the definition of culture. “There is first the ‘Ideal’ in which culture is a state or process of human perfection in terms of certain absolute or universal values. The analysis of culture, if such a definition is accepted, is essentially the discovery and description in lives and works of those values which can be seen to compose timeless order or to have a permanent reference to the universal human conditions. The second is ‘documentary’ in which culture consist of intellectual and imaginative works whereby in a detailed way, human thoughts and experiences are variously recorded.

The analysis of culture from such a definition is the activity of criticism by which the nature of the thought and experience, the details of the language, form and convention in which these are actively described and valued. Such criticism can be seen as a process of being interested in a tradition, that takes its primary emphasis and the particular works being studied to be a kind of historical criticism, which after the analysis of these particular works, seek to relate them to the particular traditions and societies in which they appeared. Finally, there is the ‘social’ definition of culture in which culture is a description of a particular way of life which expresses certain meanings and values not in art and learning alone

but also institutions and ordinary behavior. The analysis of culture from such a definition is the clarification of the meanings and values that are implicit and explicit in a particular way of life and in a particular culture. This includes intellectual and imaginative works that are analyzed in relation to particular traditions and societies” (Williams 1961). The Theory of Culture must take into account elements from each definition and respond to the complexity and significance of specific cultural organizations. These three categories of the definition of culture are however appropriate for the study in the analysis of the text mentioned because the analysis of literary works must be in relation with particular cultural societies in which they appear. They should include their values or philosophies, the details of language, the environment and personalities that constitute these cultural organizations. The study also falls within this domain because contemporary generations saw a great need to revive their native cultures and produce literature that can be deemed as uniquely Ghanaian or deeply rooted in their African traditions. Since the study is related to cultural issues as far as linguist staff is in question, cultural theory is applicable to the study since the study exposed a lot of cultural elements in relation to the moral implication of the linguist staff in the Asante kingdom.

Applications

Culture theory is a branch of anthropology, semiotics, and other related social science disciplines such as political economy, in particular, but also sociology and communication (to name a few). It seeks to define heuristic concepts of culture. Hence, cultural studies often concentrate on how a particular

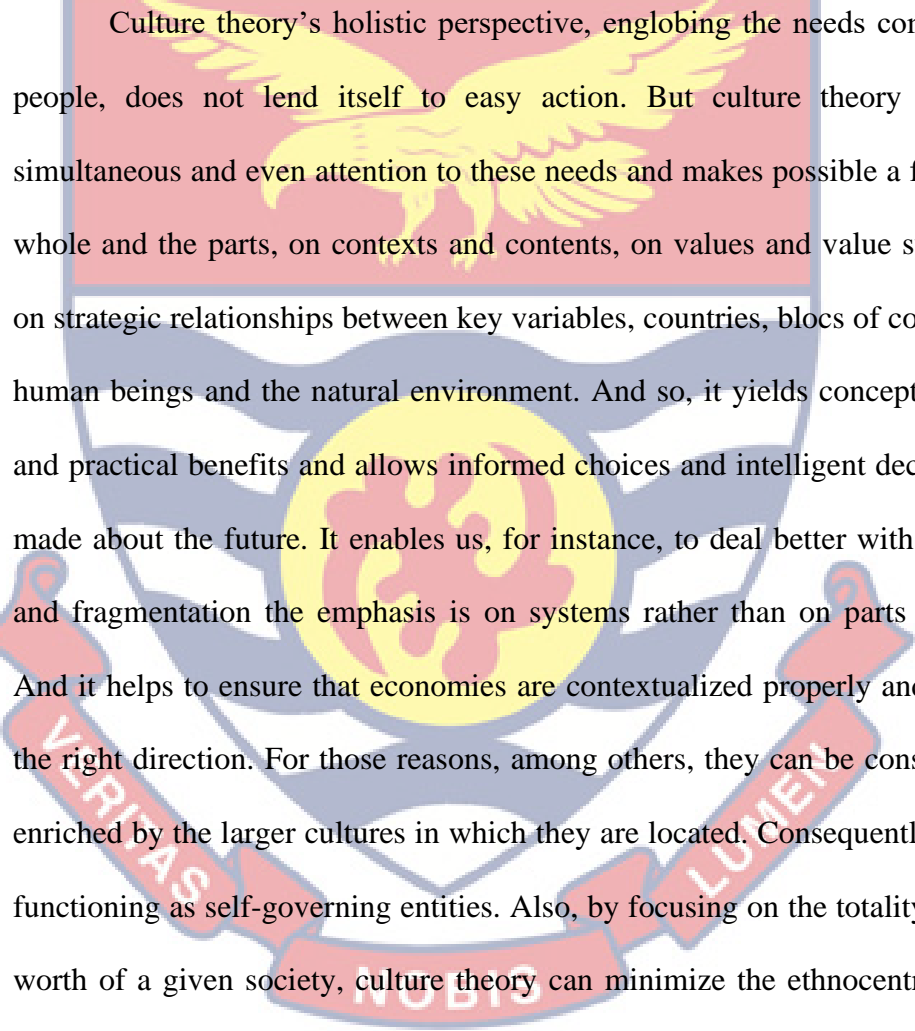
phenomenon relates to matters of ideology, nationality, ethnicity, social class, and gender. The potential for application is correspondingly vast. It follows that, practitioners of culture theory draw from a diverse array of theories and associated practices and encompass many different approaches, methods, and academic perspectives.

And so, it remains relatively unstructured as an academic field that needs to move from “Let’s” to “How.” Taking culture into account should mean understanding how cultural dimensions enter utility and production functions of various kinds. In the case of development agencies and their partner countries, new processes of policy analysis and participatory management should surely be devised so that non-economic social sciences become full partners in the decision-making concerning the policy and investment decisions that guide business processes. Much remains to be done.

Therefore, approaches to cultural studies are likely to range widely. However, Ziauddin Sardar sees that most tend to share the following characteristics

- They aim to examine their subject matter in terms of cultural practices and their relation to power.
- They aim to understand the culture in all its complex forms and to analyze the social and political contexts in which it manifests itself.
- They consider culture as both the object of study and the location of political criticism and action.

- They expose and attempt to reconcile knowledge divides to overcome the split between tacit cultural knowledge and objective (so-called universal) forms of knowledge.
- They are committed to an ethical evaluation of society, and political action.



Culture theory's holistic perspective, englobing the needs common to all people, does not lend itself to easy action. But culture theory alone pays simultaneous and even attention to these needs and makes possible a focus on the whole and the parts, on contexts and contents, on values and value systems, and on strategic relationships between key variables, countries, blocs of countries, and human beings and the natural environment. And so, it yields conceptual insights and practical benefits and allows informed choices and intelligent decisions to be made about the future. It enables us, for instance, to deal better with complexity and fragmentation the emphasis is on systems rather than on parts of systems. And it helps to ensure that economies are contextualized properly and pointed in the right direction. For those reasons, among others, they can be constrained and enriched by the larger cultures in which they are located. Consequently, they stop functioning as self-governing entities. Also, by focusing on the totality and innate worth of a given society, culture theory can minimize the ethnocentric bias that results from one's cultural conditioning.

Original proponent of cultural theory De Montesquieu Charles Baron de Montesquieu (1689- 1755) was a philosopher and he is often called the ancestor of sociology. He built on the work of Aristotle and added three types of social

organizations with differences in cultural bias to the different types of governments. He distinguished a republican government with virtue as an organizational type, a monarchical government with honor, and a despotic government with fear.

He did not spell out any underlying dimension of these categories but his work was influential for later studies. He argued that different types of society are existent within a larger part and each segment requires different beliefs and practices to remain viable. Montesquieu's mental legacies were a step away from universalism, which focuses on unraveling what all societies would need to maintain, instead, he said that different groups of people have different requirements and characteristics, and thus different ways to be maintained. Besides, Montesquieu went beyond the classical distinction between primitive and modern societies, which only allowed for two types of societies determined by their level of civilization (Thompson et al., 1990).

Despite Montesquieu's efforts to step away from universalism, a lot of scientists kept trying to find the universal law to explain the necessary conditions of life, the conditions which would inevitably lead to a breakdown or characteristics that are common to all people (Thompson et al., 1990; Fay, 1996). The philosopher Auguste Comte (1798- 1857) argued that a lack of value consensus automatically results in competing ways of life. Besides, adherence to different values within one society would lead to the breakdown of that society (Thompson et al., 1990).

Furthermore, he adopted society as a whole (rather than ways of life) as a unit of analysis, which made his theory even more universalistic (Thompson et al., 1990) and probably less corresponding to everyday life. Comte agreed that within a society (although they should all meet certain criteria to maintain), different groups can be distinguished: industrial groups which are based upon self-regulation and voluntary action, and militant groups based on a central regulating authority. Societies cycle in and out of these different types, according to their level of hostility. This attempt, to raise consciousness about the dynamic and changeable character of societies, as well as his belief that, perceptions are always relative to other elements turned out to be valuable for later work (Thompson et al., 1990).

One of Comte's principles was that the function of religion is to regulate (comparable to Douglas's grid) and to combine (comparable with Douglas's group), which leaves only one viable way of life: hierarchism. As Comte, the civil engineer and sociologist Herbert Spencer (1820- 1903) tried to identify universal laws about general conditions which need to be fulfilled to hold a society together. Spencer argued that differentiated (heterogeneous) societies are on the whole better adapted to their (changing) environment than homogeneous social structures² (Thompson et al., 1990). The philosopher Karl Marx (1818- 1883) became very influential with his controversial theory about capitalistic societies. According to Marx, there is a dichotomy in every capitalistic society between the bourgeoisie which owned the means of capital and exploited the second category: the workers. The latter are

being exploited but can overthrow capitalism for communism if all workers would unite. However, false consciousness would prevent workers to become aware of their suppressed position. Powerful about his explanations is that power relations between people explain and maintain the legal, governmental and ideological superstructure (Thompson et al., 1990). Weaker is that he failed to acknowledge that capitalist systems (like other systems) are constantly evolving, which makes his theory (if applicable at all) only applicable to a limited period in the past of capitalism (Fay, 1996).

One of the most influential scientists for Cultural Theory as we know it today is the founding father of sociology Emile Durkheim (1858-1917). He did various research projects, but is best known for his work on suicide and solidarity. Society is –according to Durkheim- a moral phenomenon, held together by solidarity which can be either mechanic (which is the case in preindustrial, undifferentiated groups where cohesion is based upon a common set of beliefs) or organic (in industrial, differentiated groups) (Smith & Riley, 2009). Conflated with this dichotomy of Hierarchism is the only perspective scoring high on the group and grid axes. Douglas’s concept of social structures was later called ways of life by Thompson et al. (1990) (Hoekstra, 1998b) mechanical and organic solidarity is his distinction between the dimension of group integration and individual integration, which are essentially identical to Douglas’s group and grid dimensions.

The difference is however that Durkheim fails to ask how these two dimensions interact. Other shortcomings of his work are his unidirectional

approach to culture as the deliverer of consensus and integration: conflict and exclusion can hardly be explained (Thompson et al., 1990). Furthermore, Durkheim was very dubious about the role of individualism: on the other hand, he approached it as being antisocial; on the other hand, he thought that even individualism had to be a social product. Finally, rather than asking what the function of something is (e.g., the function of suicide or crime,) he should have asked what the function is of calling something criminal or suicide (how and why do people judge what is criminal and what is not).

Despite these critics, his work offered a lot of insights that are still academically vivid today. He was one of the first to acknowledge that social relations generate ways of perceiving the world that contribute to the maintenance of those relations and that cultural biases serve as filters through which events are sifted to support their way of life (Thompson et al., 1990). He was also one of the earlier scientists who started to pose a critical attitude towards determinism and he was a crucial figure in the development of holism. Durkheim claimed that society is irreducible to individual behavior and that even the more individualistic appearing acts are a function of the social unit (Fay, 1996). The sociologist Georg Simmel (1858- 1918) also focused on society as the product of interaction of individuals. He claimed that individuals have the choice to imitate others (and thereby experience psychological benefit of security as a member of a collectivity) or to express themselves as an individual (as a marker of distinction) (Smith & Riley, 2009). However, together with Durkheim, he agreed that there is a threshold –constrained by social relations- beyond which you cannot go on

expressing yourself differently from the collectivity. Simmel stressed his belief about the urgency to find a midway between determinism and agency, an idea which was later adopted by Pierre Bourdieu and Anthony Giddens (Smith & Riley, 2009).

The sociologist Max Weber (1864- 1920) is particularly known for his efforts to go beyond the traditional/ modern dichotomy. Central in his work is his acknowledgment of strata: every society is divided into several social strata that are characterized by a specific style of life, and by a distinctive, more or less articulated world view (Thompson et al., 1990; pp.161). Status groups (groups with a common style of life and a shared level of social prestige) instruct individuals on what to prefer. Weak in Weber's approach is that his division of strata doesn't result from any dimension; he ends up with as many ways of life as there are groups in society. Besides, his classification of types of domination (charismatic, traditional and legal), as well as his two modes of action (Wertrational) which is driven by cultural beliefs and goals, and Zweckrational which is driven by norms and efficiency) fail to take Egalitarianism into account (Thompson et al., 1990; Smith & Riley, 2009).

Radcliffe- Brown, Malinowski, and Parsons Despite Weber's and Montesquieu's efforts to step away from universalism, the search for conditions that all societies must meet to survive, kept going. Alfred Radcliffe- Brown (1881- 1945), Bronislaw Malinowski (1884- 1942) and Talcott Parsons (1902- 1979) shared this ambitious attempt. Furthermore, they all agreed that a given practice is only understandable in terms of the system of which it is part

(Thompson et al., 1990). Parsons identified five pattern variables in his search for universalism (universalism- particularism, achievement- ascription, affectivity- neutrality, specificity- diffuseness self-orientation- collectivity orientation). However, posting a single common value system, he leaves individuals with only two choices: normative conformity (meeting the requisites) or non-normative deviance (not meeting the requisites to survive). Besides it is argued that his different dimensions continually measure the same underlying phenomena, which leaves his typology with only little more than restating the tradition/modernity dichotomy. Furthermore, he fails to distinguish between hierarchy (based on prescribed procedures) and individualism (based on the judgment of results), and also, Egalitarianism is entirely denied (Thompson et al., 1990).

Methodology

The section deals with the methodology and the research design that laid the foundation for the conduct of the research. It discussed the research design, research population, the sample size and the sampling techniques, the sources of data to ground the research, the primary and the secondary sources of data, and the kind of data collection instruments administered to the sample population. It deals with the data collection procedures, data treatment, the nature and the form of the data presentation, and the analysis of the data. The sequence of the research activities was outlined and critical ethical issues that came up were also captured.

Qualitative research design was employed in this study to identify, understand and assess the moral implication of Asante linguist staff symbols.

Wyse (2011) states that, qualitative research is primarily exploratory research. It is used to gain understanding of underlying reasons, opinions, and motivations. Qualitative Research is also used to uncover trends in thought and opinions and dive deeper into the problem. This research was based on qualitative research method principles. The researcher had close relationships with the very few purposively selected participants that enriched the research work with their deep knowledge of information and personal experiences.

List (2006) noted that conclusions are drawn in qualitative research however; such conclusions are based on words not on figures. The end-product of qualitative research is usually to appreciate the understanding of the participant, and not to measure the validity and reasonability of the responses. Hence, such findings are often not generalized since the sample sizes are too unrepresentative and accounts are more situated in individualistic contexts posing challenges for the spreading of such ideas and thoughts. The foregone discussions clearly show that, qualitative research methodology is preferable when a study requires intense details in order to unveil issues to aid comprehension. Creswell (2007) was of the view that conducting a qualitative study meant that researchers get as close as possible to the participants being studied. In practice, qualitative researchers conducted their studies on the field of activity in localities where the participants lived and worked because it was important in contexts for understanding what the participants were saying and doing. The longer researchers stayed in the field or got to know the participants; the more researchers got first-hand information.

The qualitative approach afforded the researcher the opportunity to focus attention on perceptions and interpretations of the various linguist staff in Asante kingdom and its moral implication in order to unearth the actual meanings and relevance, since it sought to uncover historical and contextual inclinations from key participants in the study.

An important consideration for the qualitative approach stemmed from the fact that a hands-off and distant research would not delve below the surface understanding and meanings of these performances. Additionally, the seemingly persistent acculturation and modernization of the youths and community members pushed the researcher to enquire deep into searching for a closer contact and interaction with custodians of the culture.

In applying suitable research methods, it was important to be in sufficient contact with the research subjects and the setting to understand fully issues inherent in the system. Qualitative approach also helped the study and provided a platform that led to the discovery of deeper levels of meanings into the subject being studied. It helped in investigating the quality of relationships, activities, situations or materials associated with the complex cultural settings and patterns.

Linguist staff is actually based on oral tradition and this has paved way for the study to do critical interviews with custodians of the various rites, and meaning it has that is hidden from the younger generation. The study considered a range of research approaches focusing on qualitative analysis and employed personal interviews, participant observations, and individuals personal accounts.

The study was field oriented and the field was the natural setting of Asante; the Kumasi Traditional Council.

There were visits to the various traditional clans in Kumasi and its environs. The materials obtained through individuals and group interviews and discussions with key informants like family heads and linguists provided a great deal of information for the research objective. The emphasis of the research was on observables, including observations of informants thereby making the research realistic.

Research Design

The research design underpinning the study was participatory observation. The participatory observation research design was also employed since it appears there was not much written literature on the meaning of the linguist staff and its moral implications. From the view point of Creswell (2008), research designs are plans and routine for research that span the choices from wide assumptions to detailed methods of data collection and analysis. The research design allows the researcher acquire answers to the questions posed. The study focused on symbols of linguist staff of Asante and its moral implications which required in-depth interviews and critical observation on the field for exploratory study.

Historical Design

Historical research has got to do with searching to find out facts, of events that happened some time ago. It is therefore an analysis and description of past events to establish as much truth as possible. Historical research helps to arrive at an accurate account of the past. It assists to gain clearer perspective of the present,

which forms a base for building the future. In this work, historical research was employed. This gave a picture of the origin of the Asante people, institutions, clans and totems and the symbols on linguist staff. This was necessary in order to give a clear presentation of the origin of the people and their tradition. Most of the sources of information in this method of research came from both documented sources and oral tradition.

Descriptive Design

Descriptive study was chosen by the researcher to describe and interpret events. Descriptive research method is a form of research that specifies, describes or reports the nature of a particular situation or phenomenon (Turkson, 2011). This method was used to throw light extensively on the meaning of the symbols of the linguist staff as well as the artistic elements seen and its moral implications. It helped the researcher to bring out the real meaning of the study.

Narrative Design

Impraim-Swanzy (2015) defines narrative research as ‘a way of understanding experience’ involving ‘collaboration between researcher and participants, over time, in a place or series of places, and in social interaction with milieus. The most common narrative research can be described as a methodology which consists of gathering stories about a certain theme where the researcher finds out information about a specific phenomenon. This helped to bring out some relevant information. The study used narrative method to recount stories surrounding the various linguist staff.

