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A sociolinguistic study of an Ewe-based youth language of Aflao, Ghana

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CHAPTER FIVE

ADZAGBE YOUTH CULTURE

5.1 Introduction

This chapter is the first part of the answer to the second research question as to why Adzagbe speakers create a code of their own. As we have seen in the previous chapter, the most outstanding reason is to create identity for themselves as identity is bound by language and culture. Even the local name for *Adzagbe* ‘rogue/hooligan language’ reveals the type of people who speak Adzagbe, rogues of Aflao, Ghana. Regarding urban youth, Kiessling and Mous (2004:5) argue that:

For urban youth, identification is achieved through distancing themselves from the older generations, from rural population that tends to live a more traditional way of life, and from the upper social classes or generally speaking from the rest of society.

We note that one identifying mark that distinguishes speakers of youth languages is the “distancing themselves from the older generations” in so far as language and their way of life are concerned.

The body of literature on youth culture continues to grow as scholars investigate youth cultures from differing angles and viewpoints. Woodman and Bennett (2015), for example, acknowledge that youth studies are multifaceted as they draw contributions from areas such as history, education, anthropology, culture, and media studies. Of course, culture itself is an ever-growing and dynamic human phenomenon which can be looked at from various points of view such as argued by Woodman and Bennett (2015). In expanding the views of Woodman and Bennett (2015), Bennett (2015:42) opines that “for a number of years, theorists have suggested that the term ‘youth culture’ corresponds with

particularized forms of youth cultural practice ... around... ‘music, style, and associated objects, images, and text’”. Bennett (2015) points out that theorists in discussing youth culture tend to focus only on the spectacular and this focus only narrows their view in that there are ordinary youth who are not cardbearing members of style-based youth. From Bennett (2015), we deduce that context is very important in describing youth culture and discussions must be specific as to what aspects of youth culture is being described and at the same time which particular youth are at the centre of investigation. Context is crucial in discussing youth culture so that findings of a study do not mislead readers by referring to an entire group of youth while they actually describe just a subset of that group (Seldanha, 2002; Harris, 2015).

The context or the focus group in this study is the youth who use Adzagbe extensively in their day-to-day endeavours, not the entire youth population of Aflao. As mentioned in Chapter Two, this study has adopted anthropological linguistics in conjunction with Eckert’s (2000) community of practice construct as complementary frameworks for describing Adzagbe practices. The study, therefore, focuses on four major parts of Adzagbe youth culture: their physical appearance, their music, their practices during social gatherings such as weddings and funerals, and their nicknaming practices.

5.2 Adzagbe Youth Appearance

This section discusses the general physical appearance of Adzagbe youth. Attention is paid to their overall dress and grooming. While the focus is on Adzagbe speakers, this discussion is not a claim that the descriptions here are exclusive to only Adzagbe youth. Let us begin first by discussing the dress and grooming of Adzagbe youth males after which we discuss those of the females.

5.2.1 Adzagbe male youth dress and grooming

The overall personal grooming of the Adzagbe male is immersed in fashion-oriented choices. Let us first describe hairdo among Adzagbe males. The typical Adzagbe male

will go for hairdo that is easily spotted in a group. One major choice of hairdo is hair dying, the usual colour being blond. The sources of the influence for hair dying are not difficult to tell. For example, it is not unusual to see a male with a blond hair wearing a Manchester United's jersey with Pogba's name at its back. Very often Paul Pogba dyes his hair blond and his admirers among the Adzagbe male youth do the same in imitation of him. Paul Pogba's case is just an example to illustrate the sources of the influences of a particular aspect of the culture of Adzagbe male youth. Hua (2007) acknowledges that youth cultures always have outside influence.

Another common hairstyle among the male youth of Adzagbe is dreadlocks, known among the Adzagbe youth as *rasta*. The source of this influence is Rastafarianism which has spread across the globe and is embraced by many youth (Hepner, 1998; Pearson, 1980). Sevishinsky (1994:20) investigated the spread of Rastafarianism among the youth of West Africa and says: "Rastafari serves as a potent symbol and expression of defiance, independence, racial pride and solidarity". White (2012, 2007) also identifies the influence of Rastafarianism and that of Bob Marley as being responsible for people wearing dreadlocks.

Sevishinsky's (1994) words that Rastafarianism offers youth a sense of defiance and independence are true of Adzagbe youth. The wearing of dreadlocks by Adzagbe youth only sets to emphasise their conscious actions towards being separate from society. Kiessling and Mous (2004) emphasise that the conscious actions of the youth in order to be antisociety are a key identifiable mark among them. Among Adzagbe youth, this is evidenced in their hairdo, particularly in dying their hair and wearing of dreadlocks. These styles of hairdo, therefore, go beyond fashion by sending symbolic messages of identity and defiance against the society. It must be noted that Rastafarianism is admired among the youth of Adzagbe not in the light of practicing the religion as it is done by practicing Rastas. It is more of a symbolic thing and an ideology than anything else. Of course, not

all who practice Rastafarianism smoke marijuana. However, some Adzagbe male youth smoke marijuana as an identity symbol, even though that is illegal in Ghana. Bob Marley once answered a question in an interview about the significance of his dreadlocks. He replied: “This is my identity man. This is my identity. If you are a Rasta then you shouldn’t say why you shouldn’t have it...” (JA forU, 2013). Bob Marley acknowledged that his dreadlocks were part of his identity and that no Rastafarian could do without that identity. In effect, Adzagbe speakers’ hairdos are part of their identity, just as it was for Bob Marley. People could easily tell that one is an *adzavi* ‘rogue’ by his dreadlocks. One Adzagbe speaker says regarding his dreadlocks:

Ne wò ɲuto è-tse rasta zi deka è-ya-fũ be
COND 2SG very 2sg-see rasta time one 2SG-AUX-know COMP

adza-wo le geti-a me.
rogue-PL VLOC ghetto-DEF inside

‘If you yourself see the dreadlocks, at once you’ll know that rogues are in the ghetto.’ (A 21-year-old Adzagbe speaker, April 2020)

One other thing significant about the wearing of dreadlocks among Adzagbe youth is the profound celebration they hold on the death day of the music icon and Rasta symbol Bob Marley. Every May 11 is like a Christmas day among Adzagbe youth. That day is a day of partying, smoking marijuana and reggae music. Asked why they attach so much importance to the day of Bob Marley’s death, one youth wearing dreadlocks says that Bob Marley has shown the world what a youth could achieve by relying on himself and that he was like Jesus. He went on to say that “the world celebrates Christmas; we celebrate Bob Marley”. We can tell that the wearing of dreadlocks among these youth is really a part of their culture that they hold high.

