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A sociolinguistics study of the language of the Ghanaian Eʋe Kentse fabric at Agortime in the Volta region

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Abstract
This paper employed a theoretical perspective, bringing together concepts from social, symbolic interactionism, symbolic consumption, patterns and sociolinguistic theory. The study adopted mixed design to collect qualitative and quantitative data for the study. Using purposive sampling techniques, 70 participants were selected to participate in the study. The participants included weavers and users of kente cloth. Questionnaire and interview guide, were used to collect data for study. The findings of the study revealed that kente of authority and royalty have messages to both the weaver and the user. These values and beliefs are learned earlier on from their fore-fathers and maintained through constant interaction with the Agortime Traditional culture through parents and family. The weavers' cultural values drive the way kente communicate gender, attractiveness, age, and social class. Another important part of this work explained the competency that kente have in communicating the different roles of their identities through clothing and appearance. Finally, this study illustrates the interconnection between the different aspects of the kente clothes by pointing out sensorial experience, fit, and interpersonal influence as the major drivers of adoption among Agortime Kente Weavers.

Keywords: Sociolinguistics, communicative value, Kente weaving, Agortime

Introduction
Background to the study
In most traditional societies, art forms such as clothing or costume make the intangible past more real, make sentiments run high and reduce the stress of using mental imagery to attempt to express or communicate thoughts and feelings. Boateng (2004) cited in Adonteng (2009) [2], expressed his views when he said that "body art refers to the art of the body" (p.2). Body art is mostly done for, among others, religious purposes, cultural identification, beauty or beautification, and entertainment. Symbols, styles and colours used in Eʋe Kente cloths are meant to communicate to the general public. This art form makes it possible to know much about one's cultural heritage and identity

The development of human language consists in the shift from the phonemes, the 'indistinct matter', to the words, the 'determined matter', and eventually to the text, the 'articulated matter' (Russo, 1996 as cited in Lottersberger, 2012) [28].

Following the model of verbal language, an articulated code has a 'vocabulary' of basic units together with syntactic rules, which can be used to generate larger meaningful combinations (Innis, 1986) [24]. A semiotic code, like the verbal language, has 'double articulation' and can be analyzed according to two abstract structural levels: a higher level, called 'the level of first articulation', and a lower level, 'the level of second articulation' (Eco, 1976) [16]. At the level of first articulation, the system consists of the smallest meaningful units available (e.g. morphemes in a language). In language, this level of articulation is called the grammatical level. The meaningful units at this level are complete signs, each consisting of a signifier and a signified.

Where codes have recurrent meaningful units, they have first articulation. In systems with double articulation, these signs are made up of elements from the lower (second) level of articulation. At the level of second articulation a semiotic code is divisible into minimal functional units, which lacks meaning in them (e.g. honemes in speech).

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These purely differential structural units, called Figurae by Hjelmslev, are recurrent features in the code. They are not signs in themselves (the code must have a first level of articulation for these lower units to be combined into meaningful signs as cited in Lottersberger, 2012) [28].

Angerosa, (2004) [3] posits that clothing is a nonverbal tool and an expressive one. Also, Nielson and Kernel (1978) refer to clothing as part of appearance that provides data for perceptions. It is said to give off information about a person's age, sex, socioeconomic status, values and political ideologies (Satrapa *et al*., 1992) [43]. The kente as a social means of indicating age sex, class and status is held at a very high esteem by the people of Agortime traditional area. Kente is a royal and sacred cloth worn by kings, and only in times of extreme importance.

According to Feinberg *et al*. (1992) [17], there are those reasons why clothing is important to research:

a. clothing is used in daily activity
b. clothes constitute a frequent public display and
c. clothing choice is an easily manipulated symbol. Generally, clothing is frequently seen and diverse in nature.

What one chooses to wear may communicate a complex array of information about who you are to others around you. An immense amount of meaning and messages are common and acted through the use of clothing (Dorrance, 2011) [15].

Angerosa (2004) [3] posits these messages in cloths (kente) are left to be interpreted by the perceiver, or the one viewing another person, who are said to be influenced by their own personal traits and cognitive structures when making perceptions of others (Fiske and Taylor, 1984) [19]. They further posit that perceivers vary in their level of clothing interest and this affects the way clothing and also how they judge others based on their clothing. Each individual brings unique circumstances to the way they rate a person's different clothing style. So, the study is also concerned with perceivers' variables, or what might affect a perceiver's impressions of others based on their clothing. Appearance and clothing can be so familiar and visible that we sometimes do not realize the significance of them in everyday life (Kaiser, 1997) [25].

Different cultures have different costumes and fashion history that identifies them from the most primitive to the most sophisticated, using clothes and adornments as means of communicating their social and personal status. Though perception through clothes as objects of ethnic identity may be misleading sometimes, clothes still remain as vital tool for non-verbal communication mode of the language of fashion, indicating the significance that accompanies the motifs and symbols expressed in them (Sue-Jenkyn, 2005; Omatseye & EneriEʋen, 2012) [48, 34].