Library Research

Various libraries were visited by the researcher to obtain relevant secondary data for the study. These include; Department of Art Education Library - KNUST, KNUST Main Library, Faculty of Art Library, and Ashanti Library (C.N.C), all in Kumasi. Other libraries visited by the researcher include; Akrofi Christaller Memorial Institutes. Secondary data collected from these libraries were mainly from documented sources like books, encyclopedias, dictionaries, periodical, journals, catalogues, publications and unpublished theses. The data collected through library research were mainly on the history and symbolism of the Asante.

Population and Sample Size

Blaikie (2009) defined research population as an aggregate of all cases that conform to some designated set of criteria. The population considered under this study was the Kumasi Traditional Council. Within the Traditional Council, a sample comprising two (2) Linguists, two (2) Clan Heads (*Abusuapanin*), two (2) Carvers, two (2) focus groups; one group made up three (3) traditional elders from Amakom palace and another group of six (6) made up of three (3) market queens and three (3) union chairmen from Asafo market and two (2) ordinary members from the general public. In all 10 participants made up of individuals and groups that have knowledge about the linguist staff symbols were involved in the study.

Sampling Method

Sampling is the use of a procedure in the selection of participants for the expressed purpose of obtaining from its description or estimate certain properties or characteristics of the whole (Kumekpor, 2002). Blaikie (2009) further

expatiated that a sample is a selection of elements from a population and may be used to make statements about the whole population. The sampling method is the selection of either random probability techniques or the non-random probability.

The researcher chose purposive sampling technique to get the various respondents for the study. The respondents selected to be included in the sample was on the basis of their knowledge on the phenomenon under study. The purposive sampling lessened the burden of the researcher considering the size of population. It helped the researcher to identify specific sites and participants, who could understand the research problems and gave leading and thoughtful information in addressing the research objectives. The techniques helped the researcher to carefully select the sample that reflected the purpose of the study and the objectives of the investigation. Purposive sampling method was used in the selection of the Linguist, 'Abusuapanin', wood covers, general public, Secretaries to Divisional Chiefs. It was used to access the people with the in-depth knowledge about the meaning of the symbols on the linguist staff of the Asante. In all ten (10) people were sampled for the study; linguists, 'Abusuapanin' and linguist staff carvers were selected for the study. Sixteen (16) Asante linguist staff symbols from the various Asante clans *Oyoko/Adako*, *Bretuo/Agona*, *Asona*, *Aduana*, *Asenie*, *Ekuona* and *Asakyiri* were selected for the study.

The study area was the Asante region of Ghana, but due to the vastness of the region, the area of study was limited to Kumasi, the capital of Asante region, which is also the seat of the Kumasi traditional council.

Data Collection Instruments

The data gathered for the research were made possible by conducting interviews, the participant observations, taking of photographs and recordings. These instruments were necessary due to the nature of the study.

i. Observation

Twumasi (2001) considers participant observation as a method of data collection whereby the researcher participated in the daily activities of the people being studied. The researcher observes situations in order to find answers to the research questions.

The researcher participated in some activities of the people such as funeral rites, naming ceremony, *Akwasidae* which allowed her to get a relevant insight into the issue or problem. The researcher needed to be acquainted with the people and to acquire a position in the setting.

As linguist staff are mostly used during festival celebration and which is also a major way by which a group of people belonging to one ideology can express themselves through symbols, observation became one of the important survey instruments used to solicit information from participants by the researcher. The researcher observed the activities in both festivals and royal regalia especially at the durbar grounds. This method was used to access the authenticity of some of the information that the researcher gathered through other methods. The researcher stayed in Kumasi and observed some of their festivals and celebrations (*Akwasidae*, *Awukudae* and *Adaekese*) and funerals including other merry celebrations and followed proceedings to gather information from action and

movement. Rather than simply observing the various activities, the researcher directly got involved in the activities of the objects of study.

ii. Interviews

Givens (2008) has viewed that, interview is a data collection method in qualitative approach and is characterized by a conversational practice where knowledge is produced through the interaction between the interviewer and an interviewee or a group of interviewees.

Interviews took a major part of the field research and also were able to produce the bulk of data for the study. The interviews produced very relevant data to the researcher because the respondents gave very useful and confidential information which was crucial to the research. A semi-structured interviewing approach was used to gather information and data in the participants' own words to help in drawing an insider perspective from them. Kumekpor (2002) also expressed similar view that, semi-structured interview is characterised by open ended questions, flexible in terms of sequence, interviewer can pursue certain questions further, take cues for additional questions not originally plan to ask from a respondent's answers. This approach enhanced the opportunity of all participants to tell their personal stories in their own words. The approach provided an open field to both interviewees and interviewers. It enabled the researcher to seek further clarification and ask follow up questions when answers were ambiguous and possibly probed and expanded interviewees' reactions. Also, interviewees had the opportunity to seek further explanation when the questions asked were not too clear. The platform and the environment for the interview

made it more relaxed, friendly for conversation and also afforded the interviewees who introduced their own agenda with regards to the line of questioning.

Issues regarding misunderstanding were quickly rectified to eliminate doubts and suspicions and created understanding between the two parties. The researcher had the chance and used on the spot respondent validation technique and cross-checked reliability and validation. The face-to-face technique of interviewing offered the researcher the opportunity to study direct experiences, perceptions, passions, empathies, and emotions during the interview session. This was used as a check for truth in data during field work. The researcher also relied on key informant interview; that is interviewing members or a member of the group being studied who had special knowledge or perception that was not readily available and again perspectives which are different from other group members.

The researcher used interviews and conversations in addition to participant observation throughout the research study. The researcher also used semi-structured interviews because they provided a free and a greater freedom due to its qualitative nature. It allowed the interviewees the freedom to express and digress into areas of interest. The type of questions asked did not limit those answering from veering off. In view of that it enabled the researcher to pursue a range of topics and offered the participants the chance to answer and tell their stories interestingly and personally in their own words. It also allowed the researcher to ask questions from participants when they are participating in ritual activities in their natural setting without any inhibitions.

During the interview and data collection in Kumasi, the researcher identified Linguist, Heads of clans (*Abusuapanin*), focus groups among others who were useful in providing content information on the meaning of the symbols on the linguist staff. The researcher realized, the participants expressed themselves on the activities without inhibitions and limitations when the activity was going on like lowering of one's clothe before the chief and seeking permission from the linguist before greetings because it was within the natural setting of the people. The researcher got more information from the participants in participating and observing with all protocols associated with the rituals.

Administering of Instruments

The researcher used personal interviews with linguist, Heads of Clans (*Abusuapanin*), and secretaries to divisional chiefs. The channel of expression was in Asante Twi and English. The researcher arranged meetings with the respondents at different times. The interview sessions were recorded with a smart phone and some phrases were written in the form of notes. These videos were transcribed into textual facts which were useful in the chapter two and four of the study.

Types of Data

i. Primary Data

This is a first-hand information gotten from the series of interviews conducted and the observation made by the researcher. It gave the respondent the freewill and urge to express themselves freely thereby giving their views and opinions about activities and visual art used on the linguist staff. This was recorded with a

camera and mobile phone. The camera was used for the photographs and the mobile phone for recording verbal intercommunication with the respondents.

ii. Secondary Data

The library served as a reservoir for data from experts in the field of visual art elements used thereby supporting the researcher in the Chapter Two of this thesis. Sources including books, articles, journals, publications, e – books, unpublished thesis and other open educational resources available online were also used.

Validity and Reliability

i. Validity

The basis of the validity of a questionnaire is to ensure that the right questions are asked without ambiguity. O’Leary (2010) defines validity as “true value” or “whether methods, approaches, and techniques actually relate to what is being explored” (p. 43). A drafted copy of the questionnaire and the interview guide was made available to my supervisor for face-to-face discussion and content validity. This was to ensure that the items in the questionnaire and the interview guide were related to the research questions. Kelly (2007) states, “validity is that of whether a test really measures what it purports to measure” (p.14). However, items identified to show ambiguity on the instrument were constructed again to improve their comprehension so as to achieve the objectives of the study.

ii. Reliability

A test is seen as being reliable when it can be used by a number of different researchers under stable conditions, with consistent results and the results not varying. Reliability reflects consistency and replicability over time. Furthermore, reliability is seen as the degree to which a test is free from measurement errors, since the more measurement errors occur the less reliable the test (Fraenkel & Wallen, 2003). Reliability refers to the consistency, dependability and replicability of “the results obtained from a piece of research (Nunan, 1999). To measure the internal consistency, the Cronbach’s Alpha value was checked to see the strength or weakness of the interview guide. This was to ensure that the items in there were related to the research questions and the objectives of the study. This was to show that the item on the instrument was reliable and could be used for the study. However, items identified to show ambiguity on the instrument were restructured to improve their comprehension so as to achieve the objectives of the study. The purpose of reliability is not to attain the same results rather to agree that based on the data collection processes the findings and results are consistent and dependable. In this study, reliability helped in judging the consistency and dependability of the items.

iii. Pilot Study

Before the administration of the final interview to the respondents, a pilot study was conducted to ascertain any challenges likely to hinder the smooth conduct of the study for necessary revisions to be made. Piloting of the instruments was carried out on 10 people from Aburi Craft center located in

Akuapem-South Municipality who were in the same occupation and business pertaining to the study.

The aim of the pilot testing was to improve the validity and reliability of the instruments. The participants of the pilot test were asked to answer the interview guide and provide comments or suggestions for revising any ambiguous items. They were told to discuss frankly with the researcher any ambiguity, incoherence or incomprehension that they will experience about any aspect of the draft interview guide. The necessary corrections were effected after the pilot testing.

Data Analysis

Data analysis is an integral part of qualitative research and constitutes an essential stepping stone toward both gathering data and linking the findings with higher order concepts (Givens, 2008). The focus on this study was on symbols of linguist staff of Asante and its moral implications. The researcher had to really immerse herself to study the historical and philosophical perspectives on the celebrations and the artistic aspects of the symbols on their linguist staff and its meanings. The interviews, observations, photographs, recordings made, the information gathered from the sampled population and the natural setting for the study which is the Kumasi Traditional council was organized using the descriptive and narrative research method. Both primary and secondary sources of information on the symbols on Asante linguist staff were given the same treatment. Since the field notes and interview transcripts came from several sources, the researcher had to do a thorough reflection on data, distill and

categorise the data for easy comprehension. The researcher took time to examine data and arrange images, phrases, words, events and pattern of behaviour that had repeated itself and stood out as topics and themes for reflection. Again, with a great number of themes generated as a result of huge data collected, the researcher categorised them in relation with the research questions as a way of generating themes for analysis.

Ethical Consideration

All ethical issues that govern the conduct of academic research were observed in strict accordance with the best practices. This was overt research where the researcher visited Manhyia Palace to understudy the participants with the introductory letter from the university. The researcher also visited various linguist staff wood carvers to explain the need of the research, and therefore pleaded with them to help uncover the necessary information needed for the study. It would be wrong to just go around interviewing the respondents without seeking their consent. The linguists, wood carvers and others were informed and appointment booked with them to make sure their privacy is not invaded or any inconvenience caused them. This also helped to look for an appropriate venue to meet them. For instance, at the wood carvers' village, the presence of other carvers disrupted the interview: noise from other carvers, music from radios and others who have come to do business. I needed to be time conscious in order not to waste the interviewees' time. In this sense I needed to be punctual and stick to the times scheduled with the respondents.

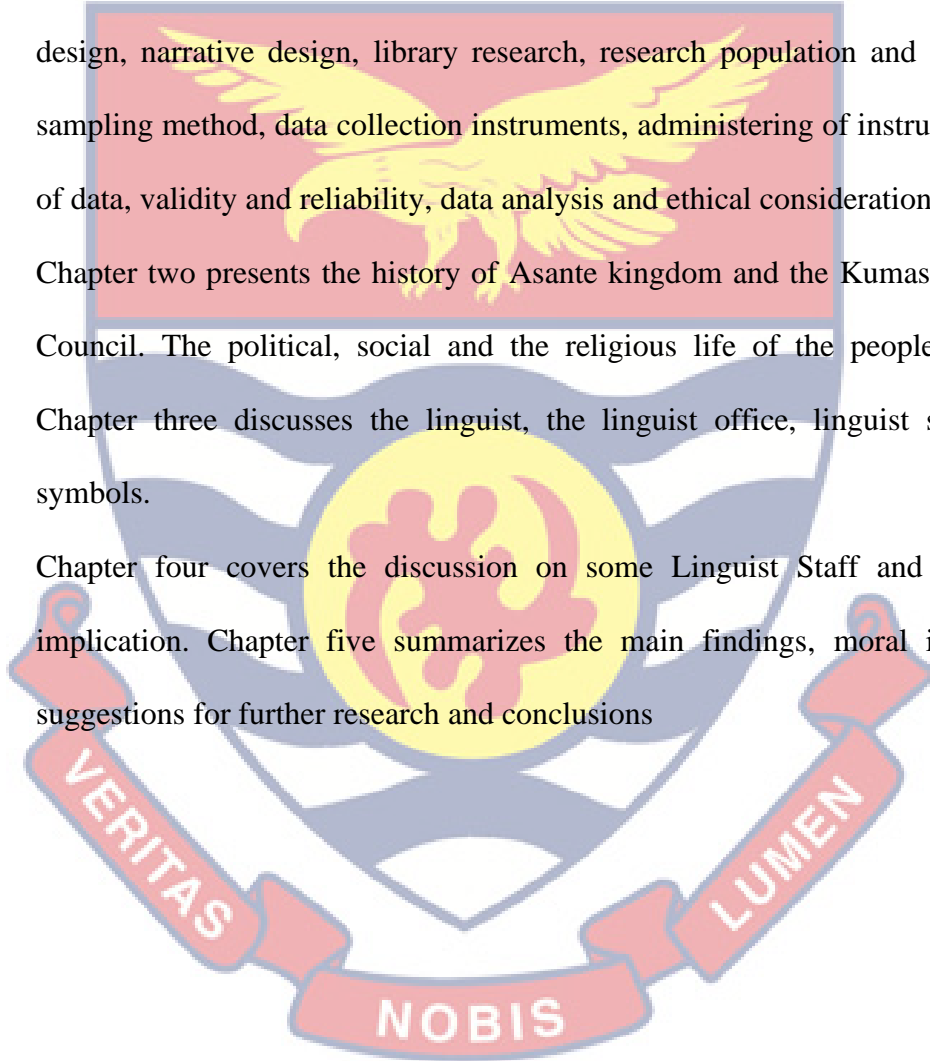
Organization of the Study

The study is organised as follows; beginning with chapter one, which includes sub-sections such as; background of the study, statement of the problem, research objectives, research questions, purpose of the study, significance of the study, delimitations, limitations, literature review, historical design, descriptive design, narrative design, library research, research population and sample size, sampling method, data collection instruments, administering of instruments, types of data, validity and reliability, data analysis and ethical considerations.

Chapter two presents the history of Asante kingdom and the Kumasi Traditional Council. The political, social and the religious life of the people of Asante.

Chapter three discusses the linguist, the linguist office, linguist staff and its symbols.

Chapter four covers the discussion on some Linguist Staff and their moral implication. Chapter five summarizes the main findings, moral implications, suggestions for further research and conclusions



CHAPTER TWO

THE HISTORY OF THE ASANTE KINGDOM: KUMASI TRADITIONAL COUNCIL

Introduction

This chapter focused on Kumasi Traditional Council, its social, religious, economic and political life, these have a link with the thesis since the research needs to be informed about the way of life of the people under study.

History of Asante

The Asante are located in the Ashanti Region of Ghana. The 2010 population census estimated the population of the region at 4,780, 380; and Kumasi Metropolis, the administrative capital of the Asante, at 2,035,064 (Statistical Service Ghana 2012). Even though there is migrant population, it is arguable that the Asante form greater proportion of the population in this region. The Asante are part of a socio-cultural group known as the Akan. This group consists of the Akwamu, Guan, Fante, Denkyra, Bono, Akyem, Kwahu, Sefwi, Wassa, Akwapim, and Assin. Geographically, the Akan occupy the Western, Central and Ashanti Regions and parts of the Bono and Ahafo, Eastern Regions of Ghana and the eastern part of the Ivory Coast. There is consensus that, together with the rest of these Akan groups, the Asante have migrated from ancient Mesopotamia to sub-Saharan Africa (Gedzi 2009; McCaskie, 2014). Each of the Akan ethnic groups is autonomous but all of them are linked by similar culture and language.

According to Asokore-Mamponghehene (Paramount Chief of Asokore-Mampong) and other traditional elders during my fieldwork in Kumasi, it was revealed that, the Asante migrated from the north to Techiman and then drifted to the southern coast in places like Mankesim. Most of the Asante people were hunters and since the coast was not conducive to this kind of life, they decided to move back to the north and settled in Adanse where they learnt to build houses. Thus, the name of this settlement Adanse etymologically refers to the art of building houses (i.e., Adansie). From Adanse, the various groups moved further north again toward Bekwai, Asantemanso and Kokofu. Other places people went to were Dwaben, Mampong, Nsuta, Kumawu, Offinso, and Nkoranza, while others also went to Kwaman, which was the original name for Kumasi (Ghana Statistical Service, 2012).

The Asante got their name from Denkyira's special commodity with which they served. All states sent resources to Denkyirahene every single *Akwasidae*, such as plain cloth, firewood, and gold dust. But in addition to these commodities, the Asantes were sending red clay as a special commodity to Denkyira. The Akan call the red clay "Asan", therefore the Asante were differentiated from others with the name *Asan-tefo* i.e, those who dig for clay (Osei, 2001).

The second theory, which the Curator has come out with is that the name Asante is said to emerge as a result of the people's activity as they prepared for war. This was at the time of Osei Tutu in the 16th century when the famous traditional priest, Okomfo Anokye purportedly gathered all the Asante chiefs

from the various 'micro states' and advised them to form a single, larger confederacy against their warring enemies such as the Denkyira. To cement the union, Okomfo Anokye was said to have commanded a golden stool, which he made to rest on the lap of his friend Osei Tutu, who at the time was the chief of Kwaman (old name for Kumasi). Okomfo Anokye managed to convince the other chiefs to accept the Kwaman chief, Osei Tutu as their king. The golden stool, therefore became the symbol of unity of all the Asante micro-states represented by their chief. According to an Asante's legend, the golden stool contains the soul of the Asante nation and thus, belongs to the Asante nation. Every chief in the union pays allegiance to it. As indicated, the union was formed to fight the King of Denkyira, Ntim Gyakari.

Clans of Asante

The Asante, is divided into clans. There are eight clans in Asante. A person belongs to the clan of his or her mother. This means all extended family members in this society, as earlier indicated, trace their descent from a common ancestress. In other words, the matrilineal family consists of all persons, whether male or female, who have descended from a common ancestress. The basis of the genealogy is the common blood that feeds and nurtures the child in the mother's womb. The peculiarity involved here is that the matrilineal blood passes only through females. This naturally leads to a system of diagonal succession where the matrilineal blood dies with every male member (Josiah-Aryeh 2005). This means males are only regarded as members of the matrilineal family during their

lifetime. This implies children belong to their mother's family and not to their father's.

