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A SOCIOLINGUISTIC ANALYSIS OF KINSHIP TERMS IN LIKPAKPALN (KONKOMBA)

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Abstract

This study, synchronically, describes and explicates the phenomenon of kinship terms in *Likpakpaln*, a Gur member of the Niger-Congo phylum, spoken mainly in the northern parts of Ghana. It focuses on the addressive usage of kinship terms. I use observation (both participant and non-participant) as a principal ethnographic data collection technique, supplemented by the semi-structured interview, informal conversation and my native speaker introspection. The analysis of data is informed by Dell Hyme's ethnography of communication as a theoretical frame. Based on the data analysed, I argue that kinship addresses in *Likpakpaln* can be categorised into three major types: agnatic, matrilateral and affinal kinship address forms, of which matrilateral and affinal kinship addresses are by complementary filiation. I also show that communicative ends have a significant influence on the vocative usage of kinship terms in interlocution among the *Bikpakpaam* (the Konkomba people). I further argue that the repertoire of *Likpakpaln* kinship addresses and the pattern of usage of these kinship addresses in communicative interactions is greatly tied to the *Bikpakpaam* kinship structure and social universe. Finally, I observe that there is a perceptible level of intercultural intrusion on the kinship address terms used among the *Bikpakpaam*.

Key terms: Sociolinguistic analysis, kinship terms and *Likpakpaln*

1. Introduction

The arena of address terms is one that has enjoyed flourishing scholarly attention in sociolinguistic investigations (Dickey, 1997: 255; Afful, 2006a: 275). The significant interest level shown in address terms seems to find a unanimous justification by many

researchers that address terms play a very important role in human communication and society. For instance, Mashiri (1999: 93-94), in a study of terms of address among the Shona of Zimbabwe, maintains that terms of address serve as conduits of communicating the values and expectations of groups, individual beliefs, fears, hopes and attitudes. On a similar note, Bonvillain (2000: 83-89), establishes that address terms play a crucial function in communication, social interaction and cohesion. Deriving from the foregoing claims is the fact that studies on address terms have, consistently, proved useful in providing a panoramic view into the nature of societies and cultures. Following this, one cannot, but further concur with Afful (2006b: 76) that address terms are an important feature of the interface between language and society. Thus, address terms are a focal resource in sociolinguistics, the study of relations between language and society.

Nonetheless, it has been observed that whereas there are an admittedly ever-increasing number of studies on address terms, a majority of such studies are based on Anglo-American, Euro-Asian and Latin American milieus. On the contrary, a relatively few of such works explore address phenomena in African contexts and, for that matter, Ghana (Afful, 2006a: 277). As by Afful, the body of sociolinguistic research on Ghanaian languages is partitionable into two: those on Akan and those on non-Akan, of which the literature on Akan is seen to be far more enhanced than that on the non-Akan linguistic systems. The present study, by being pitched on the *Likpakpaln* linguistic culture, adds to the non-Akan wing of the literature.

It is also no exaggeration to say that there are, scarcely, available studies specifically on address terms among the *Bikpakpaam* (speakers of *Likpakpaln*/the Konkomba people). The apparent rarity of linguistic documentation on address terms relating to the *Bikpakpaam* ethno-linguistic group is, probably, a reflection of the attested under-documentation of their language and culture (Maasole, 2006; Schwarz, 2009). Whereas there is little researched about the *Likpakpaln* language and culture, many of the speaker communities, including Kpassa and Sibi (all in the Nkwanta North District of Northern Volta, Ghana) where data for the present study were collected, are becoming highly cosmopolitan, a situation being triggered by modern urbanization and globalization trends.

In response to the afore-highlighted situation, this study is staged as a documentation of Kinship terms (KTs) as an address phenomenon in *Likpakpaln* while also contributing to the expansion of relevant knowledge on address systems in African linguistic contexts. Given its positioning, the study, as well, carries relevant implications for trans-ethnic and intercultural communication in the rapidly ever globalising world.

Additionally, the present paper also registers its own voice in the ever-evolving theoretical discourse surrounding Brown's (1965) famous Invariant Norm of Address (INA). Brown's Invariant Norm of Address has been described as a re-statement of a claim earlier made by Brown and Ford (1961) that the major determinants of address choices are status and intimacy (Quin, 2008: 409). As argued by Brown, the Invariant Norm of Address is to constitute a culturally universal principle about addressing. This principle is more elaborately stated as: the linguistic form used for an inferior in dyads of unequal status is used in dyads of equal status among intimates and that the linguistic form used for a superior in dyads of unequal status is used in dyads of equal status among strangers. The position of the present study is that whereas one cannot underestimate the role of status and intimacy variables in the choice of address terms, communicative intentions also significantly regulate address choices in interlocution. Beyond this, it is also made clear in the present study that address terms are quite versatile and the same address category can be contextually manipulated into communicative functions deemed typical of some other address types.

2. Theoretical Framework

This study is situated in the ethnography of communication (Hymes, 1964/1974). Consequently, it draws on the inspiration that any investigation of the problems of language must call to attention the need for fresh kinds of data and also attention to the essence of investigating directly the use of language in contexts of situation so as to discern patterns proper to speech activity. Further, such an approach must take as context a community, investigating its communicative habits as a whole. That way, any given use of channel and code takes its place as but part of the resources upon which members of the community draw (Hymes, 1964: 3).

It is communication that must provide the frame of reference within which the place of language in culture and society is to be described. The same linguistic means can be organised for quite differing communicative ends while it is also true to say that the same communicative ends may be served by significantly varied linguistic forms. Facets of the cultural values and beliefs, social institutions, roles and personalities, history and ecology of a community must be examined together in relation to communicative events and patterns as focus of study (Hymes 1964: 3). This aspect of the ethnography of communication is particularly relevant to my present task, as the study tries to examine how one category of address terms (Kinship addresses) can be communicatively organised

and used towards different communicative goals. As well, the study explores how communicative intentions/goals can influence speakers to deploy kinship address forms in conversation. In doing so, I also pay attention to how socio-cultural values, beliefs, norms and practices of speakers are interlaced with the phenomenon of kinship addresses (KAs).