Another distinct personal grooming among Adzagbe male youth is the wearing of earrings in one or both of their ears. This study is not claiming that this is a sole

possession of Adzagbe male youth. Non-Adzagbe youth and even some older adults wear earrings for their own respective reasons. Fering (2015) conducted a study on the emerging wearing of earring among men in Ghana. He concluded that the majority of men wearing earrings in Ghana fall between the ages of 31- 41 and continued that the general Ghanaian cultural attitude towards the wearing of earrings among men is negative. The Ewe culture also frowns on the wearing of earrings among males. The reason why Adzagbe male youth adopt this grooming practice, which is clearly against the dominant culture of the society, is to project the antisociety identity they want to carve for themselves. In fact, in Aflao, men who wear earrings are regarded as belonging to the LGBTQ+ community which has a very negative reception not only in Aflao but also in the whole of Ghana as there is no legal recognition of same sex unions and LGBTQ+ activities, and there have been constant calls from Ghanaian citizens to criminalise LGBTQ+ activities in the country (Abubakari et al., 2021; Ohema Birago Oware, 2021; Mesmer & Socha, 2020).⁵

Another thing common among Adzagbe youth as regards dress and grooming is their preference for chains and rings. It is not uncommon to see Adzagbe youth males wearing more than one heavy chains with big medallions as well as multiple rings on their fingers. In addition, Adzagbe male youth wear baggy or very tight jean trousers with big combat shoes, the types worn by many music stars and fashion icons across of the world. The wearing of earrings, heavy chains, multiple rings among Adzagbe males is obviously tailored after the dress and grooming among USA rappers.

⁵ Since February 2024, Ghana's parliament has passed a bill making identifying as LGBTQ+ illegal.

5.2.2 Adzagbe female dress and grooming

Adzagbe females' dress and grooming are not so different from those of their male counterparts but for a few idiosyncrasies. Some Adzagbe females also dye their hair just like the males do. However, quite a majority prefer to keep their hair rather short. They wear trousers and exhibit some form of masculine presence in the manner they walk, speak and carry themselves. It is ironic that Adzagbe male youth wear earrings while their female counterparts do not. We have discussed earlier that according to the Ewe culture and the overall Ghanaian traditional culture, it is unacceptable for males to wear earrings. By the same token, it is judged uncultured for a female to go without earrings. On this background, it is easy to see through the wider Aflao cultural lenses that females who do not wear earrings are reprimanded or looked upon as spoilt and uncultured. Some Adzagbe females are also fond of wearing very tight-fitting dresses that accentuate their curves. In addition, others wear nose rings and anklets. All these types of dress and grooming among Adzagbe females bring a lot of antagonism from the older generation and even from some non-Adzagbe youth.

5.3 Adzagbe Youth Music Culture

Laughtey (2007:1) acknowledges that "music and youth are usually deemed to hold a special relationship with each other". Studies such as Lau (2013), Bennett (2000), Moore (2019), Rose and Rose (2014), and Aidi (2014) have all shown that there is something unique about youth cultures and the kind of music they love as regards such things as the artists involved and the content of their lyrics. Music goes beyond rhythm to the youth; it identifies or reaffirms their primary convictions (Glass, 2008; Hall, 2014; Muggleton, 2005; Diamond et al., 2006). In that regard, the artists as well as the content of their music are projected as the standards to adhere to. Attention is, therefore, paid in this section not only to the types of music Adzagbe speakers ascribe to but also the artists and the content of their songs. Let us first discuss some of the artists that Adzagbe youth subscribe to with particular focus on local artists. Since Aflao is the main Ghanaian border town to the

Republic of Togo, the youth of Aflao are privy to artists from both Ghana and Lomé, Togo, and this blend of artists shape the youth culture of Aflao. As we saw in Chapters Three and Four, a large number of Adzagbe words have their origins from French, which is the official language of the Republic of Togo and Aflao's geographical setting explains this influence.

Currently, some of the Ghanaian artists whose music Adzagbe youth listen to as well as copy their personalities, dress and grooming, gait and other personal idiosyncrasies are usually youth themselves. The youthfulness of these artists gives a natural connection between them and the youth across the country, particularly Adzagbe youth. These artists from Ghana and Togo are presented here by their stage names, some of which have controversial antisociety connotations. Some of these male artists by stage names are Abodam, Stonebwoy, Shatta Wale, Patapaa, De Crime, Edem, Yaa Pono, Bosom P-yung, Kubolor, Toofan, Ali Jezz, and FOKN Bois. Some female artists by stage names are Ebony, Miz Vee, Eno Baroni, Easy Baby, Wendy Shay, and Fantana. Some of these stage names have interesting backgrounds which reveal that Adzagbe youth connect not only with their music but also their personalities and messages their stage names convey.

Let us discuss a few of these to illustrate the point in question. For example, the stage name *Abodam* is a Twi word, which means 'madness'. Adzagbe youth also seem to subscribe to the spectacular or the queer. Abodam's songs cause a lot of eerie among Adzagbe youth whenever they are played. For example, one of Abodam's songs is titled *Abodam* 'madness'. In that song's video, Abodam sits on a local kitchen stool in a rickety salon car and drives it around. Such an unconventional way of life as portrayed in the video is the toast of Adzagbe youth. The name *Patapaa* means 'one who takes things from others by force'. De Crime is a play on the words *the crime*; *FOKN Bois* is a play on the words *fucking boys*; *Kubolor* refers to 'one who wanders about aimlessly' and *Bosom* means 'god'. *Yaa Pono* is a combination of the name *Yaa* 'a girl born on Thursday' and

Pono ‘pornography’. Their spectacularism and queerness are what make Adzagbe youth gravitate towards these artists. The queerness manifests itself in their song lyrics as well. Four major themes are found in the songs of these artists, namely, praise of Adzagbe, as some of these artists are Adzagbe speakers from Aflao, human sexuality, wealth and revolt against the system. Let us briefly discuss these themes with some examples in terms of content from these artists.