Political life

Sorel (1950) pointed out that behind the Asante political achievements stood the great Golden Stool. It provided a powerful myth without which one may go on talking revolt indefinitely without ever provoking any revolutionary movement. Associated with the Golden Stool was an ingenious set of laws (77 in all) according to tradition. Among the laws were those of "common citizenship", by which every person of the Asante Union, at least in public was to place loyalty to the Golden Stool above all else, the ultimate sanction of the laws being the Golden Stool itself (Kyerematen, 1969).

Asante divine kingship reveals a type of kingship that is said to be a composite of spiritual and human elements. It is a kingship immersed in Asante religion and secularism, and whose political activities are said to be partly spiritual and partly human. It is believed to be a governance whose primeval source is God (the Supreme Being), who is regarded as the supreme ruler of Asante, with the human king as his viceroy, a feature of African divine kingship observed by Mbiti (1992). Since Asante regard God as the supreme ruler of their kingdom, their usual axiom about him is: "*Onyame ne hene*" ("God is the king"), an expression that has come to the notice of Opoku (1978, p.26) in his study about the Akan conception of God.

As spiritual ruler in Asante's divine kingship, the gods are believed to receive spiritual assistance from the ancestors and divinities of Asante, with the

divinities as the ministers, or sons and daughters of God. These acclaimed spiritual rulers are said to constitute the spiritual segment of the government of Asante, while the king and his subordinate rulers form the human facet of this sacred institution governing a sacred kingdom. The supposed sacredness of the Asante kingdom and the rest of the Akan realms, on account of the belief in the presence and involvement of the spirits in the affairs of society, have been acknowledged by Meyerowitz (1951) and Abraham (1962).

Religious life

The key value among the people of Asante is the fear of *Onyankopon* (God). The name of *Onyankopon* comes up time and again – in ordinary speech, in their drum language, in proverbs, in dances, etc. This is the Supreme Being. This is how the Asante think of him to be. “It is God who drives away flies from a tailless animal” (Steven, 2012). God for the Asante, is “considered understanding and merciful, but capable of calling punishment on those who do not live according to the society rules.” (Steven, 2012). Even in the religious dance of the *Okomfo* (the traditional priest), the name *Onyankopon* crops up. It is obvious that in the thinking of the people, *Onyankopon* is a unique being, higher than all other beings. ‘He’ is used because God, the Creator, (*oboadee*) is portrayed as a male in the Asante culture. He is Eternal (*Tetekwaframo*), he is kind (*odeefoo*), he is the source of Water (*Totrobonsu*), he is the source of Light (*Amowia*), he is the One who keeps forgiving to the extent that the sinner can never finish saying “thank you” (*Daaseansa*), he is the One whom you thank and get tired (*Daasebre*), and so on. (Gyekye,2002).

Among the people of Asante, their entire world is a spirit world. Some are good spirits; some are evil spirits. There is a hierarchy of entities in the spirit world that encompasses the Supreme God, lesser deities, ancestors, sorcery, and magic. Of the good ones among them, the Supreme Being (*Onyankopon*) is different.

The *Abosom* conviction is rather unique. It is no easy task to get answers as to the precise nature of the *Abosom* from books or personal research. Nevertheless, Meyerowitz claims that it is the same term as *Bosome* (the sun) since *obosom* is the apparent representation of the *kra* (the soul or the vital force) or the planet (Meyerowitz, 1958). What is certain is that they are spirits, created by God, having as their mundane abode anything from the rivers to creepers, and from beasts to rocks. They could also be found in the bush, in their natural habitats such as mountains or rivers or some ropes or some animals or they could be domesticated. They possess astonishing powers, which they use, some to the advantage of man, others to his detriment. The belief systems of the Asante permeate every facet of their lives. There is no way you could do anything without involving yourself in a religious experience, so much so that the hunter is involved in a religious experience when hunting, the chief being installed is involved in a religious experience, the judge passing sentence is involved in a religious experience, the girl who had reached puberty is involved in a religious experience, the farmer going to farm would not just farm without offering something to the earth, the carver would not cut a tree without offering something to the tree. Whatever one is doing, whether one is sad or happy, whether you have

just come from a journey or you are going on a journey, whether you are playing or being punished, you could not leave out religion (Gyekye, 2002: 3). Religion is inseparable from virtually every aspect of Ghanaian life and is important in the determination of worldview. Religion commands a central place in the organization of social, political, and the cultural life and regulates the relationship between people and their physical and spiritual environment (Steven, 2012).

This belief system of the Asante is in line with what Mbiti (1992: 1) said about Africans, “Africans are notoriously religious, and each people has its own religious system with a set of beliefs and practices”. Religion permeates all the departments of life so fully that it is not easy or possible always to isolate it. A study of these religious systems is, therefore, ultimately a study of the peoples themselves in all the complexities of both traditional and modern life. This is also affirmed by Kwame Gyekye that, in African life and thought, the religious is not distinguished from the non-religious, the sacred from the secular, the spiritual from the material. In all undertakings, be it cultivating, sowing, harvesting, eating or traveling religion is at work. To be born into the African society is to be born into a culture that is intensely and pervasively religious and requires, participating in the religious beliefs and rituals of the community (Gyekye, 2002).

Religion is not a classroom subject; it is picked up informally, formally and non-formally. ‘*Obi nkyere akwadaa Nyame*’ (No one shows the Supreme Being to a child) ‘*Asaase tetretee nso Nyanme ne hene*’ (A vast land but God is King) were things learnt from infancy. The Asante morality is governed by their belief systems. They mould their lives on their beliefs. ‘*Onyankopon*’ is, for them,

the universal morality. Whatever they do, they try to conform themselves to what they conceive to be the will of '*Onyankpon*', (Gyekye 2002).

The ancestors are certain individuals of the past generations of a lineage who are said to have distinguished themselves in many ways and, in particular, to have led virtuous and exemplary lives worth of emulation by succeeding generations of the lineage. The Asante do not think of their ancestors as gods. They are human beings on earth and they remain human in incorporeal existence where they are now. They are therefore considered, not as gods, but as 'relatives' who see us and have sympathy for their relatives on earth. Only their form as mundane creatures have changed. They are God's children. The spirits of those who commit suicide and the like are afraid to approach God. That is why they roam about this world. Ancestors are then human spirits (Gyekye 2002).

This religious worldview of the Asante is gradually changing in the cities but still enforced in the villages and towns. Looking back today, I can only see that things have changed and continue to change. Growing up as a child, I have realized that, there are many things done today in the cities that could not have been done about thirty years ago. In those days, for fear of '*Onyankopon*', there was respect for the aged, the sacred and those in authority.

Social Life

The social importance is specially acknowledged in rituals connected with birth, puberty, marriage and death. Everything that seems not to change actually is with (mostly) much effort maintained or adapted to the 'modern' times. Tradition in Kumasi is therefore not the same as history; it is as contemporary as is the

modern. “The ‘mirage-like’ dichotomy of ‘modern’ and ‘traditional’. ‘Mirage-like’, because it is there: people refer to it. They label rules and regulations and pigeon-hole principles accordingly. Legislation sometimes sanctions two realms, both of which are inhabited by political figures who declare themselves ‘traditional’ or ‘modern’. On the other hand, however, while traditional’ rules and institutions may be historical, their histories are often more recent than they pretend and, more to the point, they are as contemporary as ‘modern’ rules and institutions (Lund, 2010).

This idea of tradition as something contemporary will be used throughout this thesis. Traditional forms of authority, traditional social structures, and traditional culture are experienced and executed by people today. The notion of tradition therefore shows us rather the contemporary city than the historic one (Juul, 2002). The Asante express their social life through their customs and practices such as naming ceremony, marriage, festivals among others. In Asante, marriage ceremony is considered as a union between two families. The prospective husband must officially make his intention known to the family of the would-be spouse and the prospective husband presents Schnapps them. When the prospective wife gives his consent, then a list of items is given to the prospective husband. On the presentation of these items, the father of the would-be bride officially hands over his daughter to the family indicating the approval to the marriage (Nave, 2017). Some festivals celebrated by the Asante include the *Akwasidae*, *Awukudae* and *Adaekese*. All these are means by which the Asante express their social life.

Kumasi Traditional Council

The Asante Confederacy which is commonly referred to as the Ashanti Empire or Asante Empire was created by the Asante before colonization. It existed and was very powerful between the years 1701- 1896 (Obeng, 1996).

The Golden stool commonly referred to as “*Sika Dwa Kofi*” represents a major symbolic gesture of the Asante Empire. It is believed that, the Golden stool which serves as symbol of authority of the Asante Empire was ordained by God. Okomfo Anokye commanded the stool from the sky. According to the beliefs of the Asante, the Asanteman Council remains powerful and unique due to this symbolic gesture (Edgerton, 1995). The “*Sika Dwa Kofi*” remains a sacred symbol of the Asante Empire and is believed to possess super natural powers referred to as “*Sunsum*” (Akyeampong & Obeng, 1995).

With the widespread and increasing expansion of the Asante Empire, the Asanteman Council was formed to provide legal authority to its functions and operations. The Asanteman Council, which now is the Ashanti Regional House of Chiefs (ARHC) making up of all the traditional councils of the Asanteman is the highest decision-making body. The Traditional Council possesses Judicial, Administrative and Executive powers just like in every functional democracy. The Asante King heads the Asanteman Council.

The Kumasi Traditional Council is one of the traditional councils that make up the Ashanti Regional House of Chiefs (Asanteman Council). The Kumasi Traditional Council was formed under section 12 of the Chieftaincy Act, 1971 (Act 370) now Chieftaincy Act 759. Prior to its current name as the Kumasi Traditional Council, it was referred to as the Kumasi Divisional Council.

Kumasi Traditional Council covers the entire Kumasi Metropolis and beyond. It is made up of the President (the Asantehene), the Vice President (who is elected by the Council), the Paramount Queenmother (the *Asantehemaa*) the only female member of the Council and the Divisional Chiefs – (*Krontire, Akwamu, Adonten, Benkum, Nifa, Gyaase, Ankobia, Kyidom/Akyempim, Mawere, Nkosuo*) and other chiefs recognised by them. Each of these divisions has its own divisional council but owes allegiance to the Kumasi Traditional Council. The King of the Ashanti Empire, “Asantehene” is the President and leader of the Traditional Council. He is vested with administrative, judicial and executive powers (Osei, 2001).

The Kumasi Traditional Council is headed by a Registrar, who is the Chief of staff and coordinates all the activities at the Secretariat. The Registrar is supported by some core officers. It has a complex administrative structure which is different from the other Traditional Councils. In addition to the Kumasi Traditional Council which is a statutory institution, there are other offices within the Kumasi Traditional Council which are non-statutory. They include the Asantehene’s Secretariat, Kumasi Traditional Council Arbitration Court and the Asantehene's Lands Office.

Asante Traditional Administrative System

The Asantehene, as stated by Ross (2002), originally ruled with the guidance of the *Asantemanhyiamu*, defined by Wilks (1995) as the Assembly of the Asante Nation; the highest legislative council and court. This consisted of all

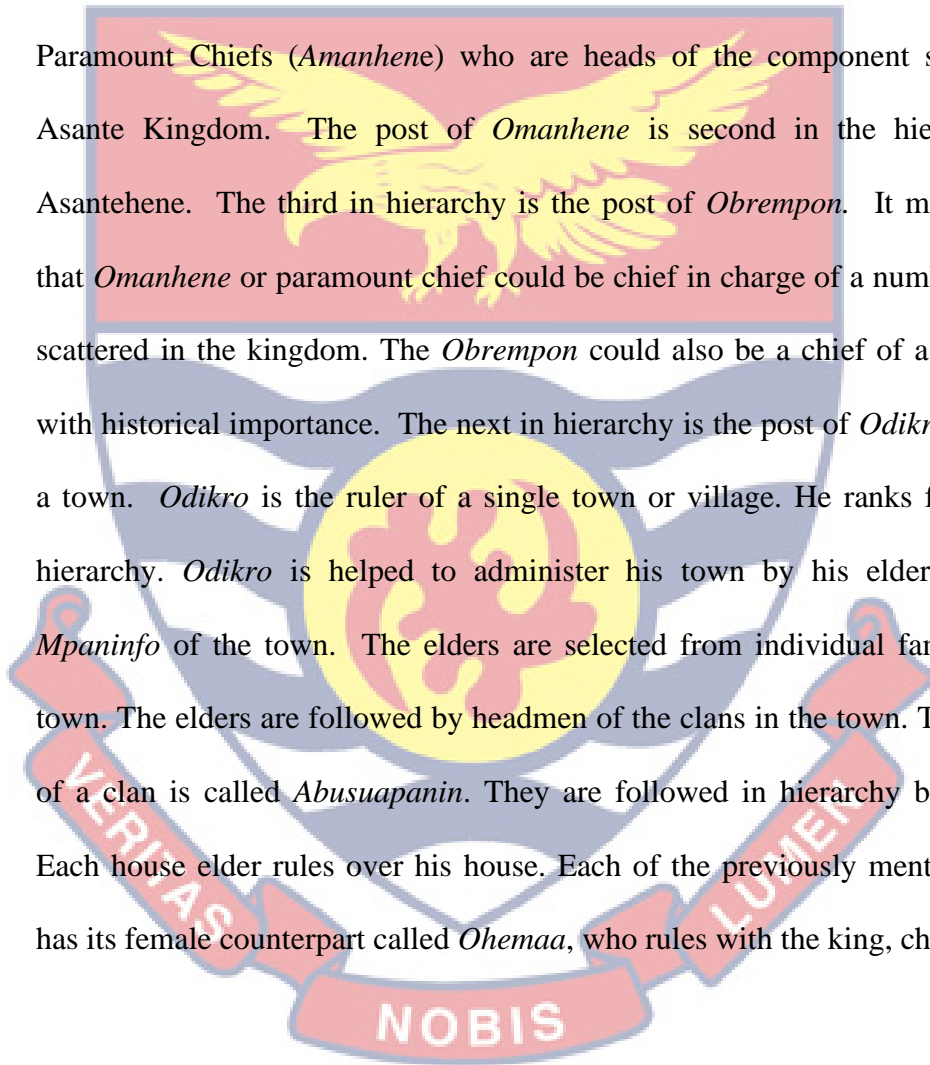
Asante paramount chiefs (*Amanhene*), senior Kumasi chiefs and selected provincial chiefs, who met once in a year at the annual *Odwira* festival.

The most notable of the Akan polities is the kingdom of Asante (Ashanti), which is a union of a number of autonomous chiefdoms under one king, the Asantehene. Every Asante chiefdom is a distinct territorial unit centred on the chief's capital town or village. The chief is elected from a group of candidates eligible by right of membership in a matrilineal descent group in which the office has been vested. He is assisted by a queen mother and is guided by a council of divisional chiefs or elders who are the representatives of the resident matrilineages of the chiefdom. Together they form a legislative and executive body, and most importantly, function as a judicial court. Each chiefdom, is composed of several matrilineages that are established on the basis of common matrilineal descent from a known female ancestor. Anthropologists have usually viewed the lineage as a fundamental corporate group with important religious, political, social and economic functions.

Ross further states that, meeting more frequently is a group identified by Wilks as the council of Kumasi, or the inner council, consisting of senior military commanders, other Kumasi functionaries, the Queenmother, and several councilors (*akyeame*), who are often called linguists. A recurring message in Akan proverbial folklore and art emphasized the necessity for a chief to consult with those senior members of his court. This message is usually conveyed in a depiction of three or four heads clustered together. Although it is also applied to images of a single head, the proverb is typically translated as “One head does not

go into council”. Quarcoopome (1996) asserts that, the Akan chief presides over a court and a bureaucracy composed of officials, both royal and non-royal, who are ranked hierarchically. Of the non-royal offices in the chiefdom, the position of the linguist or councilor (*Okyeame*) is the most respected.

Osei (2000), states that Asantehene or Asante King is assisted by the Paramount Chiefs (*Amanhene*) who are heads of the component states of the Asante Kingdom. The post of *Omanhene* is second in the hierarchy after Asantehene. The third in hierarchy is the post of *Obrempon*. It must be noted that *Omanhene* or paramount chief could be chief in charge of a number of towns scattered in the kingdom. The *Obrempon* could also be a chief of a single town with historical importance. The next in hierarchy is the post of *Odikro* or chief of a town. *Odikro* is the ruler of a single town or village. He ranks fourth in the hierarchy. *Odikro* is helped to administer his town by his elders known as *Mpaninfo* of the town. The elders are selected from individual families of the town. The elders are followed by headmen of the clans in the town. The headman of a clan is called *Abusuapanin*. They are followed in hierarchy by *Efiepanin*. Each house elder rules over his house. Each of the previously mentioned elders has its female counterpart called *Ohemaa*, who rules with the king, chief or elder.



CHAPTER THREE

THE LINGUIST, LINGUIST STAFF AND ITS SYMBOLS

Introduction

The chapter focuses on symbols, Asante Symbolism, Oral Tradition on the Linguist, The Office of the Linguist, The Asante Linguist and His Responsibilities, The Linguist Staff and Its Functions and Samples of Some Linguist Staff of the Asante.

Overview of Symbols

The use of symbols is as old as humans. Ancient Egyptian, Greek and Roman civilizations had symbols which were used to signify several things. According to Colleen (2006, p.1) symbols are “something used to represent something else”. They can represent ideas, concepts, beliefs, doctrines and feelings. They can have powerful meanings and evoke strong emotions”. This has been likened to a national flag, to a countryman and the crucifix to a Christian as they would also have powerful meanings and evoke strong emotions.

Agbo (2006) says symbolism is the representation of ideas by the use of signs, literacy and artistic invention to express ideas, emotions and abstractions in place of realism. A symbol generally stands for something visible, like an object, a mark, a sign or an abstract idea. Signs may be ambiguous in their use but they provide information about the environment, intentions and feelings of people and so elicit appropriate responses. Yankah (1989) illustrates that a certain chief who thought that a court decision had been badly made, turned up the next day in court wearing his cloth inside out and his sandals on the wrong feet. This action which

was symbolic immediately told people that something was wrong and it was likely that the chief was ready that day to turn the court “upside down”. Symbolism is mankind’s oldest form of communication. In the stone-age, artists carved female figures with large abdomens and breasts as symbols for continuity of life and fertility (Colleen, 2006). Today, realistic and abstract symbols are being used to convey several human thoughts and issues.

Symbols were found in the ancient age. In Ancient Egyptian art symbols, hieroglyphics were found in tombs and other forms of decorations, including the ankh. In Ancient Greek art for example, the symbols of gods and goddesses to signify war and wisdom (Athena), love (Venus), thunder and sky (Zeus) were used. In Medieval Europe, symbols used in Christianity included the crucifix, snake and apple, etc. to represent the death of Jesus Christ and deceit of Adam and Eve respectively. In Eastern art, Buddha Sculptures are symbols of peace and spirituality. In India the dancing Shiva has symbolic importance for creation, destruction, grace and liberation. In Japanese art, the Zen Garden arrangements of sand, rock and mounds of mass are symbols of water, mountains and islands (Colleen 2006).

