

Primary and JSS Schools

Transcript in Twi:

Baaba (female)

Kwesi (male)

Baaba: Nti Kwasi wose wogyina SS1.

Kwesi: Mhmm.

Baaba: Nti wokɔɔ JSS wɔ hefa ena primary wɔ hefa? Wokɔɔ no nyinaa wɔ bia baako anaa baabi foforo?

Kwesi: Mekɔɔ primary School wɔ Achimota.

Baaba: O ok. Aa ɛwɔ hefa?

Kwesi: ɛwɔ Accra. Emm.

Baaba: ɛno na ɛye how many years?

Kwesi: Mekɔɔ no for seven years.

Baaba: Ok.

Kwesi: Mekɔɔ class 1 to form 1 ɛwɔ hɔ ena mekɔɔ another school.

Baaba: O ok. ɛwo hefa?

Kwesi: ɛno nso wɔ Accra. North Kaneshi. ɛno yɛfrɛ no Prince of Peace International ɛwɔ North Kaneshi side.

Baaba: Nti APS ne school foforo no die ɛwɔ he na ɛso?

Kwesi: Na Achimota primary, APS ɛso kyɛn Prince of Peace.

Baaba: O ok. Nti ne mmianu die ɛwɔ he na nɛ w'ani gye pa ara wɔ hɔ. Die ɛwɔ he na na wopɛ pa ara? Anaa abi ara...

Kwesi: Abi ara ye but ne Achimota, Achimota ye cool.

Baaba: Aden na woreka saa?

Kwesi: Achimota na menanfofo pii ko because mebaa form 2 ko em... Prince of Peace nti na m'ani ngye papa te se Achimota. Nka anhye a mestartee ko Prince of Peace a anka anhye a mehu se menanfofo bew ko ko na m'ani begye kyen Achimota a, mennim a.

Baaba: Ok, nti nkrafo babree kmo hye ase ko primary a kmo wie ko ko ara anaa?

Kwesi: Mmm. Ebinom tumi ko wie. Ebinom nso tumi sesa school no nso.

Baaba: O, ok. But dodo ko no ara eko wie?

Kwesi: Mmm. Dodo no ara ko wie.

Baaba: Nti Achimota School nkrafo a wone kmo kwe no wodaso hu kmo anaa wontaa nhu kmo?

Kwesi: Mmm. Mehu bi ko asre ena mehu bi ko school ena me ko Secondary School nso makhu bebre nso ko ko.

Baaba: Oh! Babree nso ko wo school ko? Kmo hye da se kmore ko ko anaa wokwe na wok hunu se kmo ko ko?

Kwesi: Mekwe na mekhunu se kmo ko ko.

Baaba: Na wonnim se kmo ne wo na eko.

Kwesi: Aane.

Baaba: O ok. I see. Ne primary ne JSS no die ne eye mixed.

Kwesi: Aane. Ne eye mixed na eyi... em... forms no... wore ko SS a wobe fille forms bi na forms no eye parts bi ko ko a wobe choose 3 schools—1st, 2nd, 3rd and 3rd choice school. Nti nkrafo bi ko ko a ko anya ko 1st choice a wbetumi ako ko 2nd choice anaa 3rd. Nti nkrafo, menanfofo no a ebae no, ye school no kmo sei kmo 1st choice school faa kmo course bi a kmo mpe nti kmo ko eyi kmo 2nd choice school a kmo faa kmo for course no.

Baaba: Nti kyerε sε wo choose school no a na wochoose course no nso. Nti dodo no ara nya cɔmo 1st choice anaa gyεsε 2nd choice anaa se gyεsε ebi a wo yε adeε ansaa na?

Kwesi: Mmm. Gyεsε wo yε adeε ansaa na wobɛnya wo first choice. Ɛna this year nso yannye adeε. Ghana in particular this year BECE students a cɔmo kyerεw BECE no yɛn anye ade nti... (BECE—Basic Education Certificate Examination)

Baaba: Wohwε a adɛn na nkrɔfɔ anye adeε? Na εyε dɛn kyɛn other years anaa nkrɔfɔ no ara na cɔmo abɔn anaa...

Kwesi: Nε... Yɛn na kyerεsε yεusee last butch no. Yεwie syllabus no last butch no yεgyae old one no...

Baaba: Oh! Cɔmo aye syllabus fofrɔ?

Kwesi: Nti εwɔsε yεgyae old one no na yεfa new one no. Nti yɛn na εsεsε yε cut old one no but cɔmo de new ones no bi bεfraa yɛn yε papers no. Yɛn yε questions no.

Baaba: Ooo. Nti na monnyεε wɔ school koraa?

