

# Strategies Employed by Dagbamba Drummers in Revealing the Identity of their Patrons

Mohammed Osman Nindow

University for Development Studies

[mnindow@uds.edu.gh](mailto:mnindow@uds.edu.gh)

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## Abstract

*This work analyses the strategies employed by Dagbamba drummers in revealing the identity of their patrons in the praises they sing. Dagbamba are an ethnic group in the Northern Region of Ghana. Drummers form a special unite of this ethnic group and they are those who sing praise songs among the Dagbamba. In this paper, the researcher identified four (4) strategies that are used by the drummers when singing praise songs. The strategies identified and discussed are 1) using a person's patrilineal line to tell who he is, 2) using the matrilineal line of a subject to reveal his/her identity, 3) using the heroic deeds of a subject to tell his identity and finally, 4) blending the first three (3) strategies to reveal/conceal the subject's identity. The paper also shows that there are other minor strategies that the drummer will combine with the four (4) main strategies when singing praise songs.*

## I. INTRODUCTION

The strategies employed by lunsi (Dagbamba drummers) in revealing the identity of their patrons in Dagbanj manifest in different ways. According to Salifu (2014) lunsi do not only act as tradition bearers in keeping the oral history of their patrons but they also pursue their acts as a means of livelihood by drumming at functions for monetary gains. Salifu (2014) further opines that a Dagbamba drummer, in many instances, uses his/her art to reference a certain identity of he/she patron(s). Apart from these, Dagbamba drummers also entertain, praise, and send messages ranging from daybreak notifications to mobilizing people for war (Hudu, 2021). Clearly, the role of the drummer in Dagbanj is one that is inseparable from the culture and traditions of the Dagbamba people. In fact, lunsi are said to have immunity from 'punishment' when they err at the chief's palace as declared by Naa Luro, a great ancient King of Dagbanj (Tia, 2011).

The lunsi are also custodians of the history and tradition of the people and are said to be those preserving and sustaining the culture and history of the people of

Dagbanj. According to Plockey and Asuro (2018) baansi (lunsi) are the watchdogs/social critics of the society who help to maintain stability and influence people into conforming to the norms and the culture of the society.

Dagbani belongs to the South Western Oti-Volta central Gur languages spoken in northern Ghana (Naden, 1988). It is the mother tongue of the Dagbamba (Dagombas) who form the majority population in the Northern Region. The dialects of Dagbani are **Tomo**, **Nayhili** and **Nanuni**. Tamale and its environs which constitute the western Dagbanj speak the **Tomo**, whilst eastern Dagbanj – Yandi and its environs speaks **Nayahili**. **Nanuni** is spoken in southern Dagbanj - Bimbilla and its neighboring communities (Abdul-Rahman, 2005; Hudu, 2010). These three identified dialects make up the language which is also spoken in other parts of the Northern region and elsewhere in the country. Dagbani is closely related to Mampurili, Waale, Dagaare, Gurene and Kusaal among the Gur languages family. The data in this paper are based on the Tomo dialect which the researcher speaks himself.

I illustrate in this paper four (4) ways which the Dagbamba drummer chooses for his praise singing. First the drummer can use the patrilineal line of his patrons to reveal his/her identity. Secondly, he can use the matrilineal line of his subject to tell who he/she is and thirdly the drummer can use the heroic deeds of his subject to reveal his/her identity. The fourth one is, the drummer can blend the first three presented to reveal his subject's identity. The fourth one is seen to be the most often used strategy by the Dagbamba drummers.

Analysis of praise singing is not a new thing in Africa. Innes (1999) analyses Mandinka oral epics which are performed in Gambia by professional bards to celebrate the careers of heroic figures in Mandinka history. In that analysis, the bards' repertoire falls into two parts: first is the Sunjata epic, which celebrates the career of Sunjata Keita, reputed ~~first~~ founder of the ancient Mali Empire in the 13<sup>th</sup> century and the second part of the epics concerns the careers of warriors who established local hegemonies along the Gambian valley in the latter part of the 19<sup>th</sup> century.

