Ethnography of Print and Broadcast Media in Ghana

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Abstract: This article presents an ethnographic overview of the emergence of journalism in Ghana, detailing the sociocultural components of print and broadcast media that are relevant to this situation. It argues that just as sociocultural factors influence the learning process, these factors affect mass media production in Ghana. This article traces the professional, cultural, political, and economic factors that shape the development of English-language print media in contrast to African-language media in Ghana. Finally, it compares print and broadcast media in this context, with the argument that sociocultural constituents offer insight into the social aspects of languages that revolve around Ghanaian media.

Keywords: media production, professional journalism, sociocultural theory, indigenous media, ethnography, Ghanaian media, African languages.

1. Introduction

Sociocultural factors affect the learning process (Simeon 2016; Masuda et al 2015; Lantolf and Poehner 2014), digital consumerism (Edwards 2014), and coaching in sports (Jones 2016). Spitulnik (1993) called for inquiries into the sociocultural conditions that influence the emergence of various forms of media in different societies. Based on Spitulnik’s theoretical stance, this article examines the sociocultural perspectives of the media in terms of professional media practices that shape the production and development of mass media (see Meyer 2015). In this article, sociocultural features refer to the cultural, political, and economic factors of a society. This analytical method is used to explore the professional markers of journalism and sociocultural characteristics that are incorporated into the production of Ghanaian media in both English and local languages. This article contrasts print media with broadcast media in Ghana, to show the features of sociocultural status attributed to languages with regard to Ghanaian media.

2. Professionalization of Ghanaian journalism

Ghanaian journalistic production can be divided into three phases with respect to professionalisation (i.e. journalism that consists of formal institutions, trained journalists, modern financing, analytic reporting, printing presses, language skills, and modern infrastructure).¹ The first phase involves amateur newspaper production and does not deploy markers for professional news production. The second phase is marked by commercialism, in which amateur journalists produce alternative publications to critique pre-independence government politics and administration. The third phase evolves from amateur production and commercialism to professional journalism with modern infrastructure and training. Sociocultural perspectives of Ghanaian newspapers are defined in terms of their professional production, the classificatory names assigned to them, and their scopes (see Awetori Yaro 2013; Weeks, Hills and Stoler 2013; Ankomah 2003).

The first phase of journalism in Ghana began in 1822 with Sir Charles MacCarthy’s Royal Gold Coast Gazette. This newspaper aimed to provide British merchants in the Gold Coast (Ghana) with economic and commercial information, as well as to disseminate news concerning Britain and the West African colony. Given that Sir Charles MacCarthy was the governor of the Gold Coast from 1822 to 1824, the English journalistic tradition that he implanted in the colony set the tone as a sociopolitical reference point for subsequent governments throughout the history and development.

of journalism in Ghana. This type of news production gradually became standard practice in British colonies throughout sub-Saharan Africa from 1822 to 1930 (Heath 2001). Subsequent pre-independence governments in Ghana published the Gold Coast Assize in 1883, the Gold Coast News in 1884, and the Gold Coast Pioneer in 1921 (Jones-Quarrey 1975).

Within the first phase of journalism in Ghana, native Ghanaian amateur journalists drew on Sir Charles MacCarthy’s English-language tradition in order to launch alternative print media to the mainstream (government) newspapers. For instance, Charles Bannerman founded the West African Herald in 1857, James Hutton Brew launched the Gold Coast Times from 1874 to 1885, James Hutton Brew and J. E. Casely Hayford published the Western Echo from 1885 to 1887, and Casely Hayford started the Gold Coast Echo between 1887 and 1889. Similar endeavours included Timothy Laiing’s Gold Coast Express between 1897 and 1900, J. Mensah Sarbah’s Gold Coast People from 1891 to 1896, Casely Hayford et al.’s Gold Coast Leader from 1902 to 1934, and Alfred J. Ocansey, R.W. Dupigny, and R.B. Wuta-Ofei’s Gold Coast Spectator between 1927 and 1955, all of which promoted alternative political points of view in the emerging Ghanaian print media. The titles of these newspapers illustrated the sociocultural situations of the pre-independence government vis-à-vis the native outlook during this era in Ghana. For example, the names of the newspapers such as pioneer, royal, echo, people, and leader suggested the involvement of sociopolitical interest groups and advocates as well as various initiatives in media production during this phase of journalism.

During the first phase, missionary societies created apolitical newspapers for evangelisation and the spread of the Christian faith. These included the Methodist Mission’s Christian Messenger in 1857, Christian Report in 1857, and Gold Coast Methodist in 1886, and the Catholic Mission’s Gold Coast Catholic in 1926. Interestingly, missionaries also ensured that local-language newspapers emerge during this time. The Basel Evangelical Missionary Society started Sika Nsona Sanegbalo (Christian Messenger for the Gold Coast) in 1859. The Catholic Mission founded Mia Holo (Our Friend) in 1894, while the Basel Mission established Nutifafa Na Mi (Peace Be With You) in 1903 as a competitive response to the first newspaper in the Ewe-language territory in Togo (Gérard 1981). Missionaries ascribed names to these newspapers that portrayed the apolitical sociocultural perspective of their communication, and depicted their Christian message. Thus, titles such as Our Friend, Christian Messenger, and Peace Be With You represented the core of messages of this era’s missionary newspapers.