Signs and Symbols

Often times, people perceive that, signs and symbol are one and the same when they perform the role of transmitting information. This is not so. Signs usually give simple basic information while symbols communicate abstract and complex concepts which make one to form mental images providing deep meanings (Adubofour, 2000). As confirmed by Sarpong (1974), a symbol has a

meaning but not all things that have a meaning are symbols. Symbols often represent abstract ideas like peace, patience, cowardice, wisdom, unity etc. Symbols may also express ideas, and values, for example, the flag of a nation expresses nationalism and patriotism causing nationals who see the flag, to respect it and by extension, feel what it stands for.

Signs, however, do not point beyond themselves to hidden meanings and information as symbols do. According to Dzobo (2009) “signs provide simple information, but symbols communicate complex knowledge, abstract truths and ideas about life and its meaning” (p. 2). He further states that a symbol is a powerful instrument of thought and Gardner (1970) extends it further that symbolism is “a visible or audible sign or emblem of some thought, emotion or experience, interpreting what can be really grasped only by the mind and imagination which enters into the field of observation” (p. 138).

Hill (2006) agrees with Dzobo (2005) that symbols are icons that represent meanings that are not immediately obvious. According to Geary (1988) “all research on African art – be it of art objects as such or of objects or events in other domains that can be grasped through the study of art – share the concern with meanings” (p. 103).

Sometimes also, meanings given to symbols run true to the type of object, animal, person or plant. For example, a woman is a symbol of procreation, man for strength, egg for fragility, fire for destruction or heat or warmth. Gold weights also often serve dual purposes, both as a weight and in order to convey a message. For example, a gold weight featuring a symbol of a man carrying a keg of gun

powder and at the same time smoking a pipe is interpreted as meaning that you can have an important duty to carry out at a specific time but that does not mean that you should not spare time to do other important things. Depending on the context, this same symbol may mean that one is acting dangerously and so should be careful. Again, the symbol of two crocodiles with a joint abdomen has a saying attached to it, that although they both eat into the same stomach, they struggle to catch their food. This may be interpreted as, although people may aim at the same purpose, they have different ways of getting there (Sarpong, 1974).

Considering the wealth of wisdom within them, the deeper meanings of symbols in the Manhyia Palace do need to be unraveled so that the knowledge and great learning hidden in them will be made available for use by the society in general. In other African cultures, besides Egypt, several symbols are used in daily occurrences in life. Symbolism here becomes an unspoken language that is dynamic and imaginative and used to communicate ideas in visual form. For instance, in traditional Ghanaian society, human dressing, apparel, architectural designs, stools people sit on, proverbs and even articles used in daily life are means whereby the people express themselves and also educate people, young and old. African art is highly expressive, communicating meanings to persons who have the ability to understand (Sarpong, 1974). Sometimes dancers use their body movements, steps, and hands to praise or even insult a person, symbolically. For example, among the Asante, raising the index and middle fingers to form a “V” is used in congratulating a good dancer for a performance well done (Sarpong, 1974).

Asante Symbols

Asante culture has a lot of symbolism, which also has a lot of proverbs. Most symbols can be interpreted by proverbs and most proverbs can be expressed in symbols so it is difficult to draw a line between symbols and proverbs among the Asante. They are both means of effective communication of cultural and social truths. Most times symbols among the Asante have their meanings expressed as proverbs or traditional sayings, so in effect there is a strong link between verbal and visual arts in the Asante culture. For example, the proverb *Obi nkyere aseba ba atow*, to wit, “no one teaches the cub of a leopard how to spring”, is interpreted literally as “the wisdom and strength of the chief is passed on to his heir” (Cole & Ross, 1977).

The Linguist (Okyeame)

Muller (1673) was the first to identify the position of the *Okyeame* correctly when he called him with the name *Obejammi* and said he was the “first royal advisor”. Wilks (1975) saw the *Okyeame* as a counselor, advisor, judicial advocate, military attaché, foreign minister, prime minister, and political “troubleshooter”. He further explains that the *Okyeame*'s judicial role distinguishes him from other members of the King's court”.

One could conjecture that the name “linguist” was given to the *Okyeame* by English language speakers who saw him as the mouthpiece of the chief to people and vice versa. He often repeated what the chief spoke to the people and what the people spoke to the King. In the process, he would add proverbs and metaphors to the statements, buttressing what Rattray (1927: p.277 - 8) wrote that

“if a town becomes broken, it is the fault of the *Okyeame*, if a town stands firm, it is due to the *Okyeame* (*kuro ebo a, efiri Okyeame, kuro gyina a, efiri Okyeame*). It actually implies that the way we communicate as humans is really important. In this context the *okyeame*'s style of communicating what has been given him matters if peace between parties is to be maintained.

The Office of the Linguist (*Okyeame*)

In the courts of Ghanaian Chiefs, there is an important official called *Okyeame*. Opoku (1995) writing on the linguist (*Okyeame*) disagrees with Warren (1986) who refers to the linguist as a person who speaks several languages fluently.

In the views of Opoku (1997); Kyeremateng (2010) and Quarcopome (1996), the linguist as a state official is the one who rather speaks his own language with ease and confidence, displaying remarkable eloquence and wisdom and spicing his statements with proverbs. In addition to this, the linguist is steeped in the traditions and customary laws of the society as well as in diplomacy. He must be an embodiment of high morals and impressive in appearance. He must be one who keeps secrets. In the role as a linguist, he receives directly, praise and or abuses meant for the King. His share of a sheep slaughtered, customarily, is the chest meant to make him courageous in the discharge of this duties. The office is not hereditary because competent persons who have played vital roles in the palace and have good oratory skills with in-depth knowledge in Asante traditions are selected for this noble position.

Opoku (1997), asserts that the relationship between the linguist and the chief is so close that he is often referred to as “mouth piece” of the chief and to show how close his relationship with the chief is, he is the only non-family member, besides the chief’s wife who can enter the chief’s chamber to wake him from sleep.

Duties of a Linguist

The linguist, like the other functionaries in the palace has roles he plays. The linguists that were interviewed talked about their duties in and outside the chief’s Court. Beginning with the qualification or how one is chosen, one linguist said that the Position is sometimes hereditary or one could be selected based on chief’s own discretion. According to him the linguist must be respectful, honest, truthful, trustworthy and someone who can keep secrets. He should not be a liar, or a drunk so as to be able to comport himself at all times. Some of them mentioned that he is seen in public serving as a mediator between the chief and the people because one cannot speak directly to the chief and so he should be wise and decent because he follows the chief all the time. All the linguists had this to say: As a linguist you should be eloquent and know how to use the language well, trying to polish (adorn) the speech with proverbs and idioms, etc to make the speech rich and to make it sound good in people’s ears.

This corroborates what Krampah (1997) wrote about the linguists when he says, the linguist should not doze off when he is holding the staff as it is not a good sign, or the linguist must not get drunk while holding the staff because he can lose control of himself and misbehave and this can bring disgrace not only to

himself but the chief as well. With regards to the proper way of holding the staff, one linguist affirmed what Opoku (1995) and Krampah (1997) wrote that when walking the linguist must hold the staff with his right hand but when speaking in public, he must hold it in his left hand as a sign of respect so as to use the right hand to make the necessary gestures. This gave the researcher some understanding that there are rules governing the usage of the staff.

The Asantehene has thirteen senior linguists, or counselors (*Akyeame*) three junior linguists or counselors and a chief linguist or chief counselor, *Akyeamehene*. It is interesting to note that it is only the Asantehene who has this number of *Akyeame*. There was no reason provided for the odd numbers of the different levels of linguists. Most of the paramount chiefs have at most eight *akyeame* a spokesperson for any delegation of the King, either for peace or war, to consult deities, to announce deaths etc; an advisor to the King; and the link between the King and the people, who books appointments on behalf of the people, takes them to the King, presents the matter of the people to the King and conveys the King's response to the people, so both the people and the King speak through him (Osei, 2000). The *Okyeame* often walks in front, ahead of the Asantehene's procession, and stands next to or sits immediately in front of the King when the latter sits in state.

Oral Tradition on the Linguist

Chieftaincy system is not complete in Asante without the position of the Linguist. The linguist is called an *Okyeame*. He is the one who puts across whatever the Chief intends to tell his people. The Chief is not expected to call or

talk loudly to the assembly as this may injure his speech organs therefore each head has a number of linguists through whom he speaks to his subjects (Ampene, 1975).

Oral tradition from Adanse Fomena gives the first King called Awurade Basa who first chose a linguist called *Mfoafo*, through whom he spoke to his people before Asante Kings copied the practice. (Ampene, 1975). Awurade Basa in his wisdom learnt that God, the creator (*Onyankopon*) and the Greatest king have so many deities for humanity to pray to him (God) through them. Learning from the clue, Nana Awurade Basa reasoned out that if he has been chosen by his people as their head, then he was representing God in a small way and therefore should be addressed through a linguist. Nana Awurade Basa saw to it that wherever he went, he would have his linguist with him. He instituted that whosoever wanted to speak to him should do so through the linguist. The chief would also talk through the linguist to the masses and he would intend interpret the chief's statement in the language the people understood. As time passed by, the practice developed and more responsibilities were turned over to the linguist. (Adubofour 2000; Ampene 1975, Boakye 2015 and Warren 1986).

Linguist Staff (Akyeamepoma)

Linguist staff is found in the courts of Kings and Chiefs in Ghana. They are also used by clans. Linguist staffs are used for political and judicial purposes. A Linguist, (*Okyeame*) may carry a linguist staff when he is sent by the chief to deliver a message. Usually the symbol (s) of the linguist staff carries a meaning related to the message to be delivered. Such symbols may mean peace, justice,

war or arbitration. For example, the finial which is an egg means that the owner/clan/chief is careful and patient and seeks peace as the egg is fragile and needs careful and patient handling. Again, a linguist staff with an emblem (finial) of a keg of gunpowder means that the state is ready to fight if it becomes necessary; if the emblem is a tortoise and snail then it means the state has no war intentions against the other state (Adubofour, 2000).

From a personal conversation between the researcher and a linguist, it emerged that the actual time that the linguist staff came into being is not known. Tschumi (1978) however, writes that it may have started from the bible days when Jewish Leaders like, Moses Aaron and Elijah used when going about their duties as people who had been chosen by God. But in all these Quarcopome (1996) writes that the staff constitutes an important symbol that makes his office and facilitates his duties in and out of the Chief's court.

Description of the Linguist Staff

The staff consists of a lengthy wooden shaft carved into two parts of interlocking and a distinct finish attached to the foundation. It is completely covered with gold foil, a material that alludes to the sun and the vital force or soul in all living things.

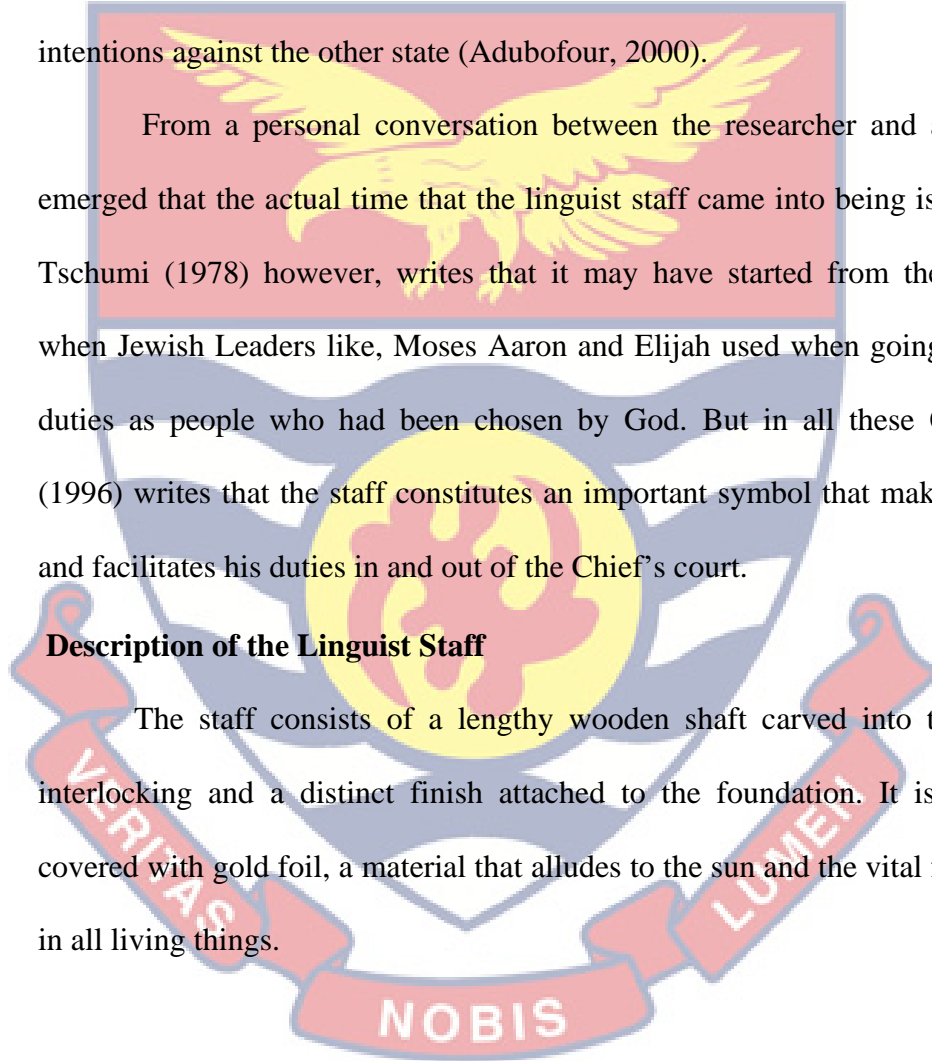




Figure 1: An example of Okyeame's Linguist Staff (Akyeamepoma)

Filed survey; 2019. Linguist Staff (*Okyeame*),

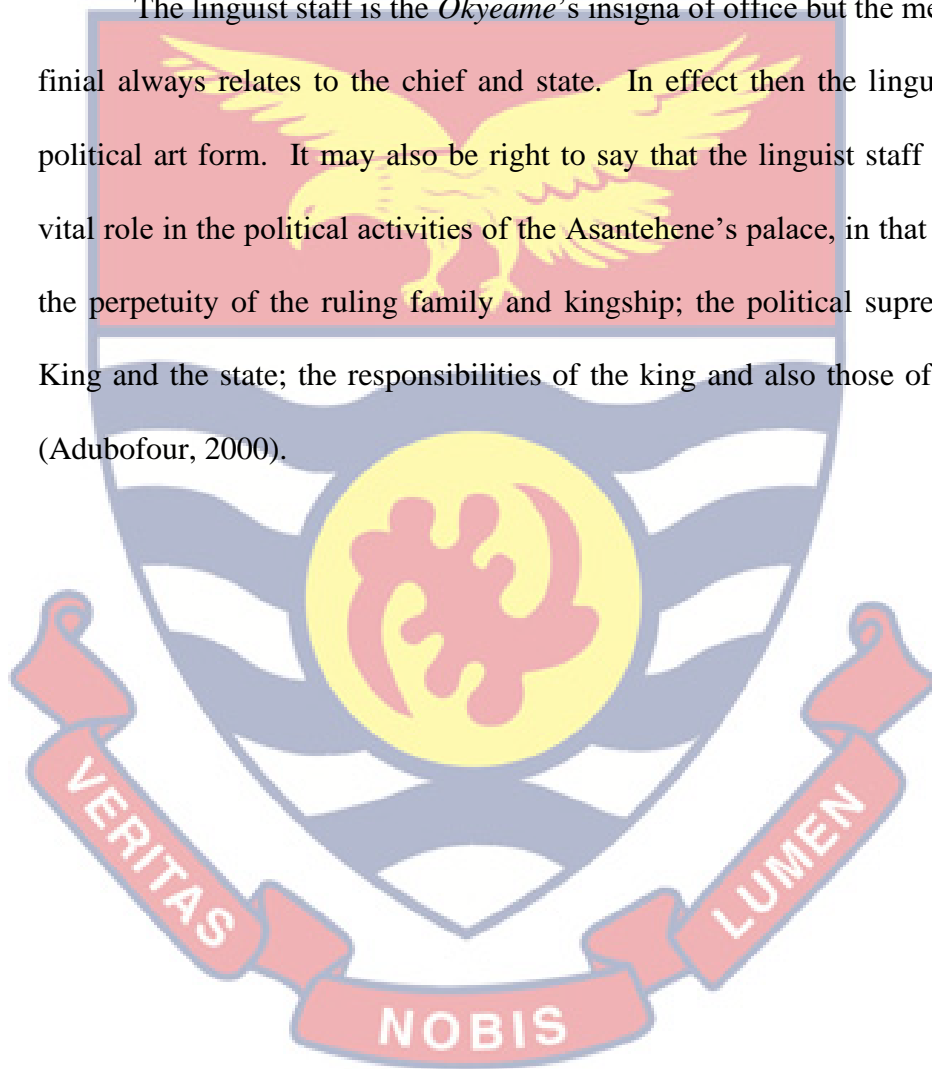
Linguist staffs are often wood carvings. There is the sculptured finial and the shaft that are gold leafed after carving. Sometimes the shaft will feature motifs. The top, which is the finial, most often has a symbol that conveys a specific meaning. The most common is a square of reef knot known as nyansapo (wisdom knot), an aphorism *nyansapo wɔ sane no badwenba* meaning „only the wise man can untie the wisdom knot. Another is the multi-linked chain which implies that family links are never broken.

It is a stick with a carved finial which most often represents a proverbial saying which may have associations to objects, situations or subjects. For example, a finial with a tree with several birds on its branches, *Anomaa nua ne*

nea one no da dua koro, that may be interpreted to mean “Birds of the same species roost in the same tree” indicates unity and solidarity within the state and the royal family (Ross,1982).

Functions of the Linguist Staff

The linguist staff is the *Okyeame*'s insignia of office but the meaning of the finial always relates to the chief and state. In effect then the linguist staff is a political art form. It may also be right to say that the linguist staff plays a very vital role in the political activities of the Asantehene's palace, in that it can depict the perpetuity of the ruling family and kingship; the political supremacy of the King and the state; the responsibilities of the king and also those of his subjects (Adubofour, 2000).