Various reasons are advanced as to why clothing is used including that of religious or spiritual connotations as well for aesthetic or personal possessions. These criteria are equally expressed as reasons for clothing in traditional settings in Ghana, incorporating different types of clothes and adornments seen in chieftaincy, religious rites, rites of passage and other socio-cultural activities within the Ghanaian ethnic setting. Throughout history, societies use clothes and various forms of body adornment to communicate rank, gender, occupations, class, wealth and group affiliation. These are also expressed in forms of signs, symbols, and iconography which served as non-verbal, but visual forms of expressing the habits, thought, techniques and condition that characterized a society as a whole (Weston, 2006).

In the works of Ngo Tuan Ahn (2017)," nonverbal communication, contrary to most people thinking, carries most of the information exchanged through communication activities. According to Mehrabian (1971) [29] study, which is a famous study cited many times among academic papers, verbal content makes up only seven percent, while nonverbal content takes up a sizeable amount of ninety-three percent of our communication activity. Price (2003) [36] says that nonverbal content is at least sixty-five percent more powerful than verbal content (whether it is spoken or written)".

Natalia Khozyainova, (2017) [31] posits that nonverbal communication is, however, not only about the tone or the speed of the speech as may seem from first glance – its structure is far more complex. Because of the non-linguistic nature of nonverbal communication, the multi-message capacity is indicated, unleashing a simultaneous transmission of various messages and cues (Damhorst, 1990) [10], thus perplexing the process of decoding the message. Because nonverbal communication has the capacity to occur through any sensory channel (Battersby, 2009) [6], while transmitting the message, the following visual cues can be involved, either individually or sometimes all at once: body language (kinesics), distance (proxemics), voice (paralanguage), touch (haptics), and appearance and artifacts. Communication through each of the elements can be culturally contextualized, therefore triggering different reactions from the observant, even if the same element is used (DeVito, 2001, p. 194-211) [14]. Apart from cultural contexts, within the same culture, there can also be gender differences in perception of received cues. For example, contrary to popular belief, females initiate more opposite-sex touching, especially with the exercise of control (Jones, 1986, as cited in DeVito, 2001, p. 205) [14]. Nonverbal communication allows a whole variety of functions to be implemented, including regulation of the opponent and their reaction, exercise of power and control, feedback transmission, control over spatial closeness, communication of cultural and subcultural affiliations – the list is non-exhaustive. The ability to effectively communicate via nonverbal signals starts developing already during childhood, when the child learns a variety of meanings communicated through these channels (DeVito, 2001, p. 194-229) [14].

In linguistic terms, any linguistic item is said to be of linguistic significance if it brings about a different meaning from the everyday usage of the word. Crystal (1985) uses the term "linguistic significance" to refer to the linguistic status of a spoken or written feature: a feature is significant if it is contrastive, that is whereby substituting it for another feature a difference in meaning is obtained (p. 279) [2]. Culturally, therefore, it is found that the Agortime people's usage of Eʋe kente cloth is also to a large extent connected to language. An object woven from cotton is not just a beauty meant for the eye; more often than not, it also carries with it some linguistic expressions and ideologies. An individual well vested with the customs and culture of the people of Agortime traditional area is able to give a remarkably close interpretation attached to any piece of clothing and textile work. This, therefore, means that instead

of using ordinary words and sentences, an artist would use clothing and textile work, specifically kente cloth to convey a message or deep emotional feelings.

Weaving as one of the methods of producing textiles has a long history whose importance cannot be overlooked. It is therefore necessary to discuss the importance of weaving in this essay. Art forms used in the Eʋe Kente cloth are meant for attraction, beautification, and for spiritual purposes. Gyekye (1986) [21], writing on African cultural values, indicated that the concept of beauty is central to the aesthetic experience and evaluation and is generally associated with works of art such as sculptures, musical compositions, as well as artistic expression through dance.

Crosman (2011) [9] posits that dating back to the late 17th century, kente originally was a prestigious textile worn exclusively by royalty, privileged chiefs, and wealthy leaders on special occasions. "Over the past one hundred years the exclusivity has relaxed and fine kente may now be worn by anyone who can afford it" (Ross, 2002, p. 190) [42].

As cited in Crosman (2011) [9], for centuries kente cloth has not only been used for personal adornment by the Asante and Eʋe but as a powerful medium of expression. As a non-verbal form of communication, the woven designs are highly symbolic. Over time the Ghanaian kente textile has become a cultural symbol, "a visual presentation of history, oral literature, philosophy, moral principles, religious beliefs and rules of social conduct" (Dennis, 2004, p. 12) [12]. Today kente clothes are worn as ceremonial garments by Ghanaians regardless of their social status not only at festivals but during important life events such as marriages, religious worship, funerals, or puberty rites. The kente cloth in its cultural context of use is more than just a cloth. Within traditional societies, age, marital, and social standing determine the size and design of kente cloth one would wear for social events.

This research, which is a study of Agortime kente is to establish the communicative significance of the fabric through pattern, and symbol. A symbol is an entity that represents some other entity (Morris, 1955) [30]. Symbols are a type of sign (unit of signification) in which the signifier (the form in which the sign appears) does not resemble the signified (the mental construct) because the relationship between these two is purely conventional and must be learned (De Saussure *et al*. 1974) [13]. The study looks at the variation with focus on age, sex, social status and would want to discover kente as a communicative identity and the factors the wearer considers to choose kente as a cloth.