Also, this study takes a theoretical basis in Hymes' (1974) model of the ethnography of communication. In this theoretical paradigm, Hymes proposes that every communicative event has eight crucial factors to consider: setting (S), participants (P), Ends (E), act sequence (A), key (K), instrumentalities (I), norms of interaction and interpretation (N) and genre (G). The linkage between this study and Hymes' model is to the extent that the present study pays attention to how participant relationships and communicative ends/goals determine kinship address choices and usage in *Bikpakpaam* communication.

3. Methodology

Field work for this study lasted 6 months in all. The field sessions were September to December, 2013 and June to August, 2014. The field settings included Kpassa and Sibi, all in the Nkwanta North District of Northern Volta, Ghana. These communities are among the most well-known traditional settings of the *Bikpakpaam* where authentic data that reflect the *Bikpakpaam* people's knowledge of their language and culture can be ascertained. I use observation (both participant and non-participant) as the main data instrument in sociolinguistic ethnographies (Levon, 2013: 196; Wardhaugh, 2006: 249) and complement this data method with the semi-structured interview, the informal conversation and my native speaker introspection. This also aided an analysis of the phenomenon from both etic and emic points of view. The interview engaged 8 purposively sampled participants (4 male and 4 female), aged 40 and above. In addition to a-40-year minimum age threshold, the purposive selection also required that a consultant was a native speaker of *Likpakpaln* and should have continuously resided in the local community for, at least, the past 20 years. The interviews were mostly used to elicit a catalogue of *Likpakpaln* kinship terms (LKTs) and to also ascertain whether or not there were definite overt social norms that mediated the usage of Kinship address (KA) in *Likpakpaln*. Informal conversation served chiefly as a mechanism for cross-checking and further probing of data and information gleaned. The observation took place in 26 communicative contexts, covering interactional domains such as family settings, market contexts, funeral occasions, arbitration sessions at chiefs' palaces, marriage dispute resolution proceedings and religious ceremonies (table 1 represents the communicative domains and frequencies of

observation). The 26 observations were beside the other opportunistic scenarios that I took advantage of. The domains for observation were carefully chosen to ensure that the data was representative of varied participant and social domains of language use. 312 instances of actual usage of KAs in natural discourse were recorded and analysed within the ethnography of Communication (Hymes, 1964/1974). For each kinship address instance recorded, I further inquired and noted down the actual kinship relationship between the interactants. Attention was also paid to the relative ages of interlocutors in the particular exchanges recorded.

Table 1 Distribution of Observed Communicative Domains

Domain	**Frequency of Observation**
Family	8
Funeral	5
Market	4
Chief's palace (arbitration)	3
Marriage dispute resolution	2
Religious ceremony	4
	Total = 26

4. The *Bikpakpaam* Lineage and Clan System

The *Bikpakpaam* are, historically, an acephalous voltaic people in northern Ghana, among whom are other ethnicities such as the Lobi, the Gurunsi, the Kusasi, the Sissala etc. As a Voltaic people, the *Bikpakpaam's* original location in Ghana is in the western part of the Oti River system where they spread over an area up to 50km wide and 175km from north to south (Middleton & Tait, 1958; Tait, 1961; Barker, 1991). In the Oti plain area, Saboba is often regarded as the traditional centre of the *Bikpakpaam*. As a true representation as this may be, the *Bikpakpaam* are also currently well represented in many other parts of Ghana (see Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada [GH], 1996) where in several cases they have indigenised and hold sway in certain settlements. Kintampo and Atebubu in the Brong Ahafo and the Nkwanta Districts in Northern Volta are some of the areas where *Bikpakpaam* are well represented in population terms. The *Bikpakpaam* are located in latitude 7.94653 and longitude 1.02319. Simons and Fennig (2017) in

Ethnologue: Languages of the world estimate that the *Bikpakpaam* population in Ghana alone is 831000.

The *Bikpakpaam* is a highly segmentary tribe in socio-politico outlook (Middleton & Tait, 1958: 1). The society is segmented into clans and lineages founded on unilineal descent groups. In the *Bikpakpaam* social sphere, a lineage is an agnatic descent group and between lineages of one clan, an agnatic relationship is assumed (Tait, 1961: 72). Each clan is a system of lineages, which in themselves are genealogical structures. Under the superordinate clan, there is the major lineage, decomposed into two or three minor lineages and the minor lineage into a number of nuclear lineages. Again, the major lineage consists of agnatic kin descended from an apical ancestor, three or four generations from the surviving compound head. In a similar fashion, a minor lineage is two or three generations between an apical ancestor and the living compound head. A nuclear lineage, on the other hand, is an agnatic group from an apical ancestor in the father or grandfather of living compound heads.

A *Bikpakpaam* clan can be unitary, compound or contrapuntal, the latter being attributable to disjunctive and expansionistic migrations Barker, 1991). The traditional residential style in the *Bikpakpaam* clan system is one clan per district. In other terminologies, the district, in this sense, is a parish or a hamlet. A member of the *Bikpakpaam* society speaks of his/her clan referentially as doyaab and addressively as **N-doyaab**. This term cognates in Tait (1961) as dejaa.

In spite of the fact that it is patrilineal ties that receive emphasis among the *Bikpakpaam*, the individual's concomitant relations with matrilateral and affinal kin cannot also be ignored. The existence of these relationships is crystallised in a number of matrilateral as well as affinal rights and duties imposed on a member of the *Bikpakpaam* society (Barker,1991:9). For instance, one may say that there is a very weak form of avuncularism among the people where a sister's son can be called to assist on the farm of the mother's brother.

Although socio-cultural paradigms continue to drift, the *Bikpakpaam* lineage and clan system is yet to see any considerable metamorphosis.

5. Kinship Terms: The Referential Versus the Addressive

Among the multiplicity of definitions targeted at explaining address terms is the view that an address term is a word or phrase that is used for the person being talked to or written to, Yule (2006), cited in Esmae'li (2011). Yule's definition, though simplistic, tends to be more appealing as it caters for both verbal and non-verbal forms of communication.

