



**ISSN Online 2617-359X**



## **A Variationist Sociolinguistics Study of Ewe Kente at Agortime Traditional Area in the Volta Region**

**Favour Mawutorwu Randy Mortey, Pamela Tsekpo, Koku Mensah Agboka & Godsway Asigbe**

**ISSN: 2617-359X**

## **A Variationist Sociolinguistics Study of Ewe Kente at Agortime Traditional Area in the Volta Region**

<sup>\*1</sup>Favour Mawutorwu Randy Mortey

Department of Languages, E.P. College of Education, Amedzofe-Ghana

[motekomla1@yahoo.com](mailto:motekomla1@yahoo.com)

<https://orcid.org/0000-0003-4789-8885>

<sup>2</sup>Pamela Tsekpo

Department of Languages, E.P. College of Education, Amedzofe-Ghana

[godslopefrelu@yahoo.com](mailto:godslopefrelu@yahoo.com)

<sup>3</sup>Koku Mensah Agboka

Department of Languages, E.P. College of Education, Amedzofe-Ghana

[vagboka@yahoo.com](mailto:vagboka@yahoo.com)

<sup>4</sup>Godsway Asigbe

Department of Languages, E.P. College of Education, Amedzofe-Ghana

[godswayvasi@yahoo.com](mailto:godswayvasi@yahoo.com)

*How to cite this article:* Mortey, F. M. R., Tsekpo, P., Agboka, K. M. & Asigbe, G. (2022). A Variationist Sociolinguistics Study of Ewe Kente at Agortime Traditional Area in the Volta Region, *Journal of Marketing and Communication*, 5(2), 89-114. <https://doi.org/10.53819/81018102t4096>

### **Abstract**

The proud kente cloth has knowledge and cultural heritage which has ceremonial, symbolic and authority about the wearer that is best known and mostly widely recognized of all textiles in Africa. Its unique features are wide and invokes powerful emotions as well as symbolizes the fundamental nonverbal codes ever imagined in Ghana which cuts across religion, ethnicity and instill national pride. The purpose of the study was to establish the unique message kente possesses and communicates to society as well as its status. Most of the existing writers center on textile weaving, tools and techniques in textile weaving and the aesthetic nature of kente. Though these writings are important contributions to kente, its nonverbal communicative codes have not been well documented. The adoption of the kente among Agortime-Kpetoe weavers was primarily influenced by sensory experience, fit, and interpersonal impact, which serves as an example of how several parts of the kente clothing are interconnected. The sociolinguistic theory is used as a theoretical lens in this work as well. The study made use of qualitative data for its purpose. 15 people were chosen to take part in the study using purposive sampling methods. Participants included kente cloth consumers and weavers. Data for the study was collected using an interviewing guide. Present the study's findings before you conclude. The study finds that the Agotime Kente mostly use non-verbal codes to communicate. The study's conclusions showed that while most modern kente cloths do not communicate, certain distinctive ones do, particularly those that are currently being woven. These include clothes that express concepts of religion, rivalry, position, authority, and royalty to the user. This supports the belief of the Agotime society that

<https://doi.org/10.53819/81018102t4096>

non-verbal codes are more reliable and plausible for expressing royalty, authority, status, and communication between people.

**Keywords:** *Ewe kente, Symbols, Sociolinguistics, Communication, Agortime-Kpetoe*

## 1.0 Introduction

It is impossible to undervalue the significance of weaving as one of the processes used to create textiles over the course of history. The significance of weaving must therefore be covered in this article. The art styles used in Ewe Kente cloth are employed for aesthetic, adornment, and spiritual reasons. According to Gyekye (1986), writing on African cultural values, the concept of beauty, which is typically associated with works of art like sculptures and musical compositions as well as artistic expression through dance and the kente cloth, has played a central role in the lives of the people of the Agortime traditional area. Among the residents of this study area, there is no compiled book offering communicative material on this art.

There is still room for more research on the communicative significance and social-cultural usage of kente, even though scholars like Henry Boateng and Bhuva Narayan (2016); Quianoo Maxwell (2020) have made a respectable effort to investigate the significance of this art (Ewe kente) in the area. Particularly for cultural, religious, and gendered purposes, the use of kente fabric is especially distinctive among the local population (Mortey et al., 2019). For instance, while the socioeconomic value of the Ewe kente fabric of the inhabitants of the Agortime traditional area has received a lot of attention, comparatively less focus has been placed on its communication meaning. As a result, one facet of this art has gotten little or very little notice. Writers like Idiens (1980); Badoe and Opoku-Asare (2014) have been interested in the aesthetic value of kente, especially for costumes.