Though praise appellations are as old as the Dagban Kingdom, little has been done to tell the world the strategies the drummer employs to identify his patrons. Salifu (2008) is the most detailed work in praise poetry among the Dagbani literature works. His attention is directed towards the meanings praise names carry and the positives and negatives about them. His work does not discuss the strategies the drummer employs to sing these praise songs.

Salifu (2014) also discusses a little on the identity we get from praise songs, he does that by comparing traditional and contemporary music of the Dagbamba. He analyzes the various ingredients that go into the two forms of music at the settings and concludes that the two forms

contrast only in style but they do complement each other. In this case too, Salifu (2014) does not tell us how the drummers employ strategies to identify their patrons.

Furthermore, Salifu (2009) accounts for the epic narratives of the battle between Naa Luro and the Dajia at Koluŋ. He shows that the praise singers employ figurative language to recapture historical events in the political life of the people. He concludes that the song has a potential of bringing conflict to the people of Dagban and their neighbors in the Gonja land. However, the researcher was silent on the structure/ways used by these traditional drummers singing these praise songs. The master drummer does not just start singing praise songs or eulogizing their patrons, but they do that with appropriate strategies that makes the singer and his patrons to enjoy the session.

According to Hudu (2021), the Dagbamba use the goonje (fiddle), timpana (talking drum) and dawule (double bell) to encode speech. The speech is sometimes encoded in Hausa, Akan and other languages they do not speak. He asserts that these instruments are used to entertain, praise, and send messages ranging from daybreak notifications to mobilizing people for work, and war. This means that the drummer's status is of great importance to the people and they are therefore guarded by the entire people. Even in wars, the drummers are spared if their town chiefs are defeated.

From the foregoing, we see a gap that needs to be filled in the praise poetry of Dagbani to show how the drummers tell the identity of their patrons.

## II. THE DRUMMER AND DRUM LORE

### 2.1 The Lunsi

The 'lunsi' or drummers form one of the specialized segments of the population of the Dagomba State, which probably appeared at an early date in the history of the Kingdom (Tait, 1956), cited in (Oppong, 1965). The lunsi are traced to a great man called Lunzoo who was discovered by Naa Nyayisi who also founded the current Dagomba kingdom (Abdulai, 1988; Mahama, 2004). Nyayisi gave his children Bizin and zima to Lunzoo to train them in the art but zimz died and Bizin learned the art well. Because of his royalty, the drummers refer to themselves as Bizin yaansi (grandchildren of Bizin). They perform orally in gatherings with the support of their lunsi (drums) which double as the name of the drums as well as the drummers. Every chief has a chief drummer, who perform for him whenever necessary.

### 3. The drum lore

In this section we look at the various ways and strategies employed by the drummers to reveal their patron's identity. It should be noted that the art of drumming and singing appellations to patrons is not done haphazardly, but in a chronological order. The drummers are chosen to perform based on the weight of the event in which they are called for.

#### 3.1 Using the paternal line of the patron in revealing his identity

Lunsi as stated earlier are those who carry the oral tradition of the Dagbamba and they tell it in gatherings such as funerals, weddings, outdoorings, and festivals. Salifu (2014) opines that it is the traditional responsibility of the lunsi to educate, entertain, inform, and critique society. They do not need anyone's invitation to any event. They attend functions irrespective of who held them, and

they are rewarded materially. Their economic needs are catered for by the society in the monetary reward they get at these occasions.

On these occasions, what the drummers do is to sing praise songs. Chernoff (1992) says that drummers respect their neighbours by beating the praise-names of their forefathers. They do it bearing in mind the background of the person they are singing the praise for. One of the strategies used is to trace the patron's background through his/her paternal line. The drummer will have to know the person in order to recall the praise for him/her. Even if the master drummer does not know the person, he is reminded by one of the drummers with a play of his drum. You often hear "**Zoligu bia**", "Zoligu's son" which is used to praise Naa Luro (1554-1570) who was the son of Naa Zoligu (1469-1486) and fought against the Gonja king Dajia (Salifu, 2009). This strategy of using a person's paternal line is so common in the Dagbani since they have a patrilineal form of inheritance.

