

Money talks: a multimodal ethnographic study of Ghana's currency

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Abstract

The purpose of this study was to unearth the hidden messages communicated on Ghana's currency – the Ghana cedi's coins and banknotes – outside their monetary value spelled by the number on them. The study employed the theoretical frameworks of ethnography of communication and multimodality, with the aim of unearthing the different modes of communication used on Ghana's currency outside their monetary value, as well as the hidden messages behind these modes of communication. The study employed a purposive sampling of Ghana's cedi in current use, thereby making the study synchronic, as opposed to a diachronic one. Findings reveal that the modes of communication employed on Ghana's cedi coins and banknotes are shape, colour, national symbols, national buildings, national cash crops and minerals, national heroes and heroines and national monuments. Behind these modes are the messages of Ghana's history such as her struggle for independence, her culture such as espoused in music, her economy as espoused in her cash crops such as cocoa and coffee, and in her minerals such as gold, diamonds, and bauxite among others. Homage is also paid to national heroes and heroines such as The Big Six and Yaa Asantewa on Ghana's cedi. National monuments such as The Independence Arch and the Kwame Nkrumah mausoleum remind Ghanaians and others of the nation's struggle for independence and the struggle's leader Kwame Nkrumah. This study shows that beside the monetary value of Ghana's currency, and by extension the currencies of the world, valuable information is communicated.

Keywords: communication; culture; currency; ethnography of communication; Ghana; identity; multimodality

Introduction

Interpersonal communication is multifaceted, as it displays much sophistication which might be taken for granted when looked at *prima facie*. Viewed more critically, however, we would acknowledge that communication has been at the centre of language study because of the complexity that it displays as a human phenomenon. Communication is generally defined as the act of conveying meanings from one entity or group to another through the use of mutually understood signs, symbols, and semiotic rules. Humans, therefore, have employed various

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mutually understood modes of communication such as vocal or verbal, non-vocal or nonverbal, sign language, pictures, videos, audios, symbols and so on in exchanging thoughts among one another. According to Yang (2020), people continue to give and receive non-verbal messages through gestures and other non-verbal channels. He submits that in the centre of communication, we find the role of culture to be very crucial. Other scholars such as Baldwin *et al.* (2014) and Weng (2015) express similar views. Weng (2015:623) submits that “major aspects of culture, such as values, beliefs, world views, and communication systems, are built within various social systems, which constitute a social context where cultural and IC (intercultural communication) occurs”. For example, in Ghana, mourners usually clothe themselves in red or black or both colours during the funeral rites of a departed person, thereby making these colours a symbol of sadness in the Ghanaian community. In the light of that no one needs any explanation if someone is seen wearing these colours, particularly during funerals. It is also common knowledge that currencies in the world employ more than numerical figures that show their value. Both coins and banknotes have other features apart from the numerical values. The researchers believe that these other non-verbal features on currencies are similarly other non-verbal channels of communication that must be investigated.

In Hymes’s (1962) ethnography of communication, which encompasses all forms or modes of communication, attention is given to the role of eight components that underlie the act of communication, namely setting, participants, ends, act sequence, key, instrumentalities, norms and genre. Settings encompasses the time and place of the communication. Participants are the ones who take part in the act of communication as well as their respective roles such as speaker, writer, listener, reader and so on. Act sequence reveals the acts that make up the communications. Key has to do with the tone or manner of performance as regards such issues as formality, familiarity and the like, while instrumentalities involves the channel or the medium via which communication is carried such as writing, symbols, pictures and so on. The norm component encompasses the cultural acceptability for producing an act of communication within which an act of communication can be interpreted. The final component, *genre*, refers to the particular type of communication: whether it is folklore, traditional music, a literary piece and the like. Hymes’s (1962) framework has really contributed to the analysis of communication across cultures and has revealed that the act of communication is intrinsically complex and warrants a critical analysis. Cameron (2001) and other linguists like Carbaugh & BoromiszaHabashi (2015) and Johnstone & Marcellino (2010) caution that the framework should be applied with flexibility since communication itself may not possess every component of Hymes’s framework. It follows that the Hymes (1962) framework can be applied to different modes of communication.