In addition, a UNESCO proposal accorded significant prominence to oral traditions, music, dance, theatre, and languages. It stated that traditional handicrafts, which were frequently on the point of extinction, should be included among the activities for preservation as a matter of significance and that craft practices were a part of the intangible heritage (UNESCO, 1993). One of the most notable aspects of Ghanaian culture is its long and rich legacy of textile production. Of all the African textiles, kente fabric has grown to be the most well-known and generally acknowledged intangible cultural heritage. It can transcend racial barriers and generate a sense of pride in one's country because it represents some of the most fundamental human concepts ever conceived in Africa, namely in Ghana (Ofori, 2016). A visual portrayal of history, religion, oral literature, social values, and political ideas is called kente (Ofori, 2016).

## 1.1 Objectives of the Study

- i. Identify the socio-cultural communication values of Agortime kente.
- ii. Identify the sociolinguistics knowledge of the language of Agortime kente.

## 1.2 Significance of the Study

The communicative value of the Ewe kente fabric on the inhabitants of the Agortime traditional territory is not well known or understood. The purpose of this research is to increase our familiarity with the symbolic meaning of Ewe kente fabric and our capacity to use it in our own communication. This research will therefore reveal how the weavers and people utilise it to convey or transmit notions of self and personal worth, societal value, economic value, royalty and personality, and culture and change.

## **2.0 Literature Review**

### **2.1 Theoretical Framework**

This study's underlying theory was Labovian Sociolinguistics. Variation is inherent to linguistic structure, according to a central tenet of this subject. The manner in which a language is spoken (and written) varies between people and contexts encountered by the same individual. Labov stated that natural languages comprise a social entity, hence it is "fruitless and unrewarding" (Labov 1977: 124) to create grammars of natural languages regardless of the speakers and/or society in which a certain natural language occurs. William Labov claimed that the purpose of linguistic analysis is to identify the universal characteristics of language use, as opposed to describing the uniqueness of any one speaker (Labov 1977: 95), and that kente fabric has regular patterns that are critical to establishing its communicative significance as a social entity in the old Agortime region.

In accordance with Saussure's definition of language, Labovian sociolinguistics views language as a social fact (Figueroa, 1994) in the sense that language is a communal asset. Labovian sociolinguistics views regular patterns as social-linguistic facts, representing a relationship between linguistic characteristics and social circumstances (Pateman 1987: 59–63). Coupland (2001: 10) contends that Labovian sociolinguistics views language as "socially conditioned distributional patterning." To show this patterning, Labov (1977) came up with the variable rule, which is a part of a language that is different in different communities based on social factors like race, social class, age, gender, etc. He says that variable rules are part of a speaker's knowledge of the language.

So, the variationist theory is used to look at kente cloth as a social language that explains language patterns. The focus is on how the communicative language of kente cloth shapes the sociocultural identity of the people who wear it in terms of royalty, rank, gender, and wealth. The kente fabric is used to demonstrate social identity and status. Indigenous Agortime-Kpetoe people are frequently connected with the values, royalty, and social standing of kente, which is rooted in the Agortime-Kpetoe people, regardless of whether it is worn by a monarch or a commoner. Thus, sociolinguistic theory is invoked to justify and establish kente's nonverbal codes of communication.

### **2.2 Empirical Review**

#### **Encoding and Decoding: Communication, Dissemination and Consumption**

Kederala (2017) examined the new practises of ethnic groups in Ethiopia of "making" costumes in one of his works, *The Case of the Siltie Nationality of Southern Ethiopia*, with a focus on the relationship between traditional costumes and ethnic identity. The Siltie people were used as an example in the project. The ethnicities have begun to recognise the colours, symbols, and signals connected with their "distinctive" traditions, much like how they advertise their outfits. In certain cases, the search for symbolic representations led to the creation of cultural costumes that featured "new" signs, symbols, and colours that had never been used before. Following this pattern, the Siltie people acquired a new "cultural" outfit. Therefore, the primary goal of the research was to track the evolution and consistency of the community's "cultural" dress and investigate the motivations behind the development of "new" costumes. The study looked at the ties between the newly created clothing and the religion, history, and culture of the Siltie people. A key goal of this experiment was to learn how people felt and reacted to the "newly invented" costume. The use of secondary materials, other readings, and focus group conversations allowed for the extensive



qualitative data collection. The outcome was thus viewed as a means of returning to self-governance, taking pleasure in, safeguarding, and promoting one's own cultural values and heritage.

