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# REFLECTION REPORT

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Sprachtandem



DORIS MORRISON AMANKWAA – VANESSA WESTER

13.11.2022

Matrikelnummer: 998512-888019

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## Introduction

Our names are Vanessa Wester and Doris Morrison Amankwaa and we are both studying wood technology in the master's program in the 3<sup>rd</sup> semester. To improve our English knowledge/learn German, gain some intercultural knowledge and get a proof for it we decided to take part in the Tandem program. It's a program where you are paired with a foreign student to teach each other the language and learn about the other culture.

The following report contains the things we learned and our general reflection on the program. It is divided into the individual meetings we had.

## Meeting 1: meet & greet

At our first meeting we got to know each other. The special thing about it was that we already knew each other from our studies because we study together. So, we also have some commonalities. Nevertheless, here is a short summary of us:

### *Doris Morrison Amankwaa:*

- Born in Kumasi which is in Ghana
- 43 years old
- Studies Wood technology Master
- Currently looking for a master thesis at the university in Rosenheim
- Lives in Germany since October 2021
- Hobbies: travelling, dancing time with friends and singing



### *Vanessa Wester:*

- Comes from Fellbach which is in Germany
- 23 years old
- Studies Wood Technique Bachelor
- Currently writing bachelors thesis in Rosenheim
- Lives in Germany since her birth
- Hobbies: mountain biking, climbing, hiking, spending time with friends



*Greeting:*

## In Ghana:

Me ma wo akye - good morning

Me ma wo aha - good afternoon

Me ma wo adwo - good evening

Me ma wo dayie - good night

## In Germany:

Guten Morgen – good morning

Guten Nachmittag – good afternoon

Guten Abend – good evening

Gute Nacht - good night

In Ghana you bow down a bit (adults) and mention their name while greeting if you don't know the person. But if you know them you shake hands or if you are more familiar you hug them.

So, how you greet another person is basically the same in those two countries. If you don't know each other or you want to be formal, you shake hands. You can also just smile at each other and hug each other in greetings. But that is not as formal as shaking hands. So, you mainly use this for friends and family. If you see someone you know, just passing by on the street, you can also just nod or smile.

The only difference we found is that if you have something big planned in Ghana, such as a move, a long trip or a marriage, you have to ask for the blessing from older people in the family (grandparents or parent). You get on your knees and touch the feet of this person with both hands.

## Meeting 2: music

Because the people in Ghana are mostly very religious, they are listening to a lot of gospel songs and therefore christian songs.

A typical Ghanian song is Aseda ninja yewo dee Jesus. They learn it in their childhood and it's about their thankfulness of Jesus being there for them.

In Germany it's not that common to be so religious but I was raised a bit religious and also went to the YMCA for some years, so I know a few christian songs. We already met a few times to sing together and play the guitar. It was quite interesting how many songs we both know.

### Meeting 3: game night



Luckily we both live in the student dorms, so we were able to meet in person and play together with another friend of us, who is from Greek. First we started with Memory because we all knew that game and later we continued with Cards against Humanity when some of my Indian flatmates joined. It was a great evening and we both had a lot of fun.



Another day we went together to a bar, whose name is 'Hangloose' and played a few rounds table soccer. It was Doris second time to play that but after a few rounds she became pretty good at it.

### Meeting 4: meet & talk

We also met quite a few times just to talk and I thought it is quite interesting what she told me about her family. It seems like she has a lot of brothers and sisters including stepbrothers and stepsisters, who are (as far as I understood) all from her dads side. It also seemed like it, that it is quite normal to have a big family. Whereas in Germany a typical family includes two parents and two kids.

## Meeting 5: trip

Because Doris is very religious (catholic) we visited a service in Rosenheim in the St. Nikolaus church for a few times. Despite the service was in German, she was really happy about it and enjoyed it. She also understood what she has to do for example she realized when everybody has to pray for themselves or when all have to say the 'Vaterunser'. So, we discussed it afterwards and realized that the service in Ghana is quite similar in some points. Afterward one of the services we went, we also got a flower because it was womens day.



In August we visited my hometown for my dads birthday. And we had a lot of fun. It was very interesting to see how my family treated Doris. We also visited one of my grandmas at the nursing home. Actually Doris did not had to join but she insisted because she really values old people and wanted to spent time with my grandma. It was very interesting because Doris can not speak German so far and my Grandma never learned English. But we played a few rounds Memory and I tried to translate a bit. I liked it that my family was very open and friendly to Doris but I could also realize that my grandma who is living in the nursing home had some difficulties with her skin colour. I think it is mainly because of how she grew up and the things she is used to so she is still kind of sceptical towards people who are from another country. But Doris already knows how older people can sometimes be not open and she is very generous so she was fine with that and I guess if they would have spent more time together and maybe could understand each other the would really like eachother.