5.3.1 Praise of Adzagbe and the Aflao town

Some youth music artists from Aflao have composed songs in praise of Adzagbe and the Aflao town. One of such is Ackumany’s 2014 *Adzagbe* ‘rogue language’, the local name for Adzagbe. This song is very popular with Adzagbe speakers as it praises the uniqueness of their number one identity marker – Adzagbe. An excerpt from *Adzagbe* goes thus:

M-è-se gome-a?
2SG-NEG-hear under-Q

Abɔdzokpo nè-le-a?
kindergarten 2SG-VLOC-Q

Adzagbe

Adzagbe

Adzagbe

M-è-se gome-a?
2SG-NEG-hear under-Q

M-é-se Uegbe o
NEG-3SG-hear Ewe NEG

Ta e-be *what is the meaning*
CONJ 3SG-say

‘Don’t you understand?
 Are you in kindergarten?
 Adzagbe
 Adzagbe
 Adzagbe
 Don’t you understand?
 He does not understand Ewe
 So he says what is the meaning’

The rhetorical questions of the first two metres of the song, namely, *Don’t you understand?* and *Are you in kindergarten?* support the conclusion drawn earlier that one of the functions of Adzagbe is to create mutual unintelligibility between Adzagbe speakers and the rest of society as an identity marker. In effect, Adzagbe speakers are saying that if you do not understand what they say, you do not belong to their community. The entire *Adzagbe* song lasts for only two minutes five seconds. However, the term *Adzagbe* ‘rogue language’ is mentioned thirty-two (32) times in praise of Adzagbe. One thing that stands out in the song in confirming Adzagbe as an identity marker for its speakers is what is captured in lines seven and eight where one is accused of not speaking Ewe and asking the meaning of what is said. Those lines confirm Ewe as the base language of Adzagbe, and even that the Adzagbe speaker can manipulate it to confuse Ewe speakers, thereby creating his own language and identity.

Another popular Aflao youth artist whose songs praise Adzagbe and the Aflao town is known by the stage name Keeny Ice. One of his songs released in 2017 is titled *Gankivi*, an Adzagbe term for *rogue*. Part of Keeny Ice’s *Gankivi* goes thus:

Si ne wò-a-de du-a gbò be
 hear:3SG CONJ 3SG-SUBJV-reach town-DEF near COMP

nye-me-ga-nye vi fẽ o
1SG-NEG-REP-COP child young NEG

Keeny I'm grown

Me-xɔ kpemi le dzi-a-fo
1SG-receive stone.face PREP sky-DEF-flat.surface

Me-ke ŋku ɖe mia dzi sigbe *drone*
1SG-open eye PREP 2PL POST like

Rap-a sugbɔ kaka gbago ta m-a-te na mi *loan*
rap-DEF plenty IDEO overflow CONJ 1SG-SUBJV-AUX give 2PL

Adzagbe-a ɖo-m sigbe axɔ̃ me-xɔ-e
Adzagbe-DEF enter-1SG like jigger.flea 1SG-receive-3SG

de se *Aflao's very own*
put up.to

Bia le Netsime alo Zorokpome
ask at N. PRT Z.

ne n-a-se gɔme be me-ɖe
CONJ 2SG-POT-hear under COMP 1SG-remove

ga-vi le to-me
metal-DIM PREP ear-inside

'Let the town know I'm not an infant any more

Keeny I'm grown

I'm focused in the sky with my eyes wide open like a drone

My rap overflows and I can give you a loan

I'm full of Adzagbe and I overflow with Aflao's very own

Ask people from Netsime or Zorokpome to know I'm uncontrollable'

This song celebrates Adzagbe, its speakers and the Aflao town. It mirrors some features of Adzagbe as discussed in the preceding chapters. First, it is full of foreign materials.

Though in Adzagbe, the song consists of English elements such as *I'm grown*, *drone*, *loan*, *very own* and *rap*. The whole song also contains some Adzagbe words such as *pã* 'talk' from *parler* 'to talk' and *fũ* 'know' from *founir* 'to furnish/supply' from French origins. As presented in Chapters Three and Four, Adzagbe contains foreign materials, particularly of English and French origins, and Keeny Ice's *Gankivi* confirms this trend.

The fourth line in the song *I'm full of Adzagbe and I overflow with Aflao's very own* celebrates Adzagbe and its home territory of Aflao. The words *Aflao's very own* capture Adzagbe speakers' pride for their language and town. The song also mentions key Adzagbe zones in Aflao as Netsime and Zorokpome. Adzagbe speakers refer to Atisukorpe as *Netsime* 'lit. in the coconut trees' because the place is full of coconut trees. According to many older ones and some Adzagbe speakers, Zorokpome is a corrupted Ewe name *Dzolekpome* 'lit. there is fire in the oven', coined to depict the volatile nature of the area as it has been a key zone for wayward youth and rogues for a long time. These are two of the four zones from where data was collected for this thesis as mentioned in Chapter Two.

Other songs from Keeny Ice in praise of Adzagbe and Aflao are *Aflao Border Boy* released in 2015 and *Made in Aflao* in 2021. These songs celebrate the Adzagbe speaker, rogue life and survival tactics among Adzagbe youth at the Ghana-Togo border. Part of *Aflao Border Boy* goes thus:

Aflao, Texas, *that is the hood I dey come from*
A. T. AUX

Ne me-nya o è-wɔ rɔf
COND NEG-know NEG 2SG-do rough

è-dza xɔ agbame fifi-dzen
2SG-AUX receive plate now-INT

Sumɔvi-wo katã ne-nɔ gu-me
small-PL all AUX-stay hole-inside

ne me-nyo o-a mi-dza-xɔ́ yaya fifi-dzen
COND NEG-good NEG-TOP 2PL-AUX-receive beating now-INT

Granfre, me-va dɔ́, kpedevi-wo mi-de afɔ́ du-me
friend 1SG-come reach little.children-PL 2PL-put leg run-inside

Aftown, mí-wɔ́ wad, mí-me-le tse ame deke ɲutɔ́ o
Aflao 1PL-do wild 1PL-NEG-VLOC see person none very NEG

‘Aflao, Texas, that is where I come from

If you play you will be slapped right now

All little ones should run or be beaten right now

Brother, I have come, all children should run

Aftown, be wild, we don’t recognise anybody’

Line one of *Aflao Border Boy* celebrates Aflao and compares it to Texas. The Texas in Keeny Ice’s *Aflao Border Boy* does not refer to the USA’s Texas. Aflao had a popular petrol station called Texaco Petrol Station from the 1980’s to the late 2000s. It had served as a popular bus terminus and a landmark. According to folk knowledge, driver mates began playfully referring to this petrol station (Texaco) as Texas and the name stuck. Even today, people still refer to this petrol station as Texas or Texaco even though the place is now known as Aflao Total Energy. Texas is now used by some youth in reference to the whole Aflao town, particularly with regard to Adzagbe speakers.

The song also demonstrates the uniqueness of Aflaogbe among other Ewe varieties like Lomégbé and Gengbe, on which Adzagbe is built. It employs the word *fifidzen* ‘right now’ which is adopted from Lomégbé; the typical Aflao Ewe word for *fifidzen* ‘right now’ is *fifilaa* ‘right now’. This is a common feature of the Aflao variety of Ewe as it is in constant contact with the Lomé variety of Ewe as discussed in Chapter One of this thesis.