Other definitions of address terms as feature in Afful (2006a), Oyetade (1995) and Keshavarz (2001), among others, seem to have a limitation by circumscribing address terms solely to oral, face-to-face interaction. Another view by Bonvillain (2000: 83) has it that address terms, also known as terms of address include several linguistic types and forms that can be used to name, refer to or address a participant in a communicative situation.

A distinction is struck between the referential and the vocative or address functions of linguistic expressions. While such a distinction is well asserted in the literature, it is also admitted that there is no absolute transparent relationship between referential and vocative usage. Address and reference tend to share a lot of tendencies, a situation which throws a great challenge at any attempt to set the two clearly apart. For instance, just as it is impracticable to attempt to determine the way a given individual is normally referred to, so it is with trying to figure out the usual way that a person is addressed. Both reference and address for an individual vary according to the speaker and convey the speaker's relationship to the addressee or the referent. Again, in many cases, a term that is used in reference to a person is also maintained as an address to him/her. For example, a child's parent may refer to him as *John* when talking to the child's teacher and still retain *John* in an address context to the child at home.

On the obverse side of this argument, addresses and references are parameterised on a number of points. First and foremost, the same speaker may use separate forms in reference and in address to the same person. For instance, a Ghanaian student may refer to his teacher as *Mrs. Akoto*, but address her as *Madam*. Again, the referential meaning of a word may be at variance with its addressive interpretation such that a referentially denigratory term can become neutral in an address respect. Afful (2006b: 86) instantiates the case of the Akan derogatory form, *kwasea* (stupid) in an address rendered as *Kwasea Boy* among a student clique at the University of Cape Coast (UCC), Ghana. He also demonstrates how otherwise apparently derogatory English forms like *Naughty Boy* and *Foolish Man* feature as acceptable addressives in verbal exchanges of student in-groups at UCC. As shown by Afful, these descriptive phrases, in their denotation as insults, are divested of such meaning in communicative encounters and, thus, are invested with some tinge of neutrality.

It probably stands to say that the only functional means to perceiving the thin line between the referential and the vocative usage of linguistic forms is when the phenomenon is subjected to a synchronic, socio-pragmatic analysis (see Dickey 1997). Nonetheless, in a basic sense, a word assumes an addressive or vocative status when it is used to directly

call a co-participant in communication, but referential when it serves as a reference label. In this sense, therefore, the vocative usage of a term is how it is used in a context to call an intended decoder/recipient of a message while the referential sense relates to how the person being talked about is termed. Illustratively, this means that if A communicates to C about B, the set of terms A uses to denote C will stand as addresses/addressives whereas A's terms denoting B will most likely serve as referential items.

KTs, as a set of linguistic expressions, function both as referential and address terms in communication. It is the addressive usage of kinship terms that this study is slanted towards.

6. The Lexicon, form and Context of *Likpakpaln* Kinship Addresses

KTs are linguistic expressions that are used for relations, whether of consanguineous or complementary filiation ties. They are indicative of the relationship between a person and his relatives (Yang, 2010: 738). In a related sense and for suitability to the research context of this study, I explain kinship addresses as nominal vocatives that are mainly used to call one's relatives in speech.

Likpakpaln kinship addressives (LKAs) are generally nominal forms. In this sense, therefore, *Likpakpaln* kinship terms have a categorial semblance with Akan (Akan is a majority ethnolinguistic group in Ghana) honorific terms, except that the latter further incorporates (a few) pronominal items (Agyekum, 2003: 370). The repertoire of LKAs is open-ended only in the sense of lexical borrowing. This means that membership of the repertoire does not easily lend itself to addition either by derivation or other processes, except through borrowing as a result of intercultural contact. Thus, one can say that it is basically by lexical borrowing that the stock of LKAs is susceptible to linguistic and cultural dynamism. A KT in *Likpakpaln* has two related forms for referential and addressive usages respectively: either a base or a stem form, prefixed with a syllabic and pronominal clitic **N-**, which I analyse in an address situation as the genitive, *my*. The vocative form of a kinship term in *Likpakpaln* invariably necessitates prefixing the **N-** pronoun to the item involved. For example, the item **N-ti** (my father) is not in an addressive sense without being preposed with **N-**. Consequently, a KT without the **N-** assumes a referential status. Hence, the terms, **Ti** (father), **Na** (mother), **Ninkpan** (sister) and **Yaaja** (grandfather) are the forms used in reference as against **N-na** (my mother), **N-ninkpan** (my sister) and **N-yaaja** (my grandfather) which constitute the addressive forms. This structure of LKAs is analogous to forms Dickey (1997: 262) describe as kinship terms with possessive modifiers. Usually, if the base of a kinship term begins with a bilabial, the **N-**

pronominal prefix undergoes a homorganic nasal assimilation when attached to a KT with a bilabial initial, resulting in an **M-** as in **M-beil** (my elder brother), **M-puul** (my aunt, i.e. father's sister/paternal aunt). A KT, whether as an addressive or referential form can be suffixed with – the class 2a **-tiib** [1]to mark plurality (see Winkelmann, 2012: 473-5 for *Likpakpaln* noun classes).

An interesting observation, from the data for this study, is that one cannot rely on only the form of a kinship term to determine its communicative function as an address or a reference term. It is noted that whereas kinship terms in address contexts constantly go with the **N-/M-** prefix, such forms also occur in some referential usages. The conversational exchanges below evince the foregoing communicative reality with the use of *Likpakpaln* kinship terms:

1. A: **Hey! U-bu wei, a-cha la chee?**
Hey! CL.1-child DEM 2SG-go.PROG where LOC
'Hey! This child, where are you going to?'

B: **N=na ntum mi ke n**
GEN;SG=mother send.PRF 1SG.OBJ CONN 1SG.SBJ
ti-daa ti-waan.
to-buy.IPFV CL.21-thing
'My mother/my mum has sent me to buy something.'