Statement of the problem
The kente cloth has played a central role in the lives of the people of Agortime Traditional Area, but there has been very little examination of its communicative significance. There is no compiled book containing communicative information on this art among the people in this study area. Although some scholars have made a fair attempt at investigating the significance of this art (Eʋe kente) in the area, there is still room for more research on the communicative significance and socio-cultural usage of kente. The use of kente cloth particularly for cultural, religious and gendered use is highly distinctive among the people of the area. For instance, while much attention has been drawn to its socio-economic importance, relatively very little has centred on the communicative significance of Eʋe kente cloth of the people of Agortime traditional area.

Thus, there is an aspect of this art that has received no or little attention. Writers' such as Idiens (1980) [2], Cole and Ross (1977) [8] etc. are pre-occupied by the aesthetic value of kente and specifically for costumes.

The current researchers therefore, hope to fill the academic vacuum created by the lack of information on the communicative significance.

Objectives of the study
The objectives of this study are to:
1. Identify the socio-cultural communication values of Agortime kente.
2. Identify the sociolinguistics knowledge of the language of Agortime kente.

Research questions
The research basically answers the following questions:
1. What are the socio-cultural communication values of Agortime Kente?
2. To what extent is the sociolinguistic knowledge of language of Agortime kente known by the people?

Significance of the study
There is lack of in-depth knowledge and understanding of the communicative significance of the Eʋe kente cloth of the people of Agortime Traditional Area. It has, therefore, become more than necessary for this form of art to be studied in detail. It is the responsibility of the researchers to ensure the accurate documentation of the communication significance of this heritage art form of the people of Agortime Traditional Area. It is hoped that once completed, this study will be a valuable one especially when it comes to the correct interpretation of shapes, patterns and style used by the weavers. This study will provide knowledge, understanding and insight into the communicative significance of Eʋe kente cloth. Accordingly, this study will uncover how the weavers and people use it to express or communicate self and personal worth, social value, economic value, royalty and personality, as well as culture and change. It is further hoped that this study will serve as an invaluable source of reference work for both students and scholars who have interest in this field of study.

Delimitation
The research is limited to Agortime kente and its communicative significance as well as its symbols and their symbolic or philosophical meanings. This is because much work has not been done on this area and the study will add knowledge to learning.

Literature review
Clothing and culture
Symbolism also determines a person and what is worn in the broader social and cultural milieu. The dominant mode of dressing (nowadays mass fashion and national costume) reflects the current cultural trends, and above all, valuable and aesthetic standards. It provides the most picturesque insight into the lifestyle of a particular social environment. Fashion in clothes reveals the universal constants that generally show the cultural and physical similarity in a certain time, as well as a series of cultural processes, borrows, or specificities. The clothes are treated as a collective and individual visual medium and with the help of it; a specific group in contemporary culture can be

successfully "decoded". This holds true also for a person in the social milieu or in several other levels (starting from its financial status to the spiritual state of mind, social position, and work engagement). Each of these structures has its place in the system of social signs of similarities and differences. These kinds of signs are fitted into group's roles and choices that society limits as informal or imposed. The choices are made when dressing confirms the messages that are transmitted through "precisely certain differences of a number of interlinked sets of class and status, self-image and attractiveness". In the retrospective look at the culture of garments, we can make a conclusion that in today's dressing a considerable freedom has been gained, i.e. very wide range of possibilities and freedom in dressing related to history.

A person's clothing choice
A person's clothing choices are often determined by the kind of person one is and also the groups which they belong to (Kwon, 1987) [2]. This is important for clothing research because people are often known to cloth themselves to acknowledge being part of group (Satrapa *et al.*, 1992) [43]. This can be attributed to the fact that clothes provide communication about the unique qualities of an individual and also the qualities that link that person to other members of society through the use of shared cultural /social patterns (Kwon, 1987) [2]. Individuals not only use clothes to define and communicate their social identity to others (Feinberg, Mataro and Burroughs, 1992) [17], they also use it as a symbol of their connection to others. So, while a perceiver's characteristics and behaviors my affect the way that person sees themselves and the way they choose to dress. Some groupings that may play a role in a person's clothing choices include: gender groupings, memberships to group organizations and self-identity.

Dress as a means of communication
Cited in the works of Khozyainova (2017) [31], unraveling the process of communication through dress is a difficult one, as multiple messages about the wearer and such instances as identity, value, mood and attitude can be sent simultaneously (Stone, 1962, as cited in Damhorst, 1990) [10]. In addition, because self-expression is conducted through dress implicitly, conventional symbols with defined meanings are absent, which often times contributes to the "undercoding" of dress messages (Guiraud, 1975, as cited in Damhorst, 1990) [10]. All of the aforementioned features make communication through dress not only an event highly susceptible to misinterpretation and vulnerable to adverse consequences, but also a rather intimate matter between a carrier and his means of transmitting the message, as the implicit side of the personality is involved.
The indication of clothing as a significant social symbol for identity communication lies in three core characteristics: a) it is used daily, b) it appears on public display, and c) it is easily manipulated (Feinberg *et al.*, 2010). Because of the strength and inevitable presence of these characteristics, clothing acts as one of the core impression-formation elements, which often results in parties tailoring their behavior based on the meanings they decode from their opponents' outlook. Impression formation in this case is one of the key stages in how individuals "assess" each other through visual cues within social contexts, together with theories of self-enhancement, communication and