One major source of communication that has not been given linguistic or literary attention is that regarding communication by money. Money is defined generally as any item or record that is accepted as payment for goods and services. While we would not go into the history of money, it is clear that contemporary money across the globe is *fiat* money which is inconvertible coin or paper money made legal tender by a government decree.

The focus of this study is Ghana’s currency – the cedi. The word cedi is of Akan origin which means cowrie shell, which was formerly used as currency in Ghana. It is obvious that money made legal tender in various countries and territories in the world have stories to tell; they communicate various information apart from the values attached to them. That is why money in the forms of coins or banknotes have more than the number depicting their value on them. Apart from the numbers on these monetary coins or notes a lot of information is presented in various modes other than verbal or textual. After a thorough search in literature on communication through money, the researchers have found that there is no known linguistic or literary study on Ghana’s currency and, at large, on many other currencies of the world.

Purpose of the study

The present paper seeks to fill this gap by presenting a multimodal ethnographic study of Ghana's cedi coins and notes. The focus would, however, not be diachronic but synchronic, in that attention would be given to the cedi in current use. The study would consider all the coin denominations from the smallest to the highest unit. The same is true for the bank notes. Ghana's cedi coins range from 1 pesewa to two cedis; one hundred pesewa units is equivalent to one cedi, while the banknotes range from one cedi to two hundred Ghana cedis. This paper seeks to provide answers to the following questions:

- What different modes and components of communication are employed on Ghana's cedi coins and banknotes?
- What messages do these modes and components convey on Ghana's cedi coins and notes?

Literature review

This section discusses some related literature that serves as the conceptual spine of this paper as regards ethnography of communication and multimodality.

3.1 Ethnography of communication

The theory of ethnography of communication (EC) has been employed in many linguistic studies because of its dynamism as a theoretical tool. Saville-Troike (2008:2) discusses EC as follows:

The focus of the ethnography of communication is the speech community, the way communication within it is patterned and organized as systems of communicative events, and the ways in which these interact with all other systems of culture. A primary aim of this approach is to guide the collection and analysis of descriptive data about the ways in which social meaning is conveyed.

Saville-Troike (2008) articulates specific points that EC encompasses. He mentions that the speech community is the focus of EC. A speech community encompasses shared community membership and shared linguistic means of communication – language. We can say that the present paper's speech community is, first, Ghanaians, and any person who uses the Ghana cedi to buy or sell or to transact business. One thing to note is that Ghana is not a monolingual country but a multilingual one. That notwithstanding, the modes and components of communication employed on Ghana's cedi coins and notes directed towards the users of the currency binds all these users into a speech community.

Saville-Troike (2008) further mentions as part of EC "patterned and organised systems". It follows that a speech community is able to decode patterns and organisations in communication of any form directed to it. The Ghana cedi notes and coins under study have information presented in patterns or organised ways that have something salient for the users. A Ghanaian or anyone who has in-depth knowledge about Ghana, her people and culture can decode the hidden information that is communicated behind these patterns. These will be elaborated on under Findings and discussion.

Saville-Troike (2008) also mentions culture as the core thrust of EC. This is definitely the case, since culture universally serves as the tool via which humans unveil information as communicated by the use of language of multiple modes. In that vein, knowledge of the Ghanaian culture would easily enable any user of the Ghana cedi notes and coins to comprehend any communication besides value presented thereon. For example, it would be easy to decode Ghanaian national symbols and the meanings they project if one is conversant with the Ghanaian culture as regards her national symbols. Regarding the EC approach, Saville-Troike (2008:2) further submits that it is a "collection and analysis of descriptive data about the way social meaning is conveyed". The data at hand, Ghana's cedi coins and banknotes,

encompasses different modes and components of communication, is altogether descriptive. Modes such as colour, shape, national symbols, monuments, buildings, and pictures are all descriptive and convey meanings to the Ghanaian monetary speech community, as we have noted earlier.