Let us look how the lunsis use the paternal line in a gathering where the late chief of Malshegu was a guest, and upon his arrival his chief drummer started appraising him with the names of his fathers' saying

#### (1) Appellation of the late chief of Malshegu.

- a) N yuri jacobili naa nom balim  
My love chief of Malshegu walk carefully
- b) A nyela Malshenaa Nindokpema zuu  
You are the 1<sup>st</sup> son of Nindoo the first ( Malshegu chief)
- c) N dalirilana ku yi polo ka m-bini lahi kpalim moyuni  
If a person who will do me good appears, nothing of my will go waste in the bush.
- d) Nindokpema zuu nom balim ka tiŋa maai.  
Regent of Nindokpema walk carefully for the ground to be cool.

In the above text, the master drummer starts by calling the chief his "love", this does not mean the drummer is a "gay". In the Dagbamba culture, drummers (lunsi) are seen as women who use their mouths to say sweet things for their patrons. They (drummers) are aware of this and it has formed a part of their license to use to refer to their patrons be they men or women. The drummer then said, "**A nyela Malshenaa Nindokpema zuu**" (You are the first son of chief Nindokpema of Malshegu) to tell the audience that the person he is referring to is the king and not his patrons and also to let them know that the chief is a descendant of the skin by his father's line and also a rightful occupant of the skin. By referring to the chief

using his father's name the drummer also tells the praise name of the chief's father, which he does immediately after mentioning the name as **N dalirilana ku yi polo ka m-bini lahi kpalim moyuni** (If a person who will do me good appears, nothing of my will go waste in the bush). This tells us the reason why Dagbamba believe that a hero never dies but lives in his descendancy and the good name he made while alive.

When a king is enskinned, he has to choose a praise name (**nam yuli**), this name is what he will be remembered with but not the name given to him by his father (**suuna yuli**). It is usually a heroic name or a name that reflects his character. Innes (1999:106) said that "the formulae with the greatest emotional impact on the audience are the praises of their heroes. He noted that it is common throughout Africa that, a Mandinka hero's praises are in terms of (a) his ancestry, and (b) his personal achievements or characteristic". Upon his death his children are still identified by this name and if they happen to become kings like their father, they will also give their praise names for identification and will still be identified by their father's name. Salifu (2008:34) has it that multilingual Ghana (which has about sixty languages) is like a market place, where each person should look out for kith and kin. The drummer is the one to remind us of where we are coming from, and also to show us the way forward. The drummer reminds us by using the legacy our parents left behind. That is the names they made at wars and on their farms and the only way they document them is by taking it as their praise names to be used by the drummers in praising them.

The children of the chief (males/females) are identified by their father's name. It doesn't matter whether the person is a chief or a sub-chief. So, a young son of school going age of the Yaan Naa will still be recognized as **gbuyinli bia** (a child of lion) even though he is still at the school going age. So, drummers will use his father's name to praise knowing that he is a potential king. They complement it by the age old adage **gbuyinkpibiga ku ŋubi mɔri, faashee nimdi** (an orphan lion will never feed on grass but meat).

In another way, the drummer will refer to his subject, in this case the king, as a son/grandson of all those who have been chiefs of the skin (the post) he is occupying. This is because he has inherited the kingship from them and they are a part of the family even after their death. So, in sambanlɔŋa (occasional group drumming at the chief's yard) the drummer will address the king using the identity of his lineage, not necessarily those who have occupied the skin he is occupying:

## (2) In sambanluḡa (ensemble drumming) at Sayinari Naa's palace.

- a) A balima yee! A balima yee!  
Be calm! Be calm!
- b) M mam dunkurigu naa,  
My love chief of Sayinarigu.
- c) M bi yēn puhi taalitaali.....,  
I won't say thank you.....
- d) N yuri Dunkurigu naa,  
My love chief of Sayinarigu
- e) A yaba nam Andani,  
Your grandfather Andani
- f) Andani n-dōyi Zuu yiri  
Andani begot Zuu Yiri
- g) Zuu Yiri ni o nyeli Bukali  
Zuu Yiri and his younger brother Bukali
- h) Jankuno n-diri sayim ka di bieri baa.....  
The cat eats food and it pains the dog.....

