1. **Introduction (name):**

   -- (a) the name Gur derives from the terms/names Gurma, Gurunsi, Gurenne, which are terms used for some of the languages or those who speak them.

   -- (b) the French refer to Gur group of languages as Voltaic

2. **Languages within this family**

   -- (a) all the languages we call Gur may be the result of many centuries of change and migration and splitting up of what was originally one ancestor language.

   -- (b) most of the descendant Gur languages of today form a fairly closely related sub-family which we call Central Gur, which includes nearly all the Gur languages of Ghana. -- the Central Gur sub-family has two major branches known as Grusi and Oti-Volta; the Oti-Volta includes what was formerly called Moore (or Mole-) Dagbani group.

   -- (c) to the west of Central Gur languages are Senufo (represented in Ghana by Nafaanra, Kulango and Lobiri)

   -- (d) there are about 25 languages within the Gur language family

   -- (e) languages within this family appear at the bottom of the diagram below (e.g. Dagaari, Frafra, Kusaal, Dagbani, Hanga, Kɔnni, Safalaba, Vagla, etc.)

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**Diagram:***

```
Proto-Gur
  |      |      |
  |      |      |
Proto-Southeast
  |      |      |
  |      |      |
Proto-Western
a. Buli
b. Kɔnni
c. Proto-Northwestern
  i. Dagaari: *Wali,
  *Safaliba, Lavara Lobi
  ii. Moore,
  iii. Frafra (upper east region capital, Bolgatanga)
  Note: (i), (ii), (iii) are rather less similar
d. Proto-Southwestern
  i. Talni
  ii. Mampruli
  iii. *Wali, *Safaliba
  iv. Hanga
  v. KaMara
  vi. Dagbani
  vii. Nanun
  Mampruli is reasonably similar to Dagbani, Hanga, KaMara, Kusaal, Nabit and Talni.
```

**Proto-Grusi**

```
Senufo (represented By Nafaanra in Ghana)
Kulango Lobiri
```

**Proto-Grusi (Formerly, Moore- (or Mole-) Dagbani). Contains the largest number of known present day lgs.; it has at least 4 major sub-groupings of which two have representative in Ghana.**

**Central Gur**

```
Kurumfe
Proto-Grusi
```

**Proto-Gurma**

```
Bargu
```

**Proto-Grusi**

```
Bargu
```

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**Proto-Northern**

```
Kasem (only member in Ghana; geo.: center of upper Ghana)
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**Proto-Southwestern**

```
a. Sisaala:
(a-i) Tumuli;
(a-ii) Northwestern
  (Debi or Bashi);
  (a-iii) Southwestern
    (Pasale)

b. Chakali
c. Tampulma
d. Vagla
e. Deg
```

**Proto-Southeast**

```
a. Chala
  (spoken in Ghana)
b. Delo
  -- the two are less similar
```

**Proto-Western**

```
a. Buli
b. Kɔnni
c. Proto-Northwestern
  i. Dagaari: *Wali,
  *Safaliba, Lavara Lobi
  ii. Moore,
  iii. Frafra (upper east region capital, Bolgatanga)
  Note: (i), (ii), (iii) are rather less similar
d. Proto-Southwestern
  i. Talni
  ii. Mampruli
  iii. *Wali, *Safaliba
  iv. Hanga
  v. KaMara
  vi. Dagbani
  vii. Nanun
  Mampruli is reasonably similar to Dagbani, Hanga, KaMara, Kusaal, Nabit and Talni.
```
3. Geography:
-- (a) most of the languages of the northern half of Ghana belong to the Gur language family
-- (b) that is, all the languages of Ghana north of the latitude of Tamale, except Bisa and Chakoshi, belong to the Gur family.
-- (c) the French use the term Voltaic for the Gur language family just because the area where they are spoken corresponds roughly to the upper basin of the Volta river system.

4. Sociolinguistics (Multilingualism/linguistics repertoire/language change):
   (a)
   -- (i) there is a high degree of linguistic diversity such that many people are bilingual – i.e. quite naturally for an area where a number of different languages are found, many speakers of north Ghanaian languages can speak one or more languages in addition to their own.
   -- (ii) this is more true in the towns and in the villages along the main roads, and near the boundary between two language areas, less true in rural areas away from major routes and large multi-ethnic markets.” (Dakubu, 38)
   (b)
   -- (i) the second or third languages used may comprise the language of a neighboring people, an African language which is used for wider communication usually Hausa, or Twi, or perhaps Ga, or an international language, usually English.
   -- (ii) younger and school-educated people use English, and others (particularly those in the road transport business) have picked up English without going to school.
   -- (iii) those who have little or no schooling may speak a ‘Broken English’ which has some features found throughout Ghana and some characteristics derived from each speaker’s own mother tongue.
   -- (iv) there are many people who have spent a long enough time in the cities of southern Ghana to learn a southern language: this is most commonly Twi but may be some other Akan language, and a number of people have learned Ga instead or as well.
   -- (v) trading networks have given some English, Twi and Hausa words (e.g. loori ‘lorry’, kọdu ‘banana, daka ‘box’) to almost all the languages.
   (c)
   -- many people use other languages than their own for communication beyond their particular group; these languages may be used in preference to, or in addition to the more alien English, Hausa or Twi. Naturally it is the languages which count a large number of native speakers of their own, and those in whose area are the larger towns and markets, which tend to be learned by others: folk whose mother tongue only opens the way to communication with a small group are likely to learn other languages.
   -- (i) in some groups in the Gonja (which belongs to Guang/Volta-Comoe family) sphere of influence (Hanga, Safaliba, Vagla) most people will know some of the Gonja language. – Gonja is one of the official regional languages for the northern region.
   -- (ii) Dagbani is used by Hanga, Tampulma, and some Gonja and others who come to Tamale for market and Other business, and also by Konkomba and others whose center is Yendi.
   -- (iii) the Kparba (just south of Tamale) – though under the Gonja system of traditional rulers – have so completely adopted Tamale Dagbani that their own language, Kparli is extinct.
   -- (iv) the numerous Frafra people, with the Upper East Region capital Bolgatanga in their territory, naturally influence the smaller surrounding groups who come to their markets (Talensi, Nabdem, Toende Kusaasi).
   -- (v) Some Bulsa use Kasem, Mampruli and Sisaala in trading with their neighbors.
   -- (vi) Some Kɔnɔni can speak Buli, Sisaala in addition to Mampruli.
   -- (vii) Wali is used by the Chakali and by many Vagla and Safalaba, and also by speakers of other Dagaari-type languages in the Wa area.