The first phase of journalism in Ghana thus involved amateur journalistic production by the government, native Ghanaians, and missionary groups. The period of Ghanaian journalism that was marked by amateur productions did not comprise the characteristics of what one would consider professional journalism—namely, formal institutions, trained journalists, modern financing, analytic reporting, printing presses, language skills, and modern infrastructure.

The second phase of journalistic production in Ghana stretched from 1931 to 1945. It began with J.B. Dankuah’s West African Times in 1931 and Ghana Statesman in 1948. This phase of Ghanaian newspaper production is termed the age of commercialism, in which amateur journalists created alternative newspapers to express their criticism against the pre-independence government (Asante 1996). These private newspaper producers adopted an analytical approach to journalism, critiquing the pre-independence government’s administrative policies and decisions. These English newspapers attracted a readership that wished to pass judgment on the government. Other such newspapers included Azikiwe and I.T.A. Wallace-Johnson’s African Morning Post and John and Nancy Tsiboe’s Ashanti Pioneer in 1939.

Ghanaian individuals also established local-language newspapers during this phase of journalism, to promote traditional core values. For instance, A.J. Ocansey’s City Press launched the Akan-language newspaper Asenta (News) in 1935 to serve as an alternative source of secular news parallel to the Ghanaian English-language newspapers. Kofi Akumia Badu edited Amanson (People), a Fante-dialect newspaper published in 1937. Another Fante-dialect newspaper, Amansun (All Nations), was established in 1943, with John Maxwell Y. Awothw as the editor. However, none of the local-language newspapers took root because their founders encountered problems with funding, printing, and circulation.

Newspapers titles of this second era illustrated the sociocultural scope of the period. English-language newspapers took on broader territorial political stances, as shown by such titles as West African Times, Ghanaian Statesman, and African Morning Post, to exemplify the African context of the sociocultural reality that they represented.

The third phase of journalistic production in Ghana began with Kwame Nkrumah’s Accra Evening News in 1947 and Morning Telegraph in 1949. During this period, journalists began to train in three institutes: the Ghana School of Journalism, established in 1959; the School of Communication Studies, founded in 1972; and the National Film and Television Training Institute, founded in 1978. Nkrumah contributed to this professional journalistic
phase by funding the production of mainstream newspapers (Asante, 1996). As professional productions, Nkrumah’s newspapers criticised the pre-independence government’s administration, policies, and newspapers. He used his newspapers to advocate for immediate independence from colonial rule. During the same era, the London-based Mirror group—a private British-trained press syndicate headed by Cecil King—started the Daily Graphic in 1950 and the Sunday Mirror in 1953. The Mirror Group practiced investigative journalism, attempting to expose the uppinings of the pre-independence government’s policies and administration. As Asante noted, “The establishment of the Graphic opened yet another significant chapter in the history of the Ghana press, for it used the first modern press to be set up in the country” (Asante 1996: 7). Ashanti Goldfields Corporation’s Ashanti Times in 1947 also followed this tradition of alternative professional newspapers within the third phase of journalism in Ghana.

During the post-independence era, Nkrumah and the Convention People’s Party (CPP) officials in the First Republic of Ghana created Guinea Press Limited to publish the Ghanaian Times (1958) and the Weekly Spectator in 1963. In order to control professional journalistic production in Ghana—given that he had used newspapers to critique the pre-independence government—Nkrumah bought the Mirror Press, thereby bringing the Daily Graphic and the Sunday Mirror under CPP government control (Ansah 1993; Nkrumah 1965).

After the Nkrumah era, Kofi Abrefa Busia of the Second Republic encouraged freedom of the press, which resulted in a proliferation of private newspapers during his political regime from 1969 to 1972. Jerry John Rawlings’ government reduced the restrictions on the press, which led to another rapid proliferation in professional journalistic production in Ghana from 1992 onward. John Kufuor (2001-2009), John Evans Atta Mills (2009-2012), and John Dramani Mahama (2012 onwards) have encouraged the establishment of many private news agencies in Ghana.

The classificatory names or titles assigned to the newspapers of the third phase of Ghanaian journalism portrayed the sociocultural character of the Ghanaian political era, in which private newspaper producers discussed political topics, policies and projects. The classificatory titles of some of the English newspapers included words such as time, spectator, mirror, morning, and evening. These words illustrated the agency of time within which the media producers of this journalistic phase understood their political and cultural responsibilities.