The signs and symbols that were originally used for local purposes were taken by the Siltie costume and granted new meanings. The huts' square and rectangle marks served as masculine identifiers, while the flowers and tree branches indicated femininity. Therefore, clothing with a floral pattern on it is for ladies, and fabric printed with square and rectangle signs with the Siltie colour (the combination of red ocher, white, and black) is for men's apparel. The committee assigns these so that the costumes have a gender. Kederala (2017) discovered that the colours received more publicity than the signs. The colours are emblems because they are painted on the walls of government buildings, private businesses, and schools across the Siltie zone. These and other steps have been taken to get the word out about the new Siltie costumes and connect them to the Siltie culture.

As Stuart Hall (Year) stated, effective communication is crucial to comprehending a culture. One requires a mental map or representation of their society in order to comprehend their culture. The meaning of sounds, words, images, attire, gestures, and other signs and symbols relies on the community in which they are used; these signs and symbols also communicate meaning (Hall, 1997:5). In the same way that the new Siltie costume is made to represent the Siltie culture, this sign shows that the Siltie culture exists. One thing Kederala (2017) considered typical of the Siltie ethnicity was the painting of numerous walls and fences in the towns' main highways with the "Siltie color" the red ocher, the broken white, and the black. It appeared to be the result of an effort to publicise the costume's colours and symbols and to link them to the Siltie ethnicity (Hall, 1997, p. 5). According to Hall (Year), if encoders and decoders fail to interpret signs similarly, the message that the encoders intended to convey may be altered by the decoding process.

Hayder and Kedir (2010) say that the Siltie dress culture grew out of two different times: the leather and textile eras. Historically, the Siltie people wore leather garments made from the skins of cattle, goats, and sheep. There were a variety of garment styles fashioned from the locally prepared skin. According to the data collected by Hayder and Kedir (2010), the types of clothing indicated below were not only important for covering the body but also served as a means of expressing one's social, cultural, and economic standing within the community. For instance, Qeta was used to distinguish between married and unmarried women. The Qeta of unmarried women was meant to be adorned with various trinkets, such as shells and buttons. But when a woman got married, she would take off the decorations from her Qeta to show that she was now a housewife.

Yenewir Lennd (tiger skin) and Hubir Lennd (lion skin) were types of apparel worn by those who killed "tigers" or "lions," who were regarded as courageous heroes and fighters in the community. Tem Lennd was a type of clothing worn by a select few individuals chosen by the community for their heroic and courageous contributions to the community. Qototo was a type of clothing fashioned from leather or skin that indicated a low socioeconomic position. It was constructed from poorly prepared cowhide. The Qototo were the poorest people, and the word "poverty" was used to describe them (Abdela & Keri, 2010). Also, clothing is a big part of culture, and most societies have moved forward because they've paid attention to their cultures, which include things like beliefs, local dialects, and religious rituals, as well as clothing (Gyekye, 1996).

As one of the most prominent aspects of Ghanaian culture, the country's ancient and illustrious textile tradition is among the most notable. As an intangible cultural asset, Kente fabric has become

the most well-known and generally recognised of all African textiles. It can make people feel strong emotions and represents some of the most basic human ideas ever thought of in Africa, in Ghana. It also has the potential to bring people of different ethnic backgrounds together and boost national pride (Ofori, 2016). Kente is a piece of art that shows how history, religion, oral literature, social values, and political ideas have been shaped over time (Ofori, 2016). Few studies have been done on how the indigenous people and people who wear these kente textiles figure out what they mean in the context of how they are worn. This is an interesting fact.