CHAPTER FOUR

ASANTE LINGUIST STAFF AND MORAL IMPLICATIONS

Introduction

Chapter four dealt with the data presentation, analysis of the research findings from the interview guide. The analyses of the data were linked up with the theoretical framework of the study which was hinged on cultural theory. The themes identified are symbols of Asante Linguist staff, moral implication of Asante linguist staff and how these symbols can be preserved. Largely the responses from the interviewees did not conflict with the principles, operational and conceptual elements of the workings of traditional council in today's corporate communications as evident by literature reviewed in this study. These qualitative data for this research emanated from the reflections, observations, personal experiences and opinions made up of words collected from respondents by way of unstructured interviews. Ten (10) respondents were purposively selected for this unstructured interview that yielded the commensurate data adequate for this academic study

Trees mostly used for Carving the Asante Linguist Staff

In a conversation with most of the carvers at the Ahwia Wood village, a wood carver, Agya Adu, said that there are several species of trees in Ghana. He said that most of the trees that are used for the linguist staff are *Osese* (*Funtumia* Sp), *Kodua* (Cider) and *Nyamedua* (*Alstonia gongenis*). This has been affirmed by Sarpong (1971) who gives reasons why these trees are mostly used and the specific artefact. Like the other carvers that the researcher spoke with, these trees

are chosen because of their durable nature but Sarpong adds that some carvers choose it for religious reasons. It is believed that some wood has a supernatural character (spirit) of its own. *Tweneboah* or *Koduah*, *Nyamedua* and *Sese* are said to possess very vindictive spirits. It is said that these trees can make themselves invisible to man when they realize that they are in danger of being molested. Sarpong (1971, p 10)

In my quest to learn more about trees used for carving, I travelled to the Kumasi Cultural Centre where wood carvers can be found. They said that some of the wood used in carving include *Sese* which can be found in Oda, Suhum, Asamankese and Konkonuru. There is "*Ebony*" which can be found in Ho and Jasikan all in the Volta Region of Ghana. Cider which can be found in Asamankese, Obuadaka and some villages in Aburi. Others such as *Ofuntum* can be found in Asamankese and "Mahogany" can be found in Aburi. *Tweneboa* is a sacred tree which means 'drum tree' can also be found in Asamankese, Suhum *Nfranta* and *Asesieso*. Other types of wood include *Afromosia*, (Cedrela) *Odum* "iroko" (Sinuro). It was made categorically clear that, not all tree species can be used in carving the linguist staff due to the nature of the tree. Trees like teak, 'sese', mahogany, etc cannot be used because they are very hard to find.

The study revealed that, from history wood carving in Ghana began in the forest areas. This was partly due to the abundance of wood and also easy access to raw materials as well as the interest of the people in the profession. The Akan dominated in wood carving activities in Ghana but not practiced on a large scale but rather practiced by few carvers. This limited number of carvers were

regarded as the privileged minority because they were so skillful. People also saw them as having been gifted with extraordinary talents from God. The few wood carvers were accorded great respect in the community. Akan wood carvers who were versatile in carving various forms of wood were called *Ohene Dwumfuor* literally translated as “The chief’s carpenters”. Akan traditional carvers were greatly feared due to the weapons the carvers could use to manufacture from wood but however admired for their creativity and ingenuity.

As it was in the past, and as the carving profession progressed over the years, especially among the Akan, it has remained an exclusive preserve for males only. Males were seen to be gifted with special talents and hence were tasked to uphold the tradition. Females were not allowed to carve wood because it involved hard work but rather were made to sell carved objects. Today few women are wood carvers (Key informant, Kumasi Cultural Centre, 2021).

The family head of the Feyiase Asona clan agreed to grant the interview per request sent to him earlier. In his first response he addressed the Asante lineage and its organization; he said that, the Asante lineage organisation consists of matrilineal clans with significant and minor sections (*musua*, plural.; *abusua*, singular). The complete number of clans (*musua*) is seven. Different names can be used for one and the same *abusua*. Sometimes, even in the same location, it is possible to use more than one name to refer to the same or its minor section.

He also said that, we speak to a wise man in proverbs, not in plain speech,' says an Akan expression. Nowhere is refined speech, embellished with proverbial wisdom, more apparent than in the institution of the linguist, a principal counselor

and spokesman for a chief. More than a translator, he is also an advisor, judicial advocate, prime minister, political trouble shooter and a historian of state law and custom--of course chosen for his sagacity, wit and oratorical skill. Many kings have several linguists, in which case one will be designated the chief linguist.

In trying to find out whether a symbol on the staff could be changed after the death of a chief or linguist, the Head of Family indicated that the staff belongs to the state, the family or clan and not the individual chief or linguist as such the it cannot be changed in such situations. He further indicated that the symbols for the various clans, for instance, *Asona*, *Agona*, *Oyoko*, etc must be used in all occasions. He also said that symbols belonging to the state can be added to the clan symbols. For instance, the symbol depicting *Nea adee wo no na odie na nnye dee okom de no* (fig. 4), *Osono akyi nni aboa* (fig. 9), *Nkabom ma ahocden* (fig. 16), etc

This opened discussion on the issue of the philosophy behind the adoption or choosing of a particular symbol on a linguist staff. He said that, circumstances surrounding the instalment of a chief, a historical event which brought progress or disaster on the people can be a reason for the adoption of a symbol on the linguist staff. He mentioned the types of symbols and the occasions that the Asante use them. Sometimes too, the symbols reflect how the state came to be and the power and authority that the chief wields over other states.

Emanating from the interview held in a wood carving workshop, a respondent indicated that wood carving as a creative work of art design is based on imagination and occurrences around the community you live and from the

world at large. The experienced wood carver who has been in the business for the past 25 years, indicated that, he learnt the craftsmanship from his uncle. Carving has always been a family undertaking, he said. He has no professional certificate in sculpture or wood carving. In his response to the kind of wood for carving, he stated that, our environment is surrounded by trees. The types of wood at a carver's disposal informs the kind of wood to use for a particular work. The strength of wood vary, some wood products are soft while others are hard to work with. Carve works that involves bending parts requires relatively soft wood while carving works with hard surfaces require hard wood. Knowing the kind of work being done informs a carver's choice of wood for carving purposes.

Again, the respondent indicated in response to traditional symbols he carved that, he carved stools and drums for Traditional leaders. A lot of household items such as those used in the kitchen were carved out of wood. Examples of these include mortars, pestles, ladles, wooden bowls. Other items carved out of wood also include combs, canons, doors, chairs, stools and linguist staff. He said linguist staffs are mostly carved based on request and design from clans, house of chiefs and cultural groups. He concluded that, the traditional Ghanaian carved wood items include: drums, masks, (*Akuaba*) fertility dolls, mortars and stools. All these items are still made and exported today. The form and design of these items have changed very little over the years.



*Figure 2: Replica of a carved works at Agya Adu's Shop.
Field survey (2019) (Agya Adu's Shop at Kumasi central market)*

In response to the youth engagement in wood carving, most of the carvers said; most of the youth do not engage in this business because of the youth's quest for quick money. It is difficult getting the youth to learn how to carve. They also said that; most of the youth are not interested in the carving because of the way they are portrayed in local movies as "fetish". They said with the linguist staff, it is done based on order form those who need it. It is noy done and put on the market for sale.

Symbols and the Moral Lessons on the Linguist Staff

On a question of how the symbols of the linguist staff teach moral lessons, Owoahene, a carver stated that, the various symbols on the staff give message to the public who are within that context. Based on this, the researcher asked a gentleman who had come there to do business but lives within the area on his knowledge about those symbols. He responded that he does not have any knowledge about the symbols on the linguist staff. This gave the researcher the

impression that almost all the symbols on the linguist staff can be used to teach our traditional values but the problem is we do not know them and we do not see them very often. We need to learn because it is when we learn that we will know the usefulness of it and that will help us to live like people who are called Asante.

The linguist in response to how the symbols on the staff can be made popular reiterated that the youth are not to be blamed much for not knowing the symbols because the staffs are kept in the palaces and rarely are they brought out for people to see. They are brought out during festivals, funerals and durbars where the youth has very little interest in. They would rather attend musical concert instead of taking part in the celebration of these cultural activities.

A linguist in Amakom describing the figure below said that the symbol is mostly lessons drawn from life experiences. The figure below (linguist staff) was an imagery on the finish line of linguistic staff. The linguist staff typically demonstrates Asante's proverbs about power and organizational responsibilities between those that own power and those that are ruled by power and authority. Physically, description and observation of the linguist staff showed two figures flanking a spider on its web. The proverbial meaning of the linguist staff symbol is: "Nobody comes to the house of the spider to teach wisdom". The spider, in the Asante tradition represents a fitting symbol for respect due to a person with great oratory and diplomatic skills. In Ghana, Ananse, the spider, is the convener of the wisdom of Nyame, the supreme creator of the Asante, and is the originator of folk tales and proverbs.



Figure 3: A shop displaying carved items by Agya Adu Field survey (2019). (Agya Adu's Shop at Kumasi central market).

The symbols on the Asante linguist staff

In understanding the moral lesson behind the symbols of the Asante linguist staff, a 75-year-old respondent who has been a linguist for the past 30 years was interviewed. The respondent indicated his status as the chief linguist of all the various clan linguists in the Asante Kingdom. This gave an indication of the respondent's deep understanding of the true moral lessons behind the Asante linguist staff. The respondent indicated that, the nature and role of the linguist office covered wide range of duties, including mediation, advocacy for justice, political troubleshooting and the conservation and interpretation of royal history. Holistically, the linguist governance function manifest as the main intermediary between the ruler and those seeking the ruler's attention. The *Okyeame* engages eloquently in verbal discourse on behalf of the chief and guests, drawing on vast understanding and significant oratory and diplomatic abilities. The linguist relays the words of visitors to the King or Chief or ruler and transmits the King's or

Chief's or ruler's response, often with poetic or metaphorical embellishment to the visitors.

Description of Lessons from Linguist Staff

This section of the study discusses the physical and derivative meaning of the linguist staff based on the physical features and usage of the staff. Again, through key informant interview, the senior linguist was engaged on the moral lessons that can be derived from the linguist staff. According to the respondent, the linguist staff portrays fables, myths, maxims and proverbs that are oral literary forms. The fables, myths, maxims and proverbs surrounding linguist staff were used in native culture when talking and thinking to express opinions, values and emotions. Proverbs are generally brief and to-the-point statements that are metaphorically used to state certain general life truths. Finally, the key respondent indicated that, the symbols on the staff assist to imagine and comprehend the core meaning of people's interactions, activities, life circumstances and behavior patterns. They maintain and present essential findings that are sifted from the experiences of life.

The interview ended by highlighting the official role of his office, saying that, a major official in a Ghanaian leader's or king's palace is the scholar, known as the *Okyeame* in Akan (a local language). The *Okyeame* as the spokesman, is the channel through whom the leader addresses his elders and individuals, and through whom the chief is discussed on both personal and public occasions. He said the appointment to a linguist's position is usually based on maturity or experience, traditional knowledge of expertise, discretion and

diplomacy. As a close counselor to the chief, on behalf of the leader and his elders, he pronounces decision at the tribunal. The linguist is identified by an office staff sculpted in wood, garnished with a figurative emblem and typically covered with silver or gold leaf. The emblem reflects a proverb or communicates a strongly valued value in society.

The study had a focus group discussion with leaders (market queens and union chairmen) of the Asafo market. The purpose for the focus group discussion was to address the question whether they have seen some of the linguist staffs with their symbols. The study revealed that section of the participants, less than 50%, did not have knowledge on the forms and shapes of linguist staffs and the reasoning behind such symbols.

The study engaged the linguist, sellers of traditional regalia and some elders in the palace in focused group discussion on the functions of the staff, where they see them and the person responsible for using the staff. Participants indicated that current tradition has been dominated with linguist staffs. Greater section of the participants indicated that linguist staff continues to be part of Ashanti Traditional structures as the quote below express such view:

It is striking to see a procession of chiefs coming for a durbar or ceremonial gathering, each riding in a palanquin or walking under an enormous umbrella, each led by his linguist carrying his domain's gold-encrusted staff on his sphere carved from wood. ‘

One elder amongst the members of the focus group who happened to be a former linguist at the Tafo palace mentioned that some of the symbols can only be used

at merrymaking activities like festivals, durbars, installation of chiefs, etc and others are used at funerals. Another elder also said that a linguist can display any number of staff at a function but cannot do away with the Clan's symbol. It also came to light that the chief can decide to adopt a symbol but would have to meet with the traditional elders to decide together. It was also revealed that the symbols used on merrymaking occasions are the symbols that speak about the chief's power, selflessness and service to his subjects.

Through the discussion it became known that the Asante has regard for times and seasons, as such the symbols for sad occasions, as said by an elder from Amakom, are grouped under one big umbrella and called *asempa ye tia* literally translated as a 'good message is brief'.

Nana Oduro Numapau, a linguist from Kukuom, who happened to be part of the group discussion said that the types of symbols used at funeral grounds as having black or dark shades and tied or covered with a red band. It is never used anywhere or for any other purpose. The symbols used on these occasions include *owuo tirim ye den* (death is wicked), *gyae mu ma nyame* (leave it to God), etc.

When asked about how the lessons behind the symbols on the linguist staff could be made to influence and impact on the lives of the Asante, Nana Abrafi, a seller of traditional regalia, had this to say;

A people without the knowledge of their past history, origin and culture are like a tree without roots and the moment you give up your principles and your values, you are dead, your culture is dead and your civilization is also dead. These days our young ones do not spend

much time with us in the home and so the little time we get, we need to teach them about our values and also encourage them to participate in the cultural activity in our communities, so that they will know more about our culture.. (Nana Abrafɔ, Personal communication, April 14, 2020)

An opinion leader in Asafo also added that parents should also minimize visits to recreational centres and shopping malls with kids and rather send children to traditional tourist sites and museum and traditional occasions like festivals, durbars, etc. they should also encourage the youth to be interested in programmes on television that borders on *Amamere* and *Amanee* (customs and tradition) so that they will be abreast with their culture and learn about the meanings and values of the Asante symbols on the linguist staff.

The study further revealed that, on the lessons and moral implication of the linguist staff on the general public, the symbols are well understood, and its meaning directs them on life issues. Another section of the group also indicated that the meaning of the symbols on the linguist staff also serve as a guide and motivation for them on how to relate with other people and live-in harmony. Most of them said unless the meaning is explained to you, it is very difficult to make meaning from it, unless you come from a royal house.

The study further revealed that various clans had their unique linguist staff. According to the respondents each 'Abusua' is identified both by its proper name and its common emblem, totem or symbol. The Table below presents various clans and unique linguist staff symbols.

Table 1: Clans and their symbols on Linguist Staff

Clan	Symbol on Linguist Staff	Meaning	Towns
<i>Beretuo (Twidan)</i>	Leopard (<i>Etwie</i> or <i>Osebo</i>)	Bravery/Aggressiveness	Mampong, Ofoase, Mprem
<i>Aduana (Atwea, Ntwea, Aowin, Aborade, or Adwinade)</i>	Dog (<i>Kraman, Bodom</i>) or Frog (<i>Atwere</i> or <i>Aponkyerene</i>)	Hardworking/Bravery and Clever	Kwaman, Kumawu and Kaasi
<i>Kona (Asokore, Ekoona or Adonten) Abusua</i>	Water Buffalo (<i>Ekoo</i>)	Uprightness	Asokore Mampong,
<i>Oyoko (Daku, Yogo, Yoko, Oweko, or Anona) Abusua</i>	Hawk (<i>Akroma</i> or <i>Asansaa</i>)	Patience/Bravery and Statesmanship	Kokofu, Mamponenten, Dwaben
<i>Agona Abusua</i>	Parrot (<i>Akoo</i>)	Eloquence	Tafo, Nkawie, Sepe
<i>Asinie Abusua</i>	Whale (<i>Bonsu</i>) or The Bat (<i>Apane</i>)	Diplomatic and Brave	Anto, Amakom, Kwamu
<i>Asona (Odum, Odum-Na, Dwum or Dwumina) Abusua</i>	Crow, White Crested Raven (<i>Adene</i> or <i>Akonkron</i>)	Wisdom	Feyiase, Toase, Onwe, Kotei
<i>Asakyiri</i>	Hawk (<i>Akroma</i>)	Calmness/Patience	Apeadu, Abrankese, Abofour

Source: Field Data (2020).

The study also revealed that present occasions also determined the type of linguist staff symbols used. According to the respondent, beyond the family symbols, there was no other specific symbol allocated for a particular family on her linguist staff. In addition, he stated that specific occasions called for the kind

of staff the linguist will like to use in order to communicate or to have a relation with the occasion at hand at that very moment.

The final section covered the lessons and moral implications learnt from the linguist staff in general. According to the respondents, symbols on the linguist staff have a lot of moral lessons and that has been the major reason for linguist staff use during important occasions to paint real picture of happenings.

Significance and moral implication of some selected linguist staffs

This section of the study discussed the significance and moral implications of some selected linguist staffs. The section connects linguist staffs with life situations. A ruler owns several linguist staffs and displays the one that best visualizes the message he wishes to convey to his people at a particular time. The *Okyeame* or Linguist has the staff as a symbol of his office and it is known as the Linguist staff.



Figure 4: Deɛ adeɛ wɔ no na odie na enye deɛ ɔkom de no

Food is for the owner and not the one who is hungry

Source: Field work (2019)

This symbol relates to the perpetuity of the ruling family and Kingship, a linguist staff of the Asantehene has a finial of two men sitting with a table with food on it between them. One is eating while one sits looking on. This depicts a proverb, *Dee adee wo no na odie na enye dee akom de no*, translated to mean: “The food is for the man who owns it and not for the man who is hungry”. The proverb is interpreted as the throne belongs to the rightful owner or heir to the stool and not someone who thinks he is popular or has wealth. This was commissioned as a result of disputes which sometimes came up concerning the rightful person to ascend the throne.

Relating the symbol to the Ashanti Traditional Authority, the symbol indicates the political supremacy of the Kingdom. The lineage of royals are the sole owners of the lands on the kingdom and some groups of people are entitled to such benefit or food. Therefore, irrespective of the level of one’s closeness, one can admire and appreciate the throne, without being a royal, one cannot occupy the throne. Denotatively, it explains food and hunger and does not bring out the right meaning of a proverb connotatively. It explains royalty and those who are the rightful owners of the throne.

The moral lessons that can be deduced from the symbol and its proverbial meaning is that, supremacy and power in our way of life is to regulate us as human beings to know where we belong when it comes to power struggle to avoid conflict. Knowing what you have or can have helps prevent envy and jealousy because in life some people will benefit while others may struggle in life. Those benefiting, may be, have superior powers over a common resource while others

may not have access to such resources. In summary, the symbol discourages illegitimate people, from claiming ownership over resources which in effect prevents disputes and conflicts.



*Figure 5: Woforo dua pa a, na yepie wo
One who climbs a tree, always gets a push*

Source: Field work (2019).

The symbol shows an individual climbing a tree with the assistance of a second person pushing from below. It relates to the phrases, "One who climbs a good tree always receives a good push." Traditional leaders are key front-liners when it comes to development of their communities. However, to achieve success in ruling or developing people, a chief requires the support of his people. The support people will give depends on the relevance or importance of the development decisions and direction that is being implemented. Hence, a chief with good and fair intentions will be supported by his people.

This symbol and its proverbial meaning relate to individual life. Mostly, upkeep of family members in terms of education comes from limited resources. Household or family members that show progress or good actions will be supported while those that engage in irrelevant actions will not receive support. For instance, children who aspire to climb the education ladder to the highest level are supported while dropouts who have no good intentions or activities are left on their own. Therefore, good things accepted in the society are supported while bad ones are neglected. One seen doing good things need a push. In the event that a person championing a good course does not receive support but rather the one with bad action receives support, society will frown on such action and fight for support for the good course.