perception that give bases for explanation of nonverbal communication process (Richards, 1991)[38]. While self-enhancement theory suggests that human behavior is tailored to construct and support a positive perception of the self, communication theory suggests that the environment of each person consists of various physical and psychological conditions and past experiences, and because these elements are different for each individual, the communication field appears to be heavily diverse, and misreading in cues can often occur.
However, it is perception and impression-formation theories that provide an explanation of how one person is "evaluated" by another one through visual cues (among which clothing is included) they send. An encoder represents a distal object, which is being perceived through channels of mediation (Hider, 1958, Shaver, 1975, Fisher, 1978, as cited in Richards, 1991) [38], and because of limited human capacity, an incomplete stimulus is sent to the brain, where signals are interpreted against the mental field. The mental field consists of aforementioned physical and psychological conditions and past experiences. During this interpretation two processes happen: through selective attention, an individual decodes the aspects most salient to their needs (in seek of gratification), and then creates a mental image of the distal object using current conditions, needs and experiences to flesh out deficient aspects (Richards, 1991) [38]. Therefore, taking in consideration interaction goals of the observer and decoding of cues on the basis of their mental characteristics, "the final percept is largely composed of those cues which the observer has a need to see" (Richards, 1991) [38]. Because these theories provide a basis for how human beings interact with each other based on visual cues, and outline the importance of artifacts in the communication process, analysis and application of these theories is important in order to understand the key functions of clothes: clothes, which represent visual cues that play a fundamental role in social interactions, how individuals perceive each other, and how one's identity is communicated.

Theoretical framework
Visual rhetoric and semiotic
Marcel Danesi (2017), in his Visual Rhetoric (VR) which is a field of inquiry aiming to analyze all kinds of visual images and texts as rhetorical structures. VR is an offshoot of both visual semiotics or the study of the meanings of visual signs in cultural contexts; and of the psychology of visual thinking, as opposed to verbal thinking—defined as the capacity to extract meaning from visual images. The basic method of VR, which can be traced back to Roland Barthes's pivotal 1964 article "The Rhetoric of the Image," is to unravel to connotative meanings of visual images. The picture of a lion, for instance, can be read at two levels. Denotatively (or literally) it is interpreted as "a large, carnivorous, feline mammal of Africa." This level conveys informational or referential meaning.
But the image of lion in, say, an advertisement or music video invariably triggers a connotative sense—namely, "fierceness, ferociousness, bravery, courage, virility." The key insight of VR is that connotation is anchored in rhetorical structure, that is, in cognitive-associative processes such as metaphor and allusion, which are imprinted not only in verbal expressions, but also in visual images. So, the image of a lion in, say, a logo design for

men's clothing would bear rhetorical-connotative meaning and affect the way in which the clothing brand is perceived. This same basic approach is applied to all visual expressive artifacts, from traditional visual art works to the design of web pages and comic books.

Visual rhetoric (VR) is the critical analysis of visual texts (paintings, movies, ads, posters, and soon) with the techniques of both semiotics and rhetorical analysis. The former is the discipline that studies signs (any form that has meaning), and rhetoric is the discipline that examines the structure and uses of figurative language (metaphor, metonymy, catachresis, irony, and so on). In addition, it has extended the traditional view of rhetoric to include the influence or persuasive force of images rather than with their structure. VR scholars may analyze the structure of an image (in the content of language or visually), but do so with an eye toward rhetorical consequence—who is persuaded and how and to what ends. Its basic focus is on the visual processing of forms and their meanings and on how to read (interpret) visual texts such as ads and films. Visual thinking is the phenomenon of forming thoughts in terms of mental and real-world images, rather than words and their meanings. It has been characterized as the process of perceiving ideas as a series of mental pictures. Phillip Yenawine (1997, p. 845) defines it as "the ability to find meaning in imagery":

It involves a set of skills ranging from simple identification (naming what one sees) to complex interpretation on contextual, metaphoric and philosophical levels. Many aspects of cognition are called upon, such as personal association, questioning, speculating, analyzing, fact-finding, and categorizing. Objective understanding is the premise of much of this literacy, but subjective and affective aspects of knowing are equally important.

Eleanor Rosch on mental images suggested that they were not just a result of perceptual mechanisms but also a product of cultural conditioning (Rosch, 1973, 1975, 1981) [39, 40, 41]. The empirical work of Abigail Housen, starting in 1993 (see Housen, 2002) [23], also showed that visual thinking was the likely basis for developing critical thinking and its transfer to other skills and content.

The link between visual semiotics and VR is evident to this day. A basic premise of the latter is, in fact, a virtual "law" of the former-namely, that the meaning and interpretation of visual images vary along cultural lines (Lotman, 1991; Uspenskij, 2001) [27, 50]. Even the actual type of image that people will call to mind is guided by cultural factors (Taylor, 1995).

In terms of communicative function, the Eʋe kente is a medium of expressing personal, socio politico and religious identity, thoughts and feelings as well other concepts of the people of Agortime traditional area. This research on communicative significance of Eʋe kente is restricted to its linguistic features as narratives as noted by Georgakopoulou (2007) [] as well as using visual rhetoric to use kente cloth as the key insight that connotation is anchored in rhetorical structure, that is, in cognitive-associative processes such as metaphor and allusion, which are imprinted not only in verbal expressions, but also in visual images which kente expresses both in visual and verbal expression.