Some scholars have employed the EC framework in a number of contexts. Duff (2002, 1995), for example, has employed the framework in the classroom setting. Suter (2000:1) applied EC within a focused group and urged linguists “to step outside their traditional methodological practices, when necessary, and integrate other methods into their research protocol”. Traditionally, EC concerns how language is employed following the components of communication as are espoused in the SPEAKING acronym. Of course, this acronym need not be followed rigidly for one to qualify to employ it because communication goes beyond speech to involve such things as are captured in multimodality, namely pictures, symbols, videos, and so on. The data for the present study, all the denominations of Ghana’s cedi notes and coins in current use, goes beyond speech. It involves colour, pictures, symbols, monuments, buildings, all loaded with meaning. It is in the light of this that this study employs multimodality as a framework in conjunction with EC.

3.2 Multimodality

This paper employs the framework of multimodality in conjunction with EC. Multimodal Discourse Analysis (MMDA) is one of the contemporary frameworks in vogue in linguistic studies. Satti (2018:116) defines multimodality in descriptive terms thus:

If you are watching a TV news programme, where a presenter discusses some events backed up by textual overlays and recorded smartphone videos from the scene of those events, then you are interacting with a multimodal medium. If you are reading a book with diagrams and text, photographs and graphs, then you are also interacting with a multimodal medium. If you are talking to someone in a cafeteria, exchanging verbal utterances accompanied by facial expressions, gestures and variations in intonation, then you are, again, interacting in a multimodal medium. If you talk to a friend on WhatsApp and reply with an image instead of writing something, or when you draw or insert emojis on your Snapchat video, then you are, once again, communicating multimodally.

From this graphic definition, we note that the concept of multimodality as suggested by its name is very broad and deep. Multimodality, therefore, captures such textual overlays as videos, diagrams, texts, photographs, symbols, facial expressions, gestures, and so on. It follows that in order to arrive at a holistic understanding of what is communicated by texts and other modes, multimodality is the approach most appropriate to such an investigation, more particularly for data that involves fewer words than the other modes, such as one for this study. MMDA is therefore the most appropriate approach to investigate the modes of communication as employed on Ghana’s cedi coins and notes.

To demonstrate the effectiveness of MMDA, we would review several studies that have relied on MMDA as a framework and how effective it has been in these studies. Amenorvi (2019a, 2019b, 2019c) employed multimodality in investigating the themes of exodus, confrontation and survival in Bob Marley’s *Exodus*, *Confrontation* and *Survival* albums. Attention was paid not only to the lyrics but also such modes as album cover design, song titles as well as the order of arrangement of the songs on the albums. Findings reveal that everything, namely, the modes just mentioned, play significant roles in contributing to the overall theme of each album. This shows that both texts and other modes work hand in hand in projecting the full meaning of a discourse piece. The discourse piece of this paper is perhaps more multimodal and encompasses more modes of communication than Bob Marley’s albums studied by Amenorvi (2019a, 2019b, 2019c). Investigating the underlying communication behind the multiple modes

employed on Ghana's cedi notes and coins would unearth information that would otherwise be left covered if attention is paid only to the value and words on the cedi notes and coins. The blend of these semiotic resources certainly has something salient to tell.

Not only has multimodality contributed to meaning-making in terms of language interpretation. It has also been used as a tool for language learning and teaching with significant results. Gilakjani, Ismail and Ahmadi (2011) investigated the effect of multimodal learning models on language teaching and learning. They submit that "learners have a preferred modality, namely visual, aural, read/write or kinaesthetic, while many learners are multimodal (use a combination of these modalities)" (Gilakjani, Ismail and Ahmadi, 2011:1322). We note that while linguistic texts are valuable resources of language teaching and learning, they are not adequate for desired results. Visuals such as pictures, videos and audios blend as an effective tool of language teaching and learning.

One of the principles of multimodal language teaching and learning is that words and pictures are better than words alone. This is because pictures are more indelibly captured by the human mind than words and if the two complement each other the better in that language teaching and learning does not only become less difficult but also an interesting enterprise. Gilakjani, Ismail and Ahmadi (2011:1326), therefore, concluded thus:

The research agenda calls for studies to evaluate the principles of multimodal learning and the electronic multimedia designs as they affect the acquisition of reading, writing, speaking and listening in various EFL contexts ... The quick pace of change from print-based to more visually oriented presentations of information involves a quick response from language teachers and educators to take advantage of multimodality to engage learners in meaningful cognitive, critical understandings.

