

University Vacation

Transcript in Twi:

Baaba (on right) Pennante (on left)

Baaba: Nti, woye den? Woye student anaa woye adwuma anaa woye den?

Pennante: Em... Meye student ewo University, KNUST.

Baaba: Woye course ben?

Pennante: Meye BS in chemistry.

Baaba: Endie se eye den o. Chemistry die...

Pennante: Eye den na yebefa no sa ara.

Baaba: Nti mo class moye nnipa dodoo sen na mowo ho? Modooaso anaa monhye daa nnooaso?

Pennante: Yedooaso, beye 138. Yewom.

Baaba: Nti sesei moapɔn school anaa moreko school anaa...?

Pennante: Em.,. Yewo vacation.

Baaba: Daben na mosebue?

Pennante: Yebɛbue February 10th.

Baaba: Ooo? Nti vacation yi woyee den? Wotuu kwan anaa...?

Pennante: Hwe! Mete Ghana.

Baaba: Na woreye den?

Pennante: Usually vacations meye adwuma.

Baaba: O ok. Ewɔ henfa?

Pennante: Ewɔ Trust Towers. Sorry. Ene consultants.

Baaba: Eeɛ? Ɔmo ye den? Ɔmo ye consultants wɔ den mu?

Pennante: Ɔmo ye consultancy firm. Ɔmo consulte ewɔ real investments, financial, accountancy ena ho nkekakekaho.

Baaba: Nti wowie school a wobeyɛ adwuma wɔ hɔ anaa?

Pennante: Daabi. Sɛ me course a mereyɛ no it has nothing in relation to diɛ omo reyɛ wɔ hɔ no ntia.

Baaba: Mmm. Nti woyɛ adwuma wɔ hɔ a eboa, eyɛ experience a eboa?

Pennante: Mmm. Sɛ nea meyɛ wɔ hɔ no ye office management. Nti mesua sɛnea mehwe office no so nti it's not really like meyɛ adwuma no a ɔmo ye no. Meboaboa ɔmo.

Baaba: Aaaa. O ok. Wo diɛ wo hwe... O ok. Nti woanyɛ accountancy koraa, wotumi ye adwuma no bi.

Pennante: Yeah. Ete se sɛnea I'm just exposing myself to the working field ewɔ hɔ.

Baaba: I see. Nti adwuma no wohyɛɛ aseɛ no ene sesei ara wode toto ho a, wohwe a sesei ara aboa wo wɔ kwan bi so anaa sɛnea wote a...

Pennante: Aanee. Aboa me in the way, in the sense sɛ, as in... Na me mereka brɔfo anaa mereka Twi. Menka mu hen?

Baaba: Ebi ara. Diɛ woka, wobetumi... Wopɛ a fa brɔfo fira mu.

Pennante: Aboa me sɛ mete fie a, mete fie kwa na wei diɛ mete adwuma mu. Ena mesua typing ene fax ena how to manipulate PC ena diɛ ekekakeka ho. Ena yɛko meetings a mehiahya mpanimanimfoɔ no bi nti...

Baaba: Eeɛ? Ɔmo ma wokɔ meetings?

Pennante: Yeah, ɔmo ne me kɔ.

Baaba: O ok. Nkrɔfoɔ a wo ne ɔmo ye adwuma no ɔmo nyina ara ye accountants anaa ebi te se wo a ɔmo ye students a ɔmo ye adwuma anaa?

Pennante: Ebinom ye financial analysts. Ebinom nso ye ... Yeah, baako ye accountant ɛna die aka no ye directors ɛna office managers ɛne research analystsno nso ɔmo wɔ ho.

Baaba: ɛnee nnipa no dɔɔso ara fine.

Pennante: Aane, ɔmo dɔɔso. ɔmo dooso. ɛna yewo ebinom nso a ɔmo te se me ara. Kyere se ɔmo wie school a, wowie school a wobɛ occupy until wobɛko university. Wowie SS a...

Baaba: O ok. Nti students a ɔmo wie SS na ɔmo ye saa anaa dodoɔ no ara...

Pennante: Daabi, daabi, se... Dodoɔ... bebreɛ ɔmo tutu kwan. ɔmo pe se ɔmo tutu kwan ko...

Baaba: ɛko hefa saa?

Pennante: ɛhe ara na ɔmo ko? ɔmo ko am-am-am-amanɔne. Mmanɔne o se amanɔne o se...

Baaba: Wohwe a aden nti na ɔmo tu kwan ko amanɔne na ɔmo ntena ha?

Pennante: ɔmo se Ghana ye den.

Baaba: ɛee? Ayɛ den sen?

Pennante: Aaa. Medie menim? ɔmo se Ghana ayɛ den, sika no ndɔɔso, ɔmo pe yoyo life ne nenkekaho.

Baaba: Na wo ankasa wohwe a Ghana ayɛ den anaa ennyɛɛ den?

Pennante: Ghana ye ara. Se medie matena Ghana a nti Ghana ye ara. Mɛfa no saa ara.

Baaba: I see. Wohwe a mmabaawa a ɔmo asi so wɔ Ghana, na daano na obi reka akyerɛ me se eyɛ a ɔmo pe se ɔmo ye tesse the youth a ɔmo wɔ outside. Se ebia the US. Nti wo wodwene ho sen? Eyɛ nokware anaa ɛna eyɛ ade pa anaa?