During our visit at my hometown, Doris also stayed one day longer because she wanted to visit a castle with my sister and my mom. And she also managed to use the sewing machine of my mom and they have sewn some of her dresses tighter.



In the summer months we have also been to the lake for a few times. We really enjoyed it. For me it was quite interesting that it is common that people in Ghana cannot swim, whereas in Germany you have to learn swimming with the age of 7 or 8. You even have a lecture in primary school where you have to swim. So before going to the lake we had to buy Doris a swimsuit. She really looked forward to it and for me it was really interesting to do it together with her. I also think she was quite brave because she went inside the water without hesitating. Of course, she did not go too far so she could always stand. But she really liked it and I guess we have to practise swimming soon 😊



On one day we also went to the boulder hall together. I really like it how open Doris is for new experiences. No matter what I suggest we can do, she is always in. For the bouldering she really enjoyed it, and it was quite fun to do it. I'm also really impressed how fast she is adapting to new things. Bouldering is quite unpopular in Ghana, and she never did it before. In Ghana they are likelier to go dancing, spent time with their family, make music or just sing.



## Meeting 6: joint project

We had a lot of 'projects' together. Following a short list of a few projects:

- Learning for the maths exam
- Writing papers (Sustainable Company Management, ...)
- Learning to ride a bike
- applying for a scholarship
- finding a job/work

A lot of these projects were really interesting for both of us because we have a different basic knowledge about these things. For example, riding the bike is something kids in Germany learn at the age of 3 or 5, while it is quite uncommon for Ghanaian kids to have a bike. If they have one it's just for boys. But nevertheless, Doris is able now to ride the bike. Also, it is quite common for German students to have a laptop and be able to use it because you always need it for applications and studying. Whereas in Ghana it is not that common. For example, Doris got her first laptop when she came here, and I think it is quite stunning how fast she adapted to these circumstances. Surely I helped her with using word and explained her a few things how everything works at the university here but still she managed the most things by herself. The following picture is from the lunch after the math exam, which was quite a challenge for all of us.



Finding a job for Doris was also quite challenging. We prepared all the documents and stuff together because in Ghana applying for a job is a bit different. So, Doris did not have a Resume and a cover letter or these things. We prepared a folder on her computer with all these basic documents, someone mainly need for applications. The first application we did together and now Doris is able to apply for jobs all by herself. She even went to the career centre at the university. But we realized without the ability to speak German it is quite difficult to find a job here. Nevertheless, she is now working at Peek and Cloppenburg temporarily.



## Meeting 7: letter/ email writing

I think the interesting part here is that Doris got her first laptop when she came here in October 2021. So before coming here she had just little experience with writing emails or word documents or anything like that. Compared to that in Germany it is quite common to have or be able to use a laptop at the age of 12 or so...and it is getting even earlier.

## Meeting 8: cooking

We have cooked Ghanaian food together twice so far. Once there was Banku with Stew and once Ripe Plantain with Beans Stew (Red Red). It was very good, and the taste was really different from what I normally eat. But the biggest difference was that we ate with our hands. To be honest I think that is a very good idea because I often burn my mouth while eating. But when you eat with your hands you feel the warmth of the food with your hands before you put the food in your mouth. So, you never burn your mouth.....probably your burn your fingers instead but anyway I think I have to eat with my hands more often.

## Meeting 9: watching a movie

We have not watched a movie so far because we were busy talking, learning and enjoying our time together differently. But I think because the weather is getting quite cold, we will soon have the opportunity to do that.... maybe we can even watch it in English and afterwards in German.

## Resume

To put it in a nutshell, we had a great time together so far and learned a lot about each other and also from each other which was really great. In my opinion, most of the differences are based on the fact that Ghana is a developing country while German is an industrial country. So, the life is happening kind of 'faster' in Germany and we get to know or learn things at an earlier stage of our life. We both improved our language skills and our knowledge about the other country, and I'll definitely visit Doris once in Ghana. So, for sure we will stay in contact.

## Declaration on oath

We hereby affirm that we have authored this paper independently, have not submitted it elsewhere for examination purposes, have not used any sources or aids other than those indicated, and have marked verbatim and analogous quotations as such.

13.11.2022

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Date, place



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Signature, Doris



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Signature, Vanessa