



Address Forms of the Kolamɔ of Ghana: A Sociolinguistic Analysis

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Abstract: This paper focuses on typical address forms of the Kolangɛ language (a Gur member of the Niger-Congo classification) in the socio-linguistic context of the language use of the people. Astrit Maria and Sudirman William (2019) express that, “address terms indicate the speaker’s attitude, intention, as well as a relationship with the addressee that someone is talking to”. This paper principally explores how native speakers of Kolangɛ appropriately address one another using varied address terms. Address terms in the domains of kinship, occupation, age, formal titles, status description, religion, intimacy, respect, nicknames, and mockery are examined. Attempts were made to explain, discuss or give meanings to the various address forms used in every situation from the sociolinguistic perspective. The data collection techniques I used were observation (both participant and non-participant), unstructured interviews, informal conversations, and my own introspection as a native speaker. The main finding from the analysis of data was that the Kolangɛ speaking group as any other tribe has its own way of addressing members in that tribe and that the typical address forms used by native Kolangɛ speakers are appropriate names or titles or reference terms used to show politeness, deference, solidarity, intimacy, mockery, and familiarity when speaking to or addressing someone. This, however, depends on the relationship between the addresser and addressee, the speaker’s intention, the setting of the encounter, and the subject being discussed. The study result has implications for the sociolinguistic analysis of address forms in relation to European and non-European (African) linguistic cultural settings.

Keywords: address forms, sociolinguistic analysis, Kolangɛ

1. Introduction

Basically, speakers in a speech community use language to interact with one another. And as members in society, they have their own philosophy towards language use. The study of language in its social context is termed Sociolinguistics (Hudson 1980). The study of language in its social context means crucially the study of linguistic variation. In different social contexts, individuals speak in different ways. This is termed stylistic variation. Every language shows the social characteristics of the speaker or addressee, it further shows the relationship between them (Fitch, 1991). Addressing term is one of the important tools of communication in society.

The Webster Dictionary explains that, “Forms of Address are formulas accepted as proper or suitable for addressing an individual of a particular rank or status

orally or in writing”. According to Fasold (1990), “address forms are words speakers use to designate the person they are talking to while they are talking to them”. Bonvillain (2000) notes that, Address forms are otherwise known as terms of address. He expresses that in a communicative situation, several linguistic forms or types could be used to name, address or refer to an interlocutor. An address term simply refers to the words or a word used to address somebody in a speech or writing (Yule 2006). Address forms may be built into the grammar of language used or may evolve as a range of titles, names, kinship, terms of endearment and nicknames all usually with an initial capital letter. In a given speech community, depending on the relationship, the language discourse may be formal or informal (Fitch 1991).

Formal forms of address are typically used in professional contexts such as academia, religion, government, medicine etc. Informal address forms are used outside professional context. These include nicknames, pronouns, day-born names, terms of endearment etc. They are used to express affection or closeness. Address forms of reference for a person are not likely to be the same (Dickey 1997). The aim of addressing is to maintain social relationship between addresser and addressee in society (Artika 2008). This paper posits to examine typical address forms of Kolangɛ speakers in the social context.

Dickey (1997) notes that much sociolinguistic research on address forms in recent times is done following the principles of Brown and Gilman (1960). Later sociolinguistic works on address forms following Brown and Gilman (1960) as cited in Astrit and Sudirman William (2019) include Fasold (1984) and Wolfson (1989). These study results confirmed that the way one speaker addresses his speaking addressee is crucial as it indicates the speaker's attitude in communication. More so, the form of address describes speaker's relationship with the addressee. In a similar vein, Afful (2006) cites (Dakubu, 1981; Fang and Heng 1983; Fitch, 1991) who posit that address forms offer a useful means of understanding the values, norms and practices of different societies.

In as much as these study findings are significant, due to their immense contribution to the speaker-addressee relationship in sociolinguistic studies, their focus was often on different linguistic backgrounds; mainly Euro-Asian, Anglo-American and Latin-American. Scientific research on address forms of Kolangɛ is scarcely found in Ghana. Undoubtedly, a study into the typical address forms of Kolangɛ language is necessary. This paper steps in to fill the gap. The study results from such a study would fill the gap left in the literature of sociolinguistic studies in Ghana.

Some articles and publications describe address forms in Ghana and other countries in West-Africa (Oyatade 1995; Afful 2006; Bisilki 2017 and Sekyi-Baidoo 2020) but examining Kolangɛ address forms in relation to the interlocutors (addresser and addressee) remains a missing gap. It is therefore significant to examine the address forms of Kolangɛ explaining and describing instances and appropriate situations in usage.

In related studies on address forms, Afful (2006) studied address forms and variation among students in University of Cape Coast, an English medium University

in Ghana. The study shows how students in the Ghanaian University with heterogeneous linguistic backgrounds address one another in varied linguistic terms often with collegiate influence determining the address forms employed.

Bisilki (2017) investigated and described Kinship terms in the domains of agnatic kinship addresses, matrilineal kinship addresses and affinal kinship addresses in Likpakpaln, a Gur member in the Niger-Congo phylum. He used observation, informal conversation and semi-formal interview as data gathering tools. Sekyi-Baidoo (2020) examined "non-name" address terms in non-native sociolinguistic context among the Akan of Ghana. The main data gathering tools he used were observation and interview. He focused on address forms used as titles, names and title-names. The paper concludes that the use and meanings of these address forms as well as the phonological differences thereof are a result of the interplay of two cultures; one supplies the words and the other controls meaning and use in the Akan or Ghanaian context.

The focus of the above sociolinguistic studies on address forms are based on the Ghanaian setting. The data gathering tools are similar in all the cases of Bisilki, Sekyi-Baidoo and Afful. The findings in all the studies are varied and amazing in Ghanaian setting. Sekyi-Baidoo's focus and discussion on titles, names and title-names as address forms is what the current study intends to replicate. More so, Bisilki's (2017) study on Likpakpaln language, a Gur member of the Niger-Congo phylum, has bearing on the current study, which is based on the Kolangɛ language, also a Gur language member of the Niger-Congo phylum. The two languages are mutually exclusive though. These studies as discussed above could serve as a sound foundation for a study into Kolangɛ address forms in Ghana with expected amazing result(s).

