

Foreigners at the University

Transcript in Twi:

Baaba (on right) Pennante (on left)

Baaba: Nti eye a abrafo bebree ba Ghana anaa bebree ntaa mma? Wohwe a are there a lot of... te ee wo school sei, abrafo bebree wo ho anaa como nyee da ndoko?

Pennante: Como bewo ho a ebia 5% na ewo ho. Yeah, como ndoko.

Baaba: Eye a como beye den saa ewo Ghana?

Pennante: Ebimo ba a como beye social sciences.

Baaba: Como beko school wo ha anaa exchange programs?

Pennante: Yeah, como beko... Como ba as in they're schooling in Ghana.

Baaba: Aa como parents wo he na como ba ha?

Pennante: Me die mentumi nhu na eye me se como parents wo beebi a como firi baa no.

Baaba: O ok. Na yede como aba se como nko school?

Pennante: Aane. Anaa se como ankasa na como pe se como ba na como aba.

Baaba: How are people usually treated? Nkrofo a como nye Ghanaians no do they fit in anaa se ase omo nko ara wo como beebi anaa...?

Pennante: Ebefi se nia wo ne yen betena. Wo ne yen tena fine a we'll treat you nicely. Na wo ba na wokyerε se wo woyε bi a, yen nso yebekyerε se yen nso yeye bia. But we treat them nicely on the whole.

Baaba: Do you think Ghanaians ebimo tumi ye racist kakra se ebi a obi ye Nigerian. Ne m'adamfo bi y ε Nigerian. M'adamfo bi wo Tech nye Nigerian. Dse akasa wo class a ne accent no na nkrofo resere no and things like that but do you think eno no ye racism because eye a

most of the time εννε se they're being nasty to them. Ayε se agoro–agoro, just as we laugh at each other.

Pennante: Yeah, γερε, γερε ngoro. Υερε σε yedi ngoro pa ara efiri σε yen koraa, γεδε γε yen ho nti we don't really find it strange when we do it to other people.

Baaba: But most people don't really see it that way. Ase foreigners, εγε εμο σε how can you tease obi foforo when ye die sa ara na γε tie.

English Translation:

Baaba: So do a lot of *abrɔfo*¹ come to Ghana or not? Are there a lot of . . . for example in your school, are there a lot of *abrɔfo*?

Pennante: They're at most 5%. Yeah, there aren't a lot of them.

Baaba: What do they come to do in Ghana?

Pennante: Some come to study social sciences.

Baaba: Do they attend school here, or are they on exchange programs?

Pennante: Yeah, they go . . . as in they're schooling in Ghana.

Baaba: And where are their parents?

Pennante: I can't tell, but I believe their parents would be wherever they come from.

Baaba: Oh okay. And they're sent here to school?

¹ *Abrɔfo*: (*abrɔfo* is plural, singular = *obron*) literally means 'the people of the corn.' The first white people who came to Ghana were believed to have come from *abrokyi*, 'or behind the corn fields. The term now refers to any foreigner, but especially white people. (There's no word that directly translates as 'foreigner'). The use of this word is not always consistent. For example, other Africans are never *abrɔfo* even though they're considered foreigners. African Americans would be considered both *abibifo* (black people) because they're black and *abrɔfo* because they're from the States. Light-skinned Ghanaians and Ghanaians who have Westernized behavior are also sometimes called *abrɔfo*.

Pennante: Yes. Yes, they themselves want to come so they come here.

Baaba: How are people usually treated? Do non-Ghanaians fit in or not . . . ?

Pennante: It all depends on how non-Ghanaians relate to Ghanaians. If you relate well to us, we'll treat you nicely. But if you come here and you want to prove that you're there, we'll also prove that we're there.² But we treat them nicely on the whole.

Baaba: Do you think some Ghanaians are a little racist sometimes? For example, to a Nigerian. I have a Nigerian friend at Tech³ who says whenever he talks in class, the other students laugh at his accent and things like that, but do you think that's racism? Because most of the time, it's not that they're being nasty to them. It's supposed to be jest, just as we laugh at each other.

Pennante: Yeah, we like jesting like that. We really like jesting like that, because Ghanaians even jest like that with other Ghanaians, so we don't really find it strange when we do it to other people.

Baaba: But most people don't really see it that way. Most foreigners wonder how we can tease in that way when it's just how we are.

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² Prove that you're someone = be obnoxious and act superior.

³ Tech = short form for the university, Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology. It's one of the big universities in Ghana.