Kwesi: About three subjects. Nti na aconfuse confuse students no bebree. Nti na gyεsε wokɔɔ classes bi kaa biribi ho na wobɛtumi afollow subjects three no.

Baaba: Ooo. Sε saa diε εnyε.

Kwesi: Na cɔmo tryε kεkε. Cɔmo de faa mu kεkε.

Baaba: Aaa. Cɔmo reyε ahγε sε nkrɔfɔɔ bɛtumi atwa anaa.

Kwesi; Cɔmo reyε ahγε sε nkrɔfɔɔ bɛtumi atwa.

Baaba: Ɛna nkrɔfɔɔ anye ade nso.

Kwesi: Ɛna nkrɔfɔɔ anye ade nti cɔmo astarte wɔ form 2's no. Form 3's and 2's no.

Baaba: Aaa na cɔmo di mo akyi no.

Kwesi: Aane. Nti cɔmo astarte wɔ cɔmo so sesei ara.

Baaba: O ok.

Kwesi: Na subjects no be bree nso wɔ ho a yachange style a ɔmo de ye saa subject no.

Baaba: Ee? Ɔmo achange no sen? Se ebi a wonim.,, wowɔ example bi?

Kwesi: Se Pretech. Wewo subject bi a yefre no Pretech. Sheet no anka wo ara na wobe draw lines no ene biribi ara nanso sheet no yede ma wo a yadraw lines no na yaya special lines bi thin bi wo so nti won na wode pencil ne keke befa. Wobe joine joine aye graph no.
(Pretech—Pre-technical skills is one of the subjects JSS students take)

Baaba: Ooo. Nti kyerese ɔmo aye ama wo.

Kwesi: Wowie nso a na woacolour. Wahunu?

Baaba: First no na yencolour.

Kwesi: First no na yenni lines, yenni border lines nti wo ara na wobeye wo border lines wo ara na wobeye biribiara na wowie nso a woncolour but sesei ara ɔmo colour ena English no nso English course book no ne textbooks no ɔmo asesa no nyina ara. Sesei ara ɔmo use SSI. Form 3's no use SS1 as a self-subsidy anaa other schools books bi nti wo ara na wobe... Course no wobe hye.

Baaba: Nti wohye a nsesea a ɔmo de baeɛ no eye anaa... Anaa se nka ɔmo nye no dada no ara?

Kwesi: Eye.

Baaba: Aden na wore ka saa?

Kwesi: Efiri se die Government no aye ne se ɔmo pe se ɔmo be catche up with em... yefre no sen?... Abroad system no. Ɔmose GIS no ɔmo ye History ka ɔmo die ne ho. Ena sesei nso Form 3's no ɔmo ye History ka ɔmo die no ho. First no na ɔmo nye no saa. Sesei die ɔmo ye no sa ara. Nti ɔmo yeye other courses ka ayi small small courses ka eyi.

Baaba: Wohye a eboa?

Kwesi: Aane eboa.

Baaba: Eye se nkɔdaa no behu saa no. O ok.

English Translation:

Baaba: So, Kwesi, you're in SS1¹.

Kwesi: Yeah.

Baaba: Which JSS and primary did you go to? Were they all in the same place?²

Kwesi: I went to primary school in Achimota.

Baaba: Oh, okay. Where is that?

Kwesi: It's in Accra. Umm

Baaba: How many years did you spend there?

Kwesi: I was there for seven years.

Baaba: Okay.

Kwesi: I was there from class 1 to Form 1, and then I went to another school.³

Baaba: Oh, okay. Where?

Kwesi: It was also in Accra. North Kaneshi. It was called Prince of Peace International in North Kaneshi.⁴

¹ SS1 = the equivalent of Form 1 in Senior Secondary School. Students spend 3 years there.

² JSS = Junior Secondary School; primary = primary school. Ghanaian students first go to primary school for six years, then JSS for three years, and then SSS or SS for three years before going to the University.

³ Achimota has a primary, JSS and SSS/SS. Kwesi was there from class 1 in primary School to Form 1 in JSS.

⁴ North Kaneshi is in Accra, the capital of Ghana.

Baaba: So which of your two schools, APS and your new school, was the biggest?⁵

Kwesi: Achimota primary, APS, was bigger than Prince of Peace.

Baaba: Oh, okay. Which school did you have the most fun in?

Kwesi: Well, I liked both, but Achimota, Achimota was cool.

Baaba: Why do you say that?

Kwesi: Well, I had a lot of friends in Achimota. I went to Prince of Peace in Form 2 so I wasn't as happy there as I was in Achimota. Maybe I would have been happier at Prince of Peace if I had started school there and had more friends there. I don't know.