In this paper, I purposefully present typical Kolangɛ address forms as used in the sociolinguistic context in everyday communication. This is in lieu of any other forms of address as a result of language contact resulting in the use of loan words or expressions. Kolangɛ speakers are bilingual speakers. They speak Asante Twi as a second language (l2) and often employ the use of loan words and address forms of Asante Twi in formal situations.

The use of the expression typical address forms of Kolangɛ is limited in usage in this study. It does not cover forms of address used as person/real names of the addressee. The address forms I consider here are those used as *Titles*, *Names* or *Title-names*. Sekyi-Baidoo (2020) states that, "*Titles* refer to address forms which are used

as prefixes to actual names, usually indicating the position of the addressee or the relationship between one and the addressee” He further explains *Names* as terms used in direct references to persons, and are considered the personal names of the addressee. For *Title-names*, he added that they are those that oscillate between being used as titles and names. It is upon these parameters that the address forms of Kolangɛ speaking people are analysed in this study.

1.1 The Speakers of Kolangɛ.

The Kolangɛ language is a Gur member of the Niger-Congo phylum. Kolangɛ is notably spoken by the people of Seikwa and Badu traditional areas in the Tain District of the Bono region of Ghana, West Africa. Other insignificant number of speakers are located in isolated areas in the Wenchi Municipality namely; Nkonsia, Akɛtɛ, Wurompo and also Asubinja in the Techiman Municipality of the Bono East region of Ghana. Others are found in Bun (Buni) in the Jaman North District of the Bono region of Ghana. The people identify themselves as Kolamɔ, the singular is Kolau. They form a minority linguistic group among bigger ones like Akan, Ga, Ewe, Gonja, Dagomba etc. in Ghana. The Kolangɛ speaking territory is completely sandwiched by Akan speakers. The people speak Akan (Asante Twi) as a second language (L2). The Kolangɛ language like Akan, uses the Arabic script and the phonemic method in its orthography. The Kolangɛ orthography is represented by all the 22 letters of the Akan alphabet with 2 additional letters [v] and [z]. The Kolangɛ expressions in this paper are rendered in this orthography. (See Agyekum, 2006; Mensah-Aborampah, 2016).

2. Theoretical Framework:

This study is situated in the purview of sociolinguistics. The analysis of data is pitched on the Variationist Research Theory of linguistic analysis which is rooted in Labov’s (1966) study; *The Social Stratification of English in New York City*. The Labovian vision on variation is based on the varieties of speech speaker’s exhibit in communication in relation to “Standard” Language. The principal focus of the approach is on the understanding the mechanism of variation and change among speakers. (See Mensah-Aborampah 2021.) Some parameters that bring about social variation among speakers are age, status, ethnicity, gender etc. However, in this paper, my argument on variation of speaker forms is tilted towards Dickey’s (1997) concept on variation which stipulates that address forms or reference to a person is likely to be different. Dickey argues that, variation means “different” or “changing” and that “the number of different ways in which a person can be referred to are virtually

infinite.....”. It is upon this Variationist concept of Dickey (1997) that I situate this paper. Its linkage to this present study allows a critical examination of typical Kolangɛ address forms in given situations, content, context and relationship between interlocutors.

3. Materials and Methods:

This is a qualitative study. A research is qualitative if it describes events and persons scientifically without making use of numerical data (Best and Khan (2006) cited in Mensah-Aborampah (2021). This qualitative approach is deemed appropriate given the exploratory nature of the study. It is the best approach to describe social phenomena because they occur naturally as no attempt is made to manipulate the situation under study which is the case with experimental research.

The data collection period lasted for two years which spanned from December 2020 to December 2022 in the Kolangɛ speech community located in the Tain District of Bono region of Ghana. Data was collected mainly through observation (participant/non-participant). This was complemented with informal conversation and unstructured interview and my native speaker introspection. Additionally, I documented episodes at arbitration sessions in chief palaces, funeral gatherings, naming ceremonies, religious ceremonies, storytelling sessions and role play moments as part of data collection. The data collection sources are varied and they cover a wide spectrum for everyday and/or periodic interactions among speakers in the speech community. From these sources comprehensive information relevant to the study was obtained. Native Kolangɛ speakers of sound mind who have resided in the speech community continuously for a minimum period of twenty years were engaged for information.

The observation sessions in the natural setting enabled me to ascertain authentic data as a native speaker in the society. The interview and conversation sessions which were conducted on separate occasions also allowed the consultant’s conducive atmosphere to express their personal opinions on their use of address forms as well as other speakers. Informants’ anonymity was assured. Information gathered was later cross-checked and analysed critically to ensure that reliable information on address forms is documented. However, what this paper presents on the subject is not exhaustive. It does not cover the entire repertoire on typical address forms of Kolangɛ. This notwithstanding, the information presented is authentic due to the reliable sources from where it was obtained.

4. Results and Discussion:

This section views typical Kolangge address forms. It surveys a wider spectrum of address forms in the Kolangge society. It generalizes Kolangge address forms under Gender after which they are categorized under specific domains as kinship address, occupational address, religious address, intimacy terms, mockery terms, nicknames, and terms of endearment and youth titles. In simple terms, what I consider as an addressive form is when a word or expression is used directly to call or denote the addressee in communication. But when a word or an expression is used to purposely point out or demonstrate or show the person being talked about, it is a referential statement term (see Bisilki 2017). We attempt to discuss Kolangge address forms by giving the background information, explaining and translating the sources.

4.1 Gender Address Forms of Kolangge:

In Kolangge, specific referential terms and names are used to exclusively address males and females in communication situation. These are the terms I consider gender address forms of Kolangge. By gender classification in this discussion, I gather all address forms of Kolangge under the possible groupings of *he*, *she*, *it* such that all address forms that fall under the *he* group represent male forms, those under the *she* represents the female forms and those under *it* represent the inanimate. Forms that can equally describe or represent both male and female fall under neuter. This is natural grouping. This *he*, *she*, *it* categorization is a natural grouping in the English gender system which similarly applies to the Kolangge system. Table 1 below depicts commonly used gender address forms of Kolangge.