The current researchers employed this framework to explore the meaning of signs or symbols in Eʋe kente, and to find out their linguistic meaning. The most important thing in semiotics is how the meaning occurs from a sign when the sign is used by the people to communicate The visual rhetoric is used in chapter four in answering RQ1 that describes the sociolinguistic values of Agortime kente cloth.

Rhetoric of the image
"The Rhetoric of the Image" Barthes (1964) [5] started by noting that the word "image" derives from a Latin term meaning "imitation," posing the question of how something that is an imitation of something else can be so imbued with meaning. This whole system of meanings occurs at the level of connotation, which constitutes a powerful unconscious rhetorical system as Barthes had also argued in his 1957 book, Mythologies. Barthes called the initial denotative reading of the ad as "non-coded" and the connotative one as "coded." He referred to the ways in which the images and caption led the viewer to the coded meaning as anchorage.

This seemingly simple semiotic analysis-denotation (non-coded meaning)-versus-connotation (coded meaning)-has been criticized on several counts, such as ignoring the fact that the advert can be understood across cultures in ways that do not involve meaning dichotomies (Kress & Van Leeuwen, 1996). But the main point of Barthes's article was that visual images bear more meaning than literally meet the eye (pun intended). They have, in other words, rhetorical force (Beasley & Danesi, 2002) [7].

Visual semiotics
Its aim is to study all kinds of visual images in terms of their implications not only for general sign theory, but also for the psychology of visual thinking generally. Visual texts (cinema, magazines, ads, optical illusions, diagrams, charts, and so on) became major targets of analysis. Visual images were analyzed as special kinds of signs, that is, as signs meant to be seen, rather than heard or read verbally visual semiotics overlapped with both the study of visual communication in anthropology and of visual thinking and mental imagery in psychology. The overlap, however, had a basis in the history of the discipline.

Ferdinand de Saussure (1916, p. 16), had used the word image in his theory of the sign, claiming, in fact, that semiology (his term for the discipline) was to be considered a branch of psychology (itself an emerging field at the time). Saussure defined the sign as a binary structure, consisting of a physical form, which he called the signifier, and a mental part, which he called the signified. He defined a verbal signifier, such as the word cat, as a "sound image" (a sequence of distinct sounds) and its signified (a type of mammal) as the "conceptual image" that the signifier calls to mind. Although he did not define a visual sign, by extension it can be characterized as a "visual image" at the level of the signifier and as a "conceptual image," analogous to the one evoked by a verbal signifier, at the level of the signified.

Visual texts
A text can be defined simply as a composite semiotic form, that is, as a form that has been constructed to represent something by combining "smaller" sign elements or signifiers in some structured way (Sebeok & Danesi, 2000) [46]. Texts are not constructed or interpreted in terms of the individual meanings of their constituent parts added together, however, but holistically as singular signifying structures. The use of both verbal and visual elements can be called "blended" or "hybrid" texts (Danesi, 2016) [11].

In this study a distributism methodology has been used to get an indication of the larger social factors (such as status, gender and age) that may play a role in language variation patterns in Agortime kente. This method could also be used as it can identify instances of language shift (i.e. with the age variable as in Yeung, 1980), as well as instances of geographic variability (i.e. how is Agortime kente different from other kente?).

Methodology
The Study Area
In order to give a meaningful assessment of the data, the ethnographic background of the sampling is very cardinal (Abotsi Antoinnette, 2014) [1]. The research took place in the Agortime Traditional Area of the Volta Region in the Agortime-Ziope District. The Agortime Traditional Area comprises Kpetoe, Beh, Kpogadzi, Afegame, Abehenase and Akpokofe.

It is not easy to state exactly when the art of weaving was introduced in the Volta Region of Ghana. Among the Eʋe of Ghana, the art is believed to have originated from Agortime-Kpetoe before spreading to other areas. This claim had been seconded by Idiens (1980) [2] when he wrote that the craft of weaving in the Eʋeland originated from Avatime and Kpetoe. Kente weaving among the Eʋe is an old art practised especially among the Agortime Kpetoe people. The oral traditions of the Eʋe traced the origin of Kente weaving to a hunter named Togbi Se from Kpetoe-Abehenase, who after a futile day, sat under a tree to rest and observed a spider weaving its web. Togbi Se wondered why humans could not weave. He went home and tried imitating the spider by inventing a small triangular loom of a type now known as a child's loom (Hiamey, 1981, in Ross, 1998). It must be noted that the use of a frame structure in experimenting weaving by the early Eʋe weavers predates the looms. In this method, materials similar to basket were woven. The technique is still used to teach learners who want to learn how to weave Kente. The apparatus is a replica of what Togbi Se used (Tettehfio, 2009) [49].

The study population and sampling procedures
The target population include Agortime Traditional Area weavers and users of kente cloth (women, men, youth, elders, tourists' natives living outside the traditional area and non-natives living in the Agortime traditional area) of the Agortime-Ziope District. To select the study sample, each of the towns in the traditional area was visited. The Agortime traditional area was purposively selected for the study because kente weaving is a predominant art and craft of the people. The maximum variation sampling technique, also called a maximum diversity sampling, was used in selecting 30 study participants for the study of weaving kente cloth who participated in focus group discussion. The maximum diversity or variation sampling technique is one of the most frequently used purposive sampling techniques (Sandelowski, 1995) [44]. When sample sizes are small (less than or about 30) maximum variation samples can be more representative than random samples (Patton, 1990) [35]. The aim of using the maximum diversity sampling technique was to sample for heterogeneity. A wide range or diversity of weavers was purposively sampled by gender, age groups, and socioeconomic status for inquiry. This was because they have experiences, and are rich in information.