The song celebrates Adzagbe by employing Adzagbe idioms like *xɔ́ agbame* ‘slap one in the face’, *nɔ́ gume* ‘stay calm’ and *wɔ́ wad* ‘do wild’. It employs some

Adzagbe lexical items such as *granfre* ‘friend’ and *sumoviwo* ‘children’. It also mentions *Aftown*, one of the ways Adzagbe speakers refer to Aflao with pride. These songs have showcased Adzagbe not only to Ghana or Togo but to the world as they can be found on social media such as YouTube, Facebook and TikTok. In all, Adzagbe youth identify with these songs as the songs project their identity as a unique community of people in Aflao.

5.3.2 The theme of human sexuality

The topic of the free expression of sexuality among the youth of the world is not a novel phenomenon at all. And many studies such as Jain et al. (2019), Whitely (2013), Hall et al. (2012), Izugbara (2005) and Kramer (2003) have corroborated this fact. All these have shown that the youth gravitate towards things that discuss sex and sexuality in explicit terms, be it in songs, films and the like. The same observation is made about Adzagbe youth in the way they cherish songs with erotic tones from well-known local artists and foreign ones. Let us discuss some of these lyrics and describe how the youth of Aflao connect with them. One popular Ghanaian Ewe artist called Edem's latest song at the time of this study in 2020 is titled *Toto* 'vagina', a popular youth term in Ghana. Parts of the lyrics of *Toto* go thus:

Gbevu eee,	gbevu eeee
rogue INTERJ	rogue INTERJ

We dey struggle for her toto
AUX vagina

Her toto
vagina

Boys dey hustle for her toto toto
AUX vagina vagina

Her toto.
vagina

‘Rogue eeeee rogue eee
 We are struggling for her vagina
 Her vagina
 Boys are hustling for her vagina
 Her vagina’

Gbevu as we discussed earlier is the Ewe word for *rogue*, *hooligan* or *a wayward person*. The overall meaning of this song is that all a *gbevu* ‘rogue’ does to survive through hard work and suffering is for a woman’s vagina. As explicit as these words are, they are a source of excitement among the youth in general and Adzagbe youth in particular. When one visits their general bases such as bars and restaurants, one could see them go almost boisterous when this song is sung. Another thing that clearly shows the connection these youth have with the contents of the song is their boisterous reactions when *toto* ‘vagina’ is mentioned in the song. Besides, the lyrics are known by heart by many.

Another artist from Ghana, Patapaa, sang a song titled *One Corner*. From the lyrics, one cannot readily tell this song has suggestive sexual tones. Part of the lyrics are as follows:

Aii! Wo-be-ti dwiii
 INTERJ 2SG-AUX-hear IDEO

One corner, one corner, one corner

E-ye pee
 3SG-COP IDEO

One corner, one corner, one corner

‘Aii! You’ll hear dwiiii
 One corner, one corner, one corner
 It is pee

One corner, one corner, one corner'

On the surface, the lyrics of the song are that *You will hear dwii* (sound of water or some liquid pouring) followed by the chorus *one corner*. The lyrics take shape in meaning by the suggestive sexual dance moves that accompany them. Once the chorus *one corner* begins to roll out, all dancers look for any object, be it a pillow, a pole or wooden structure and begin to simulate sexual act of copulation with it. These dance moves are carried out by both males and females even though these types of songs seem to present women as sexual objects to the gratification of men. The focus is usually on the private parts of women, their buttocks, vagina, breasts, and so on. These notwithstanding, many Adzagbe youth find a lot of pleasure as well as identity in it. These types of erotic themes are frowned on by the older generation. Adzagbe youth's love for these songs further demarcates their cultural boundary from the older generation. One security officer in his late fifties says:

Nye-me-nya nuka gbevu ya-wo srɔ̃-na
1PL-NEG-know what rogue PROX-PL learn-HAB

tso tagbɔkuku me ha ya-wo
from nonsense POSS song PROX-PL

me o loo.
POST NEG PRT

Gake wo-nya ha kuku ma-wo
CONJ 3PL-know song dead DIST-PL

katã dzi-dzi.
all RED-sing

Hadzila ya-wo katã ga
singer PROX-PL all money

ko dzi-m wo-le,
only search-PROG 3PL-VLOC

ye.ta nya fafã ma-wo ko-e
CONJ word rotten DIST-PL only-FOC

le wo si.
VLOC 3PL hand

‘I don’t know what these rogues learn from these foolish songs. But they can sing all these dead songs. All these artists are only interested in money; that is why they have only those rotten words.’ (A 56-year-old male, Adzagbe Notes, May 6, 2020)

The general Ewe culture frowns on discussing sexual matters explicitly (Amenorvi and Grumah, 2020) as it is with other cultures. With that background, Adzagbe youth’s subscription to these types of songs and openly enjoying and singing them only deepens the cultural gap between them and the older generation. This deepening of cultural difference finds strength in the words of one blonde haired male youth in his early twenties who says:

M-bro, ha ya-wo le kuul ɲuto.
1SG-brother song PROX-PL VLOC cool very

E-dze be mí-a-ɖu agbe
3SG-right COMP 1PL-SUBJV-eat life

vie hafi a-va ku etsɔ.
little before SUBJV-come die tomorrow

One corner la!
UFP

‘Brother, these songs are very impressive. We have to enjoy life before we die tomorrow. One corner!’ (A 24-year-old male, Adzagbe Notes, May 6, 2020)

The foregoing words are self-explanatory, revealing the total contrasting views of the youth and the older generation regarding openly discussing things of sexual content.

The theme of sexuality in song lyrics is not only present in the songs of male artists. To balance the equation, let us discuss the lyrics of one female artist called by the stage name Wendy Shay in Ghana. Her song in question is titled *Uber Driver*, part of whose lyrics go thus:

Bema bia pɛ hwɛ.
man every want watch

Agya eei ɛna eeei e-maa bɛ-ku m-mɛrima oo
father PRT mother PRT PL-woman AUX-kill PL-man INTERJ

ɔba enti wo-di car kɔ pem
woman because.of 2SG-take go crush

W-a-hwɛ Linda, a-hwɛ
2SG-PAST-watch L. PAST-see

Diana, Carolina, Rosalinda, Uber driver

What’s your matter buttocks watcher?

‘Every man loves to watch women
Father eei mother eeei women will kill men
You crushed your car because of a woman
You’ve watched Linda, watched Diana, Carolina,

Rosalinda, Uber driver
What's your matter, buttocks watcher?'

In the original words of this song above, the artist plays with the Twi word *hwe* 'watch or look' with another Twi word *etwe* 'vagina' which rhymes with *hwe* 'watch'. Replacing *hwe* with *etwe* changes the line *Every man loves to watch* to *Every man loves vagina*. This wordplay is a delight for Adzagbe youth.