Table 1: Kolangge Address Forms Denoting Gender

Male forms with English gloss	Female forms with English gloss
Hɛɛn (Male)	Yɛɛ (female)
Dèdà (father)	Ñná (mother)
Dagbóó (grandparent)	Namgbóó (grandparent)
Srágbóó (grandfather)	Ñyénamgbóó (grandmother)
Nsɛɛ (chief)	Yɛɛyegbaragɛ/Hemaa (queenmother)
Hɛɛngbadeɛ (oldman)	Yɛgbadeɛ (oldwoman)
Heenkɔɔ (young male)	Yereukɔɔ (young female)
Bèneú (mother's brother)	Ñná/Soa (father's sister)
Gyisɛhɛɛn (widower)	Gyisɛyɛɛ (widow)
Kpéé (husband)	Yèrè (wife)
Naanié (boyfriend)	Yèrèwié (girlfriend)
Hɛɛkɔɔ (brother)	Yɛkɔɔ (sister)

Table 1 above clearly outlines some gender categories of Kolangge address forms. The English gloss for male and female forms are enclosed in brackets. Both forms, male and female classifications are in exclusive use. Under no circumstance in general use, would a speaker substitute a male form for a female form or vice versa in an address situation. Forms like Bèneú is strictly used for one's mother's male siblings, hɛɛngbadeɛ is exclusively used for a mature male person (oldman) as yegbadeɛ is used exclusively for a mature female person (oldwoman). Gyisɛhɛɛn is in exclusive use for a widower as gyisɛyɛɛ is used for a widow. All the forms as outlined in Table 1 above are used as reference terms in communication situation in everyday interaction. This is to strictly show

male-female distinction in everyday communication to bring about clarity of expression.

4.2 Gender-Neutral Address Forms of Kolangge:

Frequently used gender-neutral address forms of Kolangge are discussed in this section. These include:

Yegbaragɛ: This is a gender-neutral title. Its plural form is *Yegbaramɔ*. It is an honorific title. It is used to address the elderly; male or female and stands for a person of highest status or one who is advanced in age in society. It is an address term accorded the elderly as a sign of respect and deference. It can be used alone as a title-name in the expression, *Yegbaragɛ* or in a statement such as, *wo hɛ yegbaragɛ* (you are an elder or elderly person). Also, it

could be used as title plus full name as in *Yegbaragɛ Kwabena Boɔ* (TFN). A head of a clan in the Kolangɛ society is accorded the title-name *Benyegbaragɛ* or *Gusɛyegbaragɛ* and is addressed as such to show his distinct position and role. *Yegbarasãã/Yegbarapile* is any elderly person who is outstanding in his/her display of elderly qualities. Sometimes, a teenager who displays the qualities of an elderly person in wisdom, knowledge and experience and acts accordingly is addressed *Yegbaragɛ* in recognition and appreciation of the way he or she conducts themselves.

Yaasɛɛ: This is also a gender-neutral address term in reference to a friend of the speaker. The addresser or addressee could be a male or female. This address form is used interchangeably for both sexes. For example, one could say in reference to his or her friend as; *Yaasɛɛ* (friend) or with a possessive modifier as in *Me yaasɛɛ* (my friend). An adult speaker could use the term to address a young person or vice-versa. The use of *Yaasɛɛ* this way bridges the gap between the addresser and addressee. It's used to show friendliness, admiration and familiarity. It fosters social relations among interlocutors.

Sɛɛ: This is a gender-neutral reference term for an in-law. It is a generic address term denoting all categories of in-laws namely; mother-in-law, father-in-law, son/daughter/brother/sister-in-law. This address term is used in reference to marital relations between married couples and their opposite close relatives, parents, siblings and grandparents. It is used to show appreciation, reverence, acceptance and sustenance of marriages in Kolangɛ society. Its use again fosters unity/oneness to buttress marital relations.

Kpalisɛɛ: The Kolangɛ society is basically traditional with a greater number of the indigenes as traditionalists. *Kpalisɛɛ* is a gender-neutral address term for a leader of a traditional religion (a deity). S/he is described as "one who prophesises". This address term could be used as a title-name without the personal name of the referent on one instance as for example, *Kpalisɛɛ*. Or as a title plus full name of the referent as in *Kpalisɛɛ Kwasi Kara* (TFN). The address term is used to designate the right office of the referent in his or her recognition as a religious leader and to further raise his or her status in society. However, a gender distinction could be made to identify a male *Kpalisɛɛ* as *Kpalisɛɛhɛɛn* and a female *Kpalisɛɛ* as *Kpalisɛɛyɛɛɛ*, with the suffixes *hɛɛn* and *yɛɛɛ* as gender markers respectively.

Kyeleɛ: A singular gender-neutral term used to draw attention to a stranger or a strange person found in the society. The plural form is *Kyelewo*. It is a referential term used to point out the person being talked about. In a communication process the person being talked about may know or not know what is going on between the interlocutors. The use of *Kyeleɛ* is not a derogatory reference term. Interlocutors may consciously use it to put the referent at bay, or to show their unfamiliarity of his presence or to show a distinction between him/her and the indigenes in the community. For example, a speaker may find out from his listener about a stranger in their mist by asking; *Ae kyeleɛ hoo gu?* Which means, where does this stranger come from?

Bɔresɛɛ: This is also a gender-neutral term used to describe or name a landlord/landlady. It could also be used for a host who entertains a guest. Its use as a host expresses appreciation for the former for his/her benevolence towards the latter. It is an honorific title used for such persons in general. It could be used alone as a title-name for a landlord/landlady as in, "*Bɔresɛɛ*" or with a possessive modifier as in, "*Me bɔresɛɛ*" (my landlord/landlady) to make clarity of expression.

Kyerebaa: This is another gender-neutral referential address term for a new-born baby irrespective of its sex (baby boy/ baby girl). The Kolangɛ cultural set up believes that until a baby is given a personal name after the eight day of its birth, it is not regarded as a human-being or as part of human society. *Kyerebaa* is the referent term given to such a new-born baby in the interim, until it is given a personal name eventually to be counted as human and from then, addressed by its personal name. It could be used figuratively sometimes, as an address term to demean a mature person who usually behaves childishly or acts in a childlike manner as in an expression like; *mene kereba hɛɛu-ũũn koi*, literally, look at this childish behavior or attitude.