Local-language newspapers in this stage did not undergo professional journalistic production, but the names ascribed to these newspapers depicted the sociocultural perspectives of the native people. For example, the Catholic Mission in the Gold Coast introduced the Akan Kyerema (Akan Drum) in 1948 primarily for missionary activities, but it covered secular news as well. The Bureau of Ghana Languages, a wing of the government, lent its expertise to the publication of non-professional newspapers in local languages, with the aim of promoting adult literacy programs rather than serving as professional sources of news. This Bureau published the Akan Nkwantabisa (Enquirer about the Road Map [Direction]) in the three Akan dialects (Fante, Akwapim, and Asante), with versions in six Ghanaian languages, such as the Motabiala in Ewe, the Lahabali Tsumu in Dagbani, the Mansralo in Ga, the Lahabare or Labaari in Kasem, and the Kakyevole in Nzema. These select, government-sponsored, rural newspapers were printed from 1951 to 1970, mainly to supplement adult literacy programs in local languages. Oman Nwomaye Fekuw established the Akwapim-Twi dialect newspaper Duom (Move On) in 1953 to disseminate secular news, but could not adopt the professional characteristics of the English-language newspapers.

The Ghanaian government also produced an Ewe-language newspaper Kpodoga (Gong) in 1976. The title of this rural newspaper, Kpodoga, has sociocultural significance. Its meaning, gong, represents the bell used in traditional Ghanaian society to solicit attention preceding the dissemination of news by an itinerant announcer or town crier, as portrayed in African novels such as Kofi Awoonor’s This Earth My Brother (1971), Kwakuvi Azasu’s The Stool (2004), and Chinua Achebe’s Things Fall Apart (1966). By extension, the gong is reminiscent of the sociocultural media through which the traditional chief of a village or chiefdom convokes and informs his people. As the title of this newspaper indicates, the name was symbolic of both the medium and the instrument in the native system of communication and life. Kpodoga was established as an experimental rural community and pedagogical newspaper by the Institute of Adult Education at the University of Ghana, with the collaboration of UNESCO (Ansah 1981). The editorial board that gathered and organised the materials for print was supervised by a professional journalist, trained in

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English-language newspapers tradition at the Institute of Journalism in Ghana, but was not trained in the local language. He had worked primarily as a reporter for English-language newspapers. To enhance the professional style of this local-language newspaper, a trained teacher of the Ewe language was hired as a columnist to write about the common grammatical errors in written Ewe, and to describe recurrent Ewe expressions and language stylistic devices such as proverbs, adages, tropes, and other Ewe lore. In spite of these linguistic contributions to its production, this rural newspaper failed to acquire the professional features (analytic journalism, modern financing, and a printing press) that characterised English-language newspapers in Ghana.

UNESCO co-sponsored other newspaper projects in Ghana as well. It helped to publish the non-professional newspaper Wonsuom (Nation) in the Fante dialect.1 The Ministry of Education and Non-formal Education of Ghana also published a local-language newspaper, Atumpani (Talking Drum) in 1989 to enhance literacy and functional skills among Ewe adults aged 50 and above, who had lacked English-language education in early childhood. This non-professional newspaper served as reading material as well as a writing medium for these adults, who partook in non-formal adult education in the local languages. The title Talking Drum (Atumpani in Asante-Twi or Atumpani in Ewe) referred to a special set of drums – one designated as female and the other as male – in the sociocultural life of the native Ghanaians. These twin drums are played with two curved sticks shaped similarly to the number seven. The traditional drummer plays rhythms that convey sociocultural constituents of the traditional Ghanaian life such as proverbs, wise sayings, panegyrics for chiefs, epithets, appellations, poetic names, praise names, chieftaincy-stool titles, chieftdom motto, etc., in the various local languages of Ghana. Atumpani as a newspaper title symbolically conveyed the idea that, just as drums communicate messages through the language of rhythm, they symbolically communicate news through print media during the contemporary era. By the name Atumpani, the newspaper associated itself with the traditional instrument of the communication of messages or information – above all, the news – by integrating aspects of traditional sociocultural life and symbolism into the contemporary sociocultural situation of news production.

Midim (Seek Me) was a missionary-initiated, non-professional newspaper published in the Ewe language. It was founded in 2001 by P.W.D. Nutormutsi of the Apostles’ Revelation Society, although he had no formal training in journalism. This Ghanaian-language newspaper was published until July 2004. Gbeku, the assistant editor of the newspaper, pointed out that resuming publication would depend on professional journalistic production markers, such as the availability of funding, printing facilities, personnel, critical journalistic practices, and people interested in local-language print media. Nutifafa (Peace), the most recent Ewe-language newspaper, was launched in April 2007. Spearheaded by Esther Malwine Kuto Edu-Yao, this non-professional newspaper was the brainchild of the Nyanyui Hamea (Good News Church) Christian community at Ho, located in the Volta region of Ghana. Catechists and amateur writers have contributed news items and Ewe lore to its production. Like other local-language newspapers, Nutifafa lacks funding, printing equipment, trained journalists, and analytic journalistic practices.

As noted early on, the professionalisation (through institutes, trained journalists, analytic reporting, modern financing, language expertise, and printing presses) of journalism in Ghana led to the prominence of print media written in English. Nonetheless, producers of both Table 1 below captures the salient characteristics of the three phases of journalism in Ghana.