### **Preserving Kente as Intangible Cultural Heritage**

Traditional attire is indicative of an ethnic group or a nation, which typically preserves significant cultural features from its place of origin. Most of the time, these clothes are worn for special events and celebrations, especially ones that have to do with ethnic traditions, pride, or heritage (Adzobu, 2016).

Diverse cultures are distinguished by their distinctive clothes and fashion histories. Thus, from the ancient to the contemporary, adornments and clothing were used to communicate social age and personal status. So, clothing design is still an important part of non-verbal communication through fashion or language (Jones, 2005; Omatseye & Emeriewen, 2012). It shows the importance of the symbols they communicate.

The Republic of Ghana is recognised by its rich kente cloth, which has become synonymous with the country and its traditional rulers, who showcase this national treasure during festivals and other events. The kente fabric is composed of silk and cotton. The cloth is a source of pride for its owners because, depending on the type worn, it reveals one's social class and place in the community (Badoe & Opoku-Asare, 2014; GoG, 2018).

During burial rites and ancestral remembering ceremonies, Kente is again employed as a symbol of respect for departed souls. Its significance as a symbol of merriment and honour is evident during festivals and community festivities, when people proudly wear their finest kente fabrics to express the spirit of the occasion (Ofori, 2016).

The inclusion of varied colour formations and yarns in weaving is an additional innovative aspect of traditional kente (Fening, 2006). Thus, the use of colour in kente weaving has special significance. Asmah, Gyasi & Daitey (2015) use white for purity or for funerals of the extremely elderly; black, red, orange, and dark colours for funerals and sorrow; gold for wealth; blue and silver for the Queen Mother; and brown for solemnity of purpose or battle are common colours (Asmah, Gyasi, & Daitey, 2015).

Tyler (2016) examined the use and awareness of Ghana's kente fabric among African, Caribbean, and American college students. Twenty students of African, Caribbean, or African American descent participated in two focus groups. The findings revealed that students utilise kente fabric on special occasions despite having limited awareness of its history.

### **Kente Production in Ghana**

Most Kente fabric is made in Ghana, where it is a type of narrow strip weaving made on a horizontal frame treadle loom (Dennis, 2004). referred to in Taylor Mithelman's writings (2019) Because it is hand-crafted, intricate, and historically significant, kente is elevated in Ghanaian culture to a higher-status, more "artisanal" quality than other textiles made in Ghana, such as the vast batches of hand-dyed batik or the factory-produced wax-resist cloth. Handwoven kente is

produced by a master weaver who uses meticulous precision to create intricate patterns that are passed down to the next generation.

Kente has contributed significantly to the royal or presidential image in Ghanaian society and continues to be a key symbol on a national and worldwide level (Ross & Adu-Agyem 2008). Chiefs and other important people in the community used to wear kente, a material that was seen as a sign of wealth and power (Dennis, 2004). Kente is now more widely used than it was originally, among a select few people. While its usage has been expanded to meet "contemporary" stylings, worn as matching skirts and tops or wrapped over the leather thongs of sandals, it is still an expensive cloth to purchase and frequently saved for special occasions. To make it simple for tourists to purchase, kente has also been manufactured into handbags, bow ties, and single strips.

The kente cloth, which has a long historical background and associates itself with poetry and the social nature of language with its unique tendency, must be preserved as history in order to prevent losing its identity. Costumes are associated with culture and help identify the distinctive ways of a person.

### **Social identity**

According to Henry Boateng and Bhuva Narayan's (2017) research, Kente fabric is inextricably linked to an individual's identity. Schramm (2010) explains that African Americans have adopted Kente to reconnect with their African roots. Thus, Kente is a vital part of the yearly Kwanzaa celebration in the United States. This has ramifications for the flow of Kente-related knowledge; based on the interviews, we found that social identity has also helped the flow of Kente-related knowledge. By means of social identity, Kente-related knowledge has penetrated the global community. During an interview with Ghanaians residing in the United States, it was clear that Kente is crucial to the history of the Asantes and Ghanaians in general. It depicts the Asante and Ghanaian cultures. ... "When I wear Kente, I am reminded of my heritage". It highlights my African ancestry.... When my friends here see me wearing it, I tell them about it. – Afia So, in a way, the Kente cloth isn't just worn to feel connected to one's identity as a Ghanaian or African. It's also worn to start a conversation or to make people ask questions that lead to stories about one's identity... As another participant affirms:

*The first thing that comes to mind [when you see a person wearing Kente] is this person is probably attending a special occasion. There are times too when people see others wearing Kente, they ask if the person is from Bonwire. – Bonsu*

Many Ghanaians who travel abroad, and Africans in the diaspora, sometimes wear Kente to show their African and Ghanaian identities overseas. As such, many people outside Ghana have come to acquire knowledge about Kente through these Ghanaians and Africans in the diaspora who want to communicate their identity via Kente. This kind of symbolic meaning about social identity in the contemporary world supersedes the original traditional symbolic meanings of the patterns and colours embedded within the Kente cloth itself.

### **Social status**

According to Boateng Henry and Bhuva Narayan (2017), social status also showed up in the interview data as a component of social ties that enables the exchange of knowledge about Kente. In one way or another, all the participants claimed that their social position was increased and created by wearing Kente. One of the users said:

*The first thing that springs to mind is status and dignity, and that is why I wear Kente to events like festivals. -Kweku*

In addition, Kwaku, a weaver, described how wearing Kente gave him royal rank and the benefits that go along with it:

*Given that the gathering was for dignitaries from Ghana and other nations, I was aware that I might not be permitted entry. So, I made the decision to wear Kente, and when I arrived at the entry, the security personnel did not even search me; instead, they worked to clear a path for me to enter the stadium because there were many people attempting to do so at the gate. They cried, "Open the gate for Nana (chief) to enter!" when they saw my Kente because they assumed I was a king or one of the invited guests. -Kwadwo*

Participants believed that wearing Kente made one a royal and honourable person. If someone wears Kente, they may even be considered wealthy. This has helped many people adopt Kente and, in turn, has made it easier for knowledge about Kente to circulate. Many of these users now know both what the names of the patterns are and what they mean.

Because of this, a person's social standing shows how much respect, honour, assumed competence, and special treatment they get from other people, families, communities, and organisations in a society. It also shows whether a person must wear kente cloth. When worn, the kente cloth conveys a distinct social-cultural communication to the wearer and establishes the interpreter's sociolinguistic expertise, as the interpreter is aware of the communicative language of the symbols and motifs in the foreground of the kente cloth.

### **3.0 Materials and methods**

#### **Study Area**

It is difficult to pinpoint exactly when weaving was introduced to Ghana's Volta Region. The art is thought to have begun in Agortime-Kpetoe before spreading to other regions among the Ewe of Ghana. Idiens (1980) wrote that the art of weaving in Eweland originated from Avatime and Kpetoe, which supported this argument. Kente weaving is an ancient craft among the Ewe, particularly among the Agortime Kpetoe. Oral stories of the Ewe attribute the origin of Kente weaving to a hunter named Togbi Se from Kpetoe-Abehenase who, following a fruitless day of hunting, rested beneath a tree and witnessed a spider weaving its web. Togbi Se pondered why people were incapable of weaving. It must be mentioned that early Ewe weavers used frame structures to experiment with weaving prior to the invention of looms. Using this technique, materials resembling baskets were weaved. The technique is still employed to educate individuals on how to weave Kente. This apparatus is a duplicate of the one used by Togbi Se (Tettehfoo, 2009).

#### **Study Design**

Qualitative research techniques were used in this investigation. Data were gathered through in-depth conversations conducted in both the Ewe language and English due to the participants' and researcher's shared social status. A total of 15 people were interviewed: 10 Ewe kente cloth weavers and 5 wearers/users in the Agortime traditional area.



## 4.0 Findings and Discussions

### Some Kente Cloths and their Meaning

There are many kente each is weaved in distinctive patterns or symbols. The figures are those of human figures symbolically woven, while others are in the form of animals to represent a proverb, a social event or to give an advice. Some images/designs collected attest to non-verbal art forms as indicated in the figure below.



**Figure 1: Xexeame dɔ atsyɔ̃**

The cloth in Figure 1 uses many symbols. The keys signify the importance to open doors, the bird signifies beauty, the state sword depicts royalty, the fish depicts a feminine symbol of fertility, abundance and faith, the umbrella shows protection etc. The full expression is analyzed as:

#### **Xexeame dɔ atsyɔ̃**

**Xexe -a - me - dɔ - atsyɔ̃**  
 World - DET – in - arrange - beauty  
 “The world is beautiful”

The cloth has its proverbial meaning as “the world is beautiful” and that kinship is an entangled web that sought to bring all shades of people in the society together for the common good of living peacefully among one another. The cloth is designed to encourage the chiefs to see their people as beautiful and therefore rule the people with tact and unite them thereby averting the numerous disputes among their people.