From the above the drummer is singing the appellation for the chief of Sayinarigu using his grandfather's names to tell the audience the background of the chief. He did that by mentioning Andani his great grandfather and also Yiri and his brother Bukali who are his ancestors.

This is a strategy employed to tell the audience that the occupant of the skin is a rightful occupant. It's a point in the Dagbamba land to show that a chief is really a rightful occupant of his skin if a drummer can tell the lineage of the chief through his great grandfathers, grandfathers and fathers to the skin he is occupying.

### (3.2) Telling the identity of the subject using his/her maternal line.

Another strategy which is used by Dagbamba drummers in revealing the identity of their patrons is by using the maternal lineage of his patrons. Dagbamba do not have a matrilineal form of inheritance. Now, the question is how will the drummer use a subject's maternal background to reveal his identity.

Usually, the issue is that a man is identified both by his father and mother. Sometimes the name of a woman or her home town is added to differentiate her children from her colleague's children if they share the same names. This therefore means that the drummer is aware of the number

of children a king has and can also tell who their mothers are. In a gathering, this was the way a drummer chose to identify Naa Yakubu (Yaan Naa Yakubu Andani II, (1974-2002)).

### (3) Singing praise song to Yaan Naa Yakubu Andani

- a) Jeliba yee, jeliba yee!  
Spirit of jeliba come, Spirit of jeliba come!
- b) Andunia Naawunilana, jeliba yee!  
God of the world
- c) Diḡoyu paya bia, jeliba yee!  
Son of a woman from Lingbuḡa
- d) M ma Fatimata bia, jeliba yee!  
Son of mother Fatimata

In the above text the drummer starts by calling on the Jeliba spirit. Salifu (2014) observes that a drummer will always begin a session with an invocation of some sort. He adds that many cry out *yeligu* "speech", *jeliba yee* 'spirit of *jeliba*' and (wondered if that has a relation to the *jeli* of Mandika), and *kali* 'tradition' as a prelude to performance. This he believed is a kind of invocation of the Muse.

The drummer in line (3b) then introduces the King by calling him the "God" of the world, then further says he is a son of a woman who hails from Lingbuḡa<sup>2</sup>, then in (3d) he mentions the name of the woman Fatimata (mother of the king) to tell his listeners that the woman is nobody but Fatimata from Lingbuḡa.

This strategy is not used to tell the identity of only chiefs, the drummers use it to reveal commoner's identity too. It is just a matter of the drummer knowing where the mother of his subject comes from. For instance, in an ensemble, the master drummer was notified that a man behind him was the son of the princess of Zugu<sup>3</sup> and here was how he praised him.

### (4) Identifying a man whose mother hails from Zugu:

- a) A nyela waa payisara bia,  
You a son of a woman from Zugu
- b) Waa paya bia,  
Son of a woman from Zugu
- c) Waa pakpaḡ bia n-nyē a  
You are a son of a princess of Zugu
- d) A buyisi ti ma ka m-bi niḡ.....  
If you suggest something for me and I have not done it....

In the lines above, the drummer repeated in lines (4a, 4b and 4c) that his subject's mother is a woman from Zugu. Then he mentioned the maternal grandfather's praise name in line (4d) to inform the audience of the Zugu chief he is referring to. The praise name of one man is not used by the other, therefore it is a unique form of identity for the patrons. Audience minds are cleared when the drummer mentions the praise name of a great ancestor of his subject. As we have seen above, the drummer upon taking a strategy still has different ways of presenting it to the audience.

Using the subject's mother home town to identify him/her is not done by the Dagbamba alone, Finnegan (1949) cited in Ephraim et-al (2010) observed that as far as Kele of Congo drum names are concerned, "each man has a drum name given him by his or her father, made up of three parts: first the individual's own name; then a portion of his father's name; and finally, the name of his mother's village".