Table 1. Phases of Ghanaian media

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Features</th>
<th>English</th>
<th>Ewe</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Phase 1</td>
<td>amateur merchants</td>
<td>missionary church</td>
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<td></td>
<td>government</td>
<td>church</td>
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<td></td>
<td>funding</td>
<td>faith circles</td>
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<td></td>
<td>information</td>
<td>personal budget</td>
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<td></td>
<td>political</td>
<td>evangelization</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>apolitical</td>
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<td>Phase 2</td>
<td>commercial</td>
<td>church/local</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>criticism</td>
<td>narrative</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>activists</td>
<td>believers/traditional</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Phase 3</td>
<td>Professional</td>
<td>Amateur</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>government</td>
<td>church/NGO</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>investigative</td>
<td>literacy/fait-based</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>infrastructure</td>
<td>rudimentary press</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>formal training</td>
<td>self-trained</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>schools</td>
<td>personal skills</td>
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</table>

language-domain newspapers had a symbiotic rapport in drawing on each other’s characteristics. For example, the producers of English-language newspapers have drawn on the sociocultural constituents of the African context, such as names, political situations, and people, by integrating the newspapers in the Ghanaian context. Producers of local-language print media have imitated the accuracy of language by hiring local-language teachers to oversee the language quality of their newspapers. However, English-language media has provided the social infrastructure (see Bourdieu 1979; Spitulnik 1993) for its own development, whereas the local-language media has lacked the

were ascribed the sociocultural markers of English-language newspapers, whereas local-language newspapers were attributed to indigenous political leaders such as chiefs, clan heads, and landlords (see NukuNU 1969).

Ghanaian print media reflected other aspects of sociocultural domains. However, those domains were not mutually exclusive. For instance, in 1874, James Hutton Brew et al.’s English-language newspaper Gold Coast Times focused on social issues (chiefs and social infrastructure) in an attempt to highlight the new sociocultural domain that was emerging through European-African cultural contact and symbiosis or dialogue. During the pre-independence era, Brew naturally focused on social issues that occupied centre stage at that time, such as independence from colonial rule, territorial wars, and trade. For instance, the editor of the Gold Coast Times cautioned Chief Ghartey IV of Winneba to bring his education to bear on his chieftainship— an attempt to initiate a dialogue between the sociocultural markers of English-language repertoire and local-language domain. However, the editor adopted a neutral tone, avoiding partisan political polemics.

Print media in Ghana have displayed other sociocultural traits in journalistic production. In Western Echo in 1885, Brew and his assistants, Joseph Casely Hayford and Timothy E. Laing adopted an analytical approach to journalism. Within its sociocultural context, the Western Echo gained popularity among readers because its editorial team wrote a special column, The Owl, to publish investigative reports. The classificatory name owl, a nocturnal bird, is a symbol of the whistle-blower or sentinel in the Ghanaian context. The producer chose this name to refer to the amateur journalist who, like an owl, stayed awake at night to uncover hidden secrets, unhindered by night hazards. Under the guise of this personified owl, the editorial team exposed the secrets of political leaders, criticised the pre-independence government’s policies, and suggested ways by which the government and the people could improve the Gold Coast. In the Accra Herald (October 5, 1857), Bannerman declared the following principles in order to recapitulate the policies of journalistic production for his newspaper, which was an alternative print medium to the government newspaper:

The plan which we laid down for our own guidance is simple. We sincerely respect the Authorities, and for that reason we shall keep our eye on them, so that we may, whenever they slip from the right path, humbly endeavour to point out the road. If we sometimes boldly tell the Government what is the public feeling on such or such a subject, the Government should not be offended (Bannerman 1857).
During this journalistic phase in Ghana, the Ewe newspapers (Mia Holo [Our Friend] and Nutifa Na Mi [Peace be with you]) used a narrative approach to present their contents and to engage their readers in missionary works.

Another dimension of print media concerned the sociocultural communication elements that are incorporated into journalistic production to replicate sociocultural repertoires in Ghana. For instance, traditional Ghanaian societies (such as the Akwapim, Ashanti, Ewe, Fante, and Ga chiefdoms) disseminated information mainly through indigenous oral media, material culture (drums, musical instruments, textiles, art, etc.), symbols, and special agents. The traditional agents for public information included royal spokespersons, wandering announcers with gongs, and ceremonial specialists (Yankah 1995). Ghanaian traditional societies used material culture, such as the gong (bell), sceptre, and drum (known as the talking drum) to reinforce the communication of official public information. For instance, wandering announcers beat gongs with sticks, rather than ringing bells, to gain the attention of the inhabitants of a village whenever they need to relay a message from the chief or the elders. These cultural elements have been extensively referenced in Ghanaian-language newspapers and print media, while the English-language domain in Ghana has used print media such as newspapers, letters, postcards, telegraphs, magazines, journals, and annals.