5.3.3 The theme of wealth and materialism

Another theme Adzagbe youth gravitate towards in songs is the theme of wealth – the culture of materialism. This theme is not only projected in words of the lyrics of artists but also in the visuals that accompany their performances. The depiction of finding fulfilment in life by the display of expensive cars, clothes and mansions add up to this theme. The praise of money permeates most of the songs that Adzagbe youth subscribe to. As said earlier, the youth of Aflao have access to Lomé artists too. Two of the Lomé artists popular among the youth of Aflao are Toofan and Ali Jezz.

A current Toofan's song is titled *Money*, which has gained a lot of popularity among Adzagbe youth. Part of the lyrics of Toofan's *Money* goes thus:

I say money, everyday think of money
Everyday wanna money money
our

Do and do for money
L'argent, money, cedi, CFA, Euro, Dollar, Naira, Naira.

'I say money, everyday think of money
Everyday our money money
Do and do for money

Money, money, cedi, CFA, Euro, Dollar, Naira, Naira.’

Although Toofan is a Togolese, the title of his song *Money* as well as the lyrics is in English, a way common with most Lomé youth artists in order to connect with the youth across the border in Aflao and also internationally. This song fully expresses the youth’s strong desire to acquire money by any means. The chorus, which is the fourth line, is all about money and different types of currencies. The boisterous ecstasy with which this chorus is sung among Adzagbe youth shows they can identify with these words. Their attitude is summarised in the words of a disc jockey youth in his early twenties who says:

Azea, enya katã ko-e ma Toofan pã loo.
friend word all only-FOC DIST Toofan say PRT

Kpeɖuɖu-a ko-e hiã!
money-DEF only-FOC need

‘Friend, the fact is all that Toofan has said. It is only
money that matters!’ (A 26-year-old male,
Adzagbe Notes, May 10, 2020)

No doubt, Adzagbe speakers identify with songs in praise of wealth and materialism such as Toofan’s above.

5.3.4 The theme of revolt against authorities

It is observed that Adzagbe youth are happy with songs that criticise or revolt against the establishment. One Ghanaian artist popular among Adzagbe youth for criticising governmental authorities is Kubolor. Another is a Lomé artist by the stage name Ali Jezz. One recent song by Kubolor very popular among Adzagbe youth is titled *Copy and Paste*. An excerpt from Kubolor’s *Copy and Paste* is as follows:

Dey den *the* koti *make one*
they CONJ police

everytin *here* go *kill* u
everything here AUX you

mps dey give formula
members.of.parliament AUX

the youth dey *give formula*
AUX

what be the difference?
The two all be sakawa
COP fake.schemes

useless id *card* wan *take* chop wana moni
identity AUX spend our money

‘They and the police are one
Everything here will kill you
MPs have a formula
The youth have a formula
What is the difference?
Both are into fake schemes
They want to use this useless
ID cards to spend our money’

The foregoing obviously resonates the theme of revolt against authorities. For example, the song says that both the police and the youth are the same in perpetrating crime. Kubolor compares the actions of members of parliament to *sakawa*, cybercrime or any get-rich-quick scheme. The words *useless ID cards* refer to an opposition against new identity cards for citizens proposed by the Government of Ghana which Kubolor sees as a ploy on the part of the government to have access to taxpayers’ money for their own

schemes. One thing that makes this song popular with its theme of the criticism of the system is that it is sung in Pidgin English which is a youth phenomenon in Ghana and used as a lingua franca by many.

A most recent song of revolt that resonates with Adzagbe youth is one sang by JJ Gonami in March 2021 advocating mass refusal of the vaccines against covid19 as proposed by the Government of Ghana. Part of the lyrics of that song goes thus:

Ne me-dze dɔ ɖekpekpe hã amagbe-a ko me-zã-na
COND 1SG-fall.sickness every also herb-DEF only 1SG-use-HAB

Ne me-tugu dɔntsi kple kakla ko me-haya-na
COND 1SG-squeeze lime CONJ type.of.herb only 1SG-recover-HAB

Dɔlele ɖe siaa ɖe ne va gbekui-a ko me-zã-na
sickness some all some COND come marijuana-DEF only 1SG-use-HAB

Abi ma nye-me-do-ge o
injection DIST 1SG-NEG-take-PROSP NEG

Abi-a nye-me-do-ge o
injection-DEF 1SG-NEG-take-PROSP NEG

‘Whatever sickness I suffer I use herbs
If I squeeze lime with other herbs, I get better
Against every sickness I use the marijuana
I will not take that injection
That injection I will not take’

This song is in vogue among Adzagbe youth insofar as many dismiss the reality of covid19 as a ploy from the world’s rich governments to rob third world nations of their wealth. The observation of covid19 protocols such as wearing of face masks, washing of hands and social distancing are not taken seriously at all.

On the other side of the Ghanaian border is Ali Jazz whose revolutionary themes are cherished by the youth of Adzagbe. One of his most popular songs Adzagbe youth are happy with is titled *Ega* ‘money’. An excerpt from Ali Jazz’s *Ega* goes thus:

Gbedoxo-a ega ye tu-n-ε
chapel-DEF money FOC build-HAB-3SG

Wo-ɖe gbefã be mi-m gba kplɔ ga ɖo o
3PL-give announcement COMP 1PL-NEG AUX follow money POST NEG

Bena ga Santana ye
say money Satan FOC

Tsotsi ka-e wo-tu ye wo-η dzɔ ga kpɔ o?
church which-FOC 3PL-build CONJ 3PL-NEG contribute money before NEG

‘A chapel is built with money

They have announced that we shouldn’t follow money

That money is Satan

Which church have they built and not offered money contributions in?’

Ali Jazz’s words are a criticism of the religious order that preaches that money is evil. He reveals the paradox in churches asking for contribution of money at the same time condemning the love of money. As we have seen earlier, a significant definition of Adzagbe youth identity revolves around their desire and praise for money. It finds reason why they enjoy lyrics that project this identity.

5.4 Adzagbe Youth Practices at Social Gatherings

Adzagbe youth culture at social gatherings, particularly at weddings and funerals of their colleagues, is phenomenally distinct. Weddings and funerals that involve Adzagbe youth are known to be spectacular among the people of Aflao. During weddings that involve any Adzagbe youth, this occasion is seized by the youth in a spectacular kind of display of their possessions. It is an occasion where the rich Adzagbe youth come in flashy and very

expensive vehicles. Usually, they choose to clothe themselves in all white during these weddings. Their flamboyant dressing and display of wealth are marked identities noticeably obvious to one and all.