On the 20<sup>th</sup> of March 2022, the author attended a wedding and was seated in the gathering. Then came the chief drummer of Malshegu, a community along the Tamale-Kumbungu road. He was singing and at once realized the presence of the author and the following was how he revealed who the author was:

#### (5) Appellation at the wedding grounds

- a) Ooi! Payiba Fati bia  
*Ooh! Son of Fatima*
- b) Nyama! A nyela tieriwula pakpaɲ bia  
*Look! You are a son of a prince from Gumo*
- c) Tieriwula paya bia,  
*Son of a woman from Gumo*
- d) A ma yaba n-niɲ Gumonaa Dasana  
*Your mother's grandfather is chief Dasana of Gumo*
- e) Dasana kuliya ka yuli yeli ni o di kuli  
*Dasana is dead but his name is not dead*
- f) A ma yaba, Gumonaa Napari  
*Your mother's grandfather, chief Napari of Gumo*
- g) N kpee yohim ma ka m baɲ, ka o zaɲ niɲ diɛma  
*My colleague deceived me, but when I realized it, then he turn it into play*
- h) A ma yaba Gumonaa Saandoo  
*Your mother's grandfather, chief Saandow of Gumo*

- i) Bia lana maani o bia, ka naawuni maani kpibiga  
*Parents protects their children, while God protects the ophan*
- j) Yilikpani Mahama bia, a ba kuliya  
*Son of Yilikpandana Mahama, your father is dead*
- k) Guma paya bia n-kuli  
*Son of a woman from Yong Duuni is dead*
- l) A ba ma yaba, duunnaa Napari  
*Your great grand father, Napari chief of Young duuni*
- m) Naawuni mieri o yili ka ninsalinima wɔlim je  
*What God has build, no man can destroy it.*
- n) A ba ma yaba, duunnaa Gaani  
*Your great grand father, Gaani, chief of Young duuni*
- o) Ko' mahim ku to toli ni  
*You can't pound water in a moter*
- p) A ba ma yaba, duunnaa Sumani  
*Your great grand father, Sumani, chief of Young duuni*
- q) Sapili bɔri zaɲ nimdi, ya ka o yen paai li?  
*The hyna want to eat the meat of bat, where will it get it?*
- x) To che ka n che li nima ni  
*Let me leave it there*
- t) A ba daa niɲ lahiɲibu,  
*Your father did a wonderful thing*
- u) O zaɲ o mayili duri guɲ ka zaɲ o bayili kuni Jabobili ni  
*He is a son of a woman from Young and son of a man from Malshegu*
- v) Yilikpani Mahama, Naawuni malimi tiɲa ka naa doni.  
*Yilikpandana Mahama, may he rest in peace!*

In the above text, the singer starts by identifying the patron as '**payiba Fati bia**' "son of women's Fatima" as seen in (5a). Then he followed it with the appellation of the village from which the mother of the patron hails from. The singer uses the phrase, **a ma yaba** from (5d-h). to emphasized that the people the patron is being identified with are his maternal grandparents. So, anybody around who understands praise songs will be able to tell which village or town from where my mother hail from.



After realizing he has said enough about the maternal aspect of the patron, the singer from line (j-v) starts to sing the appellations of the patrons' father. He started by the statement "yilikpandana Mahama bia, a ba kuliya"

*Son of Yilikpandana Mahama, your father is dead*

This indicates that the first name of the father of the patron was Mahama, and that the man has passed on years back. From this point, he started counting the great grandparents of the patron with their appellations or praise names. Even though the patron at this moment does not have a chieftaincy title, he is being praised in the song by the deeds of his grandfathers, mothers and fathers as well.

There are even instances where a man can become a chief because of his mother. If at the early stages of a boy's life his maternal grandfather takes him from his father (a form of adoption) to stay with him and the boy grows up there and becomes the family head he has a chance of succeeding his maternal grandfather. In this case, he will be identified mostly by his matrilineal background by drummers and a little of his patrilineal background to show his root.

### **(3.3) Using a person's heroic deeds in telling who he is.**

Dagbamba chiefs go with the saying that, *be kaanila doo tuma, pa doo yuusim* "it is a man's deeds that people count but not the number of years a man lived". This saying opens this aspect of the paper which is to discuss how drummers use the heroic deeds of patrons to reveal their identity. According to the Oxford dictionary, a hero is a person who is admired for their courage, outstanding achievements, or noble qualities. In this research, I am going to concentrate on the aspect of the definition that relates to a being of great strength and courage celebrated for bold exploits. Across Dagban, when a drummer says *yembimbierilana* (the great Wiseman) anybody who is familiar with the narration behind how Naa Zanjina (1648-1677) became the Over Lord will know the drummer is referring to him (Naa Zanjina).