In addition, forty (40) people were also purposively sampled and administered questionnaire on the socio-cultural knowledge and usage of the kente cloth for the researcher to establish the existence knowledge people have about the communicative significance of kente cloth.

Data collection procedure
The participants and the researchers are members of the same community (positionality), data were collected through the face-to-face, telephone, and web-based interviews, and the focus group discussion using the Eʋe dialect and English language as mediums. Interviews were conducted with Eʋe kente cloth weavers in the Agortime Traditional Area. Visits were made to the youth and elderly people who are familiar with the art of kente weaving and usage in the traditional area. The researchers visited each of the respondents to book an appointment with them. On the appointed day, the researcher called on the respondents to conduct the interview. The researchers first of all adhered to the ethical considerations and made sure the respondents were prepared before proceeding with the interview. The researchers asked the questions one after the other, giving the respondents enough time to react to each question. The researchers probed for clarifications whenever there was the need. Data from the interview was audio-taped with the consent of the participants, and it was later transcribed. Through the face-to-face interview, the researcher was able to probe, follow up and elaborate responses.

Furthermore, the researchers during interview made an assessment of what the respondent felt, thought and believed through observing verbal and non-verbal behaviours. The interview and FGD sessions were audio recorded, and notes were taken. It was important to take notes because, though interviews hold the truth on the tape; gestures, facial expressions and postures gave additional information to the meaning of what was spoken and not captured on the tape, leading to the loss of vital portions of data. Besides, the tape might develop technical or mechanical faults hence the need for notes.

As facilitators, the researchers ensured that the study participants were comfortable. Before each interview session, there was a conducive atmosphere which allowed participants freedom and independence to participate. The researchers explained the contents of the interview schedule and the FGD guide. Participants were shown the schedules so that they chose the questions they wanted to begin with. The researchers, in some cases, decided to begin with questions that would help participants to uncover their perspectives when participants' responses gave way to or yield "leads" during the interaction. The researchers pursued them in order to get more data and clarity. Since the questions were open-ended, it gave participants the opportunity to give their own points of view in respect of their situation. The participants were afforded greater opportunities to tell their stories.

The researchers reaffirmed the value and usefulness of the participants during the interaction. The interviews and the FGD were audio taped and transcribed to enable the researcher to capture every detail. All the information: interview and FGD guides, and transcriptions from the process notes were labelled and filed in a way that made the data easily identifiable and retrievable. This ensured that no data was lost or misplaced. A period of 15 days was used for the data collection, including interviewing of the

participants, and the FGD. Through the use of the interview the researcher was abl e to "understand the world from the victims" points of view." Thus, in the guided conversation, the researcher was afforded an opportunity to hear the participants" stories thereby capturing the deep meanings of their lived experiences.

Demographic information about respondents
Concerning the background of the respondents, data was collected on gender, age, and level of education. The tables below represent the summary of the characteristics of respondents of both users and weavers on their demographic data.

Table 1: Shows the number of gender that participated in the study and therefore shows the percentages of the respondents Gender of Respondent (Weavers)

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Male	25	83.3	83.3	83.3
Female	5	16.7	16.7	100.0
Total	30	100.0	100.0	

The above table represents the demographic response of the weavers of kente. From the table on gender, 25 (83.3%) of the respondents are males and 5 (16.7%) are females. This indicates that the majority of kente weavers are males with few females in the industry.

Table 2: The table below shows the ages of respondents in the weaving industry Age of Respondent (Weavers)

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
20-30	13	43.3	43.3	43.3
31-40	10	33.3	33.3	76.7
41-50	4	13.3	13.3	86.7
Above 51	3	10.3	10.3	100.0
Total	30	100.0	100.0	

The table shows the age of respondents, there is a frequency of 13 (43.3.4%) which records for the 20 – 30 years' age limit, 10 (33.3%) for 31 – 40 years, 4 (13.3%) for 51 years and above. This data again shows that, the mainstream of kente weavers are between the ages of 20-30 years followed by 41-40 years. The two age brackets indicate that most youth are still in the weaving industry.

Table 3: The table shows the level of education of weavers for the study. Level of Education of Weavers

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Primary	19	63.3	63.3	63.3
JHS	8	26.7	26.7	90.0
SHS	3	10.0	10.0	100.0
Total	30	100.0	100.0	

From the table, the data shows the level of education on the weavers of kente. The sample consist of 19 (63.3%) having their highest education to primary level, 8(26.7%) have it to the junior high level, and only 3 (10.0%) have it to the senior high secondary level. The most shocking is that, none of the respondents selected have tertiary level of education. This suggests that the weaving industry consists of people who do not have tertiary education

Table 4: The table below shows the gender of selected persons who use kente Gender of Users of kente

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Male	30	75.0	75.0	75.0
Female	10	25.0	25.0	100.0
Total	40	100.0	100.0	

The table above represents the demographic response of the users of Kente. From this analysis, 30 of the respondents are males and 10 are females, which represent 75% and 25% respectively. It is clear from the table that males always put on kente cloth no matter the occasion than females who put on kente during special occasions.