For funerals, the youth clad themselves in all red or black, which are the traditional colours of mourning in the Ewe community. During these funerals, it is a sight to behold when the youth engage in life-endangering acrobatics with motorbikes. Some of these displays are visibly obvious to be done under the influence of alcohol or marijuana which are taken in the glare of people around. These peculiarities in social behaviour among Adzagbe youth sometimes meet with heavy criticisms but others enjoy them and look forward to the presence of Adzagbe youth during these wedding and funeral ceremonies. Studies have also shown that youth cultures across the globe are very similar; it is as if all youth in the world are connected somehow. For example, Bucholtz and Scapoulli (2009:3) state the following as regards the resemblance in all youth cultures or identity across the globe:

The global span of cultural commodities involves some degree of homogenization, scholars of youth cultures express great concern with the ways in which globally available resources are activity and creativity appropriated by social actors in local contexts and how youth engage with push back against, or otherwise negotiate externally generated social forces.

This observation is the case of many youth in the world. The internet, mobile phones, television and globalisation have influenced not just the youth but even the elderly. Bucholtz and Scapoulli (2009:3) refer to “globally available resources”. These resources include music, dress and grooming, style of speech, attitude towards the dominant culture of the community and so on. When we take music, for example, exposure to all kinds of

music from all cultures can be assessed by the youth in any corner of the globe. Access to the music, its content as well as the lifestyles of music artists regardless of space influence the recipient youth, at least in some ways.

Bucholtz and Scapoulli (2009:3) go on to mention the “homogenization” of cultural norms or commodities among the youth. It shows that youth identities have some similarities inasmuch as these cultures are interconnected. Even by observation, one could see no difference in the way the youth of Aflao dress from the ways youth musicians in Ghana and the United States dress. That is a global phenomenon now. Movies also serve as one powerful source of exposure to other cultures among the youth.

Halliday (1976), Hodge and Kress (1997), Castells (1997), Rampton (1995) and Stone (2002) have discussed the complexities embedded in identity as a characteristic feature of speakers of youth languages in general. Halliday (1976) argues that youth languages usually have their origins in crime. He reveals that some youth languages rise from argots, specialised idiomatic vocabulary unique to a particular group of people, especially that of an underworld group, devised for clandestine communication. Argots have overlapping meaning with slangs and jargons which all play major roles in the origins of youth languages. We deduce from the foregoing that if one of the origins of youth languages is crime, which by itself is antisociety, a clear cultural identity could, therefore, be developed by the youth who speak these languages. It is, therefore, only natural and reasonable that strategies will be employed as measures to protect these cultural identities.

5.5 The Practice of Nicknaming

A nickname, a substitute for a person’s proper name, is commonly used to express affection, amusement, a character trait or defamation. Nicknames are common among the youth of all cultures and there is a growing body of empirical works on the culture of nicknaming among the youth across the globe. Some of these are Mensah (2016, 2017), Awewoda and Owoahene-Acheampong (2017), Filani (2014), Starks et al. (2012), Hagan

(2008) and Moyo (2002). A common voice among all these studies is that nicknames are a major source of identity among youth cultures. Among the people of Aflao, nicknames are popularly called *guynames*. The English word *guy* is used in the same light as *gbevu* ‘rogue’ in Aflao; when a boy or a girl is called a *guy*, it means he or she is a rogue or a hooligan. *Guynames* is, therefore, the popular way nicknames among Aflao youth are known among both the wider community and Adzagbe speakers. While Adzagbe youth sometimes refer to these names as *adza ŋkwo* ‘rogue names’ or *guadzi ŋkwo* ‘street names’, the use of *guynames* is more widespread among them than these terms. I, therefore, adopt *guynames* for these ‘street names’ among Adzagbe speakers.

These guynames are not merely alternate forms of address but are performed in ways *ahanonkwo* ‘lit. drinking names’ or praise names are done among the Ewe. Among the Ewe, an “*ahanonkwo* is given to, or taken up by the bearer himself later on in life as a result of peculiar characteristics or outstanding qualities which he exhibits” (Yegblemenawo & Yegblemenawo, 2021:334). Just like *ahanonkwo* or *praise names* among the Ewe are performed, whenever an Adzagbe speaker hears his guyname mentioned, he gives a response. Yegblemenawo & Yegblemenawo (2021:335) argue that “the first part” in the performance of *ahanonkwo* “is the call of the name by the non-bearer and the second is the response by the bearer which may sometimes end with a handshake depending on the setting or communicative situation”. The performance of guynames among Adzagbe speakers follows the same pattern of performing *ahanonkwo* among the Ewe. An instance of this performance was in a casual conversation among some Adzagbe speakers. One male Adzagbe speaker guynamed Avumokolo Matufe told his friends that he could not sleep at home because he was hiding from the parents of a girl he had impregnated. That admission was followed by the following performance:

113. Performance of guynames among Adzagbe speakers

First part

Calling by non-bearer

Avumɔkolo ‘lit. dog fucks vagina’

Second part

Response by bearer

Matufe ‘without paying’

The performance of guynames such as the foregoing draws laughter amidst handshakes and hugs among Adzagbe speakers. By observations and interactions with Adzagbe youth, there was not a single instance where the researcher discovered one respondent, male or female, without a guyname, self-given or given to one by peers. In all, the guynaming culture among Adzagbe youth has revealed some creativity worth mentioning. There is also some uniqueness with the guynames of male Adzagbe speakers compared with those of females. This section does not intend to discuss all there is as regards guynames among Adzagbe youth. It discusses just a few to show the overall picture of the guynaming practice among Adzagbe youth.

5.5.1 Adzagbe male guynames

The guynames found among Adzagbe males can be categorised under those of sexual tones, those for their sweet-sounding nature, and those after destructive weapons or destructive celebrities.

5.5.1.1 Guynames of sexual tones

Some of the guynames of sexual tones are *Sexy Kolo*, *Kolo Toure*, *Fokn Bariya*, *Avumɔkolo Matufe*, *Mamɔnuɖe*, *Vevivinho*, and *H.I.V.* For the guyname *Sexy Kolo*, the part that needs explanation is *Kolo*, which means ‘vagina’ in the Ewe language; the name, therefore, literally means *sexy vagina*. The interesting thing about this guyname is that it does not hide *kolo* ‘vagina’ under any Adzagbe term. As we saw earlier, the Adzagbe term

for *kolo* ‘vagina’ is *vẽ* or *evẽ*. Asked why he does not go for *vẽ* instead of the explicit Ewe *kolo*, Sexy Kolo replies:

Ame-nye, me ɖeke m'-ame
 person-1SG:POSS person none NEG-person

ɖeke vɔ-m o loo.
 none fear-PROG NEG PRT

Dkɔ-e nye Sexy Kolo, *simple*!
 name-FOC COP S. K.

‘Friend, no one is afraid of anybody. The name is Sexy Kolo.