2. A: **N=na, kpe sa sambal ya wii!**
GEN;SG=mother, look.PRS 2SG.POSS plate DEF crack.PRF
'My mother/my mum, look, your plate is cracked!

B: **N=kan. Fu ya nka li fi lir**
1SG=see.PRF. Yesterday DEF CONN 3SG.SBJ TRM fall.PRF
ki-tiŋ.
CL.12,15-ground
'I have seen it. It fell on the floor/ground yesterday.'

[1] Likpakpaln kinship terms in their root/base forms are placed under noun class 1a and in class 2a when in their plural, but referential form.

As can be observed, in 1 above, B uses **N-na** as a reference term while in 2 the same form, **N-na** is used addressively by A. However, the absence of the **N-/M-** pronominal clitic in a kinship term, irrespective of context, is invariably suggestive of referential usage. One can, therefore, postulate that the determination of referential and addressive uses of *Likpakpaln* KTs rests on both the linguistic (morphological) form and communicative context. This can be schematically represented as: form + context = function of a KT.

Every *Likpakpaln* kinship address used in a communicative encounter inherently indexicalises the relative social personae of the interactants as well as suggest the type of relational bond existing between them. This phenomenon with LKAs is in tandem with a resounding argument in the literature that terms of address are extremely important conveyers of social information and reflect interpersonal relationships (Qin, 2008: 409-410). Social information here can be about individuals in a dyad or aspects of the socio-cultural cosmology. Generally, a LKA will include, in its composite semantic interpretation, age, gender and type of kin relationship between the addresser and the addressee. It must, nevertheless, be noted that the age and the relational meanings suggested in a kinship address is not to always be taken literally on every occasion of use. For example, a woman is supposed to address each of her father-in-law's wives as **N-chapii** (an address term for husband's mother), regardless of the relative age of the addressee to the addresser. This also happens, as in other cultures, when adults/parents sometimes invert addresses with children so that a child is addressed by a parent as *father*, *mother* etc. (Aliakbari & Toni, 2008; Mashiri, 1999). The relational semantic also commonly assumes a non-literal sense in a context of extension of a kinship address to a non-relative.

The set of linguistic expressions that serve as kinship addresses (KAs) in *Likpakpaln* are very much tied to the kinship system of the speakers. This linguistic reality is, once again, in line with the age-long theoretical notion that language use is socio-culturally determined (Wardhaugh, 2006: 221-224) whereas culture also finds expression through language. By their status as linguistic items, address terms have been shown to have their roots in the socio-cultural context of society (Oyetade, 1995; Aliakbari & Toni, 2008). Every LKA form chosen in a given context affirms one of three possible kinship relations: agnatic, matrilateral and affinal relation types. This falls in with the *Bikpakpaam* social dispensation whereby every individual born into the community, by default, acquires three categories of kin. These include paternal relatives, matrilateral relatives and affinal relatives. Although the *Bikpakpaam* operate a unilineal agnatic system of descent (Zimon, 2003: 429), the social order also places on the individual the responsibility of giving a certain threshold of social recognition for his/her matrilateral and affinal kin.

Delineating LKAs into three, namely, agnatic, matrilateral and affinal finds plausibility in the fact that every KA in the *Likpakpaln* repertoire non-neutrally point to a particular kind of relationship that is bounded within three kin types, although the matrilateral and the affinal KAs can be regarded as complementary since they are supposed to be meant for the non-descent members of an addresser. As will be discovered in the following section/s, LKAs, whenever they are employed in speech, are largely marked for these separate kin groups to the ego. This feature of bifurcation in *Likpakpaln* kinship terminologies is more clearly pronounced in the distinction that they mark between matrilateral and agnatic relatives. I diagrammatically represent the classification of LKAs as in the figure below:

7. Types of Likpakpaln Kinship Addresses

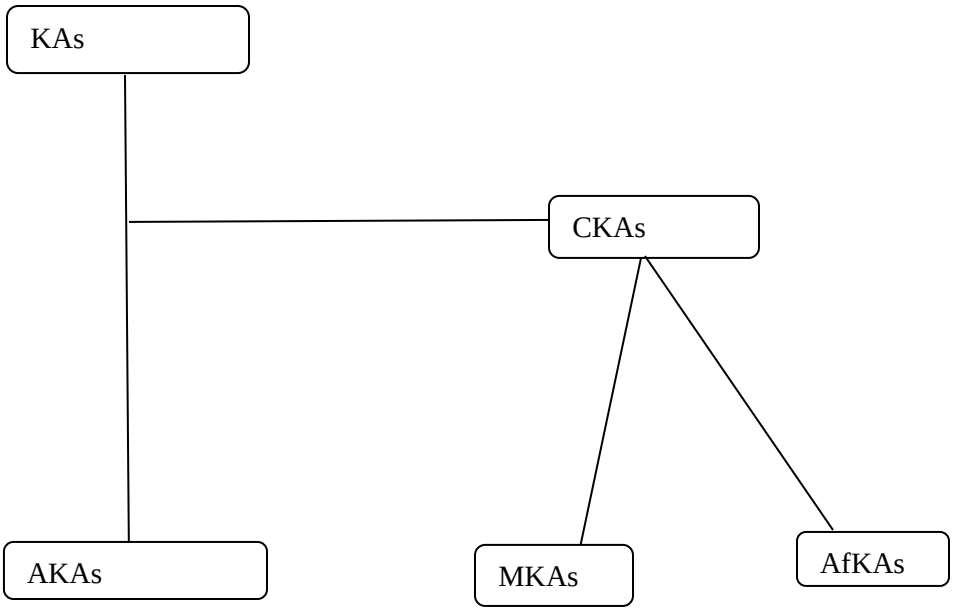

Figure 1: *Likpakpaln* Kinship Addresses

7.1. Agnatic Kinship Addresses (AKAs)

AKAs are the vocatives that reflect a patrilineal relationship between interlocutors. Given the strong patrilineal inclination of the *Bikpakpaam* society, one will further define AKAs as the KAs proper that are employed in address to members of one's descent. This category of KAs was observed to be the most commonly used among the *Bikpakpaam*. This can be attributed to an aspect of the social philosophy and practice among the *Bikpakpaam*. In the *Bikpakpaam* society, the legitimate kin to dwell among are one's paternal relatives and it is usually considered weird and deviant for one (particularly men) to take up a long-term residence with uterine or affinal relatives. It is, nonetheless, worthwhile indicating that the [2]*Bikpakpaam* practise virilocality and so women are expected to live in their husbands' communities. This situation finds enforcement in a kind of strict patrilineal territoriality among the *Bikpakpaam*. This finds corollary in Tait (1961: 73; Barker 1991: 7) that, as far as the Bikpakpaam habitation is concerned, one clan occupies one district and that patrilocal maximal lineages reside in contiguous hamlets. Ideally, one may only go to one's matrilateral kin when the occasion demands and so do married men keep visits to their affinal kin sparingly. This social norm and residential pattern naturally restricts the frequency of interlocutory engagements between matrilateral and affinal relatives as compared to such engagements with agnatic kin. It appears that the influence of kinship notion and practice on the use of LKAs is in compliance with the refrain in several related investigations that terms of address are significantly affected by history, social relationships and traditional ethics (Quin 2008; Yang 2010; Ismae'li 2011). Further still, this is reminiscent of Hymes' (1964) tenet that communicative events and patterns are best examined in relation to cultural values, beliefs, social institutions etc.

AKAs are not employed in a unidirectional mode in *Bikpakpaam* communication. In a verbal interaction, AKAs are sometimes used reciprocally in trans-gender and in cross-generational fashions between participants. Addressing among the *Bikpakpaam* lacks accompanying strict social sanctions. However, from a general point of view, the younger agnatic kin of a clan tend to more frequently address their elderly relatives with AKAs than the vice versa. There is infrequent use of AKAs in verbal engagements occurring between agnatic relatives in the same age ranks, even when such interlocutions are trans-gender. Traditionally, the use of AKAs in dyads between age mates may only be a deliberate recipe to a certain desired communicative effect. What rather happens in some instances is for

[2] In figure 1, KAs = kinship addresses, AKAs = agnatic kinship addresses, CKAs = complementary kinship addresses, MKAs = matrilateral kinship addresses and AfKAs = affinal kinship addresses.

some youths to resort to forms like **Braa/Brada** (bro./brother) and **Sista** (sister) as a mark of respect/politeness or unfamiliarity. These forms (which originate from English) may be used in isolation or used to precede the addressee's FN as in **Braa Mukanjo**, **Sista Nakool** etc. as can be noticed in the following exchanges:

3. A: **Braa** **Jangboja, ndopua.**
Bro. Jangboja, good morning
'Bro. Jagbonja, good morning.'
B: **Monica,** **lafei** **bi?**
Monica, health be.there
'Monica, how are you?

4. A: **Braa,** **u-nachipuan** **u=ti=si=na** **yin** **si.**
Bro., CL.1-young man who=LOC=stand.PROG=FOC call.PROG 2SG.OBJ
'Bro., the young man standing over there is calling you.'
B: **Yoo,** **aa=ni=li-tuln**
Ok, 2SG=and=CL.5-work
'Ok, thank you.'

The form, **Braa** can be used either in isolation or together with FN while **Brada** is often used alone. It is observed that when this pattern of KA + FN is used for a youth, there is a dignifying/respectability effect on the addressee. **Braa** in isolation may suggest politeness or lack of familiarity with the addressee's personal name while **Brada** in isolation is mostly indicative of unfamiliarity with addressee's name. This English-source address forms are clearly on ascendancy in African communities. [3]Afful (2006b) and Mashiri also confirm the use of similar addresses among the Fante of Ghana and the Shona of Zimbabwe respectively. Table 1 below provides a list of AKAs:

[3] Among the *Bikpakpaam*, people are seldom addressed with the last name(LN) or with the formal full name as in first name, plus last name (FNLN). The use of FN is the order of the day. LN and FNLN patterns usually occur in non-traditional contexts like in school, at the hospital, in church etc.

Table 2: Agnatic Kinship Addresses (AKAs)[4]

Kinship Address	Addresser - Addressee	English Gloss
Nyaaja	C ⟹ FF	Grandfather
Nti	C⟹ F	Father
Ntikpel	C⟹FBe	Uncle
Ntiwaa	C⟹FBy	Uncle
Mpuul	C⟹FZ	Aunt
Mbeil	B⟹Be	Elder brother
Nnaal	B⟹By	Younger brother
Mbeil	Z⟹Ze	Elder sister
Nnaal	Z⟹ Zy	Younger sister
Nninkpan	B⟹Z	Sister
Nninja	Z⟹B	Brother
Njapuan	F⟹S	Son

[4] The kinship addresses in Tables 2, 3 and 4 may not be exhaustive of the repertoire in *Likpakpaln*. However, all those that appeared in the research data are represented. The kin notations used in the tables were derived from Raciunaite-Pauzuoliene (2013: 103) and are interpreted as follows: F-father, B-brother, S-son, H-husband, e-older/elder, ss-same sex, M-mother, Z-sister, D-daughter, W-wife, y-younger and os-opposite sex. A combination of symbols expresses possession (e.g., MZ means mother's sister and FBe means father's brother younger than father). A double pointing arrow (⟺) suggests that both addresser and addressee can exchange the kinship address.

Mbisal	F⟹D	Daughter
Mpubil	FZ⟹C	Nephew/Niece
Nyaabil	F ⟹SC	Grandchild

In *Likpakpaln*, there are no separate AKAs for immediate and distant lineage or clan members. AKAs in *Likpakpaln* remain the same, for both immediate and distant relatives. For example, the addresses, **Ntikpel** (my elder paternal uncle) and **Ntiwaa** (my younger paternal uncle) are invariant for both immediate and non-immediate male paternal siblings of one's father. This address culture mirrors an aspect of the communalistic character of the *Bikpakpaam* society where every child belongs to every adult clan member and every adult clan member a parent to every child in the clan. In this regard, Tait (1961: 74) has this to say about the *Bikpakpaam*: "To any child the elder is my father; any child of the lineage is my child to the elder."