*The brief of the whole story is that when Naa Gungobli died (1627-1648), many princes were in a fierce battle to succeed him including Zanjina who was the second youngest among them but was contesting for the Nam (chieftaincy) in secret. (Tia, 1974) posited that in total, seven contenders wanted to succeed Naa Gungobli including Naa Zanjina.*

*Naa Zanjina upon realizing the keen nature of the competition went round all the contenders' palaces and gave them his support and telling them secretly that he is in support of each one of them so that when any of them eventually become the Yaan*

*Naa he will work for his success as a king. Having it at the back of his mind that the case of the contest will be settled in Mampurugu<sup>4</sup> by the Mampurugu Naaba, he secretly went to him and inform him of his interest to become the Yaan Naa, see (Tia, 1974). Finally, the case was settled in Mampurugu where all the other six contenders got to know that Zanjina was deceiving them that he was not interested in the Nam (chieftaincy). They were all made to come out and give their praise names and Naa Zanjina's names were adjudged the best among them and therefore he was made the Yaan Naa.*

The brief story above has given us a clue as to how Zanjina became the Yaan Naa through the wisdom he used. That alone is a heroic deed by Zanjina and since then it has been used as his praise name in addition to what he gave at Mampurugu.

A person will prefer a drummer to use his heroic deeds to identify him most because that is what he feels make him proud over other men. These names as noted by (Avea, Fusheini, & Ababila, 2010) If someone hears his or her name being drummed and praised s/he becomes elevated. At that material moment he or she may even forget of all worries and psychological traumas that s/he may be encountering.

There are different ways through which Dagbamba heroes make their names; a person's bravery in war e.g, Naa Andani Siyili (1677-1687) vrs Golingolin kumpatia, see Sulemana (1970), the chieftaincy titles one have gained e.g, Naa Luro (1554-1570) who achieved forty (40) chieftaincy titles before he became the Yaan Naa see (Salifu, 2009; Tia, 2011). These names are employed as a strategy by Dagbamba drummers when revealing the identity of their patrons.

Whenever these names are mentioned the patrons of the drummer start dipping their hands into their pockets and what follow are monetary rewards for the drummer. This is only done if a person is well identified by the drummer.

### **(3.4) Revealing a subject's identity using his father/mother's line and his heroic deeds.**

Drummers in Dagban also combine many devices to help them do their art well. Usually, one will give money to the drummer based on how good the drummer is in telling him about his past relatives and their heroic deeds. The text in six (6) below presents how a drummer used both strategies to tell who Naa Luro was; it was transcribed from an audio of Dakpema Lunnaa by the researcher.