Borowie: *Borowie* means 'orphan'. It is an address term used for a person who loses one or both parents. The plural form is *Borowuo*. It is a gender-neutral term used to address a male/female of any age (young or old). The use of the address term expresses sympathy or empathy towards such unfortunate persons. For example, *nya borowie hoo zengɛ wɛɛ lɛ ho de*. This means, give this orphan something to eat.

4.2. Kinship Terms of Kolangɛ:

Kinship terms are terminologies describing how people in various parts of the world refer to dad, mum, brothers, sisters, uncles, aunts, cousins (see also Dickey 1997).

Kolangɛ speakers of Ghana like the Akan of Ghana use kinship terms to describe the relationship between them and others (see Sekyi-Baidoo 2020). Some commonly used kinship terms of Kolangɛ are *Dèdà* (father), *Ñná* (mother), *Bènéú* (uncle), *Dagbóó* (grandfather), *Namgbóó* (grandmother), *Hāraú* (older sibling), *Vɛɛlé* (younger

sibling) *Hɛɛkɔ* (male sibling), *Yɛkɔ* (female sibling) etc. All these terms could be used as address terms when an addressee is in direct or face to face communication with the addresser or as a referential title when two interlocutors talk about the person in question. I present in a table form the various uses as indicated above.

Table 2: Depicting Kolangɛ Kinship Addressive and Referential Forms

Addressive Form	Referential Form	English Gloss
Dèdà	Dèdà	Father
Ñná	Ñná	Mother
Hāraú	Hāraú	Elder sibling
Vɛɛlé	Vɛɛlé	Younger sibling
Bènéú	Bènéú	Mother's male sibling
Dagbòò	Dagbóó	Grandfather
Namgbòò	Namgbóó	Grandmother

From Table 2 above, the first column depicts the addressive forms with the *low, low* tonal structure of Kolangɛ. The second column depicts the referential forms with the tonal structure of *low, high* as found in *Dèdà*, *Bènéú*, *Hāraú*. This referential usage involves an addresser and an addressee within or outside the immediate family circle in conversation. Other words in the column like *Ñná* displays *high* tonal structure with *Dagbóó*/*Namgbóó* displaying *high, high* tonal structures. The third column depicts the English gloss.

Dèdà/Dèdà: In Kolangɛ one addresses his/her biological father, with a title-name, *Dèdà* in a direct or face-to-face interaction without adding the father's personal name. Among Kolangɛ speakers, it is inappropriate and no one has the moral right to address their fathers by their personal names in their presence or in absentia. But in a communication with another interlocutor, one may make reference to his/her biological father as *Dèdà* with the low-high tone. With Kolangɛ speakers, your father's male siblings, young or older are your fathers (paternal uncles) in European parlance. In this respect you could use *Dèdà*, the *low-high* tone as a title and attach the full name (TFN) to show a distinction between your father's male siblings or any other father(s) rather than your biological father. You could in this way, address such male paternal relations of your father as for example, *Dèdà Kwame Tanɔ* or *Dèdà Kwabena Futu*. Any form of address intended for a father as described above accords them respect and dignity.

Srá: Another address term in reference to a father is *Srá* (father). One could refer to his/her biological father with a possessive modifier as "*Me srá*" (My father) within or outside the family line conversation. A speaker could

equally say in a statement, for example, "*Me srá ɛ Dèdà Kwabena Lopo*" (My father is father Kwabena Lopo). In the statement, the speaker uses the title *Dèdà* which means father, same as *srá* because it is inappropriate for a

Kolangɛ speaker to address their fathers directly by a personal name without a suitable title-name. So the speaker could not have referred to his/her father as ("Me srá ɛ Kwabena Lopo"). This sounds impolite. Equally, a speaker in an ordinary conversation could refer to his/her addressee's father with good intention in a statement like, "*Wo srá bɔ yokɔ ɛ ze?*" (lit. Your father's name is what?). However, the use of "*Wo srá*" (Your father) with an emphatic stress on the noun "*srá*" (father) means a disregard for the addressee's father. Its use is with insulting intention which shows impertinence.

Ñná/Ñná/Ñyéná: These are three terms used to address a biological mother or any other woman considered a mother with the Kolangɛ speakers. Your mother's female siblings, young or older, are your mothers among the Kolangɛ (aunt/auntie) in European parlance. You could address your biological mother and her female siblings in a similar manner as I have explained for a father and his male siblings using the appropriate tone patterns to show clear distinctions. A similar address term for a person's mother is *Ñyéná* (mother) with *low-high* tone. A speaker could appropriately make reference to his/her mother as "*Me ñyéná*" (my mother) with no ill-intention. But in a conversation, if somebody else refers to your mother as "*wo ñyéná*" (Your mother) with an emphatic stress on *ñyéná*, it means an insult, a sign of disrespect to you and your mother.

Srágbóó/Ñyénamgbóó: In Kolangɛ speech community, *Srágbóó* is grandfather, literally a *big father* or a *father*

who is big. He could be your father's or mother's biological father. *Srágbóó*, could also be used outside kinship circles to address any male adult of your grandfather's age. It could again be used in reference to your great grandfathers of paternal or maternal descent. *Nyénamgbóó* is also an address term for grandmother both of paternal and maternal descent. Literally, the term also means *a big mother* or *mother who is big*. Used as an address term, *Nyénamgbóó* is used in similar manner as *Srágbóó* as explained above. The use of *Srágbóó* and *Nyénamgbóó* as address terms for one's grandfather/grandmother is honorific. It accords them dignity and respect and raises their social status.

Hāraù: Among the Kolangɛ speaking populace, it is inappropriate or lack of respect for a young sibling to address his/her older sibling by their personal names. The appropriate term to use is *Hāraù*. This is a gender-neutral term. It is used as an address term for older siblings (male or female). So as a younger sibling, you are expected to address your older sibling, male or female as, *Hāraù* as a title-name. Or used as a mere title, you may attach your older sibling's full name (TFN) as in *Hāraù Kwaku Agyei*. In this usage *Hāraù* serves as a reference title to show age difference and respect. In the community, concerned parents or the adult in general frequently endeavour to put in check younger siblings to always address their older siblings with the appropriate address term to ensure decorum in society.