Simple!’ (A 26-year-old male, Adzagbe Notes, May 12, 2020)

These words reveal that the taking of these guynames are conscious direct action of establishing one’s identity without seeking approval from anybody. Saying that he is not afraid of anyone, Sexy Kolo means that he does not seek approval from anyone who regards Adzagbe youth as going contrary to established acceptable norms of Ewe culture.

Following *Sexy Kolo* is the guyname *Kolo Toure*. Taken prima facie, this name can be seen as paying homage to the Ivorian national football player. That was the understanding of the researcher only to be corrected by the bearer that the guyname *Kolo Toure* is actually a play on words. He explains that the *Kolo* in *Kolo Toure* is the Ewe word for *vagina*. Moreover, the word for *gun* in Ewe is *tu* and *ɖe* is a general topic only question particle. In the light of that, *Toure* sounds like *tu ɖe* ‘where is the gun?’ in Ewe. Brought together, *Kolo Toure* means *where is the vagina gun?* On the surface, not only does this sound interesting; it is also gross regarding the lucidness it conveys.

For *Fokn Bariya*, *Fokn* obviously points to the English word *fucking* as confirmed by the bearer. *Bariya* is an expletive used among Adzagbe youth; it has no direct meaning but is seen as a pejorative term. As his guyname, *Fokn Bariya* says that

Fokn is his first name while *Bariya* is his last name because he feels that he is of no use and that his life is ruined. Very few Adzagbe youth make this type of comment about themselves. That notwithstanding, it comes out clearly that guynames carve identities as well as tell underlying stories and feelings of their bearers among Adzagbe youth.

Another guyname of sexual tone is *Avumɔkolo Matufe*. This is a play on Ewe words which means ‘a dog has sex without paying’. The bearer states that they are seen by others as dogs in society, but dogs gain something, that is by having sex without paying. These words may not carry a lot of substance but clearly show the demarcation between Adzagbe youth and the general Aflao society. The guyname *Mamɔnuɖe* ‘let me fuck something’ also is one of sexual tone. The final two among guynames of sexual tones among Adzagbe youth are *Vêvivinho* and *H.I.V.*; and findings about them are interesting creativities. *Vêvivinho* looks like a Latin American name of Portuguese descent and *H.I.V.* seems self-explanatory. However, *Vêvivinho* is born out of play on words. In it is the Adzagbe noun *vê* ‘vagina’, the Ewe adjective *vivi* ‘sweet’ and the suffix *-nho* ‘little in Brazilian Portuguese’, making *Vêvivinho* something like ‘little sweet vagina’. This is another display of innovative ingenuity from these Adzagbe youth. *Vêvivinho* says that it was easy for him to create the name because he has seen many Brazilian footballers like Ronaldinho and Robinho with the suffix ‘-nho’ in their names. Following that trend, *Vêvivinho* was created.

The guyname *H.I.V.* also displays a level of creativity. Ordinarily, *H.I.V.* refers to the human immunodeficiency virus. However, the bearer of this guyname says it means ‘highly important vagina’. Overall, one unique type of guynames among the youth of Adzagbe are those that have underlying sexual tones.

5.5.1.2 Sweet-sounding guynames

Another type of guynames among Adzagbe males are those chosen only for their sounds but not for any attachment to meaning. Some of these are *Otongorongo*,

Azewoerokperowoe, *Paradisiaka*, *Paparapazitona* and *Davanavacity*. All the bearers of these guynames say that they were not targeting any specific meaning but only interested in taking something that sounds good. One thing that stands out about these types of guynames are that they are all polysyllabic. Of all the guynames, only *Paradisiaka* sounds familiar to the researcher, being the scientific name for some types of plantain. Asked why he had chosen the nickname, *Paradisiaka* says he once heard it from school but does not know what it means, but that he likes the sound of it. This confirms that *Paradisiaka*'s nickname's origin is *paradisiaca*, the botanical name of plantain.

5.5.1.3 Guynames of destructive weapons and notorious celebrities

The last type of guynames that reveal the culture of Adzagbe male youth are those of destructive weapons and notorious celebrities. Some of these are *AK47*, *Bazooka*, *Bin Laden*, *Atta Aryee*, and *Bomb*. It is obvious that *AK47*, *Bazooka* and *Bomb*'s origins are the ammunitions that bear similar names. Bin Laden is a very controversial person in world history. Atta Aryee has been a very notorious armed robber in Ghana. The controversial nature of these guynames points to the self-evident message of the antisociety and anti-acceptable attitudes characteristic of youth cultures in general and Adzagbe youth culture in particular.

5.5.2 Adzagbe female guynames

The spectacularism found in Adzagbe male guynames is missing in Adzagbe female guynames. Among Adzagbe females, guynames concern affectionate terms and some popular characters. Some of these are *Benja*, *Mama Gee*, *Titanic*, *Lady Tick*, *Boss Chick*, *Sly Baby*, *Diva*, *Sweet Pie*, *Green Pepper* and *Rondonion*. *Benja*, for example, is a popular female guyname among Adzagbe youth. The name originated from a popular Latin American soap opera shown on the Togolese National Television in the 1990s. The soap opera's main character was *Dona Beija*. *Dona Beija* was very beautiful and came to represent the symbol of beauty among the youth of Lomé in Togo and Aflao in Ghana.

Benja confirmed that her *Benja* originates from the *Beija* of the soap opera in question. *Mama Gee* is another common type of guyname among the youth where their first names are shortened to their first letter with a double *ee* preceded by *Mama* or *Lady*. *Mama Gee*'s first name is Genevieve, hence 'Mama Gee'. A Leticia could, therefore, be *Lady Lee* or *Mama Lee*.

Titanic says that she chose her guyname from the popular movie *Titanic*. *Boss Chick* says she is no ordinary chick but one of power. The term *chick* is a common term used in Ghana to refer to one's girlfriend. *Sly Baby*, *Diva*, *Sweet Pie*, *Green Pepper* are all guynames of affectionate tones. One that attracted the researcher's attention is *Rondonion*. *Rondonion* says that her name is simply a combination of *round* and *onion*, making *Rondonion*, as she claims, she has the body shape of an onion. This reveals that while Adzagbe female guynames do not have the spectacularism found in those of males, present in them also is some creativity.

5.6 Views from Respondents on Adzagbe Youth Culture

The main findings of this chapter concern the dominant culture of Adzagbe youth. Attention was paid to dress and grooming, music, social gatherings and guynaming. Findings as discussed reveal that as regards dress and grooming, Adzagbe youth go for trendy fashion-oriented choices. Hair dying is common among both sexes. With music, Adzagbe youth gravitate towards music whose content bothers on sex, beauty, wealth and criticism of the established system. During social gatherings, particularly weddings and funerals, Adzagbe youth prefer to flaunt their possessions such as cars and motorbikes. Guynaming is also a common cultural practice among Adzagbe youth. These guynames usually portray sexual tones, controversial items or personalities.