Another unique discovery around LKAs is that parents hardly address their own genetic children with the exact address forms that reflect the parent-child relationship as in **Mbisal** (my daughter) or **Njapuan** (my son). Parents prefer to use such addresses to the children of other relatives other than their own. When one decides to address one's own child with a KA, one will usually resort to non-literal usage of address such as addressing a child with **Ntiwaa**, **Nti**, **Mpuul**, **Nna** etc. This amounts to a pattern describable as reversative addressing since, at the moment of address, parents seem to invert their address positions with their children. Otherwise, FN is the commonest address form from parents to their genetic children.

7.2. Matrilateral Kinship Addresses (MKAs)

MKAs are the terms that are used in address to one's mother's patrikin or mother's agnates. The term **Nweitiib** is the hyperonym that collectively addresses or refers to all of one's matrilateral kin as the form, **Weitiib** is invariably the reference form for such relations. Among the *Bikpakpaam*, the use of KAs in communication is more stable and regular in matrilateral relationships than happens in agnatic relationships. This is to say that matrilateral relatives, across generations and gender tend to more regularly observe the use of appropriate KAs in their interactions than agnatic relations do. For instance, whereas

uterine kin in the same ranks will still prefer to address one another with KAs, same generation agnatic kin rarely use KAs, with the most prevalent address form being the exchange of FN. It is likely that this address situation is underpinned by a relatively reduced level of familiarity (conditioned by the *Bikpakpaam* social norms) among matrilateral kin. It was observed that with the exception of one's direct matrilateral grandparents (i.e. parents of one's mother) who will normally address one by FN, all other matrilateral kin will prefer to address one with an appropriate MKA, with the vice versa being the case. Table 3 provides a list of *Likpakpaln* MKAs, built from the research data.

Table 3: Matrilateral Kinship Addresses (MKAs)

Kinship Address	**Addresser- Addressee**	**English Gloss**
Nyaaja	DC⟹ MF	Grandfather
Nyaaja	BZC⟹ MFB	Grandfather
Nwei	ZC⟺MB	Uncle
Nnakpel	ZC⟹ MZe	Aunt
Nnawaa	ZC⟹ MZy	Aunt
Nwei	MBS⟺FZC	Cousin
Nnabo	MZC⟺MZC	Cousin
Nnawaa	MBD ⟹FZC	Cousin

As can be noted from Table 3, *Likpakpaln* matrilateral KTs have a feature of skewing as it lumps relatives of different generations with the same label. For example, the kinship address used for one's mother's brother (MB) is the same for one's mother's brother's son (MBS). It has been established that this nature of kin terms is common with ethnicities with strong patrilineal systems (Schwimmer 2001), a description that the

Bikpakpaam social system is prototypical of. Also, as with the *Likpakpaln* agnatic kin terms, uterine kin terms do not discriminate between immediate and distant relatives.

7.3. Affinal Kinship Addresses (AfKAs)

Affinal kinship addresses (AfKAs) are a set of addresses that portray a marital relationship between interlocutors. Observation and data revealed that females (women) more often use AfKAs to males (men) than the reverse happens. It means, then, that a husband's kin exact more AfKAs from the wife than a wife's kin do from the husband. Again, this in-balance in the pattern of kinship address usage is partly explainable in the *Bikpakpaam* type of marital residence, patrilocality. Whereas a wife usually will spend the rest of her life in the midst of her husband's relatives, it is the norm that a husband infrequently mingles with the wife's relatives. This limits communicative opportunities that would warrant the exchange of AfKAs between husband and his wife's kin. Although it is socially and culturally very approving for the individual (whether male or female) to address the kin of his/her spouse with the appropriate AfKAs, the *Bikpakpaam* have no known mechanism in place to exact compliance to this expected verbal behaviour from members of the community. One may never address one's spouse's relatives in the ascending generations with a bare FN, but an instance of a violation of this norm may not also lead to any comment or open rebuke.

The use of AfKAs among the *Bikpakpaam* is more of a mark of politeness in deference to one's affinal relatives. In the *Bikpakpaam* tradition, respect between an individual and his/her affinal kin may not always be mutual. It is customary for wives and husbands as individuals to show more meekness and greater respect towards the kinsmen of their spouses. This hypothesis has a backing in the *Bikpakpaam* philosophy that: Ukpakpanja achoo san waawumbɔr (A man's in-law is his God). Thus, the use of AfKAs by an individual to the kin of his/her spouse is mostly motivated by negative politeness. Table 4 below catalogues *Likpakpaln* AfKAs.

Table 4: Affinal Kinship Addresses (AfKAs)

Kinship Address	Addresser - Addressee	English Gloss
Nchoo	H ⟺ WF	Father-in-law/Son-in-law

Nchoo	H ⟺ WM	Mother-in-law/Son-in-law
Nchoja	W ⟹ HF	Father-in-law
Nchapii	W ⟹ HM	Mother-in-law
Mpuu	H⟹W	Wife
Nchal	W⟹H	Husband
Nyɔn	W⟺HW	Rival
Nchakpel	W⟹HBe	Brother-in-law
Nchawaa	W⟹HBy	Brother-in-law
Nchiin	H⟺WB	Brother-in-law
Nchiin	H⟺WZ	Sister-in-law
Nnatɔ	H⟺WZH	Brother-in-law

As a consistent feature of *Likpakpaln* KTs, AfKAs do not mark distinction between close and distant relatives. For instance, the addressing term, **Nchoja** for husband's father (HF) is the same for husband's father's brother (HFB) of any generation. Also, a notable address mannerism in relation to AfKAs among the *Bikpakpaam* is that couples almost never address each other with the forms **Mpuu** (my wife) and **Nchal** (my husband), which terms would depict the exact kinship relationship between them. The most regular way of addressing between couples is reciprocal FN. Some wives may also, in exchange for FN, address their husbands with occupational titles like **Fiita** (fitter), **Teila** (tailor), **Tiicha** (teacher) etc. The use of teknonyms from wives to husbands is also visible among the *Bikpakpaam*. In this particular addressing style, a husband is addressed by wife with a form that defines him as 'father of his child'. In the *Bikpakpaam* case, it is usually the first child's name that is adopted in this descriptive address from wife to husband. Examples of this

address pattern include: **Mbɔti Ati** (Mborti's Father), **Abena Ati** (Abena's Father), **Njɔfuni Ati** (Njɔfuni's Father) etc.