Sociocultural elements have been adapted to modern or contemporary forms of communication such as print media, broadcast media, novels—and gradually—Facebook, YouTube, Twitter, websites, cyberspace, Myspace, Instagram, etc., in order to reach audiences targeted by the construed cultural repertoires of both English-language and African-language media. For instance, the name of the Ewe newspaper Atumpani constitutes an enculturation of the pre-independence form of communication with traditional forms. In Ewe society, as in other Ghanaian-language territories, the atumpani drummer plays rhythms that enunciate the epithets and panegyrics of a chief, the motto of a chieftdom, and the heroic deeds of a chief or legendary personage. For example, the drummer could play rhythms that call to mind the following motto of the Anlo chieftdom: Anlo, kotsia klolo, naketi deka no dzo me bi nu (Anlo, the mighty one, a single stick in a hearth suffices to cook). By naming the newspaper Atumpani, the editorial team used the traditional connotation of this element of Ewe material culture in a print medium that belonged to a different culture—namely modern European communication culture, which began with the emergence of the printing press (Anderson 1983). This sociocultural practice illustrates how the print media can serve as the nexus of the enculturation of European professional journalism and African communication practices.

Another instance of the sociocultural dimension of journalistic production in Ghana concerned the indigenisation of the English language in print media (Smith 1987). In particular, English-language newspaper readers partly affected language use by sanctioning the linguistic style of the journalists. The readers endorse some level of indigenisation of English, a practice whereby journalists occasionally adopt local-language words into English-language newspapers. For instance, Ghanaian-language words such as kalabule (the hoarding and selling of goods in secret), wahala (picketing and demonstration), have gained public acceptance and have been used in English-language print media in Ghana. Given this adapted sociocultural situation, readers of English media from elsewhere would have to adapt to a few Ghanaian sociocultural contexts in order to integrate with the English-language print media in Ghana. Journalists and newspaper corporations in Ghana thus base their production policies on the particular political situation and sociocultural context. Local-language newspapers borrowed English words to incorporate into language repertoire.

The print media have also depended on economic factors in setting sociocultural markers for professional journalism in Ghana. For instance, Sir Charles McCarthy brought the first printing press to the Gold Coast in 1822. Missionaries followed this initiative by bringing their own printing equipment. The economic aspects of Ghanaian newspapers vary in terms of printing presses, funding, personnel, and printing materials. The Royal Gazette, for instance, cost sixpence in 1817, when the readers were mainly European traders and pre-independence administrators. In 1870, the price of the West African Herald was 1s (shilling) 2d (pennies) by which time a few natives had studied in the Gold Coast and in Europe, thereby increasing readership numbers (Jones-Quarley 1974: 65). The West African Herald was partly funded by publishing advertisements from J. Mensah Sarbah and other merchants. Most of the English-language newspapers had commercial sponsors. These sociocultural constituents sustained the repertoire of English-language print media.

In 2005, an editor of the Graphic Corporation disclosed to me that the Daily Graphic, for instance, produced on average about 90,000 copies during peak periods such as electoral campaigns. It circulated about 4000 copies in the Volta Region, where Kpodoga, Midim, the Ghanaian Times, the Daily Guide, and other newspapers also circulated. During the same period, Kpodoga and Midim circulated only 1000 copies each within the same region. Whereas English-language newspaper offices were located in the capital, local-language newspaper editorial offices were located in rural...
areas, which obliged them to wait until they got to the capital to print their newspapers. These socioeconomic factors affected the repertoires of the Ghanaian print media, for better or for worse.

The stratification of readers also affected the sociocultural markers of the Ghanaian print media. Readers of the local-language newspaper Kpodoga were enrolled in adult literacy programs (rural people aged 50 and over in the 1970s and 80s who could not go to school), extension workers (agricultural specialists advising local farmers), and peasants (local farmers, anglers, and traders). The Kpodoga editorial team also inspired the formation of local-language readers’ clubs in various towns and villages in the Volta Region, where groups of people met to discuss news items and make suggestions for subsequent news publications. In contrast, the English-language newspaper the Ghanaian Times targeted average readers in Ghana—that is, those with at least a high school education. The editor of the Ghanaian Times and the Spectator believed that the writer of a news report should always provide the sociocultural background of the story in order to enhance the reader’s understanding of the report’s context. These factors have contributed to the role of language in Ghanaian print media.

This summary showed features of journalistic production in English and Ewe in Ghana.

Table 2. Sociocultural Features

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Feature</th>
<th>English</th>
<th>Ewe</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sociocultural</td>
<td>urban issues</td>
<td>regional issues</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leaders</td>
<td>politicians</td>
<td>chiefs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cultural</td>
<td>global</td>
<td>indigenous</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Approach</td>
<td>analytic</td>
<td>narrative</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Communication</td>
<td>contemporary media</td>
<td>traditional media</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Language</td>
<td>nativisation</td>
<td>loanwords</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Economic</td>
<td>modern printing</td>
<td>rudimentary printing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Readers</td>
<td>National</td>
<td>local</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stratification</td>
<td>formal literacy program</td>
<td>adult literacy program</td>
</tr>
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4. Overview of broadcast media