Vɛɛlé: Kolangɛ speakers address their younger siblings as *Vɛɛlé* without any malice. Older siblings can address their younger siblings directly by their personal names (family or birthday), as for example; *Kofi*, *Ama*, *Serwaa*, *Tano* etc., to prove that they have some sort of power or age superiority over them. In reference to their younger siblings, an older sibling can say, "*Me vɛɛlé Ama Serwaa*", i.e. 'my younger sibling Ama Serwaa'. *Vɛɛlé* is a gender-neutral term which can be used to address a younger sibling, male or female. The use of *Vɛɛlé* as a title-name in communication is an indication of social distance. This means that the addresser doesn't seem to be familiar with the referent because the use of *Vɛɛlé* in the Kolangɛ society can go beyond kinship relations to embrace anybody else who could be a younger sibling to the addresser. The use of *Vɛɛlé* in this way does not augur well to foster close family relations.

Bèneù/Bèneú: These two address forms vary in usage depending on the low-low or low-high tone an addresser intends towards an addressee. The use of *Bèneù* serves as an honorific title-name to dignify the referent. An addresser can again attach the full name of the referent as

in *Bèneú* (low-high) tone as *Bèneú Kwame Bonua*. Here the addresser is describing or pointing out a particular mother's male sibling in a communication process. In both usages, the addresser's intention is to show respect to the referent in line with kinship relations. Your father's female sibling with the Kolamɔ, is your mother, an equivalent of *aunt* in English. Likewise, your mother's female sibling is also your mother. In a direct interaction, each of them is addressed *Ñná*, low-low tone as your biological mother. But in making reference to them with another interlocutor, she is *Ñná* high tone as a title to which her birthday-name or full name is attached as in *Ñná Kosia Kara* (mother Kosia Kara) TFN.

Soa/Sewaa: In Kolangɛ speech community, once again, another accepted and frequently used address term for your father's female sibling is *Soa/Sewaa*. This could basically be interpreted as *Yere sra* (lit. female father). The term is used in the same way as Akan speaking people of Ghana. *Soa* is the preferred word and spelling for Kolangɛ and *Sewaa* for Akan. The Kolangɛ speaking territory in Ghana is completely sandwiched by Akan Speakers. As a result of language contact, Asante Twi which is the higher variety language in the diglossia region has to a greater extent influenced the Kolangɛ language in vocabulary and other linguistic expressions in common use. But the reference term *Soa* is etymologically typical Kolangɛ word. It does not evolve or realised as a result of Akan influence. Its synonymous use with Akan may be attributable to mere coincidence in language use.

Konta/Akonta: This is also a reference term for couples' male siblings. Your wife's male siblings could address you as *Konta/Akonta*. (Brother-in-law). In like manner you could also address your wife's male siblings with the same reference term. The term could be used as a title plus full name as *Konta, Kwabena Mensa* (TFN) or as title-name like *Konta/Akonta* to address the referent in a communication situation. Kolangɛ speakers traditionally believe that in the family, you and your siblings (male/female) are one in bond like twins. You are always one and thus inseparable. So if a man enters a family to marry a female sibling, he is breaking the bond between them; hence *Ko-nta*. *Ko/koa* is to fight and *nta* is twins (fight the twins) to break the bond. So in a traditional marriage, the would-be husband is obliged to pay a token amount of money to appease the male siblings. Akan speakers also use the terms in similar manner. The use of the referent terms strengthens marriage ties of couples and their family relations.

Akumaa: With the Kolangɛ speakers, your wife's female siblings could address your female siblings *Akumaa* (lit. female husband). In reciprocity, your female siblings could equally address your wife's female siblings *Akumaa*. The address term is used in the same way as Akan speakers. This is a true indication that though mutually exclusive, the two languages, Kolangɛ and Akan in Ghana, share some linguistic items in common as seen from the use of *soa/serwaa* and *konta/akonta* above.

Dagbòò/ Dagbóó: These address terms are applicable to an addresser's grandfather (paternal/maternal). As indicated earlier, the use of *Dagbòò* with low, low tone is an indication that the addresser is in face-to-face interaction with the addressee and in this sense, the former addresses the latter directly with the title-name, *Dagbòò*. Its use is to dignify the addressee. On the other hand, if an addresser uses the form *Dagbóó* with high-high tone pattern, it means s/he is involved in a communication with another interlocutor with the referent (*Dagbóó*) in the picture. *Dagbóó* in this sense could be used as title plus full name (TFN) of the referent as in *Dagbóó Kofi Dɔnkɔ*. With either use of the address forms, dignity and respect are accorded to the status of the referent figure(s). Another use of *Dagbòò* (low, low) tone is when a parent names his child after his grandfather. Family members address such child *Dagbòò* because they cannot call such a child by his personal name like *Yarw Agyei* on moral grounds. This is an honorific use of the term. Parents do this to dignify the grandfather whom they named the child after and the honour goes to the child who bears his grandfather's name.

Namgbòò/Namgbóó: These two address forms from the same root are used for the speaker's grandmother (paternal/maternal). They are used similarly, the way the male forms are used for a grandfather as addressive or referential forms to accord the referent respect, dignity and to show age difference.

Hɛɛkɔɔ/Yɛkɔɔ is a set of kinship address terms for a person's siblings, maternal and/or paternal. *Hɛɛkɔɔ* is 'brother'. It is an address form a female sibling uses exclusively to address only her male siblings; young or older. *Yɛkɔɔ* is 'sister'. It is an address form a male sibling uses exclusively to address his female siblings; young or older. The use of *hɛɛkɔɔ* is a title-name said in a low, low tone. It is a direct address term between a female sibling as an addresser and her male sibling in family conversation. The address term with a possessive modifier, "*Me hɛɛkɔɔ*", said in high-high tone, means 'my brother'. Used with a possessive modifier "*mɛ*" (my), it

makes reference to the addresser's brother in a conversation with an interlocutor within or outside the immediate family circle. The reverse is the same in usage for a male sibling as an addresser using *yɛkɔɔ* and *Me yɛkɔɔ* in an address situation. *Hɛɛkɔɔ/Yɛkɔɔ* used in any of the tonal variants; low-low or high-high as addressive forms, are in exclusive use for male and female siblings respectively in a conversation situation.