The foregoing clearly spells the significance of employing multimodality in language teaching and learning as this method enhances the quality of teaching and learning materials and fosters productive language learning. If multimodality is good for language teaching and learning regarding its versatility, it must be good also for language interpretation, particularly if a discourse piece under study itself is multimodal. Once a discourse piece involves modes other than words, multimodality will be one of the most appropriate tools to use in analysing it. The present paper therefore blends MMDA and EC as frameworks to analyse the information other than words and figures as presented on Ghana's currency in current use. The choice of multimodality is warranted by the variety of the modes of communication found on the data at hand. The choice of ethnography of communication is to address the cultural values of the various components of communication employed on Ghana's cedi notes and coins.

4. Methodology

The paper employs multimodality in combination with ethnography of communication as the analytical tool for the analysis of Ghana's cedi coins and notes. Halliday and Hasan (1985) emphasise the diversity as well as the interrelatedness of a set of systems of meaning as espoused in language. Their focus was a set of systems or a system of different modes that combine to project interrelatedness in meaning; this diversity of systems is what multimodality encompasses. O'Halloran (2011:1) submits that multimodal analysis involves "language and other resources which integrate to create meaning in "multimodal" (or "multisemiotic") phenomena (e.g. print materials, videos, websites, three-dimensional objects and day-to-day events) ..." Just like multimodality, ethnography of communication also involves more than one component that defines acts of communication with the role of culture as its core thrust since language is interpreted through its culture. A multimodal analytical approach and ethnography of communication is an appropriate method for the present study because the Ghana cedi coins

and banknotes under study comprise modes or components such as colour, portraits of important personalities of Ghana, traditional symbols, monumental buildings, artefacts, size, shape, space and texture. With all these in consideration, a combination of multimodality and ethnography of communication is deemed most appropriate for this paper. As a synchronic study, purposive sampling procedure was adopted to sample all of Ghana's cedi coins and bank notes in current use for the study. The cedi coins range from one pesewa to two cedis while the banknotes range from one cedi to two hundred cedis.

Findings and discussions

This section addresses the research questions one after the other. The first research question seeks to establish the different modes and communication components employed on Ghana's cedi coins and banknotes. The thrust of the second question is to unearth the hidden messages behind these modes and communication components on Ghana's coins and banknotes. We would first proceed to discuss the modes and communication components as well as the messages behind them on Ghana's coins, after which we discuss those of the banknotes.

5.1 Ghana's coins

Ghana's coins range from one pesewa to two cedi coin. In all, the coins in current use are 1 pesewa, 5 pesewas, 10 pesewas, 20 pesewas, 50 pesewas, 1 cedi and 2 cedis; seven denominations in all for the coins. The most outstanding mode of communication that meets the eye as regards the one pesewa coin is its colour of copper, its size of 17mm in diameter and its weight of 1.82 grams. It is the smallest of Ghana's coins in current use; it is also the one of least value. One hundred of the one-pesewa units is equivalent to one cedi. What information is behind these modes other than the value of the one pesewa coin?

First, the choice of the colour copper is deliberate, even as it evokes setting as outlined in Hymes's ethnography of communication, the setting of the one pesewa coin is definitely Ghana and the employment of the copper colour for the coin is a point of education for both Ghanaians and all who use the Ghana cedi. The employment of the copper colour is educational to users of the coin as regards one of Ghana's mineral deposits. It is common knowledge among Ghanaians and visitors to the country that copper is one of the minerals in her soil (Koranteng Addo *et al.* 2011). The employment of this colour no doubt is a communication or reminder to Ghanaian of the nation's riches. Moreover, investors can acquire this knowledge and therefore direct their investments to the country.

Let us move on to discuss the two faces communicating features of the one pesewa coin. On the obverse is Ghana's coat of arms, state title and year of production (2007). We would agree that all these are definite ways of communication. Through the spectacles of EC, we note that the end or purpose of these communicative symbols is to educate users of the Ghanaian cedi about the country. Regarding the act of sequence, we note that Ghana's coat of arms is placed at the obverse of the pesewa coin, revealing the value placed on the nation's coat of arms.