**Figure 2: Gãbusu**

The Gãbusu kente cloth has a lot of background colours (light/navy blue, yellow, light green, purple with black strips at the extreme ends design in it a wall gecko ) with perfect squares sitting on each other's edge. The full expression is analyzed as:

### **Gãbusu**

Gã busu

Great- evil/trouble

“Greatness with responsibilities”

The Cloth: Gãbusu has such symbols as a tortoise, a Sankofa bird, a man with a staff with rectangle shapes, and a wall gecko. These symbolic meaning of the man carrying the staff depicts a leader that must lead the way for others to emulate, the Sankofa bird literally meaning “go back and take it:” which tells us about the beauty of some of the good cultural practices we no longer respect, and that our lost culture values must be searched for, the tortoise refers to adaptability that tells life must be hasten slowly as foreign cultural practices is taking over all our lives as a people. And finally, the wall gecko signifies the renaissance of our culture is possible if in silence we adapt those ones that are beneficial for the common good of the society.

The cloth portrays its linguistic meaning as a chief has all it takes as a royal and authority to rule but the same chiefdom is bedeviled with a lot of difficulties, challenges/and a person with a great responsibility, indeed, uneasy lies the head that wears the crown.





**Figure 3: Hiato mequa kpe o**

Hiato mequa kpe o

The kente, Hiato mequa kpe o literally in English means the poor eats no stones. The cloth has two major designs. The upper part design is woven on an army green background which is interwoven in parallel lines in white, blue yellow and red spots. The lower part is woven in strips of yellow, red with black alternating in short spans. The full expression is analyzed as:

**Hiato mequa kpe o**

Hia - to me - du - a kpe o

Poor -owner NEG- eat- HAB stone NEG

“A poor man does not eat stone”

This cloth has rectangular shapes connected to each other lying along the sides in a big square shape. The rectangular shapes show the perfect nature of every human being in his own unique ways whether rich or poor that must co-exist in peace. The cloth is designed to give hope to the poor and that everybody should respect the poor in society because the poor will never eat stone no matter his condition.



**Figure 4: Trekake**

The kente cloth Trekake has a background red and yellow with the yellow inter woven with black and white threads. The full expression is analyzed as:

**Trekake**

Tre - kake

Calabash- piece

“a broken piece of calabash”

This kente cloth shows a pattern with rectangular shapes made in horizontal shapes of which the red strips over shadows the other colour strips of the cloth. It has its literally meaning as a piece of broken calabash. This kente cloth signifies that no human being is without mistakes and infallible and that every person has a role to play to make a wonderful society.





**Figure 5: Zikpuivi**

The Zikpuivi kente has royal stools design in the backgrounds of the cloth and has the literal meaning in English as a small stool. The cloth can have several backgrounds but the key feature to the cloth has royal stools as its symbols. The full expression is analyzed as:

### **Zikpuivi**

Zikpui- vi

Sit - small

“small stool”

The kente portray that it is not the size of the kingdom that determines a successful rule but small kingdoms are capable of ruling themselves to show authority in its kingship. This cloth belongs to royalty and most put on by royals. A symbolic object such as the stool, according to Sarpong (1971), symbolizes the soul of the society in Akan traditional life. The seat which is in the shape of a crescent, symbolizes the warmth of a mother’s embrace.



**Figure 6: Mawuko**

The Mawuko kente cloth has religious identity from the Volta Region. Mawuko literally translated as only God which signifies no one except God. Mawuko is analyzed linguistically as follows:

**Mawuko**

**Mawu - ko**

**God -only**

**“except God”**

This cloth has the main symbol as gye nyame on blue, yellow white and red strip background in between horizontal adjacent strips making one side and the other opposite side woven in similar colours in a kite form. Mawuko shows the supremacy of the Almighty and so the people of Agortime believe with God all things are possible.