The symbol and proverbial meaning indicate that, limited resources are channeled to good actions other than bad deeds. People who require support must therefore engage in good course of action. It contributes to shaping behaviour to meet accepted norms and values in society either by a group, traditional authority or an individual. This encourages the individuals to keep up the good work for the chief to sustain the push being given.

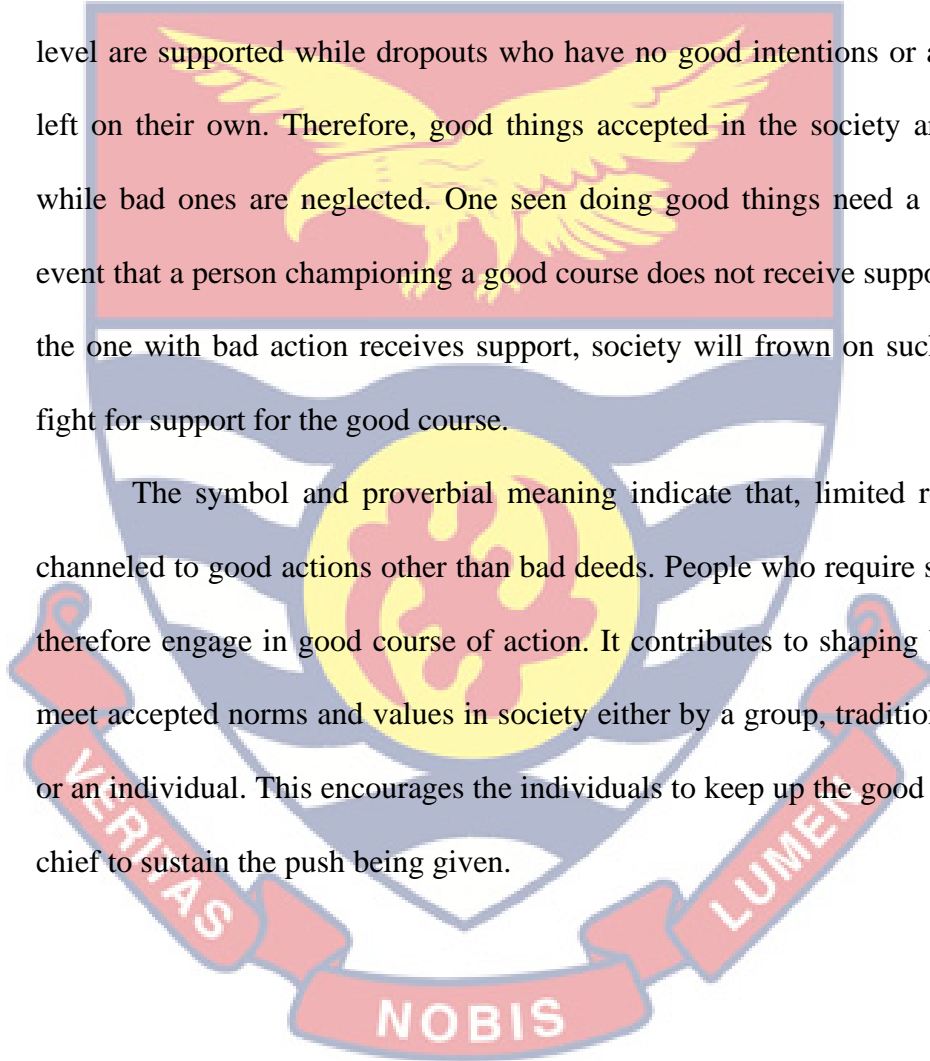




Figure 6: *Oko ma ne man a, ogyina tuo so*

The bird who always travels with cannons and gunpowder

Source: Field work (2019)

A bird carrying a keg in its beak or cannons in its talons is a direct reference to the proverb: “The bird who always travels with cannons and gunpowder.” It means a good chief must always be prepared for war. This proverb explains the power of chiefs in various communities to protect their subjects. In the past, chiefs were chosen based on the strength and the ability to fight your enemy and to defend the properties in your demarcated area.

This symbol communicates to members about dangers looming the community. It signifies preparation to protect his people in times of danger. Morally, it informs the public that, we need to be prepared towards any kind of endeavor in life, be it at our workplaces, school or wherever. We need to be prepared for the battle ahead.



Figure 7: *Ti koro nnko agyina*

One head does not make council.

Source: Field work (2019)

The symbol of this staff depicts three heads or three people sitting together personify the proverb, “One head cannot make a council.” It suggests three heads are better than one. The symbol connotes that one requires stakeholder consultation and participation in decision making. Allowing one person to take decisions and actions may lead to errors that will cost the Traditional Authority so much. Relating the symbol and its proverbial meaning to current system of governance at both national and traditional levels, leaders are required to consult or form groups that provide rooms for taking into consideration diverse views of stakeholders in decision making. This forms the basis of Democracy, a system of governance that works on the principle that "two heads are better than one". It indicates that, people should come together in decision-making because various knowledge and expertise who come together and take decision are able to tackle

situation from several angles and perspectives other than a single or one-sided mind.

The moral implication is that one requires consultation in decision making even if it is an individual decision being taken. Consulting exposes the unforeseen risk that may be associated with a person's decision and action. Consulting with others brings on board experiences and exposure that may not be known by an individual. Hence, consultative decision making ensures that actions and inactions represent collective benefit that are mostly devoid of errors.

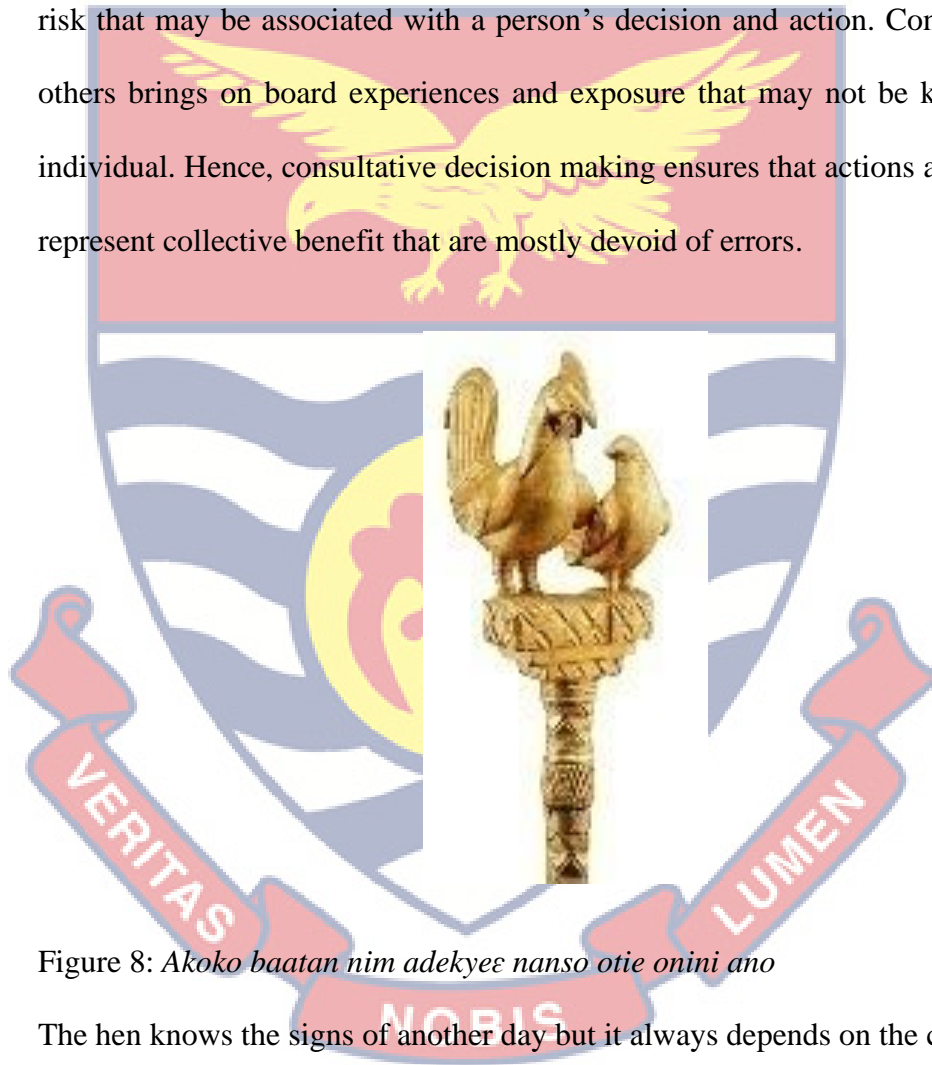


Figure 8: *Akoko baatan nim adekyee nanso otie onini ano*

The hen knows the signs of another day but it always depends on the cock to crow

Source: Field work (2019).

Asante linguist works have been found to be symbolic, with their various metaphysical and proverbial interpretations serving as reminders to chiefs, elders of traditional structures and the public; the need to be vigilant and wary of what

they do and say in public or private. The fowl is always cautious of the new day since she has an obligation to feed a lot around it. The symbol symbolises care for one another which the Asante do not play with.

The moral implication of this symbol is that one should not hesitate to help one in times of need. Also, the researcher was informed that every king is aware of what his children need and therefore should be ready to provide it for his people. The symbol continues to enlighten us on the various ways of the fowl and its care for the people around it.

A Linguist has this to say about this symbol. According to him the supreme being had assigned roles to his creatures and these roles must be performed accordingly. He continued that, a chief who uses a staff with this symbol must adhere to the norms of the society to ensure peace and harmony in his kingdom. The symbol is a warning to the citizens to also obey the rules and regulations and abide by them and not to be lawless. The chief on his part must be patient in all he does. The linguist added that the symbol also means that, two people, that is, the king/chief and the queen rule a nation but as much as the queen is among the people who select the Chief, she must allow the king to announce certain issues to the ruled, although she might be the one who came out with the idea. The respondent went further and likened this saying to the way people announced issues in the social media instead of waiting for the right people to do so. A typical example is the way the death of chiefs is announced these days.



Figure 9: *Osono akyi nni aboa*

No animal can replace the elephant

Source: Field work (2019)

The symbol of linguist staff depicting human ears and on top an elephant. It represents the proverb “The ears of the chief are as big as those of an elephant”, meaning that the chief hears all. Within every society there are sections that will rebel against whatever leaders do, even if the leaders’ actions are beneficial to people. Such rebellion can lead to conflict or defamation or hatred among the people who are being ruled. A ruler using this symbol expresses to the people and council that spreading false information about him will surely come to his attention.



Figure 10: *Sankofa*

It is not taboo to fetch what is at risk of being left behind

Source: Field work (2019)

Sankofa is an Akan word. The literal translation of the word and the symbol is “it is not taboo to fetch what is at risk of being left behind”. The *sankofa* symbol teaches the Akan people to be learning from the past when current situation becomes challenging or when one realizes that he or she has made a mistake by changing the status quo. The symbol of the Sankofa is based on a mythical bird with its feet firmly planted forward with its head turned backwards. Thus, the Akan believes, the past serves as a guide for planning the future and that the future may not be certain for whatever activity one carries out.

To the Akan, it is this wisdom in learning from the past which ensures a strong future.

The moral implication is that, the Akan believes there must be movement and new learning as time passes. As we move on, the knowledge of the past must never be forgotten. “Sankofa” teaches that, one must go back to ones roots in order to move forward and when the current actions are faced with challenges, one can always make reference to the past or the status quo. That is, we should reach back and gather the best of what our past has thought us, so that we can achieve our full potential as we move forward. Whatever we have lost, forgotten, forgone or been stripped of can be reclaimed, revived, preserved and perpetuated. Visually and symbolically, “Sankofa” is expressed as a mythic bird that flies forward while looking backward with an egg that symbolises the future in its mouth. This ties with the motto: “In order to understand our present and ensure our future, we must know our past”. Morally, it can be deduced from the symbol that the future is not perfect and therefore one may face challenges that can make life very difficult. In such difficulty, a person must remember that there is no crime visiting or learning from the best practices in the past, if the past experiences and knowledge will contribute to addressing current life situations.

In a community, old laws on sanitation, protection of natural environment and life may not be practiced due to modernization and development. However, when the natural resource like water bodies and lands are being destroyed by activities of some persons, for instance “galamsey”, it will be prudent to go back

to our past laws or values such as sacred days or punishment in order to curb the destruction.

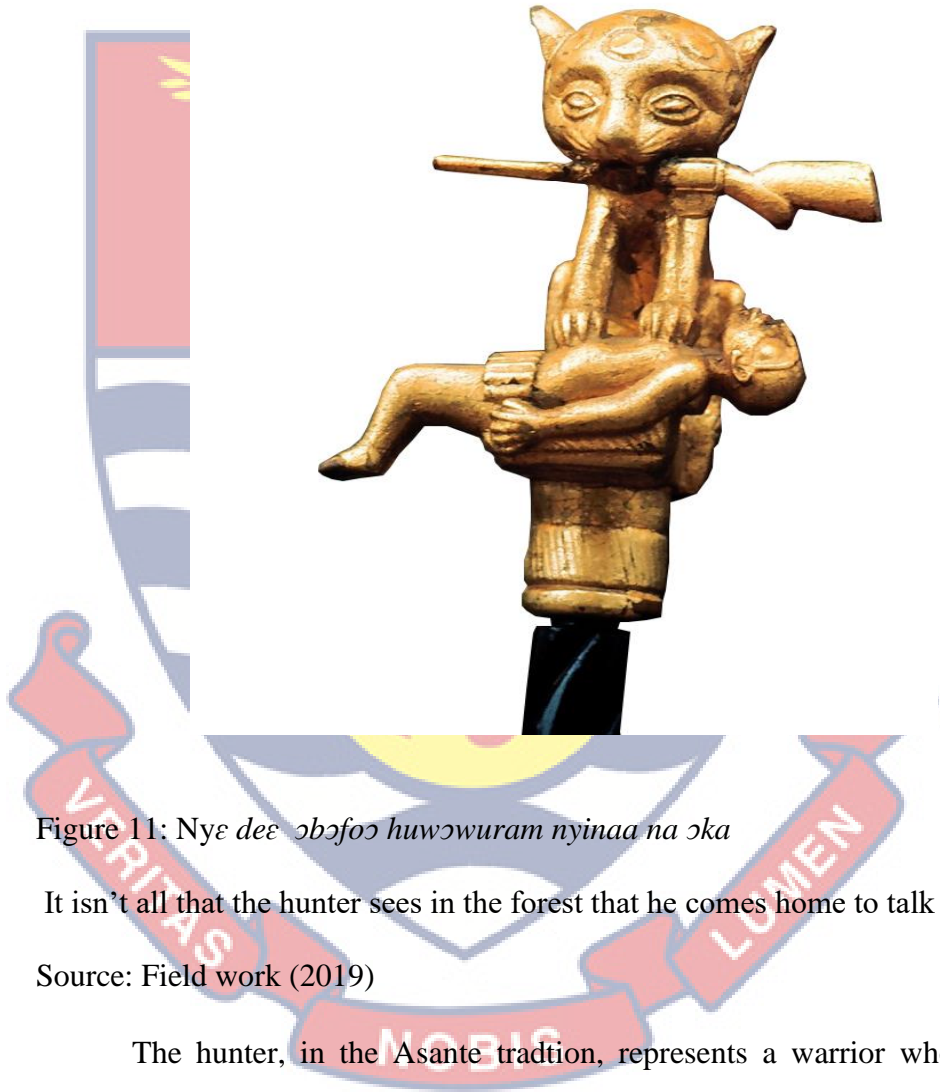


Figure 11: Nye deɛ ɔbɔfoɔ huwɔwuram nyinaa na ɔka

It isn't all that the hunter sees in the forest that he comes home to talk about

Source: Field work (2019)

The hunter, in the Asante tradition, represents a warrior who is mostly described as executioner in the forest where wild animals are common. The symbols of the hunter with the child in his hand and a gun in the mouth shows how brave the hunter is. The hunter being a warrior and executioner tends to protect the child who is vulnerable to wild animals while he has his gun in the

mouth. Chiefs or Traditional leaders in the Ashanti tradition are regarded in their communities as warriors, who must defend and keep secrets on behalf of the state or people. In times of war or disaster, the chief must protect the vulnerable people with all the tools at his disposal.

The moral implication of this symbol is, one must keep secret no matter the situation and protect vulnerable people within a society or household in difficult times.

A bird's neighbour is the one it perches with

This staff is used mostly by Asante chiefs. Here, two birds are perching on the same tree. One of the birds is on top of the other. Both birds are looking at the same direction. This is the symbol we see below.

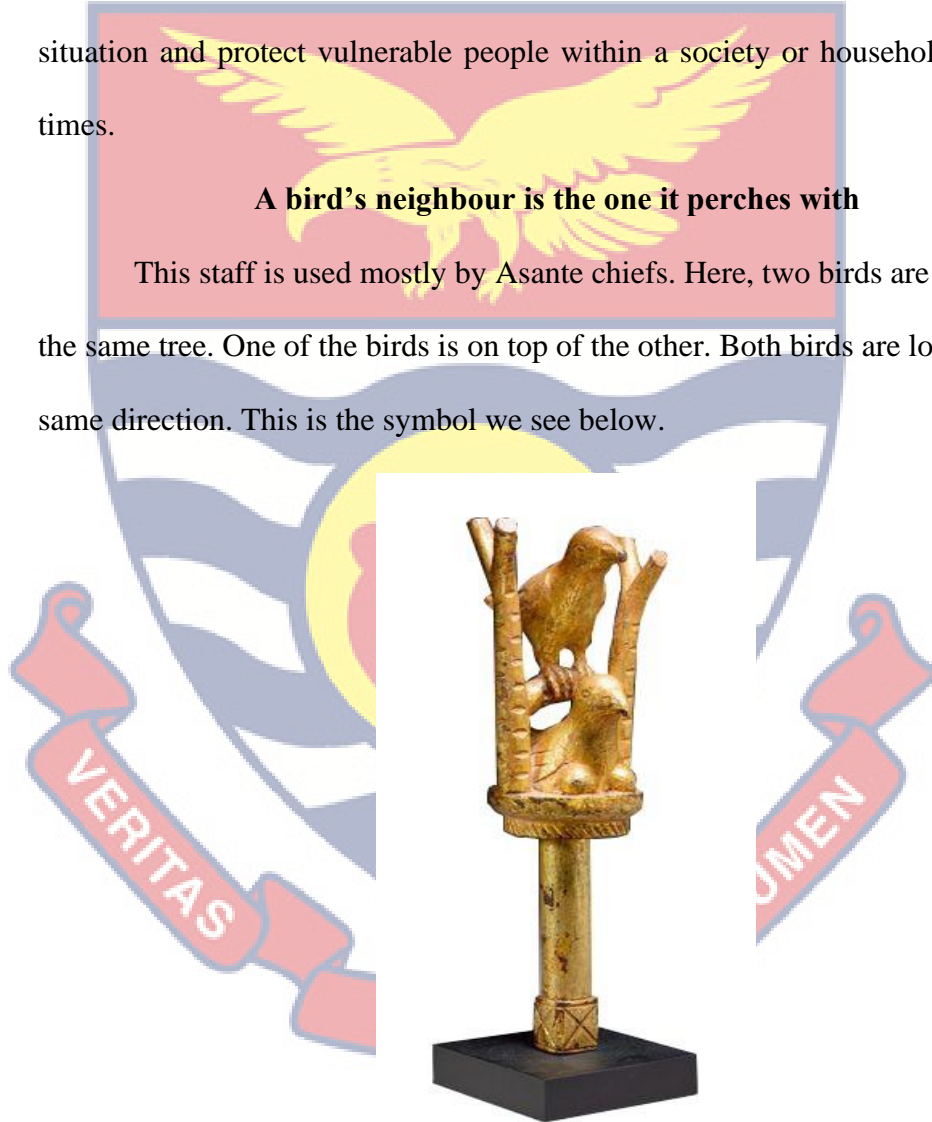


Figure 12: *Anomaa ne nua ne deɛ ɔne no da dua koro so*

A bird's neighbour is the one it perches with.