#### **(6) Naa Luro**

1. Balim balim dunialana a balima yooi

- Softly, softly owner of the world softly please.
2. Yakubu zuu Abudu yelimaŋli naaya Yakubu's first son Abudu, truth has finished
  3. Yelimaŋli naaya ka guui yelimaŋ dara  
Truth has finished and its left with bought truths
  4. Dun ti gbubi tusa anu ŋun mali yelimaŋli.....  
The one who has hundred ceddis is the one who is truthful....
  5. N yen yeli do ŋuni paya ŋuni bia?  
Which man's son and which woman's son am I going to talk about?
  6. Sampimo nayili tindaampiɛligu paya bia  
A son of a woman who hails from sampimo
  7. A ba n-nyɛ Luro Your father is Luro
  8. Nyamandu paani bia yee Luro  
Luro the son of a woman from Nyamandu
  9. Pulumpuŋ nabia bia yee Luro  
Luro the son of a woman from Nyamandu
  10. Zolugu bia wuntumalana  
Son of Zolugu the man of action
  11. N yen zaŋ nam saba yeli paya ŋuni bia  
Which woman's son will I adore with garment of chieftaincy,
  12. Do' ŋuni mi bia? Which man's son
  13. A yaba n-niŋ Naa Luro  
Your grandfather is Naa Luro
  14. Sampimo nayili tindaampiɛligu paya bia  
Son of a woman from Sampimo
  15. Baluli baa bi ŋmani ba' darili  
A dog raised from the house is not like a dog bought from somewhere
  16. Gumbindili mi bi ŋmani gunsarili  
A native does not look like a stranger
  17. Payifarɔ mi bi ŋmani payibɔrili  
A seized woman does not look like a married woman
  18. Zolugu bia wuntumalana  
Son of Zolugu the man of action
  19. Sampimonayili tindaampiɛligu paya bia
  20. Son of a woman from Sampimo
  21. Dagbamba amii bɛ tam bɛ piligu yɛla bee?  
Has Dagombas forgotten about their roots?
  22. Zoligu bia ŋun bi tam.  
Son of Zolugu has not forgotten
  23. A yaba Luro ni yen pili nam dibu,  
When your grandfather Luro was going start ruling as a chief
  24. Nantɔŋ tiŋkpaŋ beni ka bɛ booni li nyamandu.  
There is a village under Nanton call Nyamandu
  25. Nyamandu n-daa lu tiŋa,  
The chieftaincy of nyamandu became vacant (the chief died)
  26. Ka a yaba yiɣisi niŋdi looloo  
Then your grandfather got up and started moving
  27. Ka baŋli ni looi kpaliga la  
Moving like how the lizard jump to he mahogany
  28. Ka ŋɔŋli ni looi kaɣili shem la  
Moving like how the grasscutter run to the grass
  29. N chaŋ nti zaŋ nyamandu kparigu ye o toli  
He went and made himself chief of Nyamandu
  30. Ka yeli ni o mayili nam di bi pɔra.....  
And said it is chieftaincy from his maternal line it is not small....

The data in (6) above is a combination of the different strategies by the drummer in revealing the identity of his subject who in this case is not even alive. But the drummer still used them to tell who Naa Luro was, who his mother was and who his father was.

In lines (1-4) the drummer addresses the regent of Dagbaŋ using the name of his father Yakubu. This is done to introduce him before he starts with the epic song of Naa Luro. Then in line (5) the drummer rhetorically asked the audience about who he is going to sing about, *N yen yeli do' ŋuni, paya ŋuni bia?* (Which man's son and which woman's son am I going to talk about?), then answered it with lines (6-9). In those lines the drummer used strategy (3.2) i.e telling the identity using the subject's matrilineal line. Then in line (10) he used strategy (3.1) i.e telling the identity of the subject using his patrilineal line i.e *Zolugu*

*bia wuntumalana* (Son of Zolugu whose work is like that of God). From line (22-29) the drummer used his heroic deeds. He mentioned how he started his ruling as chief starting from a village under Nanton call Nyamandu. The heroism in it is that under normal circumstances the chief of Nanton should have been the one to appoint the chief for Nyamandu but Luro used his unquestionable powers to make himself chief of the said village which is stated by the drummer in line (28) *N chaŋ nti zaŋ nyamandu kparigu ye o toli* (He went and made himself chief of Nyamandu). His only reason for his act is said in line (29) *Ka yeli ni o mayili nam di bi pɔra.....* (And said it is chieftaincy from his maternal line it is not small....). This means that, there were his maternal uncles who could not wrestle the chieftaincy title of their brother from their nephew.

### III. CONCLUSION

The goal of this paper has been to research into the strategies employed by Dagbamba drummers in revealing the identity of their patrons since no literature has done that in the language. It is shown in the paper that 4 main strategies exist from which the drummer chooses the one he will like to use to reveal his subject's identity. The strategies used are the patrilineal line and matrilineal line of the subject, the heroic deeds and finally combining the first three strategies to tell the identity of his patrons. It is noted that every Dagbana can be praised using these praise songs. Even if a person has no chieftaincy title, he can still be praised using praise names of his grandparents, fathers and mothers.

It is also observed in this paper that even though the four strategies mentioned above exist, the drummer also has at his disposal several techniques that he uses to make his audience enjoy hissing.

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