**Figure 7: Dzifomo**

The cloth Dzifomo similarly takes its name from the Eweland. It literally in English means the way to heaven or the gate to heaven. The cloth is woven in the colours of wine, white, blue with black, white, yellow and wine interlaced to form small squares along the major design of an arrow head opposite each other separated by a white strip in between the two arrow heads. The full expression is analyzed as:

**Dzifomo**

**Dzifo - mo**

**Heaven- road/way**

**I7u“The way to heaven”**

Dzifomo shows the religious nature of the wearer and that in life the only thing to look out for is the heaven gate.



**Figure 8: Fia le xɔ me**

Fia le xɔ me kente has green and yellow background woven in rectangular shapes in vertical forms and has a top three shape steps in red and blue joining each in a triangular shape. The top design is which represents the chief is in the room which is sitting on the background yellow and blue. The full expression is analyzed as:

**Fia le xɔ me**

Fia - le - xɔ - me

King - PREP -room - inside

“The king is indoors’

Fia le xɔ me literally meaning the chief is in the room is a cloth used to signify the installation of chiefs as well as to show their power and elegance nature on such important occasions.



**Figure 9: Takpekpe le Anloga**

Takpekpe le Anloga cloth is woven in violet and yellow with an internal design resembling shooting stars closely having at its base colours of yellow and violet alternating and the kente cloth has a dark background. The full expression is analyzed as:

**Takpekpe le Anloga**

Ta - kpekpe - le - Anloga

Head-hit RED-PREP- Anloga

”reunion at Anloga.”

Takpekpe le **Anloga** tells about a chief attending such important meetings of his people. The cloth when seen on a chief tells about the deliberations of serious matters and it is a pride for a chief to put on such kente cloths on such meeting days.





**Figure 10: Lɔɔwuho**

The kente Lɔɔwuho is woven in small horizontal strips lying on each other's side in colours of grey, white, black, red and navy blue. The full expression is analyzed as:

**Lɔɔwuho**

Lɔɔ - wu - ho

Love- pass - wealth

“Lɔɔwuho” means ‘love is more valuable than riches’. This cloth is one of the most cherished items used during marriage ceremonies, and always included in the bride price to signify love and respect for the bridegroom. The society sees its representation as love, humility and perfection.



**Figure 11: Atsunyesi kpɔm dze dzome**

Atsunyesi kpɔm dze dzome kente has its main colour strips woven in black, violet and brownish. It has a triangular shape alternating each design and have between them squares of small interlaced patterns. The full expression is analyzed as:

### Atsunyesi kpom dze dzome

Atsunyesi -kpom – m - dze - dzo - me  
 Rival - see- 1SG- fall – fire - inside

”my rival has fallen into fire”

The kente cloth Atsunyesi kpom dze dzome literally means in English “my rival sees me and has fallen into fire.” The kente cloth has the tendency to tell rivals that she can go and burn the sea if she wishes.



**Figure 12: Atsunyesi do mado**

The kente cloth Atsunyesi do mado has three main colours as its design and woven in violet, yellow and green colours. It is woven in small vertical strips lying at the sides of each other. The full expression is analyzed as:

### Atsunyesi do mado

Atsunyesi- do – ma – do  
 Rival - go - let -go  
 ”my rival if you can”

Atsunyesi do mado literally means in English if you can my rival come out for a challenge. It is to show supremacy of who can survive the rivalry.

The above cloths in fig (11) and (12) show rivalry in the marriage home where a husband is married to two women and they have disputes, this kente cloths are used to cast insinuations.

### Titriku

The Titriku kente shows authority which comes with varieties. It has perfect square shapes of black white, yellow and green. The literal meaning - Titiriku is a tree in the forest that never dies no matter what happens to it. The cloth signifies supremacy, wealth, beauty.



**Figure 13: Titriku**

Some varieties of Titriku

- (a) Tugbewofia literal meaning Queen of beauty.
- (b) Klogo literal meaning tortoise shell.
- (c) fome literal meaning family.





**Figure 14ai: Tugbewofia**



**Figure 15aai: Tugbewofia**

Tugbewofia has two major varieties in designs of rectangular shapes in different colours, namely yellow, black, white red as shown in figure 14(ai) or blue, green white and violet as in figure 15(aai). The cloth is “Tugbewofia” is analyzed linguistically as follows:

Tugbe-wo-fia  
beauty-PL-chief  
“beauty queen”



Tugbewofia has its literal meaning as the “Queen of beauty” and tells that the wearer must be adorned, as she is the ultimate beauty of kente cloths.