There is also an evolving address paradigm of some couple using **Mama** (mum/mummy) and **Daddi/Dada** (daddy/dad) in address to each other (i. e., wife addresses husband as **Daddi** and gets **Mama** in return), though not always in a reciprocal form as some husbands, in such address situations, still keep FN for their wives. This innovation in *Likpakpaln* kinship terminologies is a mark of Westernism in the socio-cultural context of the *Bikpakpaam* as happens in the Akan address system (Agyekum, 2006:229). So far, couples who were discovered to patronise this novel form of addressing fulfilled some or all of these variables: Christianity, exposure to urban life and attainment of some level of formal education.

8. Functions of Kinship Addresses

Convincingly, address terms have been shown to carry several functions in communication and society generally. In the view of Quin (2008: 409), terms of address open communicative acts and set the tone for the interchanges that follow. For Leech (1999), they signal transactional, interpersonal and deitic ramifications in human relationships. Similarly, Afful (2006b: 89) argues that by terms of address, students attempt to construct and reflect individual and group social identities. However, a trajectory that is innovative with this study is to look at how a single address category (in this case, kinship address terms) can communicatively be manipulated to assume functions typical of other address types. Further to this claim, this study also makes the point that the choice and use of an address form can determine as well as be determined by the communicate intent of an addresser.

8.1. Kinship Addresses as Identifiers

Identification is a common function that is known of address terms. This role of address terms seems to be more closely related to personal names, a sub-class of address terms. One of the reasons for naming in our cultural contexts is so that we can differentiate (Agyekum, 2006: 207) and a name refers specifically to its bearer.

A primordial communicative significance of *Likpakpaln* KAs is their (KAs) resourcefulness in identifying participants in a communicative encounter when used non-fictively. This identity can be from an intra-clan or an inter-clan perspective. In the

Bikpakpaam society, an individual simultaneously has three categories of relatives (see section 5) in the midst of numerous clan divisions. Given this social arrangement, the choice of a kin term for an addressee helps identify his/her lineage or clan line. For example, if it is known that A's mother belongs to clan x, the use of the address form, **Nwei** to B by A will reveal that B is a member of clan x. In the same way, when B is in the company of A's clansmen, the use of the address form, **Nwei** alone suffices to identify and single out B as the one being addressed.

In their use for an identification motive, KAs are also commonly combined with FN, in which case the particular address takes the structure of KA + FN. This happens when the addresser can gauge that FN alone is inadequate in identifying an intended recipient. Among the *Bikpakpaam*, it is ubiquitous for the same FN to have multiple bearers in the community or even in the same household. This is especially the case with Christian/English, Islamic and Akan day names that have become very common among the *Bikpakpaam*. When this happens, one functional way to avoid and resolve addressee ambiguities is for an addresser to add a KA to the addressee's FN as in **Nwei Magmanbi**, **Ntikpel Timunaan**, **Nnawaa Ubaneen** etc. For this kind of addressee identification strategy (KA + FN) to work, the addresser must have kinship tie/s with addressee/s. The following exchanges exemplify KA + FN usage:

5. A: **Kwame, bi-chaam funi ki ban**
Kwame, CL.2(PL)-visitor arrive.PRF CONN look.IPFV
si a=do
2SG.OBJ 2SG;POSS=house
'Kwame, visitors are awaiting you in your house.'

A: **N=nabo Kwame, n tike bi-chaam**
GEN;SG=cousin Kwame, 1SG.SBJ QUOT CL.2(PL)-visitor
ban si a=do
look.IPFV 2SG.OBJ 2SG;POSS=house
'Kwame, my cousin, visitors are awaiting you in your house.'

B: **Ma ba-nyi ke mme chee nka a=len.**
1SG;NEG PST-know that 1SG there that 2SG=talk.PRF
Aa=ni=lituln
2SG=and=CL.1-work

'I didn't know that I was the one you were talking to. Thank you.'

In 5, A had to do an address repair in A's second utterance by adding a KA to B's (addressee's) FN in order to sufficiently identify B as the recipient. In the company of other *Kwame* FN bearers, B did not know he was the one being addressed until a MKA, **Nnabo** was added.

8.2. Kinship Addresses as Solidarity Terms

KAs provide a very potent means of creating and sustaining solidarity among members of the *Bikpakpaam* community. This is seen among some clansmen using certain KA forms reciprocally as a mark of intimacy and to drum home a sense of belongingness. The AKA form, **Ntiwaa** was seen to have such a use among the *Binajuub* clansmen at Sibi. It is usual for any two members, particularly males to trade the form, **Ntiwaa** upon meeting each other. This symmetrical address exchange is mostly accompanied by noticeable feelings of elation, warmth and oneness. Other forms that were commonly used that way include the MKA form, **Nnabo/Nnayɔ** and the AfKA form, **Nnatɔ.** The dyads below exemplify the solidarity use of KAs.[5]

6. A: **N=tua!**
GEN;SG=uncle
'uncle!'

B: **N=tua!**
GEN;SG=uncle
'uncle!'

A:	**N=tua,**	**ka**	**ti**	**lan-ji**	**ba**	**din?**
	GEN;SG=uncle	CONN	1PL.SBJ	FUT-eat	what	today
	'Uncle, what are we going to eat today?'					
B:	**N=tua,**	**n**	**kpe**	**a=bɔ.**		
	GEN;SG-uncle,	1SG.SBJ	look.IPFV	2SG=on		
	'Uncle, I'm looking up to you.'					