Ghana's coat of arms may be a drawing and a symbol, but it is one loaded with meaning. And placing it on a coin in use is not an arbitrary act but a conscious effort to communicate, because the nation's coat of arms represents in symbol the length and breadth of Ghana. Everything on the coat of arms has a story to tell. Here is a brief summary. The black star on the coat of arms represents the pride of Africa as spearheaded by such freedom fighters as Marcus Garvey and Kwame Nkrumah. On the crest of the coat of arms, we see a sword and staff which represent the traditional authority of Ghana. The castle tells the story of the Trans-Atlantic slavery. The cocoa tree draws attention to Ghana's chief cash crop, while the gold mine tells the story of Ghana's minerals. The lion on the crest tells the story of the lionlike bravery displayed by

the founding fathers in their fight for independence from colonialism. This is just the obverse part of the one-pesewa coin.

On the reverse of the one-pesewa coin we see the Adomi Bridge and a palm tree. What story are these telling, focusing on the norm or the culture of the country? The Adomi Bridge, completed in 1957, is one of Ghana's oldest bridges and a very symbolic one.

Since the Adomi Bridge is as old as the nation of Ghana itself, it is regarded as one major monument of Ghana's independence. By the side of the Adomi Bridge on the one pesewa coin is a palm tree, one of the symbolic trees of Ghana. Ghanaians place a lot of value on the palm tree because of its many uses towards the livelihood of the people of Ghana. From the palm tree Ghana derives the palm kernel oil which is used as food and for medicinal purposes. Another edible oil from the palm tree is the ubiquitous palm oil in Ghana. Besides, Ghana derives palm wine from the palm tree, we derive firewood for cooking, brooms for sweeping, hand fans, baskets, furniture and many more. The presence of the palm tree on the pesewa coin truly communicates a great deal of information, since the palm tree is a multipurpose plant of significance among the people of Ghana.

We now turn our attention to the five-pesewa coin. The modes of communication employed on the five-pesewa coin are colour, size, weight, shape. The colour of that five-pesewa coin is nickel, which speaks to one of the Ghana's chief minerals – silver. The five-pesewa coin is 18mm in diameter, weighs 2.5 grams and is round. In comparison with the one pesewa coin, the five-pesewa coin is bigger and heavier, as it is in value. Let us move on to the communication conveyed on the five-pesewa coin. On the obverse side of the five-pesewa coin we see a traditional man blowing a horn. What is this communicating? We acknowledge that one of the main thrusts of the theory of ethnography of communication is culture. In that regard, culture plays a great role in understanding the symbols employed on the coins under discussion.

In the Ghanaian culture, the horn was both a musical instrument and a tool used for blowing alarms during wars. This musical instrument is usually used during ceremonies that involve royals. This showcasing of the traditional home may be calling attention to Ghana's diverse traditional music. And since the horn is also used to sound the alarm during wars, its presence is to draw attention to the nation's courage or bravery. Like the one pesewa coin, the five pesewa coin has Ghana's coat of arms on its reverse side. We have already explained the communication behind Ghana's coat of arms.

Let us now focus our attention on the next denomination: ten pesewas. The ten pesewa coin has the nickel colour that the five pesewa coin also possesses, drawing attention to Ghana's silver. On the obverse side of the ten pesewa coin is an open book with a map of Ghana on the verso page; on the recto page of the book is a diamond drawn by an unheld erect pen. On the top of the book is a star. What is being communicated by these modes? The open book obviously reveals the place of education in the lives of Ghanaians. Ghana places great value on her citizens' education as education would contribute to national growth. This is clear from the fact that the entire verso page of the book in question is filled with the map of Ghana. That means that the development of Ghana should be the most important preoccupation of the Ghanaian as he/she seeks to acquire education. On the recto page, we see the precious mineral diamond. The communication here is that education is as priceless as a diamond as it is one of the only major ways of nation building. We can see how loaded with meaning the information on Ghana's cedi coins and notes are.