Source: Field work (2019)

The symbol shows that, good relationship is required between a higher authority and or a subordinate. A good leader is the one that associates well with his followers and therefore having the spirit of sacrifice which is one of the tenets of a good leader. A linguist bears this staff to signify the need for all town folks to work assiduously to assist the chief and elders of the town. Again, there is a saying that 'nobody knows what tomorrow holds' and so if someone or a neighbour requires help, there is the need for everyone to be willing to offer the assistance to the neighbour. One may have the opportunity today or resources while others may not. It is prudent for the well endowed to help the less privileged in order to ensure peaceful coexistence in society. Again, the symbol also teaches that, the one who provides a helping hand should be appreciated. One must not see the helper as an enemy but rather a good person or neighbour.

It is good to be fast at something while a slower pace is also prudent

The physical description of the staff bears two camelions with one of them standing on the other. One of the camelions is leading the other while the other is lagging behind. The one leading depicts how hurriedly one should be in life while the one lagging behind shows how patience one should be in life.

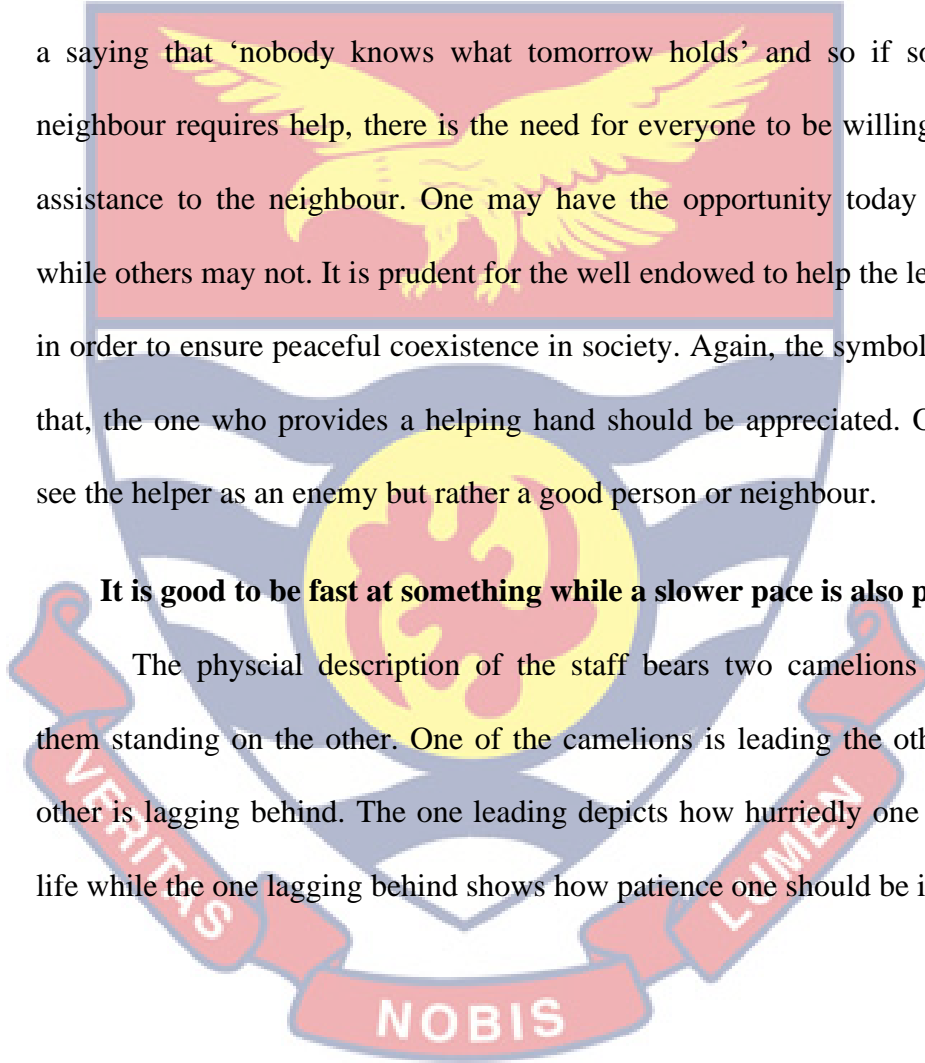




Figure 13: *Ntem ye, brebre nso ye*

It is good to be fast at something while a slower pace is also prudent

Source: Field work (2019)

The camelion will always go in a slow pace and this shows how patient we should be in life. A chief who uses this staff tries to tell his members that he does not work in haste but rather takes patience in decision making. Though people may want timely justice for actions, as a leader, there is the need to exercise patience in ruling in order not punish or set free people that have not done wrong or otherwise respectively.

People who are patient in life always emerge victorious. The chief who uses this staff does not compare himself to other chiefs but does what he thinks is best and can help his members before doing it. This chief requires nothing but victory.

The moral implication from this symbol is that, if we want to develop or have justice at a higher rate, then there is the need to exercise patience in such process, in order not to make mistakes that will be difficult to rectify. Patience ensures that, best results are achieved without making significant errors.

A carver, further compared the symbol with the life of the youth who want to make things happen overnight, and so are ready to engage in all kinds of behavior including “Sakawa” to get money. This kind of attitude has made us lose value inherent in human life.

Be careful of human being because that is how they are

This shows a person holding a book in his left hand and showing it to everyone and this person also directing his forefinger towards the eye.

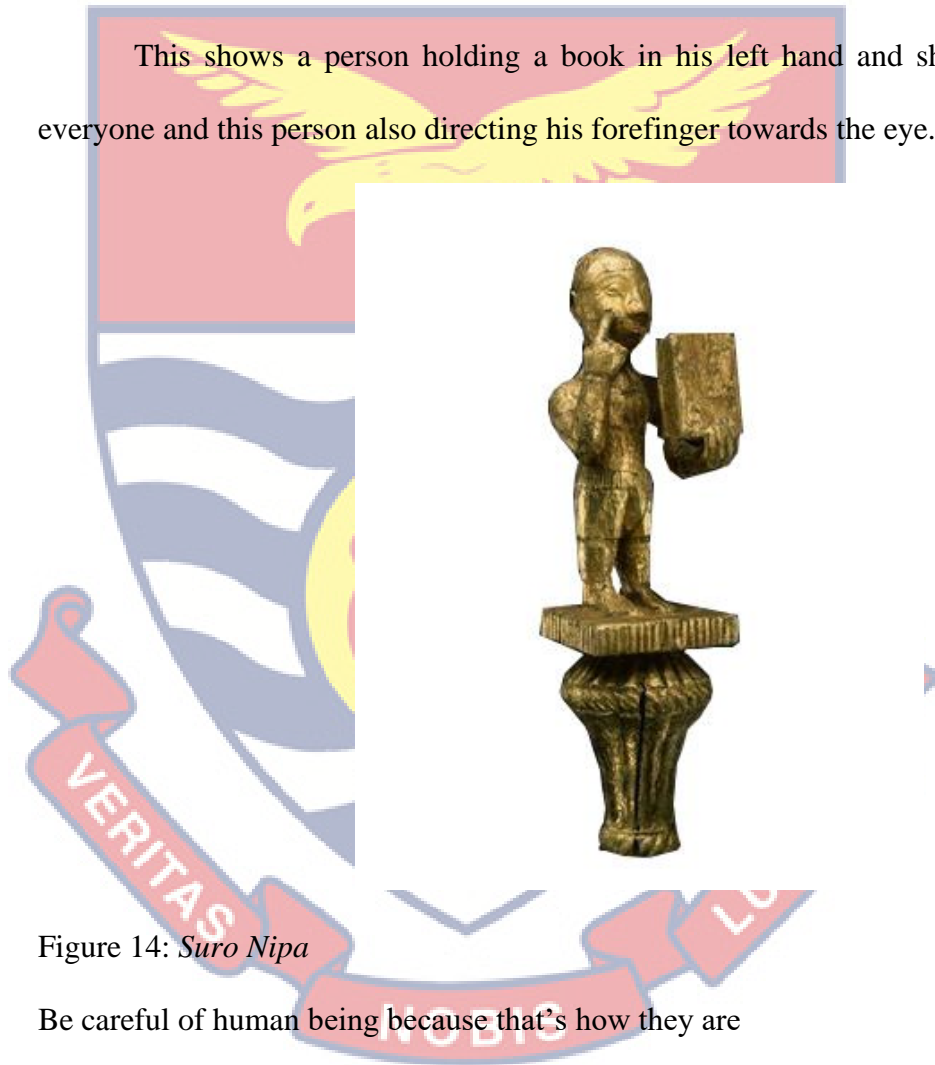


Figure 14: *Suro Nipa*

Be careful of human being because that's how they are

Source: Field work (2019)

This symbol is used to warn someone against his neighbour. This depicts how probably a chief depended on a neighbouring town or chief and was

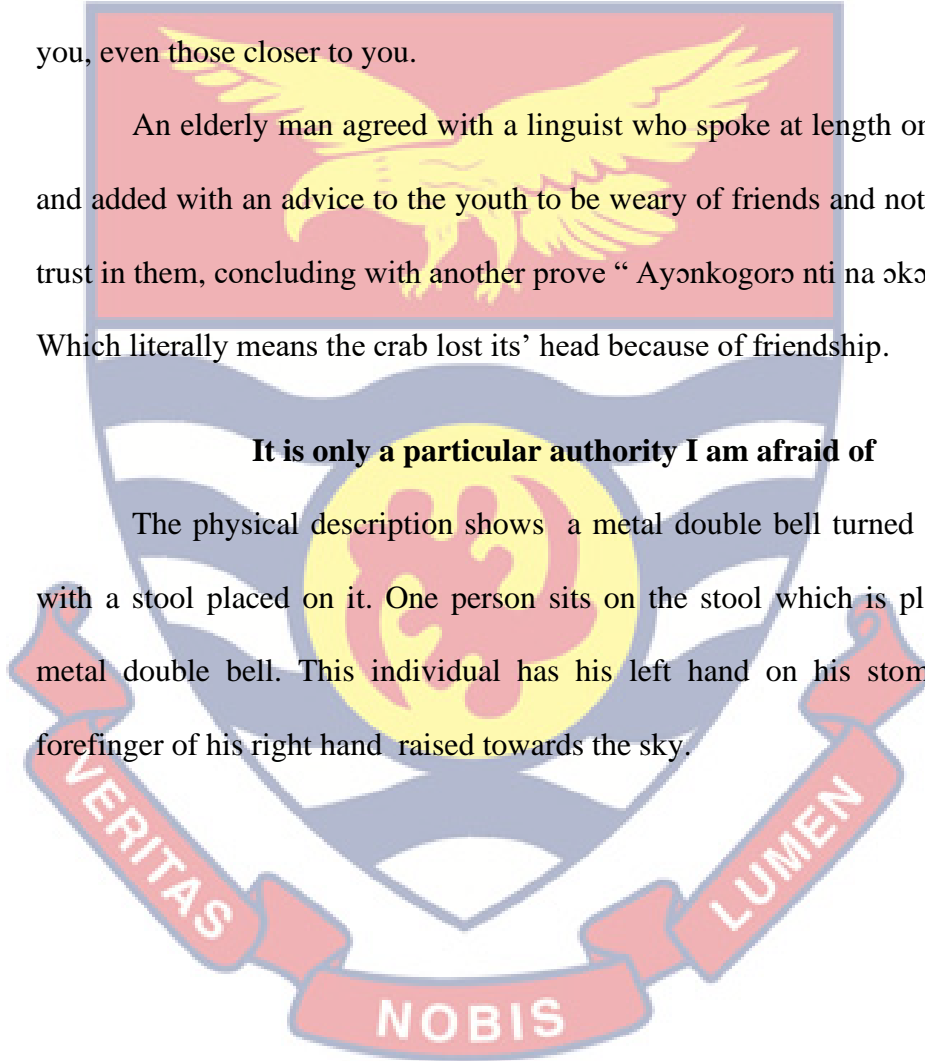
disappointed in the long run. There is no need to depend on someone in everything. One must trust in ones capability.

The moral implication from the symbol is that, irrespective of the praises and how well you perform towards people, there may be some who are closer to you who may not appreciate your actions. Not everyone will love and appreciate you, even those closer to you.

An elderly man agreed with a linguist who spoke at length on this symbol and added with an advice to the youth to be weary of friends and not put so much trust in them, concluding with another prove “ Ayɔnkogorɔ nti na ɔkɔtɔ anya tire”. Which literally means the crab lost its’ head because of friendship.

It is only a particular authority I am afraid of

The physical description shows a metal double bell turned upside down with a stool placed on it. One person sits on the stool which is placed on the metal double bell. This individual has his left hand on his stomach and the forefinger of his right hand raised towards the sky.



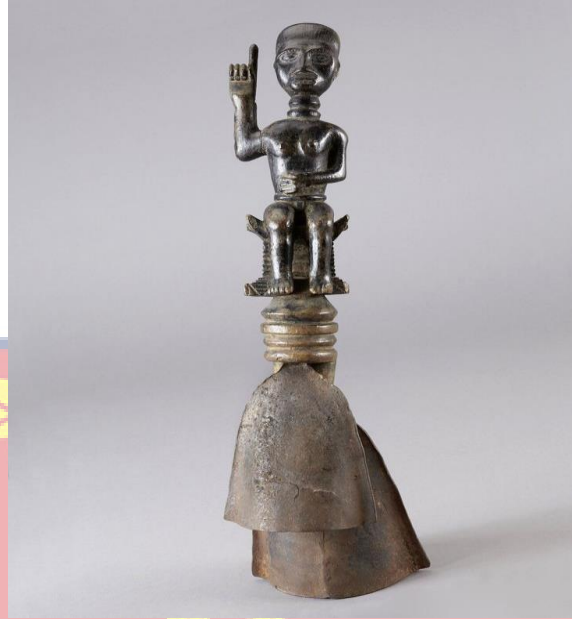


Figure 15: *Tumi baako pe na mesuro*

It is only a particular authority I am afraid of

Source: Field work (2019)

The symbol depicts that, there is only one supernatural power the king is afraid of and that is the Most High God. The chief accepts the fact that God has power and his power conquers everything. Therefore, members or the followers of the chief should accept that there is God who superceeds everything. The leader indicating higher authority and giving such recognition ensures that all members in the Traditional authority respect and accord higher authority as such. Those who use this staff show reverence to their leaders. The metal double bell tells the members of the town or community that the information goes to everyone irrespective of ones position in the society. God is really the foundation of whatever the chief does.

Unity is Strength

The physical features of the staff show stools that are tied together in a metal chain in a way that nothing can separate them.



Figure 16: *Nkabom ma Ahocden*

Unity is strength

Source: Field work (2019)

This symbol shows unity. It is true that where there is unity, there is freedom. Unity is an essential tool for every society. Lack of unity is regression and so a chief who uses this staff seeks nothing else in his society but unity. In sum, the chief requires unity among his people. The success of Ashanti Kingdom has been attributed significantly to the unity among all its members. To achieve

ultimate success, people are expected to unite in championing a common course. Without a common goal success cannot be achieved.

The mouth is like a sword but a head cannot take decision

The physical display of the symbol shows a chief who is seated on his throne and three of his elders walking towards him. The chief realizes that behind the elders is a lion but did not utter a word but he rather directed his forefinger towards his eye. The chief then tried to tell the elders what he had seen.



*Figure 17: Anoye yiwan nanso tikoro nnkɔagyina
The mouth is like a sword but a head cannot take decision.*

Source: Field work (2019)

The moral lesson that can be deduced from the symbol is that, we should be careful about what we utter but we should also try to make suggestion if there is the need to do so. Also, we should know when to make suggestions about

certain issues. A chief who uses this staff expresses to others, he is full of wisdom and whenever he wants to utter something he thinks twice before doing so.

If you are not a chief and you adorn yourself with even a crown, nobody will revere you as one

This symbol involves two individuals where one of them is standing and the other sitting on a throne with a sword in his hand. The one who is standing is putting a crown on the head of the one who is sitting on the throne.

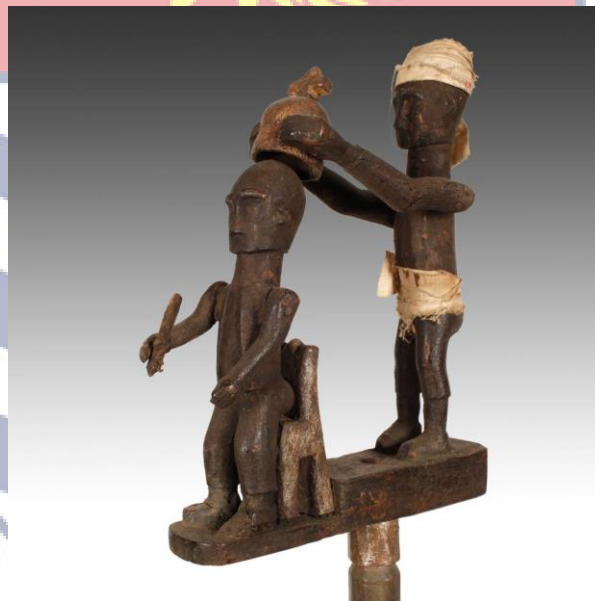


Figure 18: *Wonsii wo hene na wokofa ahenkye hye a, obiara resom wo*

If you are not a chief and you adorn yourself with even a crown, nobody will revere you as one.

Source: Field work (2019)

This staff tells us that one cannot possess power with pride. It is only the worthy that has power. The right person must possess power. This chief ensures that the right thing is done. When it is not your turn to have something, do not

force your way through but just wait for the right time. Chieftancy in the Akan setting is not through the wishes of the masses. There is nothing like the affluence or the elegant should have the liberty to possess it in the Akan.

Pure cola and the leaf of power can be possessed with nothing but wisdom

This talks about a hunter holding a gun and has directed the gun towards his right hand side. There was a child sleeping on a mat and a huge animal beside it and wanted to harm it.