Pennante: Yeah. When you talk of influences no a ɔmo wɔ wɔ youth a ɛwɔ Ghana as in outsiders no, it's really bad in the sense sɛ ɔmo suasua nnoɔma bɔne no ɔmo nsuasua nnoɔma pa no.

Baaba: Nnoɔma bɔne te sɛ?

Pennante: Nnoɔma bɔne te sɛ smoking, exposing some parts of their bodies, yeah.

Baaba: Nti wohwɛ a traditionally na Ghanaians yɛnte saa?

Pennante: Yeah, traditionally na yɛnte saa nɛ nansɛn yi... Yes. Yɛbɛka sɛ yenni abue na yenni abue in the wrong direction.

Baaba: Nti wohwɛ a dɛn na dɛn na Ghanaians ebetumi aye ma saa nnoɔma no nyina ara ɛso atwa?

Pennante: Sɛ? Sɛ sɛn? Me diɛ mennim.

Baaba: Sɛ nnoɔma bɔne a ɛreba no yɛnyɛ dɛn anaa is it impossible sɛ wobɛ change anaa saa na wiase te nti diɛ wobɛyɛ biara sa ara na ɛtie...?

English Translation:

Baaba: So what do you do? Are you a student or do you work?

Pennante: Umm . . . I'm a student at the university: KNUST.¹

Baaba: What is your major?

Pennante: A BS in chemistry.

Baaba: That must be a difficult course. Chemistry is really

Pennante: Yeah, it's difficult but what can you do?

¹ KNUST=Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology, one of the big universities in Ghana.

Baaba: So how many students in your year do the same course? Are there many of you?

Pennante: Yeah, there're a lot of us: 138.

Baaba: So what are you doing right now?

Pennante: Umm . . . We're on vacation.

Baaba: When do you go back?

Pennante: February 10th.

Baaba: Yeah? So what are you doing with yourself this vacation? Are you traveling or . . . ?

Pennante: No way! I'm stuck here in Ghana.

Baaba: And what are you doing?

Pennante: I usually work during vacations.

Baaba: Oh, okay. Where do you work?

Pennante: At the Trust Towers. Sorry. With some consultants.

Baaba: Yeah? What are they consultants in?

Pennante: Well, it's a consulting firm. They're consultants in real investments, financial, accounting and so on.

Baaba: So do you plan to work there when you're done with school?

Pennante: No, I can't, because my major at the university has nothing to do with what they do at the firm.

Baaba: I see. So is working there a good experience?

Pennante: Yeah. See, I do office management there, so I'm learning how to manage an office, so it's not really like I do exactly what they do. I just sort of help them.

Baaba: I see. So you just . . . Oh, okay. So you can work in your office even if you've never studied accounting.

Pennante: Yeah. It's as though I'm just exposing myself to the working world there.

Baaba: I see. So you've found the whole experience useful?

Pennante: Yeah. It's helped me in the way, in the sense that, as in . . . Do you want me to speak English or Twi?

Baaba: Whichever you're comfortable speaking.

Pennante: It's helped me because if I were not working, I would just stay at home doing nothing. However, by working, I've learned to type, fax, how to work a PC and so on. I've also met so many prominent people by going to meetings so . . .

Baaba: Really? You get to go to meetings?

Pennante: Yeah, I do.

Baaba: Oh, okay. So are all your co-workers accountants, or are some of them students like you?

Pennante: Some of them are financial analysts. Others are . . . Yeah, one is an accountant, and the rest are directors or office managers or research analysts.

Baaba: There seems to be quite a number of people working there.

Pennante: Yeah, there is. There are also some students. It's a way of being occupied until you go to the university.

Baaba: Oh, okay. Do most students work to keep themselves occupied?

Pennante: No, no, most of them travel. Most of them like to travel to . . .

Baaba: Where to?

Pennante: Where could they go? Abroad.

Baaba: Why do you think most of them travel and don't stay in Ghana?

Pennante: Well, they claim it's too difficult to stay in Ghana.

Baaba: Really? How is it difficult?

Pennante: I have no clue. They claim it's difficult to live here, they don't have enough money... They just want to live the "yoyo life."²

Baaba: So do you personally think it's difficult to live in Ghana?

Pennante: It's not that bad here. I mean, I've always lived here, and it doesn't seem so bad to me.

Baaba: I see. Well quite recently, someone was talking to me about how young Ghanaians aspire to be like kids outside . . . like those in the U.S. What do you think about that? Is it true? Is it a good thing?

Pennante: Yeah. The foreigners seem to have a really bad influence on young Ghanaians because the Ghanaians take on the bad things and not the good things.

Baaba: What sort of bad things?

Pennante: They copy bad habits like smoking, exposing various parts of their bodies, yeah.

Baaba: So Ghanaians weren't traditionally like that?

Pennante: Yeah, traditionally we weren't like that so . . . Yes. We seem to think we're developing, but we're developing in the wrong direction.

Baaba: So what could Ghanaians do to stop this negative trend?

Pennante: What do you mean? I really don't know.

Baaba: I mean what can we do about the negative influences, or is it useless to do anything?

² Yoyo life=taken from the American expression "Yo!" Having a yoyo life means dressing, eating, acting, etc. like an American.

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.

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