The Ghana Broadcasting Corporation (GBC) was established in Accra in 1935 by Sir Arnold Hodson with the support of British radio engineer F.A.W. Byron. The corporation later underwent a series of changes in 1965, when television was added to diversify broadcasting in Ghana. GBC operated three radio stations in Ghana: Radio One (GBC 1); Radio Two (GBC 2); and an FM station (GBC FM). Radio One, which broadcasted nationally, transmitted programs in English and a select number of local languages. It provided programs for rural dwellers on topics such as farming, animal husbandry, rural development, health, and local festivals. Through this station, news bulletins were broadcasted in each of six Ghanaian languages (Akan, Ga, Dagbani, Nzema, Dagaare, and Hausa) three times a day: 10 minutes of local and international news in the morning, five minutes of international news in the afternoon, and eight minutes of local and international news in the evening. These broadcasts included news bulletins, official political speeches, presidential discourses, and parliamentary debates.

Before reporting the news in local languages, newscasters first received the news reports in English and translated them into local languages (see Heath 2001). The editor of the English section first screened each news item before sending it to the newsroom for approval. A copy was then transferred to the local-language newscaster, who adapted the text to the target audience by focusing on its essential message. Besides these news broadcasts, Radio One also offered programs on a variety of topics, including entertainment (such as short plays and music), youth topics (covering sports, summer camps, and associations), regional topics (such as festivals and coronations), educational programs (on health), programs for senior citizens (on cultural heritage and values), and other programs oriented to rural dwellers. Radio One was therefore the station for select languages in Ghana.

Radio Two offered commercial broadcasting in English. The station was launched in Accra in 1967 to provide national information services in English. It provided music programs (popular, traditional, and gospel) and movies, as well as hourly news broadcasts, sports updates and commentaries, business and financial news, Ghanaian press reviews, and interviews with prominent leaders in Ghana. It also presented regional investigative reports about ongoing developments, current affairs, rural issues, and school-related programs. In addition, it offered a number of services such as advertising, public announcements, and obituaries, interspersing these with English-language programs that targeted elite audiences. These programs explored themes such as national policies and social issues. The presenters at Radio Two reviewed government activities, objectives, projects, and development plans. The station broadcasted programs such as plays, basic science topics, English-language instruction, French-language instruction, and cultural topics for primary and secondary schools as well as colleges. Religious programs such as Sunday celebrations, songs of praise, and religious reflections were also offered.
The FM station Radio Gar was established in 1986 as a local station for the city of Accra and its surrounding communities. Initially, it provided a variety of music throughout the day, but over time it began to broadcast news, announcements, reports, and advertisements. A similar station provided service in each regional centre, both in English and in the local language(s) of the region. For example, at Bolgatanga in the north-eastern part of Ghana, the local FM station broadcasted in English as well as in the Gurune, Sisal, Kusaal, Kasem, Buli, and Dagaare languages of the region. Besides the government-owned radio stations, several private radio stations have since emerged in Ghana as a result of the freedom of speech and the press that was established in the 1992 Constitution of Ghana.

Ghana Television, known as GTV, was established in Accra in 1965 to broadcast in English and in six local languages. Initially, it was intended as a medium for education, information, and development. Gradually, however, entertainment-related programs began to be offered, such as storytelling, music dedications, and quizzes. Regional offices were established in the Ashanti, Central, Volta, Northern, North-eastern, and Western regions to gather information on regional programs for nationwide broadcast. Three such stations were located in Accra: the TV3 cable network was established by a private group in 1997 to provide entertainment, particularly movies and popular music, to individual subscribers in selected cities; the MNET cable network was founded by Multichoice Ghana Limited in 1993; and V-Net TV was established by Vision Network Communications Limited in 1993. Telecommunications networks have also increased over the years. In 2010, there were more than 140 radio stations and 32 TV stations in Ghana. In 2016, there were more than twenty radio stations in the Volta Region.

Most local-language programs were translations of English-language programs (see Essegbey 2008). For example, one of the Ewe adult education programs on GTV used a script based on three previously written versions: one in English and two translated into Ewe. To create a consistent program in all local languages, the script was written first in English and then translated into Ewe and six other local languages (Akan, Ga, Dagbani, Nzema, Dagaare, and Hausa) for telecasting, because the government had selected these languages to represent all 55 Ghanaian national languages. I collected and analysed two Ewe versions in comparison with the original version of the questionnaire in English. I noticed that there were variations in the three texts. For example, in the second Ewe version, the program’s hostess added further questions to the script including question one, where she asked additionally: “It was a long time since we heard about you, so what happened?” Similarly, in both Ewe versions, the hostess added the following question to the original eighth item: “What advice would you give to the [Ewe] citizens [of Ghana]?”

Such additional elements attested that although the English questionnaire regulated the uniformity of the GTV programs broadcasted in the selected local languages, the hostesses and broadcasters adapted the program to the particular concerns of their local-language audiences.