Ghana's twenty pesewa coin shares the same colour with the five and ten-pesewa coin. It also shares the country's coat of arms in its reverse side. On the obverse side of the twenty pesewa coin is Ghana's number one cash crop, cocoa. An open cocoa pod with exposed beans lies horizontally with a full pod standing vertically in an L-formation. The two pods are as loaded with communication as they are loaded with beans. Anyone, Ghanaian or foreign, would learn that Ghana is an agrarian economy and that cocoa is her chief export product. Currently, Ghana

and La Cote D'Ivoire are the top two exporters of cocoa beans in the world. All this information is hidden behind a conscious artwork of a picture, revealing that communicative modes such as pictures sometimes carry far more information than words do.

We move on to the next higher denomination of the fifty pesewa coin, which shares the same colour and coat of arms symbol with the previous three. On the obverse side of the fifty pesewa coin is a Ghanaian woman wearing a headgear. What is the communication behind this image? The first is that the role of the Ghanaian woman towards nation building is acknowledged. Second, this is also another display of the Ghanaian culture, with specific reference to dressing and grooming. On the first point, women have played great roles in nation building, in that traditionally, women stay at home and take care of children. They also support their husbands in the day-to-day running of the family as the family is the basic unit of nation building. The second point is that wearing a headgear is part of the traditional Ghanaian woman's dressing. Headgears come in different shapes and sizes and each has an associated meaning attached to it. It is therefore common to see a number of Ghanaian women wearing headgears during traditional gatherings of any sort. The fifty pesewa coin is therefore paying homage to the Ghanaian woman for her role in nation building as well as her role as a preserver of culture.

The one cedi coin looks very different from all the coins discussed so far. The one cedi coin is bimetallic – it has a brass centre in a nickel-steel ring. It weighs 7.3 grams and has a diameter of 2.798mm. We have already discussed the significance of the use of nickel for Ghana's coins. The brass used on the one cedi coin is another revelation of Ghana's natural resources, specifically brass. It follows that if one considers Ghana's one pesewa coin all the way to the one cedi coin, one would be exposed to a number of minerals that Ghana possesses. In that regard, apart from being legal tender for the transaction of business, these coins are also advertising or educating people on Ghana's natural resources.

The one-cedi coin also bears Ghana's coat of arms on its reverse side. On the obverse, we note a scale of justice, resting on two olive branches tied in the middle. What are these modes communicating? The scale of justice points to the nation's motto as captured on her coat of arms – freedom and justice. The scale of justice universally symbolises the presence of justice and an olive branch is considered a symbol of peace. It is no wonder that the scale of justice is resting on two olive branches tied together. Through the one-cedi coin, therefore, Ghana is projecting her profound advocacy for justice for all, for both citizens and foreign investors. If justice is served, there would be peace for all. These assuring words behind the arts on the one cedi coin would project Ghana as a place to do business to many investors as the presence of justice is peace and true peace means justice.

The final focus of our discussion on Ghana's cedi coins is the newly introduced two cedi coin, issued in 2019. It follows that from 2007 to 2018 there was no two cedi coin. The new two-cedi coin is markedly different in shape and design from all the other coins. Unlike the one cedi coin, the two cedi coin is a golden decagon ring with a nickel-steel nested into it. It is directly opposite in appearance to the one cedi coin. Regarding the golden colour, it is without doubt that attention is drawn to Ghana's gold. Ghana before independence was called the Gold Coast because of her gold deposits. The golden part of the two cedi coin is shaped in a decagon – a symbolic ten. In Ghana, the number ten symbolizes wholeness, purity and perfection. Capturing the golden part of the coin in a decagon is unequivocally clear – Ghana's gold is pure, whole and perfect; it is of the best quality. The symbolic communication also serves as a source of education to anyone who comes in contact with the two cedi coin and seeks to learn what these symbols mean.