Table 5: The table shows the age distribution of users of kente cloth Age of Respondent (Users)

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
20-30	3	7.5	7.5	7.5
31-40	13	30.0	30.0	37.5
41-50	11	27.5	27.5	65.0
50 and Above	14	35.0	35.0	100.0
Total	40	100.0	100.0	

On the age of the respondents, 3 (7.5%) are between 20 – 30 years, 12 (30%) are between 31 – 40 years, 11 (27.5%) are between 41 -50 years, and 14 respondents representing 35% are above the age of 51 years. It can therefore be concluded from the analysis that the vast people who use kente are the people aged 51 years and above. This the researcher can say because the aged see kente as a pride to be worn and the youth see wearing of kente belonging to adults

Table 6: Gender of Respondent * Number of Years in weaving Kente Cloth Cross Tabulation

		Number of years in weaving kente cloth				Total
		1-5 years	6-10 years	10-15 years	15 years and above	
Gender of Respondent	Male	11	7	4	3	25
	Female	3	2	0	0	5
Total		14	9	4	3	30

The table above represents how long weavers have been in the kente industry. Age 1-5 had 11 males, 6-10 had 7 males, 10-15 had 4 males and 15 years and above had 3 males. This shows that most males in the youth age have embraced weaving as a vocation which gives hope to the sustainability of the weaving industry. The females age of 1-5 years had 3, 6-10 had 2, 10-15 had 0 and 15 years and above had nil. This shows the dominant nature of males in the industry and low number of females could be attributed to child birth and other household chores especially when the females get married.

Table 7: Gender of Respondent * What Influence you in Selecting a type of Kente Design: A Cross Tabulation

		What Influences you in selecting a type of kente design					Total
		Personal communication	Aesthetical criteria	Social stratification	Social engagement	Transmission of information	
Gender of respondent	Male	11	1	5	2	5	24
	female	2	4	4	3	3	16
Total		13	5	9	5	8	40

The table above is to understand reasons why weavers weave for users (wearers) to buy. Wearing kente for personal communication had 11 male respondents, aesthetical criteria had 1 male respondent, social stratification 5, social engagement had 2 and transmission information had 5 male respondents. Comparatively for female respondents 2 for personal communication, 4 for aesthetical criteria, 4 females for social stratification, 3 for social engagement and 3 for transmission of information. The research shows that males put on kente to send messages to onlookers for an identity. On the other hand women prefer the beauty of kente and for social stratification to exhibit their elegance human nature and status in society. The table below shows the significance of certain designs to confirm their knowledge about their consciousness on the kente cloth.

Table 8: Significant of Designs

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Unity	9	30.0	30.0	30.0
	Supremacy	9	30.0	30.0	60.0
	Leadership	5	16.7	16.7	76.7
	Beauty	3	10.0	10.0	86.7
	Loyalty	4	13.3	13.3	100.0
	Total	30	100.0	100.0	

The table indicates the significant of designs wove in kente. In rank order, the significant designs were: unity and supremacy as noted by 30% each. This was followed by leadership as affirmed by 16.7% of the designs, beauty constitutes 10% designs and loyalty had 13.3% of designs. The result implies the importance weavers attach to kente cloths that depict unity and supremacy. The weaver sees beauty as a least significance.

Evaluating the sociolinguistics knowledge of the user of kente

The data presented and discussed under various themes of the kente cloth user is to find answers to the question, response to items in the questionnaire were analysed. The quantitative result is presented as frequency counts and percentages in tables.

Table 9: Age of Respondent * what influences you in selecting a type of kente design Cross tabulation

		What influences you in selecting a type of kente design					
		Personal communication	Aesthetical criteria	Social stratification	Social engagement	Transmission of information	Total
Age of respondent	20-30	2	1	2	0	1	6
	31-40	6	1	5	2	4	18
	41-50	2	2	1	3	2	10
	50 and above	3	1	1	0	1	6
Total		13	5	9	5	8	40

Table 9 shows the magnitude of the influence of the user in selecting kente cloth. The age 20-30 had 6 respondents with varied reasons to selecting a design. In selecting design 2 respondents each selected personal communication and social stratification as reasons for choosing designs while a respondent each selected for aesthetical criteria and

transmission of information with no one choosing a design for social engagement., 31-40 represents 18 respondents had 6 selecting for personal communication, 5 for social Stratification, 4 respondents for transmission of information, 2 and 1 respectively for social engagement and aesthetical criteria. In addition, the age of 41-50 had 3 respondents for social engagement, 2 respondents each for personal communication, aesthetical criteria and transmission of information while social stratification had 1 respondent. Similarly, the age of 50 and above confirmed 3 for personal communication, 1 each for aesthetical criteria, social stratification and transmission of information while none for social engagement. The aggregate results of the various respondents show that personal communication (13) influences the various respondents in selecting a design to wear kente cloth followed by social stratification, transmission of information(8) 5 each for aesthetical criteria and social engagement. This depicts that users usually wear the cloth to extend messages.