[5] The conversation in 5 above was recorded at the Binajuub community, Sibi during a funeral festivity. Both A and B are members of the Binajuub clan and are also cousins, i.e. A's mother and B's mother are sisters.

7. A: **N=natɔ!**
GEN;SG=brother-in-law
B: **N=natɔ!**
GEN;SG=brother-in-law
A: **N-gien chee?**
CL.22,23-sleep there
'How is your health'
B: **Lafei bi, N=natɔ**
Health be-there GEN;SG=brother-in-law
'I'm fine, brother-in-law'

Every *Likpakpaln* KA can possibly be adopted for a solidarity effect between individuals or groups, especially in communication between same generation interlocutors. An already existing camaraderie between interlocutors can inform their use of a KA to reinforce this bond. The other way around, a sense of solidarity can be initiated by using a KA either to a relative or a non-relative. For example, the use of the form, **Nnatɔ** (whether literally or non-literally) somewhat naturally engenders a feeling and attitude of solidarity between the addresser and the addressee. In their typical use as solidarity terms as in 6 and 7 above, *Likpakpaln* KAs assume the outlook of Gang and play names (see Agyekum, 2006: 225 for gang and play names).

8.3. Honorific Use of Kinship Addresses

Honorifics are linguistic markers or forms that signal respect (Bonvillain, 2000: 89). Making reference to the views of other writers, Agyekum (2003: 369) refer to honorifics as specialised address and deference forms used to show politeness. Honorifics also point to aspects of social identity and reflect social asymmetries. *Likpakpaln* KAs are sometimes used as reverential titles, in which case they attain honorific status. Some elderly people by virtue of their achievements and exemplary life styles in the community may come to deserve a high level of respect. One way of expressing this respect is for the other people to address such an individual with either **Tina** (our mother), **Titi** (our father), **Tiyaa** (our grandmother) or **Tiyaaja** (our grandfather). Prefixing a KA with the plural genitive, **Ti-** (our) elevates the status of the addressee as the parent of all. This honorific use of *Likpakpaln* KAs is akin to the use of **bóbö** (elder paternal uncle) among the Chinese. As

noted by Bonvillain (p. 88), the use of the Chinese **bóbö** implies a deferential and exalted status of the addressee, worthy of extreme respect and the concomitant humbling of the speaker.

The honorific usage of *Likpakpaln* KAs is also extended to supernatural beings in the *Bikpakpaam* religious circles and activities. In prayer, God is sometimes addressed as **Titi Uwumbɔr** (God our father) and in libation an ancestor/ancestress is addressed honorifically as **Tiyaaja/Tiyaa** + name of ancestor or ancestress. In an honorific mode, a KA can be used alone or in combination with the personal name of the addressee. An honorific usage of a KA in *Likpakpaln* may also have a laudatory under-tone as it dignifies the addressee.

8.4. Emotive Use of Kinship Addresses

The emotive use of language refers to the use of language to appeal to people's feelings or emotions (Ofori, Asilevi & Quansah, 2013: 27). In this case, I consider the emotive function of language in a positive sense where KAs are used to trigger positive feelings and attitudes that elicit desirable responses. It also incorporates the use of KAs as a mark of approval for a deserving act or conduct.

Some of the emotive uses of *Likpakpaln* KAs include their functions as persuasive, affectionate/endearment and commendatory devices in communication. A careful observation reveals that KAs have a persuasive force that can skilfully be drawn on by an addresser to elicit behavioural compliance from an addressee. In a broader perspective, persuasion is any form of discourse that serves to influence thought, feeling and conduct. One way that *Likpakpaln* speakers achieve persuasion with KAs is to extend to an addressee an address form that elevates his/her status relative to the addresser. The following dialogue between a mother and her 5-year old son exemplifies this:

8. A:	**Foo**	**n-nyɔk**	**ki**	**nyɔ**
	Take.PRS	CL.3-medicine	and	drink
	'Take medicine and drink.' (mother giving medicine in a cup to her sick son)			

B:	**Maa**	**lan-nyɔ**
	1SG;NEG	FUT-drink
	'I won't drink!	

A:	**Ah!**	**N=yaaja,**	**fo**	**ki**	**nyɔ**	**ka**
	Ah!	GEN;SG=grandpa	take.PRS	and	drink.PRS	CONN
	a=wun	**nsɔŋ**[6]				
	2SG.POSS=body	cool				

'Ah! Grandpa, take it so that you'll get well'.

KAs are also commonly used among the *Bikpakpaam* as endearment/affectionate and commendatory expressions. This is mostly from parents to children and from husbands to wives. However, in such instances, there is a precondition of a pleasurable mood, especially on the part of the addresser. The endearment/affectionate and commendatory uses of KAs also mainly see the use of the addresses in a non-literal sense. For example, a husband may, as a mark of affection or commendation address his wife as **Mpuul** (a KA for paternal aunt), **Nyaa**, **Nnawaa** etc.

9. Conclusion

In this paper, I have discussed kinship terms as a category of addressives in *Likpakpaln*. I also put forth the proposal that, per their addressive usage, *Likpakpaln* kinship terms can be delineated into three, namely: agnatic kinship addresses, matrilateral kinship addresses and affinal kinship addresses. This categorisation is dependent on the kind of kinship ties that are constructed by the *Bikpakpaam* social system. Also, more importantly, I have shown that in addition to the popular claim in the Invariant Norm of Address (Brown, 1965) that the choice of addresses in communication is solely based on status and intimacy, communicative intentions can also significantly influence address choices. Further, I intimate that the same address type (in this case kinship address terms) can be contextually manipulated into varied communicative functions. This observation ties up with a focal point in the ethnography of communication (Hymes, 1964) that the same linguistic form can be organised for quite varied linguistic ends. Finally, I hint that some innovative tendencies are creeping into the *Bikpakpaam* address system, a situation that marks intercultural influence on the *Bikpakpaam* linguistic culture.

[6] After speaker A's second utterance in 8, her sick son (B) now grabs the cup and begins to sip the medicine.

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