Like all the other coin denominations, the two cedi has the nation's coat of arms on its reverse side. On the obverse, however, is the Jubilee House, which serves as the presidential seat of the country. The Jubilee House is a monument built to commemorate Ghana's fiftieth year of independence, and projecting it on the two cedi coin communicates how far the nation had

travelled from colonialism to her present state. By sight, this is just artwork. However, a lot of communication is going on behind the artwork. The Jubilee House is built in the shape of a traditional stool used by royals. This is symbolic. Since the Jubilee House serves as the presidential palace, Ghana's president is symbolically regarded as the head traditional ruler of Ghanaians and therefore sits on the traditional stool of authority. The stool design is for the propagation of the Ghanaian culture as regards chieftaincy.

We have seen the employment of the different modes of communication employed on Ghana's cedi coins. We have also noted that these modes convey a lot of meaning within the cultural parameters of Ghana, and serve as a source of education for anyone who uses these coins and seeks to understand the communication behind these artworks on the coins. Let us now turn our attention to the banknotes.

5.2 Ghana's cedi banknotes

Ghana's cedi banknotes range from one cedi to two hundred cedis. Within this range are the two cedi note, five cedi note, ten cedi note, twenty cedi note, fifty cedi note and hundred cedi note; eight banknotes in all. This section, like the one before it, would address the different modes and components of communication employed in order to unearth the information behind these modes and components of communication.

Before we get into discussing the one cedi note, we would like to acknowledge that some features run through all the cedi notes. These features are on the front part of the notes. These are six distinguished men who led the struggle for Ghana's independence. They are popularly referred to in Ghana as the "Big Six". They are Kwame Nkrumah, Emmanuel Obetsebi Lamptey, William Ofori Atta, Edward Akuffo Addo, Ebenezer Ako Adjei and Joseph Boakye Danquah. Also on the front side is the Independence Arch, the symbol of Ghana's political independence. No doubt, the presence or absence of these features would not in any way affect the legal value of the cedi notes. Their presence, therefore, articulates clearly that these features communicate more than monetary value.

On the back of the one-cedi note is the main source of electricity in Ghana, the Akosombo Dam. What is communicated by this monument of Ghana on the one-cedi note? There is no denying that the Akosombo Dam is one of Ghana's achievements worth advertising. However, its presence seems to be a message to visitors or investors that they can make Ghana their destination. Investors are usually interested in a good source of energy or power for their industry, and showcasing Ghana's Akosombo Dam is an answer to any question regarding power.

The next banknote for discussion is the two cedi note, which was first issued in May 2010. Its main modes of communication are the colour beige. The main features on its obverse, a portrait of Kwame Nkrumah, Ghana's main figure of the struggle for the political independence. Nkrumah's place in the political history of Africa is famous and homage is paid to him on the two cedi note. On the reverse of the two cedi note is Ghana's Parliament House, a symbol of Ghana's rule of law, a reminder to both Ghanaians and foreigners about Ghana's emphasis on the rule of law and that they are welcome to live in the country without fear. Without a doubt, all these communications are more valuable and deeper than the one held by the number 2 on the two cedi note.

The main modes of communication on the five cedi note are its blue colour, the features of the obverse, the Big Six and Independence Arch, already discussed at the outset of this section. What is the colour blue projecting on the five cedi note? One of Ghana's national assets is the Gulf of Guinea, on which the country has a harbour to support her economy. The sea is universally captured in colour blue and the choice of the colour blue suggests reference to the sea. On the reverse of the five cedi note is the nation's first university, the University of Ghana and its Balme Library. The point of communication here is not far-fetched; this is a drawing of

attention to the value that Ghana places on education, as also captured on the ten pesewa coin discussed earlier. By the five cedi note, Ghana is, therefore, projecting the image of the nation's love for education to the local and international community.

It is now the turn of the ten cedi note, which is green, a symbol of Ghana's agrarian culture. Like the other notes, on the obverse side are the Big Six and the Independence Arch. On the reverse is the Bank of Ghana. Of all the notes, it is only the ten cedi one that has the Bank of Ghana featured on it. Of course, all the coins and notes have the lettering "Bank of Ghana" on them, but only the ten cedi note has the building itself. This building on the ten cedi note only points to the autonomy of the Government of Ghana over her currency.