Table 10: Age of respondents* names of some kente cloths

| | | Names of some kente cloths | | | | Total |
		Trekeke	Mawuko	Tayati	Gabusu	
Age of respondents	20-30	3	2	0	1	6
	31-40	10	5	0	3	18
	41-50	5	4	0	1	10
	50 and above	1	0	0	5	6
Total		19	11	0	10	40

Table 10 indicates the names of some kente cloth and their significance. The response to identifying the kente and its significance aggregate scores of Trekeke is 19 that shows it has a message when put on, Mawuko with aggregate respondents of 11 also suggest it sends message if worn as well as Gabusu of 5 respondents. The kente cloth Tayati had none of the respondents' identifying it as sending message which implies that Tayati has no sociolinguistic message but is only worn for beauty.

Table 11: Gender of Respondent * Names of some kente cloths Crosstabulation

| | | Names of some kente cloths | | | | Total |
		Trekeke	Mawuko	Tayati	Gabusu	
Gender of respondents	male	14	4	4	2	24
	female	5	7	1	3	16
Total		19	11	5	5	40

Table 11 indicates gender respondents associated with the names of various kente shown to them for identification. 14 males identify Trekeke as against 5 females, this was followed by Mawuko which had 4 for males and 7 for females, Tayati had 4 males and 5 females and, Tabusu had 2 males and 3 females. The result implies that Trekeke, Tayati is mostly worn by men and therefore easily identified and Mawuko which has religious meaning was easily identified by females. However, Gabusu which is a cloth worn by men was identified by females than males. This could be as a result of females identifying cloths than males.

Table 12: Which Designs have Messages?

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Trekeke	12	40.0	40.0	40.0
	Xexeame do Atsor	9	30.0	30.0	70.0
	Gabusu	9	30.0	30.0	100.0
	Tayati	0	0.0	0.0	100.0
	Alenku	0	0.0	0.0	100.0
	Total	30	100.0	100.0	

The table above indicates which designs have messages when shown to users of kente cloth. 40% of respondents identified Trekeke, 30% each identified Xexeame do Atsor and Gabusu and Tayati as well as Alenku do not have messages. This indicates the old woven kente cloths have messages than the new cloths like Tayati and Alenku which are woven for beauty purposes.

Summary, conclusions and recommendations
Summary of the work
The purpose of this study was to investigate a sociolinguistic study of the language of kente cloth at Agortime in the Agortime traditional area in the Volta Region of Ghana. To accomplish this purpose, two research questions were outlined and investigated. The study adopted the ethnography and variationist theory to collect quantitative and qualitative data for the study. Using purposive sampling technique, 70 participants were selected to participate in the study. The participants included weavers of kente and users of kente cloth.
Questionnaire and interview guide were used to collect data for the study. These instruments were pre-tested to ensure their validity and reliability before data collection commenced. Guidelines to collecting data was followed and adhered to. The quantitative data was analyzed using descriptive statistics such as frequency and percentages. The qualitative data, on the other hand, was analyzed thematically.

Among the major findings were the following

a. Kente of authority and royalty has messages to either the weaver or the user

b. There are brands of kente cloths that do not have messages to either the weaver or user and it just shows its aesthetical values.

c. People would select kente cloths that infer with messages of personal communication and infer messages than just for beauty.

d. The weavers easily identify brands and names of kente cloths as well as the users.

e. The main weavers of kente are people who do not have high educational background.

f. The dominant weaving industry has more males than females and that the vocation has become a male one.

Conclusions

Based on the findings the following major conclusions have been drawn. The Agortime Kente cloths mostly communicate through Non-Verbal codes. According to the belief of the Agortime society, non-verbal codes have more reliability and believability for expressing royalty, personal communication and status. In the society, there are different kente designs. These designs have high value messages as they convey meanings non-verbally.

On special occasions in the Agortime society in marriage ceremony for example, the society uses various kente cloths (object languages) to transfer messages related to marriage. These kente clothing styles is used to communicate that a wearer is a bride or a groom, Klogo is a kente to show that the bride is adaptable to all situations so ready to be with the husband. There are kente cloth languages which are considered as positive and negative in the society. For instances, kente cloth like Mawuko which signifies "only God" has a positive language as compared to those with rival intentions like "Atsunyesi kpɔm dze dzome". Similarly, kente that speak the language of royalty, wealth, authority and supremacy is considered positive. When a chief puts on Gãbusu the message is clear to the society about the symbol of authority that the chief holds.

Recommendations

As time goes, cultural change is inevitable to messages in kente. Most of the kente cloths which serve as means for communicative purposes in the society may be lost due to different factors like: the youth seeing the weaving of kente as a difficult vocation as compared to the riding of motor cycle which brings to them more economic emancipation than weaving in different communities. Modern education and urbanization have also brought some change in the weaving industry where the youth are seeking white collar jobs after graduating and passing their exams which makes the vocation for less privileged and school dropouts by introducing new kente cloths that have no messages but for beauty only into the life of the Agortime society.

Therefore, as kente cloth reflects the identity and as they are used as communicative cue in the society, elders should take responsibility in creating awareness among the current generation about the importance of preserving these kente cloths and passing them onto the upcoming generations. Since kente cloths are a part of communication, the effect of assimilation on a culture of the society, particularly on the change of kente cloths with regard to communication is currently evident. Before they are lost, some mechanism of documenting them is necessary by the society or other organizations. Research on them should also be encouraged.

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