A second difference in the scripts is the orthography of certain words in the two versions of the Ewe text. In these, the Ewe program hostess used the dialectical versions of certain words—versions that are typical of sound changes in the Anlo dialect in the southeast region of Ghana. For example, she used mekawoe (who) rather than the Standard Ewe orthography amekawoe (who), ameyiwo (people who) instead of ame siwo (people who), and yiwo (those) instead of siwo (those). In the case of mekawoe, for instance, the word-initial phoneme is syncopated. In the case of ameyiwo and yiwo, there is a sound change that involves lenition, which occurs in the vicinity of Keta and Anloga, the towns that represent the core area of the Anlo dialect. In this sound change, obstruents are palatalised when followed by the high front vowel [i]; the palatals then undergo further sound changes, which culminate in the lenition of the phonemes when followed by a high front vowel [i], to yield first [h] and later [y]. In other words, palatals → lenition—high front vowel (i.e. ame siwo → ame hiwo → ame yiwo). There are two possible explanations for the presence of this sound change in the cited GTV scripts: either the Ewe program hostess intended to keep some phonemic dialectical elements of Ewe for the sake of the broadcast media—that is, to reflect everyday speech and orality—or she used the dialectical orthography as a linguistic residual of her own dialectical origin (although the program was meant for all Ewes of Ghana).

5. Journalistic production of broadcast media

African sociocultural constituents have influenced Ghanaian broadcast media with regard to journalistic production. One of the main factors in this is the widespread prevalence of orality-based mass media in Ghana. Before the inception of the modern European media, traditional Ghanaian societies used various forms of aural mass media, such as the atumpani (talking drum), the kpodola (wandering announcer), the tsiami (chief’s spokesperson), envoys, traditional art, communicative dances, and so on. Ghanaian governments conceptualised the broadcast media as a modernized form of traditional orality-based mass media, which could be used for political purposes. Nkrumah, for instance, viewed the broadcast media
as the most suitable tool for democracy in Ghana (and Africa). He based his views on the fact that radio and television audiences did not require local-language literacy to understand local-language broadcasts. The broadcast media tap into this sociocultural context by presenting programs that focus on the Ghanaiian context (traditional lore, rural agriculture, and rural development issues), particularly in local languages. The English-language broadcast media also drew on local sociocultural elements (music, storytelling, and drama), which were balanced with programs from CNN, BBC, WorldNet, and Deutsche Welle. The broadcast media used local-language classificatory words to name their stations. For instance, the Adom FM station used the Akan word *adom* (grace) to illustrate the indigenisation of media in Ghana.

The governments of Ghana have historically controlled broadcast production by defining the operational framework for journalists. It was therefore not surprising that, when military personnel overthrew a democratic government in Ghana, they took over the broadcasting stations first as the primary symbol of power and control of the public sphere (see Habermas 1991). Media control by Ghanaiian governments took the form of ordinances that specified parameters within which journalists could work. For instance, the pre-independence government enacted the sedition ordinance in 1893, obliging media producers to register their newspapers with a government office and to obtain a media production license prior to their journalistic productions. This ordinance also defined the kinds of news reports that could undermine public security and the penalties associated with such an offence. The pre-independence government amended the press ordinance in 1934 by further specifying the types of media offences and their corresponding penalties. The post-independence government modified the sedition ordinance in 1992 by providing guidelines for print and broadcast media. With these changes, the 1992 Ghanaiian constitution called for journalistic production to reflect good journalism values, such as accuracy and fairness, reliability of information sources, right of reply, transparency and absence of harassment in news gathering, respect for private life, protection of the vulnerable, balanced reporting, absence of discrimination, and temperate language. The government set up a commission (National Media) to promote free and independent journalistic production, while overseeing how each media corporation adhered to the principles outlined in the constitution.

Economic factors determined the sociocultural markers of broadcast media. Radio One, Radio Two, Radio Gar, and GTV received 75 per cent of their funding from the government. They relied on revenue from advertising, announcements, sponsorship programs, TV license fees, and the sale of music dedication coupons, which together provided 25 per cent of the net income of the GBC. The corporation generated income by publishing and selling magazines such as the Ghanaiian Broadcaster, Radio and TV Times, GBC Brochure, and Commercial Booklets. The corporation depended on these sources of income to pay the staff, produce programs, and procure materials for broadcast. Professional broadcast media technicians and engineers are trained at an engineering school founded in 1955. Media workers train at other institutes, such as the Ghana Institute of Journalism, the School of Communication Studies, and the National Television and Film Training School.

6. Comparison of broadcast media and newspapers

Language options (Bourdieu, 1977, 1979) have influenced media production in the Ghanaiian multilingual context, in which 55 local languages are spoken. Identity issues (Anderson 1983) have often appeared at the forefront of linguistic adherences with regard to Ghanaiian print and broadcast media. As discussed early on, in Ghana, journalists, newspaper readers, radio audiences, and broadcasters associate certain sociocultural markers (professional journalism, urban milieu, specialized literacy, contemporary infrastructure, etc.) with English-language print media. In contrast, the some Ghanaians associate local languages with orality, indigenous agriculture, traditional lore, and specialised literacy (see Hemmings 2015; Amenga 2011; Saah 1986). In various contexts, Ghanaians allot print and broadcast media to these language domains.