Nieusɛɛ: Male siblings could address their female siblings' children (male or female) as *Nieusɛɛ*. It is a gender-neutral address term for a nephew or niece. For a distinction, a male *nieusɛɛ* is *nieusɛɛhɛɛn* (nephew) and a female *nieusɛɛ* is *nieusɛɛyɛɛɛ* (niece). The suffixes *hɛɛn* and *yɛɛɛ* serve as gender markers for distinction. *Nieusɔɔ* is plural form for *nieusɛɛ*. The former could be used with a possessive modifier as in *Me nieusɔɔ* to mean, my female siblings' children.

4.3 Chieftancy Titles

Every traditional community in the Kolangɛ society is headed by *Nsɛɛ*. *Nsɛɛ* is 'chief'. He is a traditional ruler who rules the community under his jurisdiction. Chiefs hold ultimate respect as they are seen as protectors of the culture, customs and traditions (see Holzinger et al. 2016). In the Kolangɛ society, *Nsɛɛ* (a chief) is accorded the highest dignity and respect and no one could address him informally by their personal name(s) like *Yarw Gyasi* or *Kwabena Bekoe*. *Dagbóó* is a royal referent title to every *Nsɛɛ* (chief) to which his stool name or personal name could be attached. The equivalent of *Dagbóó* is "*Nana*" among the Akan speakers of Ghana. Kolangɛ chiefs could be appropriately addressed formally in several ways as: *Dagbóó Nsɛɛ*. *Dagbóó* is a title plus *Nsɛɛ* (chief) or in other ways as expressed below.

- *Dagbóó Bonua Mensa-Aborampa*. The interpretation of this name is; *Dagbóó*, a title for every chief plus *Bonua*, a stool name and *Mensa-Aborampa*, a personal name attached.
- *Dagbóó Mangɛla Kwasi Kara*. *Dagbóó*, title for chief. *Mangɛla*, an accolade plus full name, "*Mangɛla*", literally translates, 'power is finished'.
- *Dagbóó Mangɛtɔsɛɛ Kwadwo Kesse*. *Dagbóó*, the title for a chief plus an accolade plus personal name. "*Mangɛtɔsɛɛ*", literally translated means, "one who owns power" or "one who is self-reliant".

The royal title for a queenmother is *Namgbóó*. Queenmothers are similarly addressed in the Kolangɛ traditional society like their male counterparts, *Nsɛɛ-wɔ*

(chiefs). A queenmother is thus addressed as: *Namgbóó yɛrɛyegbragɛ*. *Namgbóó Adwoa Yeboa*, *Namgbóó Ama Yɛrɛbɔɔ* etc. The significance of using such address terms for Kolangɛ chiefs and queenmothers is to accord them the dignity, reverence, prestige and respect they deserve. It is also used in recognition of the authority and power they hold as traditional leaders in society, hence the use of an honorific title, *Dagbóó/Namgbóó*, to address them.

4.4 Social Titles/Address Forms

In the Kolangɛ society tell more about the achievements or social status of the person and it is upon those parameters that appropriate address forms are used in reference to people. Frequently used social titles/address forms in Kolangɛ are; *hɛɛngbadɛ/yegbadɛ*, *yegbaragɛ*, *beegɔ*, *hɛɛsãã/yedaaseɛɛ*, *Nsɛbii*, *Dagbóó bɔyɛrɛ* etc.

Hɛɛngbadɛ/Yegbadɛ is opposite terms. The former refers to an oldman (mature male adult) and the latter refers to an oldwoman (mature female adult) both in their sixties. At this height in age, they are seen as respectable, wise persons in the society (see Sekyi-Baidoo 2020) and are accorded the dignity embodied in them. However, when a youth (teenager) frequently exhibits a sterling quality of wisdom associated with *hɛɛngbadɛ/yegbadɛ*, such a teenager is addressed in similar manner as the oldman/oldwoman in praise and admiration of such qualities at a youthful age. Also, a teenager who frequently displays weakness or frailty in physical appearance is addressed perjoratively as *hɛɛngbadɛ* or *yegbadɛ* in spite of the youthful age.

Beegɔ: This is an address term bestowed on the referent rather than through any achievement. It is a belittling address term intended for young persons of either gender. *Beegɔ* is used in the plural sense by a parent, an adult, a chief or any leader to address all young persons under their care and direction. The addresser intends to show that all those that s/he addresses by the term are below him/her; age-wise, experience-wise, knowledge-wise, wisdom-wise, courage-wise, and that s/he is above them in all spheres of human qualities. It is a belittling term, though, it is not used with the intention of contempt to hurt, deride or satirise the addressee's feeling. It is rather used to exert the addresser's superiority over the addressee.

Hɛɛsãã/Yɛdaasɛɛ: These address terms are marked for young male/female adults who frequently display youthful exuberance beyond expectation. This address term/title is won through one's achievement. If a youthful person for instance, could conquer or repel a

gang of armed-robbers, in their territory, or wins a tough competition in wrestling or in any field of human endeavor, or displays valour by killing a python, a lion or a wild beast by their singular effort, they are hailed and accorded such an honorific title in appreciation of the feat accomplished.

Yegbaragɛ has already been discussed (see section under gender-neutral address forms of Kolangɛ).

Nsɛbii and **Dagbóó bɔyɛrɛ**: From the source where they come, these address terms when used, accord the referent some sort of nobility. A chief's son or daughter (prince or princess) is referred to as *Nsɛbii*. *Nsɛɛ* is chief and *bii* is child. The plural is *Nsɛbugo*. A chief's wife is addressed *Dagbóó bɔyɛrɛ*. (The chief's wife). The use of these address terms ennobles the referents and identify or recognize them as persons coming from a royal gate.