The twenty cedi note shares the same features of the obverse side with the rest of the notes discussed so far. On the reverse, however, is the depiction of Ghana's supreme Court. What is the significance of the presence of the Supreme Court on a banknote? Like the Parliament House in the case of the five cedi note, the Supreme Court is projecting Ghana's love for the rule of law as it is held by the highest court of the nation. Ghanaians and non-Ghanaians should therefore have the assurance that the Supreme Court of the nation would protect and defend their rights.

Before December 2019, the fifty note had been the highest denomination of Ghana's cedi since July 2007. It is brown in colour and shares similar features with all the notes, but for the two cedi note as regards the obverse side. The colour brown may be the symbolism of the earth as it is seen at mine sites, indirectly referring to Ghana's minerals such as gold, bauxite, copper, diamond as found in the earth. On the reverse of the fifty-cedi note is the historical monument of the Christiansburg Castle. The capture of the Christiansburg Castle, one of the oldest castles in Ghana, on until now Ghana's highest denomination of her cedi is the projection of Ghana's journey through the vistas of time from colonialism to date. The Castle has a long history, dating back to when it was built in 1661, close to four centuries now. By just this building, a lot of stories can be learned by the inquisitive mind as to what it communicates. The Christiansburg Castle, like other castles in Ghana such as the Cape Coast and Elmina Castles, are the physical remains of the infamous Trans-Atlantic slave trade from whose ashes Ghana has risen as a country. This history cannot be forgotten and homage is paid to the many lives lost in this historical nightmare. Moreover, this is a reminder to the Ghanaians to work hard and contribute to the growth of the country in order to make the sacrifices made by victims of the Trans-Atlantic slave trade worthy of remembrance.

The hundred and the two-hundred cedi notes are the newest and highest of Ghana's currency. They have been available since December 2019. They also maintain the Big Six and the Independence Arch on the obverse side. On the reverse side of the hundred Ghana cedis is the interior of the nation's Parliament House, the communicative significance of which is discussed earlier. On the reverse side of the two-hundred cedi note, however, is the Jubilee House. What is its communicative significance? The Jubilee House, formerly the Flagstaff House, serves as the residence and office of the president of Ghana. The Jubilee House symbolises the nation's sovereignty and freedom from colonialism. Ghana's independence from colonial rule in 1957 is past both the golden and silver jubilees. The Jubilee House is a physical voice to this achievement of the country.

Conclusions

This paper set out to unearth the modes and components of communication employed on Ghana's cedi coins and banknotes as well as the messages behind these modes and components of communication. Through the analytical tools of multimodality and ethnography of communication, findings reveal that the various modes of communication on Ghana's coins and banknotes are shape, colour, national buildings, national symbols, national cash crops and minerals, national monuments and the nation's human resources in her past heroes and

heroines. These modes and components of communication on Ghana's currency are loaded with meaning. Through the ethnography of communication, it emerged that the setting and the participants of these modes of communication on Ghana's currency are the country and those who transact business with her by means of the cedi. The end or purpose shows that these modes communicate more than monetary value. The instrument via which these messages are delivered is clearly Ghana's currency, while the norms reveal that to be able to decode the messages behind these modes, one needs to be conversant with Ghana's culture and history. In all, these modes communicate Ghana's struggle for independence, her culture as espoused in music, her economy symbolised by her cash crops, namely, cocoa and coffee, and her minerals such as gold, diamond and bauxite. Homage is also paid to national heroes and heroines such as The Big Six and Yaa Asantewa. The Independence Arch and Kwame Nkrumah mausoleum remind Ghanaians of the works of Nkrumah in achieving political independence for the country. The implication of this study is that communication abounds in all the length and breadth of the linguistic world, particularly in areas where much attention had not been given to, such as the world's currencies. Moreover, this study adds to the voice that there is more to a text than just words, and that multimodality should be given the necessary attention it deserves in discourse analysis. The study also reveals that one of the ways to learn about a nation or a people is through that nation's currency by decoding the information presented on these currencies outside their monetary value. The case of Ghana has proved this. A question that arises from this study is whether other countries of the world also communicate vital information via their currencies, and if so through what modes and components of communication? Further studies can be conducted on other currencies of the world to answer that question.

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Appendix

Ghana's cedi coins and banknotes