Figure 19: *Bese pa ne konin ahaban wotase no nyansafoo*

Pure cola and the leaf of power can be processed with nothing but wisdom

Source: Field work (2019).

This staff is an essential symbol for Akan because it depicts how knowledgeable Akan are. It tells how wisdom and knowledge can lead to victory. To achieve a goal in life, one needs wisdom and knowledge to enable one to work it out. In the Akan setting, whenever an issue is addressed these tools come to play and without them disaster may occur. The hunter in this situation has to kill the animal to enable him save the child but he has to apply wisdom otherwise the child will also die.

The palm fruit is always harvested with wisdom

This staff tells us about the palm tree and the palm fruit. On the palm tree are two parrots and one of them is facing the left and the other facing right.



Figure 20: *Abefua ka abemu mu a, wotu no akoo nyansafoo*

The palm fruit is always harvested with wisdom

Source: Field work (2019).

The Akan always speaks in parables and there are various ways in which they present issues. The Akan is known for eloquence. Whatever we utter shows who we are and this is done by good language.

A parrot is a bird which is beautiful and full of wisdom. These qualities must be seen in a chief who uses this staff.

One can only mend the shell of the tortoise with wisdom

This is tortoise on a hill and its head is out of the shell and its limbs can also show so, we can conclude that it is standing.

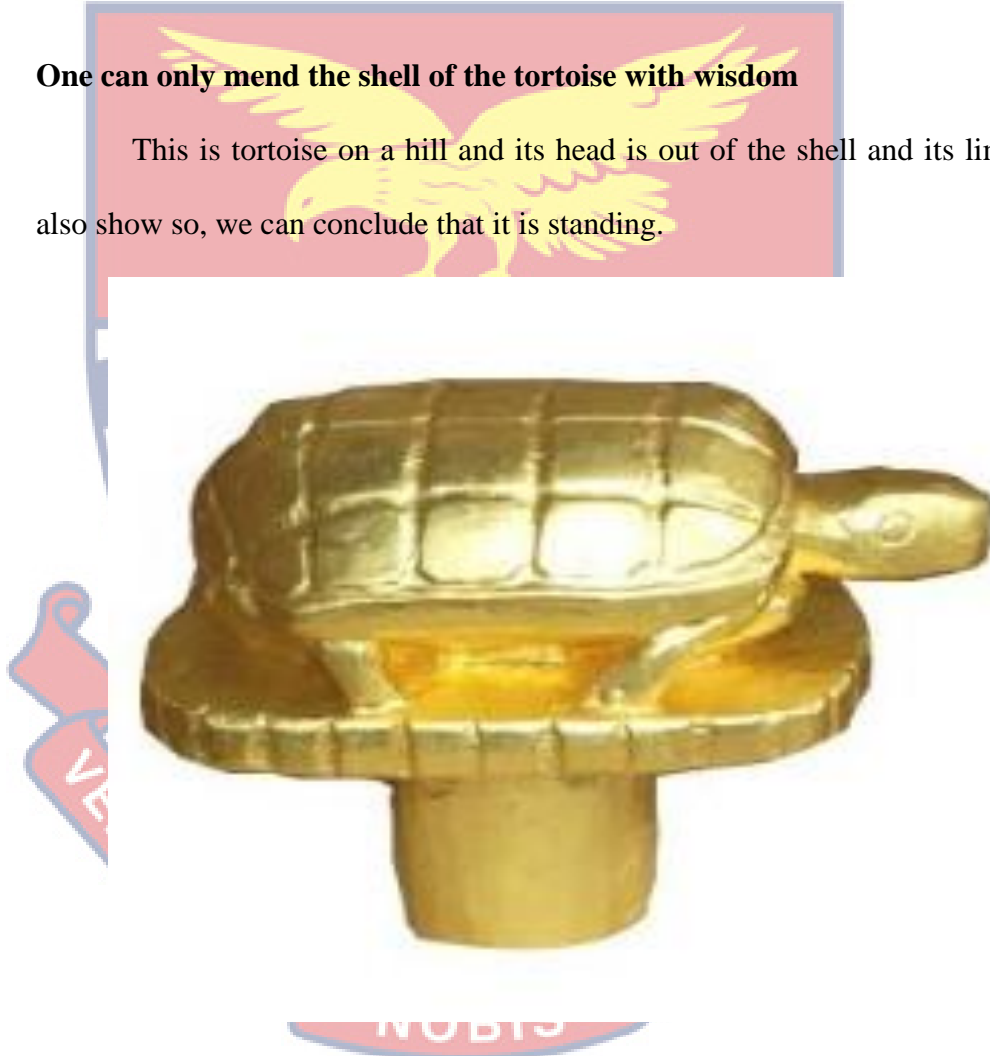


Figure 21: *Akyekyedee akyi yepam no oba nyansafoo*

One can only mend the shell of the tortoise with wisdom

Source: Field work (2019).

It is a staff which shows how knowledgeable that chief is. This means that the chief may require his followers to also behave or go about their activities wisely. The tortoise is a wise reptile, its back is like a puzzle and it is only people who are wise that can solve it.



CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY, RECOMMENDATIONS, AND CONCLUSION

Introduction

The present study sought to examine the moral implication of symbols on Asante linguist staffs. The study aimed at exploring the various research questions to ascertain the views of respondents through the use of interviews and text analysis. The information gathered was evaluated through thematic analysis. This chapter discusses the summary of the findings, as well as the moral implication on Asante's linguist staff. It also discusses the moral values of the results and suggestions for future research.

Summary of Findings

This section summarizes the outcome of the study. It also indicates what chiefs, linguists, carvers, elders in a particular community and the members themselves can do to enhance the knowledge on the various symbols on the staff. This is because one's knowledge on the staff tells how much information they have about the history and the tradition of their community. The discourse so far concerning the staff and the various symbols suggest the need to go back to our tradition to have a look at the customs and practices, for it is "better late than never".

This study tells the Asante the various ways through which they disseminate information. This means that information dissemination in the Asante setting does not depend on what one utters only but it is done through non-verbal

as well like totems, symbols, the staff or the various items the chiefs use to adorn themselves.

At funerals, festivals, Enstoolment, Destoolment, Marriage ceremony and other traditional meetings which are part of the Asante culture and are cultural activities or occasions, these symbols are sometimes displayed as chiefs and traditional leaders are invited or are integral part of the activity or occasion. In attending these functions, the chiefs go with their regalia which include the linguist staff and showcase them. Meanwhile the people have no clue as to the embedded wisdom and reasoning behind the symbols but only admire its aesthetic values.

It was realized that the symbols on the linguist staffs speak to the people in proverbs and it also teaches life lessons. For example, symbol like *Suro Nipa* and *Ntem ye, brebre nso ye* (fig. 13 & 14) admonishes the individuals to be cautious patient in their actions. Unity and strength is depicted in the symbol *Anoma ne nua ne dee one no da dua koro so* (fig. 12 & 16) *tikoro nko egyina* (fig. 7) teaches about governance and figure 17 teaches us about how power is used.

It has been realized that the good values of the people have been lost. The people have neglected what brings them together as one people and the values they have to pass on to the next generations have been alienated to the background. Despite these negatives, it is to be noted that, if the people go back to their values, customs and traditions and practice them, the children will learn and also pass them on to generations to come.

Conclusion

The study realized that, there are a lot of moral values that can be learnt from the symbols on the linguist staff but much recognition is not given to the linguist staff because most individual do not participate in chieftaincy or traditional activities in their various communities. Most citizens consider it as ungodly, mostly by the Christian community, hence the low engagement by lot of people to learn and draw knowledge from it. These symbols have philosophical, proverbial, informative and historical significance that can provide a learning platform for the youth of the country. The issue of globalization has made the youth to play down or look down on our culture which the linguist staff play a critical role. Moral decadence is on a surge because of the detachment of the youth from our culture.

This research was to find out if the symbols on the Asante linguist staff have any moral values to teach and educate and to impact on the moral life of the youth. It has been found that the symbols have values that can impact positively on the life of the youth and this finding answers the question of the research. The meanings of the symbols be made easily accessible, to enable a great number of people learn from and apply them to their lives.

To conclude, the researcher is of the view that if the Ministry of Education and the Ghana Education Service include our values and our tradition in our educational materials to enable our children learn them in schools, there will be proper supervision to boost the knowledge and morals imbedded in the symbols

on the linguist staffs and hopefully positively impact on the moral standards of the Asante youth.

Recommendations

Emanating from the findings of the study the following recommendations are made for consideration.

The wisdom behind linguist staff must be taught at the basic level of our education in schools in Asante. Inculcating chieftaincy or linguist staff knowledge into our educational system, especially at the basic level, will ensure that basic school pupils have adequate knowledge on traditional systems and structures and the moral lessons behind the designs of linguist staff. By so doing, the traditions and customs of not only Asante culture but the entire culture of Ghana will be preserved.

Again, it is recommended that, community members must be made aware of the traditional symbols that represent their clans and the Traditional ruler. Based on the interpretations discussed on linguist staff their meanings or interpretations and moral implications or moral lessons taught them to influence their behaviour and shape their lives to acceptable ways of doing things in the Ghanaian society.

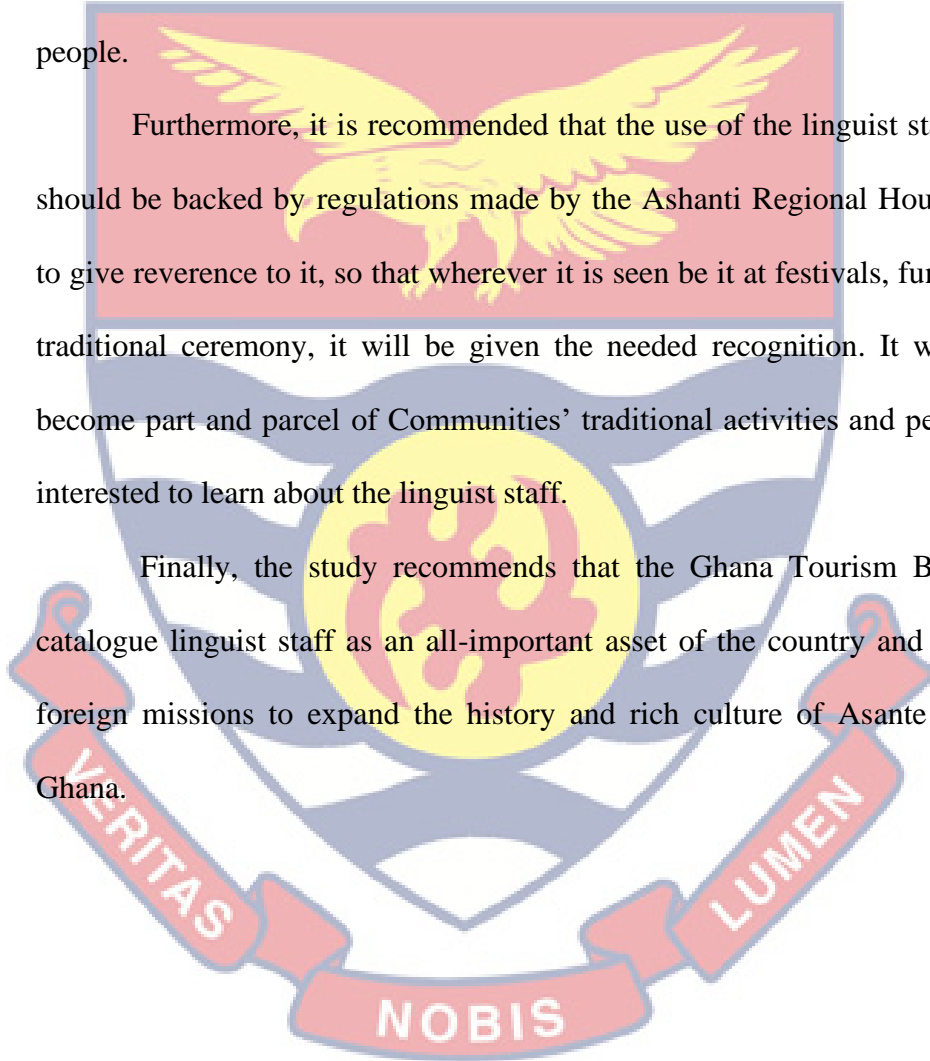
The rich reasoning and knowledge behind linguist staff must be sold to people who are not Ghanaians just as any resource is sold to tourist. In effect, the Centre for National Culture in Kumasi and other parts of the country should exhibit samples of linguist staff to serve as centre for learning for locals and foreigners visiting Ghana. Access to such rich information will enhance the

interest of young ones into wood carving and thereby provide lucrative business ventures.

Again, it is well known that Ghana has a rich culture which includes its festivals which are very much revered. It is therefore recommended that Chiefs or Communities in Asante that do not celebrate any festival should get one for the people.

Furthermore, it is recommended that the use of the linguist staff by chiefs should be backed by regulations made by the Ashanti Regional House of Chiefs to give reverence to it, so that wherever it is seen be it at festivals, funerals or any traditional ceremony, it will be given the needed recognition. It will therefore become part and parcel of Communities' traditional activities and people will be interested to learn about the linguist staff.

Finally, the study recommends that the Ghana Tourism Board should catalogue linguist staff as an all-important asset of the country and sell them in foreign missions to expand the history and rich culture of Asante and mother Ghana.



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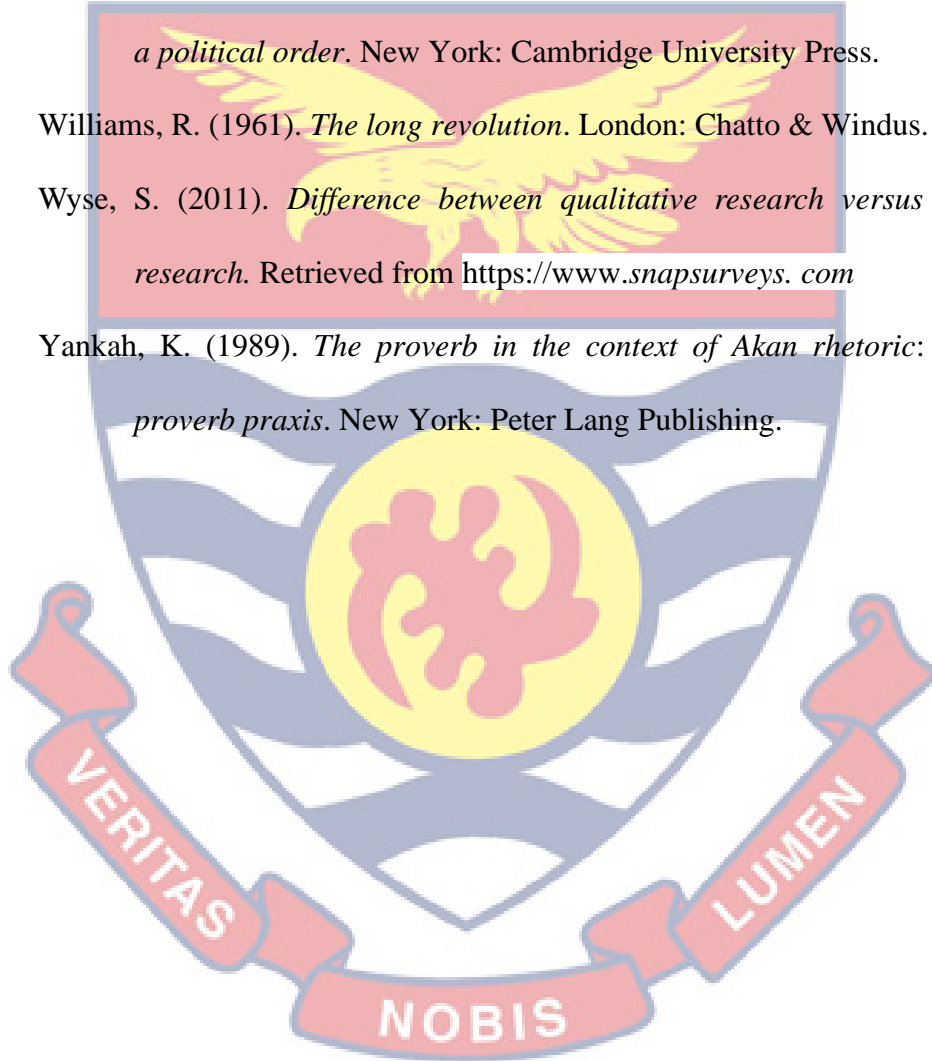
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APPENDIX

INTERVIEW GUIDE

Wood carvers

1. How long have you been in the carving trade? Is any of ancestral fathers in the carving trade?
2. What is your target market?
3. How long have you been carving for traditional rulers or clan heads?
4. What are some of the traditional symbols do you carve?
5. Can any tree species be used in carving the linguist staff?
6. Are there special rites to be performed before one can begin carving?
7. Do you have any knowledge of the meaning of the symbols on linguist staff?
8. Do you think the symbols on the linguist staff can be used to teach moral values?
9. What are the moral implications of the symbols on the linguist of staff?
10. How can the lessons behind the symbols on the linguist be made popular to reflect in the lives of the Asante?

General public and Focus groups

1. Do you know of any traditional symbols?
2. Mention some of the names of the Asante symbols you know.
3. Where do you see these symbols?
4. How often do you see these symbols?
5. What are the importance of these symbols?

6. Do you have some knowledge about the meanings?
7. Which of these symbols in your view is popular in terms of their meanings?
8. Do you know of any other traditional symbols?
9. Can you mention their names and their symbolic meaning?
10. What are the moral implications of the symbols on the linguist staff?
11. How can the lessons behind the symbols on the linguist staff be made popular to reflect in the lives of the Asante?

Abusuapanyin

1. How long have you been the Abusuapanyin for the clan?
2. What is the name of the clan you are heading?
3. What is the symbol of the clan you are representing?
4. How was the symbol adapted as a symbol for the clan?
5. What is the philosophy behind the adoption of the symbol?
6. What is the moral implications of symbols on the linguist staff?
7. How can the lessons behind the linguist staff be made popular to reflect in the lives of the Asante?

Linguist

1. For how long have you been associated with chieftaincy?
2. What role do you play in chieftaincy?
3. Name some of the traditional symbols in the palace?
4. What are the uses of these symbols?

5. How long have the symbols been used?
6. How is one selected to be spokesperson and holder of the linguist staff?
7. What are the importance of the linguist staff?
8. How is the symbol adopted as a symbol on the linguist staff?
9. What is the philosophy behind the adoption of a particular symbol as a symbol on a linguist staff?
10. Can the linguist staff be changed after the death of the chief or a linguist?
11. What are the moral implications of the symbols on the linguist staff?
12. How can the lessons behind the linguist staff symbols be made popular to reflect in the lives of the Asante?

Focus Group

1. What are the importance of the linguist staff?
2. How many linguist staffs can be used by a chief at a function?
3. Can a chief decide on his own to adopt a symbol?
4. What is the philosophy behind the adoption of a particular symbol?
5. How can the lessons behind the symbols on the linguist staff be made popular to reflect in the lives of the Asante youth?