4.5 Youth Titles

The youth address their age mates directly by their names without adding any title or give respect to it, for example, Kofi, Ama, Yaa etc. This is an informal address formular. The Kolangɛ youth (male/female) do this as a sign of intimacy. Besides, the female youth often use the terms *kyɛmena* or *asuo* to address their colleagues within the same age brackets without attaching personal names. *Kyɛmena* or *Asuo* just mean 'my friend', 'my intimate' or 'my colleague'. It should be noted that female adults also use the terms *kyɛmena* and *asuo* in the same manner as the female youth. Also, female adults could address young females with the terms *kyɛmena* and *asuo*, so could the young females address female adults with the same address terms. The use of the terms either way is to bridge the social distance between the addresser and the addressee in a communication situation. The use of these address terms in general shows intimacy, familiarity, solidarity and love towards the addresser and the addressee.

Heenkɔɔ/Yereukɔɔ: These are terms used to address teenage boys and girls respectively in the Kolangɛ society. Pronounced on a high-high tone, the address terms are used when the names of the addressees are not known. Whenever a speaker addresses a teenager as *heenkɔɔ/yereukɔɔ*, it is a presumption of unfamiliarity and social distance with some sort of disrespect for the addressee, otherwise, its use is deliberate.

Yebom/Yɛrgwie: These are address terms intended for a young male adult and a young female adult respectively in about their mid-twenties. At this prime age, such persons display youthful exuberance in agility, courage,

solidarity and curiosity. They are addressed so in admiration and appreciation of a display of such qualities. Adults of the older generation are also sometimes addressed as *yebom/yeɾɛwie* when they frequently display such youthful exuberance in their character in spite of their advancement in age. When persons of the older generation are addressed, *yebom/yeɾɛwie*, it is not demeaning, rather it is a figurative use of language (Oxymoron) to mean that though they are old, they are young.

4.6 Religious Titles:

Religious titles are appropriate terms used to address leaders of the various religions being practiced in the Kolangɛ society. The Kolangɛ society is highly religious. Three main religions namely; African Traditional Religion (ATR), Christianity and Islam are being practiced. The African Traditional Religious practice has been with the Kolangɛ people since time immemorial. There are priests/priestesses who serve as leaders for those who profess that faith. They are addressed with a generic term *Kpalisɛɛ* (fetish priest /fetish priestess). A male leader's title is *Kpalisɛɛhɛɛn* and that for a female leader is *Kpalisɛɛyeɾɛ*. A place of worship for such believers is *Gbokoben/Gbokoyɔɔn/Kpaliyɔɔn*. Those who profess the faith are addressed *Gbokosɔnesɔɔ*. The title *Nyɛnamgbolounsɛɛ* is a specific religious title accorded a mature old woman of 50 years and above. She is chosen from a particular clan to perform essential rites for adherents of ATR. The *Nyɛnamgbolounsɛɛ* is the administrator of puberty rites of mature teenage girls into adulthood. She also administers widowhood rites and burial rites for adult traditionalists in the society. Islam is seen as an ancient religion practiced in the Kolangɛ society though its adherents in terms of number are insignificant as compared to ATR and Christianity. Those who profess the faith are *Sɔɔwɔ* (Islam worshippers), the singular is *Sɔɔ* (gender-neutral term). A male adherent of the faith is *Sɔɔhɛɛn* and a female adherent is *Sɔɔyeɾɛ*. A place of worship is *Misiriɔɔn* (mosque). A leader of the Islamic faith is addressed *Limam*. The Ramadan period is given a descriptive term; *Kyɛifɛngɛ* (a period of one lunar month abstinence from food and water). Christianity is seen as an alien religious practice in the Kolangɛ society. It entered the Kolangɛ society lately from the western world through missionaries and colonizers. The Kolangɛ society does not have their own words like Pastor, Bishop, Catechist, Steward, Prophet, etc. to address leaders of the Christian faith and their place of worship. The Kolamɔ use descriptive phrases or coined words to address leaders of this alien faith. A leader (pastor) of the Christian faith is

given a descriptive title; *Yogomoliabɔkpalisɛɛ* (one who leads God's people or one who prophesises God's message). A place of Christian worship is *Asɔnben/Yogomoliasɔnben* (church). Those who profess the faith are *Yogomoliabɔnesɔɔ/Yeegɛsɔnesɔɔ*. These descriptive address terms/titles are coined for the leaders, believers and places of worship for the various religions practiced in the society. Kolangɛ speakers frequently use these address terms to show reverence, respect, recognition, honour and appreciation for the referents.

4.7 Occupational Titles:

These tell about the work a person does to earn a living which could be a profession or trade. The Kolangɛ traditional society originally has such persons, male or female and what each does determine their address titles. *Sɛɛlɛsɛɛ* is a wood carver. *Dɔɔlɛsɛɛ* is a blacksmith. *Maalɛsɛɛ* is a potter. A drummer is *pagalɛsɛɛ*, palm-wine tapper is *tɔkpɛɾisɛɛ* and a hunter is *sawalɛsɛɛ*. Some alien professions like law, medicine, teaching, nursing etc. entered the Kolangɛ society lately. Practitioners of such professions are addressed with befitting descriptive titles. A lawyer is addressed as *maragisɛɛ/dɔlɛnyasɛɛ* (one who knows the law/one who defends the other in law terms). A judge is *daɔl/gyaunyasɛɛ* (one who interprets the law and passes judgement). A tailor is *bɔgɔlɛsɛɛ* (one who makes or sews dresses). A nurse is *bɔgɔlɛweɾsɔsɛɛ* (one who administers a syringe). A doctor is *zugasɛɛ* (one who cures sick persons) and a teacher is *sɔnɔkasɛɛ* (one who transforms persons). See Mensah-Aborampah (2021). The suffixes *ɛɛ* in each word means; "one who is/one who does something". All such titles are descriptions of the various occupations mentioned. They are used purposefully to draw the addressee's attention for identification. These address forms serve as honorific titles for the addressees.