There are clear differences between broadcast and print media when it comes to choice of language. Although Ghanaiian languages possess few print media, it is common to ascribe more space to them on the radio and television. Since 2003, there has been an unprecedented increase in the number of radio stations in Ghana due to the increased freedom of the press. The escalation of the number of

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4 Habermas (1991) contended that incessant struggles for control of and influence on discourse occur in *public spaces* such as the courts, the press, towns, literary creations, and art journals. See Jurgen Habermas. *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1991.

7 See Michael Laflin, Alex Quarmyne, and Kwame Ansre *Study of the Use of Radio to Support Functional Literacy in the Volta and Northern Regions of Ghana*. Accra: NFED/Ministry of Education & World Bank (PHRD Grant GH-PE 974), 1998, as well as Paul A. V. Ansah PAV (1975)
Ghanaian-language radio stations is substantial: in the Ashanti region, the number of stations rose from five to 29, and in Accra from eight to 21, while in the Brong Ahafo region there were 17 new stations; in the Western region, 15; in the Central and Eastern regions, 10; in the Northern region, nine; in the Volta region, six; in the Northwest, four; and in the Northeast, two. Strikingly, even government stations have increased in number. In Accra alone, the government set up two additional stations besides Radio One: Obonu to broadcast in English and Ga, and Unique FM to broadcast in English and Twi. On the flipside of this proliferation of radio stations, however, newspapers in Ghanaian languages have decreased in number.

In Accra, most stations used English as their main broadcast language. Out of 21 stations, 15 use English and six use Ghanaian languages. In various regions of Ghana, the ratio between the number of stations that use Ghanaian languages and the number that use English has fluctuated over the years (see Heath, 2001). In Accra, Joy FM allocated 90 per cent of its broadcast time to English and 10 per cent to Ghanaian languages in 1995. Radio Gold broadcasted in both English and Ghanaian languages in 1996. Joy FM and Vibe FM also used English as the main medium of transmission. In contrast, Peace FM in Accra used Akan as its broadcasting language in 1999. However, presenters of local-language programs sometimes use code switching, or the interspersing of local languages with English. Although usage of local languages was initially limited to the context of informal interpersonal conversation, since 1999 there has been a noticeable increase in the use of certain Ghanaian languages in broadcast and print media in rural communities, with Akan leading in its use of code switching.

Radio stations, unlike newspapers and television, offer phone-in programs that enable Ghanaian listeners to interact with broadcasters. Programs that prioritise interactive participation are extremely popular among radio audiences in Ghana. However, audience participation depends largely on the language policy of a radio station. For example, radio listeners in Kumasi were so insistent on speaking Twi (Akan) during English phone-in programs that some radio stations later accepted a high percentage of respondents who preferred to speak Twi (Yankah 2004). Consequently, the rule of the practice and insistence of the listeners became the rule of obligation for radio stations like Kapital Radio, Luv FM, and Vibes, which were encouraged by audiences to incorporate more local-language programs in their presentations. This raised questions regarding whether this interest in local languages on the radio in Ghana would lead to the kind of modern orality discussed by McLuhan (1964). At this time, this remains an open question for future investigation.

7. Conclusion

There is clearly a symbiotic relationship between broadcast and print media in Ghana, but it is common for private radio stations broadcasting in English to criticise the government newspaper editorials for their lack of investigative journalism. This has often made such stations popular because their programs focus on criticising newspapers, politicians, and important public leaders in Ghana. Some of these private radio stations have organised uncensored, interactive newspaper-review programs in Ghanaian languages, in which listeners are invited to express their critical opinions on various news items, most of which relate to controversial political topics. For this reason, agents of broadcast media and of newspapers are often wary of each other.

In terms of linguistic competence, there has been renewed interest in Ghanaian languages, but this has been limited to the spoken language. This renewed interest has been enhanced by the fact that some radio stations employ radio presenters who are proficient in both English and a number of Ghanaian languages. This renewal in the use of the spoken version of Ghanaian languages, in turn, has fostered a renewed appreciation of proficiency in the most commonly spoken Ghanaian languages. One offshoot of this interest in Ghanaian languages is an increase in employment opportunities for those trained in Ghanaian languages, as well as for those wishing to make their career using their local language. Might this situation give rise to a sort of neo-traditionalism or indigenisation among media practitioners in Ghana? The answer to this will be determined only in the future, when such attitudes might gain a firmer foothold.

Ultimately, the emergence of professional journalism in Ghana has led to certain perceptions of the role of Ghanaian languages in the print and broadcast media (see Obeng-Quaidoo, 1984). Sociocultural, economic, and political features embedded in media productions in Ghana have shaped the domains and repertoires of Ghanaian readers and media audiences who have been assigned English-language and local-language media. Although the construed sociocultural media markers have evolved over time, they have also illustrated the features and factors of media production and consumption in Ghana with respect to Ghanaian print and broadcast media.

8. References.