Baaba: Okay. So do most people start primary school in one place and finish there?

Kwesi: Yeah. Some finish in the same place, but some change schools.

Baaba: Oh, okay. But most people go straight through?

Kwesi: Yeah. Most people do.

Baaba: Do you still keep in touch with your friends from Achimota School?

Kwesi: Yeah. I see them at church or at school, and a lot of them are in my Secondary School, too.

Baaba: Oh! Many of them are in your school? Did you guys plan to go to the same school together?

Kwesi: No, I ran into them there when I got there.

Baaba: You didn't know they were going there, too?

Kwesi: No.

Baaba: Oh, okay. I see. Your primary and JSS were co-ed schools, though?

⁵ AP = Achimota Preparatory School; it is the umbrella name for Achimota primary and JSS.

Kwesi: Yeah. They were mixed. When you're about to go to SS, you fill out forms choosing three schools—your first, second and third choice of schools. So students who don't get into their first choice can go to either their second- or third-choice schools. So some of my friends in my school didn't get to do the course they wanted in their first choice, so they went to their second choice so they could do the course of study they wanted. (SS—Senior Secondary School).

Baaba: So you have to choose a course of study you want to follow in addition to choosing a school. Do most people get into their first or second choice schools, or do you have to do extremely well on the exams to do that?

Kwesi: Mmm. You have to do well to do that. Those of us who finished this year didn't do too well Actually, BECE⁶ candidates all over Ghana didn't do too well so

Baaba: Do you know why this happened? Were the examinations extra difficult this year? Or were the students just not too bright?

Kwesi: Well, we were the last bunch of students to use the old syllabus.

Baaba: Oh! There's a new syllabus?

Kwesi: Yeah, so the schools are going to stop using the old one and start using the new one. We were supposed to be the last bunch of students using the old syllabus, but we had questions from the new syllabus on our examinations.

Baaba: Oh. So you hadn't covered any of that in school at all?

Kwesi: About three subjects. So most of the students were very confused, and in order to do well in those three subjects, you had to have gone for extra classes in them.⁷

Baaba: Oh. That's not good.

Kwesi: Well, they were just trying to see how it would turn out.

⁶ BECE = Basic Education Certificate Examination.

⁷ Extra classes are "help sessions" that students pay to attend, particularly when they're preparing for examinations.

Baaba: I see. They were just checking to see how the students would perform.

Kwesi: They were just checking to see how the students would perform.

Baaba: But the students didn't do too well.

Kwesi: No, the students didn't do too well, so they've started with the Form 2's . . . the Form 3's and 2's.

Baaba: You mean for those who were "behind" you.

Kwesi: Yes. They've started using the new syllabus recently.

Baaba: Oh, okay.

Kwesi: They've also modified a lot of the subjects.

Baaba: Really? How? Could you give an example?

Kwesi: Well, take Pretech. We have a subject called Pretech. It used to be that the students had to draw their own border lines during the examination, but now you get a thin outline and all you need to do is to join the lines.⁸

Baaba: Oh. So they've basically done it for you.

Kwesi: You also need to color the drawing after you're done.

Baaba: You didn't need to do that at first.

Kwesi: No. At first, you had to draw your own borderlines, and you didn't have to color anything. The English course has also been modified so that Form 3's in JSS use the textbooks SS1 students use as a self-subsidy. They also use other books that they decide on.

Baaba: So, do you think these changes are good? Or did you prefer the old system?

Kwesi: They're good.

⁸ Pretech = Pre-technical skills is one of the subjects JSS students take.

Baaba: How so?

Kwesi: Well, the government wants to catch up with, um... what do you call it... the system abroad. They say GIS (GIS = Ghana International School) is teaching History, so the Form 3's now take History, too. They didn't use to do it at first. They've also added other courses.

Baaba: And is that useful?

Kwesi: Yeah, it's useful.

Baaba: It's good for the students to know that, right? Oh, okay.

About CultureTalk: CultureTalk is produced by the Five College Center for the Study of World Languages and housed on the LangMedia Website. The project provides students of language and culture with samples of people talking about their lives in the languages they use everyday. The participants in CultureTalk interviews and discussions are of many different ages and walks of life. They are free to express themselves as they wish. The ideas and opinions presented here are those of the participants. Inclusion in CultureTalk does not represent endorsement of these ideas or opinions by the Five College Center for the Study of World Languages, Five Colleges, Incorporated., or any of its member institutions: Amherst College, Hampshire College, Mount Holyoke College, Smith College and the University of Massachusetts at Amherst.

© 2003-2008 Five College Center for the Study of World Languages and Five Colleges, Incorporated