4.8 Mockery Terms

These descriptive terms are directed towards persons who frequently display deviant behaviours or indulge in nefarious practices like stealing, rape, drunkenness, etc. There are others who display qualities of folly, mediocrity, laziness, lying, hypocrisy etc. Persons with such behaviours are given befitting titles whenever they are addressed. A thief is *yusɛɛ*, a fool is *yegyega*, a liar is *lepasɛɛ*, a rapist is *muayaasɛɛ*, a hopeless person is *yewaram*, a drunkard is *seusɛɛ*, a lazy person is *paangɛsɛɛ* and a hypocrite is *denyungusɛɛ*. The use of these address terms is demeaning. They are used in affront to persons who are addressed this way. They are also intended to

satirise such deviant behaviours of the addressee in order to reform them.

4.9 Physical Features

Kolangɛ speakers often give referential titles to persons by their physical appearance with no malice. A person who is dark in complexion is *yebiɔro*, one who is fair in complexion is *yevanya*, a short person is *yekudiɔwie*, a tall person is *yesusuɔrɔ*, a fat person is *yekpasaga*, a smallish person is *nyoofefewweɛ*, a sick-looking person is *nyaiɔsɛɛ* and a hunchback is *gbiligɛsɛɛ*. These address terms are gender-neutral descriptive phrases used by interlocutors/speakers to describe or point out the referent in conversation. Speakers use the terms to make a distinction among persons they are talking about and also for easy comprehension.

4.10 Terms of Endearment

Endearment terms are used to cajole an addressee, one whom the speaker really holds dear at heart. A married woman frequently addresses her husband as *metɔsɛɛ* which in English, literally means “my owner” and could equally mean “my Lord”. A married woman uses this address term to show affection for her husband. A married woman again addresses her husband as *me kpeɛ* (my husband). The possessive modifier *me* (my) with the noun shows that the husband is hers. Equally, if you are a married man, all your wife’s female siblings are your wives. These women could address you *me kpeɛ* (my husband) same as your real wife addresses you. A man addresses his wife as *me yɛrɛ* (my wife) to mean that the woman is his. *Yekyɛnsɛɛ* (weɛ) means a beautiful or a handsome person. It is an address term intended for a person to appreciate or admire them for their physical outlook. *Mekorɔsɛɛ* (my lover) is an endearment address term used for one’s lover, or a dear one. A speaker uses the term to address the person s/he loves so dearly with marriage intention or one whom they could offer something good or beneficial. A speaker could address his/her lover passionately as, “*Wo hɛ me korɔsɛɛ*” (You are my lover). The term can also be used to address lovers who are already in relationship. This address term is gender-neutral which could go for a male/female addresser or addressee. The use of endearment terms in general fosters good relationship ties among interlocutors in the social setup which coaxes them to co-exist peacefully.

4.11 Nicknames as Terms of Address

As part of social life, nicknames are derived names native Kolangɛ speakers use to refer to persons of either gender or age. Nicknames are not personal names such that everybody in the society is given one. A person may live

in a community throughout their life time without a nickname whereas another may earn two or more in their life time. Nicknames are only used among equals or unequals in a particular community within a particular social group like schoolboys/girls, gangsters, playmates etc. Nicknames are connected to a person’s real name to particularise the referent. The use of nicknames may serve a dual purpose. On one hand, they are used as play names to show familiarity, solidarity and friendliness among users but on the other hand, their use could be derogatory with the intention to tease the notoriety of the referent. Under normal circumstances, those addressed by their nicknames do not take offense if the circumstance under which the name was derived was a pleasant one otherwise the referent takes offence whenever they are addressed thus. For lack of space in this paper, I put forward a few nicknames of some notable persons in my home village within the Seikwa enclave of the Kolangɛ speech community. One young man is addressed *Kwaku Demina*. *Demina* is the nickname connected to his real first name, Kwaku; a name for a male born on a Wednesday. *Demina* in Kolangɛ folktales is portrayed always as a cunning and greedy creature. The man who bears the nickname here is seen as one who goes out always to easily outwit his colleagues and exploit them to his advantage. Another man is referred to as *Kofi Korote*. *Korote* is rat in Kolangɛ, a rodent which the people believe is a thief. The people in the community therefore deride the man by referring to him by this nickname to reflect his nefarious activities in stealing. *Ama Pɔɔpɔɔ* is another nickname given to one young woman in the community. *Pɔɔpɔɔ* literary means slippery. The woman in question is seen as a smart clever person who could easily snatch her colleagues’ husbands or lovers from them. Another man’s nickname is *Kwame Gbɔɔgbɔɔ*. *Gbɔɔgbɔɔ* in Kolangɛ means hairless/no hair/bald. This man, Kwame, since adolescence, has grown no single hair on any visible part of his body; head or face. A certain beautiful teenage girl in the community is nicknamed *Dankabii* (a wooden doll). Kolangɛ speakers generally admire a woman’s beauty and fertility in a carved wooden doll. A colleague of ours way back in our primary schooldays was nicknamed *Kwabena Mensa Sɔngbmɛɛ*. *Sɔngbmɛɛ* is connected to his real name. *Sɔngbmɛɛ* in Kolangɛ is the royal antelope in the forest. The *sɔngbmɛɛ* looks smallish in nature with tiny short legs. It is very clever and swift in movement in the forest which makes it difficult for its predators to capture it. The referent shares similar features of the royal antelope in physical outlook and character, hence his nickname.

5. Conclusion:

In this study, I examined typical address terms of Kolangge from the purview of sociolinguistics. I discussed principally how native Kolangge speakers address one another using varied address terms in the linguistic domains of kinship, occupation, religion, intimacy relations, mockery terms, endearment terms, youth titles, nicknames and status descriptive terms. I examined only address terms used as *titles*, *title-names* and *names* rather than personal or real names of the addressee. This is in line with Sekyi-Baidoo's (2020) study. The study revealed that Kolangge speakers use appropriate names, titles and title-names to address the referent to show politeness, deference, intimacy, mockery, familiarity and solidarity. In all this, the relationship between the addresser and the addressee determines the choice of appropriate address terms as found in the use of kinship term; *Dèdà* (father) with low-low tone and *Dèdá* (father) with low-high tone. The former is an addressive term and the latter, a referent term used by the same speaker in relation to the same referent. This falls in line with Dickey's (1997) Variationist concept on linguistic variation that both address and reference vary according to the speaker and express the speaker's relationship to the addressee or person referred to in a given situation.

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