As part of the methodology of this study as spelt out in Chapter Two, findings were taken back to the Adzagbe and the wider Aflao communities to crosscheck the researcher's conclusions. This was done about the findings in this chapter too. Their

general view of the findings in this chapter was summarised by one taxi driver in his fifties who says:

Ye tututu-e ma ne-kpɔ.
3SG exact-FOC DIST 2SG-see

Wo-vlo wu e-ma gɔ̃ hã.
3PL-bad surpass 3sg-DIST real also

Eha kuku-wo dzi-dzi, awu manyata-wo do-do,
song dead-PL RED-sing dress weird-PL RED-wear

guyname kuku, gbe-gblẽ nya-wo kple vu gã-wo ku-ku.
guyname dead RED-spoil word-PL CONJ car big-PL RED-drive

Ne gbevu dzi-m ye ne-kpɔ-e ne-to
COND rogue search-PROG CONJ 2SG-see-3SG 2SG-PASS

e-ya ɲu ko-a me-ga gbevu aɖeke kpɔ-ge o.
3SG-PROX body only-TOP NEG-REP rogue none see-PROSP NEG

‘That is exactly what you have seen. They are even worse than that. Singing of useless songs, wearing of wild dresses, dead guynames, immoral words and driving of big cars. If you are looking for a rogue and you pass by this one, you will never meet another again.’ (A 55-year-old male, Adzagbe Interview 2, June 3, 2020)

While the focus on these words is not the attitude, the response confirms the findings about the dominant culture of the youth. By *useless songs*, the respondent is referring to music that has sexual connotations. The youth’s preference for these types of music naturally sets them apart from the rest of the community. By *dead guynames*, the respondent is referring to guynames that hang on topics considered worthless according to Ewe culture such as found and discussed in this chapter. By saying that one will not be able to find

another rogue if he passes by the Adzagbe youth, the respondent in question says that this cultural identity of antisociety is inseparably linked with the Adzagbe youth.

A food vendor also confirmed the culture of Adzagbe youth when she was asked to comment on the findings on Adzagbe culture such as their dress and grooming. She says:

Wo-me nyɔnu-vi-wo-a, wò ɣuto è-nya.
3PL-POSS woman-DIM-PL-DEF 2SG very 2SG-know

Wo-do-na kolan wò-a-mia wo kpatsikpatsi.
3PL-wear-HAB stretcher 3SG-SUBJV-tight 3PL IDEO

Wo-me-de-na toge o.
3PL-NEG-wear-HAB earring NEG

Wo-trɔ-na ɖa me kola. Tsiaa!
3PL-change-HAB hair POSS colour INTERJ

‘Their girls, as you yourself know, they will wear very tight-fittings stretchers. They don’t wear earrings. They dye their hair. It’s a shame!’ (A **46-year-old female, Adzagbe Notes, June 6, 2020**)

From the above glaringly ageist comments about Adzagbe, we see the confirmation of the general grooming among Adzagbe female youth’s tight clothes, hair dyeing and no wearing of earrings. The younger generation of non-Adzagbe youth and Adzagbe youth had no reservations of the findings as regards the general culture of Adzagbe youth. There is one reservation worth noting as captured by a few young ones, both of Adzagbe and non-Adzagbe origin. The reservation is captured by one tailor in his thirties. He says:

E-ya-wo katã ne-gblo e-le me.
3SG-PROX-PL all 2SG-say 3SG-VLOC POST

Gake ame aḍe-wo hã li yi-wo
CONJ person INDEF-PL also exist DEM-PL

me-nye adzavi-wo o yi-wo fe awu-do-do,
NEG-COP rogue-PL NEG DEM-PL POSS dress-RED-wear

music se-se, guynames kple tɔ-wo le nenema
music RED-hear guynames CONJ other-PL VLOC like.that

tututu togbo be wo-me-nye adzavi-wo o.
exact though COMP 3PL-NEG-COP rogue-PL NEG

Eme kɔ be agbe-nɔ-nɔ sia-wo bɔ
inside clear COMP life-RED-live DIST-PL common

ḍe adzavi-wo dome ye ne ame aḍe wɔ nu
PREP rogue-PL midst CONJ COND person INDEF do thing

nenema, wo-a-teɲu a-susu be adzavi-e.
like.that 3PL-SUBJV-can SUBJV-think COMP rogue-FOC

‘All that you have said is true but there are some people who are not Adzagbe youth whose dressing, music and guynames and others are exactly like those of Adzagbe youth. It is true, however, that these lifestyles are common among Adzagbe youth and one could be easily mistaken for an Adzagbe youth if one behaves like these.’ (A 33-year-old male, Adzagbe Interview 7, June 12, 2020)

The respondent has pointed out what has already been captured earlier in the study. The researcher showed earlier that while the focus is on the dominant culture of Adzagbe youth, findings do not suggest that this culture is exclusively practiced by Adzagbe youth. The tailor respondent went on to acknowledge that while this culture belongs to some

other youth in Aflao, one could easily be mistaken for an Adzagbe youth if one practices them. That itself is a confirmation that this culture is dominant among Adzagbe youth.

5.7 Summary

This chapter set out to describe the general culture of Adzagbe by focusing on four major parts of this youth culture, namely their physical appearance by dress and grooming, their music, their practices at social gatherings such as weddings and funerals of their peers, and their guynaming practices. Findings reveal that when it comes to dress and grooming, the Adzagbe youth is immersed in trendy fashion-oriented choices. Among males, hair-dying is a common feature, others wear dreadlocks and many other hairstyles that make them stand out in a crowd. The males also love to wear earrings in one or both ears. Their fashion greatly resembles the dress and grooming of popular music artists or entertainers. Hair-dying is also common among Adzagbe females. A majority prefer to keep their hair short and do without earrings. This change of roles in earring wearing is a clear signal against the overall acceptable culture of the Aflao traditional area. Music plays an important part of Adzagbe youth culture. The very lifestyles of popular artists who echo the values of Adzagbe youth are mirrored and adored by Adzagbe youth. The types of music towards which they gravitate are those with sexual content, beauty, revolt or criticism of the establishment. During social gatherings like weddings and funerals of their peers, Adzagbe youth display pomp and pageantry by displaying their material possessions such as expensive cars and motorbikes. They visibly engage in smoking and heavy drinking at these social gatherings. Finally, the culture of guynaming is pervasive among Adzagbe youth and that there is hardly one without a guyname on the part of both males and females. Adzagbe male guynames are normally of sexual tones, sweet sounds and those of controversial items or personalities. Female nicknames, on the other hand, are largely affectionate ones. Chapter Five has shown that Adzagbe speakers belong to a unique community of practice made distinct by the totality of their practices from the wider community of Aflao.