**Figure 15b: Klogo**

Klogo is woven in patterns of hexagonal lines and connected with horizontal line. Klogo, which literally means ‘tortoise shell’. Klogo- the tortoise shell can adapt itself to every situation and circumstance. Klogo is analyzed linguistically as follows:

Klogo

Klo - go

Tortoise- shell

“shell of a tortoise”

The significance of Klogo depicts adaptability, and that the person who wears it is sending a message that s/he can adapt to every situation and so the wearer simply says I adapt to every situation especially in marriage.



**Figure 15c: fome**

*fome* woven in horizontal strips in shade of colours linking each colour strip that is uniquely woven which literally means family is important or I belong to a family. The cloth is analyzed linguistically as follows:

Some

*fo* - me

Stomach- inside

“family”

The cloth tells the uniqueness of how family existence is important and must be protected and guarded with all its values.

### **Kente cloths without meanings**

In my work, it came to the fore that some kente cloths do not show literal or proverbial meanings for communicative significance. The kente cloths are examples:

Fatia fata Nkrumah comes in the same designs with many backgrounds. It is woven in perfect rectangular shapes sitting on each other crossing the strips as in multiplication signs with zigzag strips woven in colours alternating each design.



**Figure 16: Fatia fata Nkrumah**

The cloth Fatia fata Nkrumah is to honour the wife of late Dr. Kwame Nkrumah for her beauty and elegance and as an in law of the state of Ghana. The cloth comes in different colour designs. It is an honour to wear the cloth which signifies how honorable a woman looks. The Fatia fata Nkrumah kente cloth is associated with history of the ever first lady of Ghana.



**Figure 17: Afɔkpavi**

The Afɔkpavi kente is woven in different colourful background. It is one of the new clothes that are being woven by the youths. The main pattern of the kente cloth is arrow heads lying on each other's side and alternating each other.

The **Afɔkpavi** literal means small sandals/shoe is a cloth design, a recent invention, takes its name from the complex and difficult weft designs. The artistic version takes a long time to complete. The cloth shows no relationship to the object of small sandals. The full expression is.” **Afɔkpavi**”, analysed as:

**Afɔkpavi**

Sandal qualifier (small)

“Small sandals”





**Figure 18: Tayati**

Tayati is one of the new kente design without any communicative significance. It is an example of the new breed of kente cloths being woven in different colours with catapult stick being the major design and have vertical strips alongside the catapult stick. The full expression is.” Tayati”, analysed as:

**Taya- ( a)ti**  
Rubber- stick  
“catapult”

The Faprim kente cloth is also woven in different colourful designs. The patterns come in triangular shapes with straight lines in colours alternating each other as well as squares at the lower part of the cloth.





**Figure 19: Suklikpe**

Suklikpe meaning cube sugar in English apparently designed in squares to represent the shapes of cube sugar as a major design has no meaning. The full expression is analyzed as:

**Suklikpe**

Sukli - kpe

Sugar-cube

"cube-sugar"

The design comes in different colours in little perfect squares adjacent to each other.

**5.0 Conclusions**

The following key conclusions have been formed considering the findings: The Agotime Kente people mostly use nonverbal codes for communication. The Agotime civilization holds the view that non-verbal codes are more trustworthy and credible when used to convey aristocracy, intimate communication, and rank. Agotime-Kpetoe features a variety of kente patterns. Due to the nonverbal ideas, they express, these designs have strong connotations. The Agotime society uses numerous kente (object languages) to convey messages connected to marriage on significant occasions, such as during marriage ceremonies. These kente clothing designs are used to convey whether the wearer is a bride or a groom. Klogo is one such kente that conveys the bride's adaptability to all circumstances and readiness for marriage. There are kente cloth languages that the culture views as both positive and negative. For example, kente fabric like Mawuko, which means "only God," has a more positive phrase than cloth with the opposite meaning, such as "Atsunyesi kpom dze dzome." In a similar vein, kente that speaks the language of aristocracy, riches, power, and domination is regarded favourably. The message to society about the chief's sign of authority is evident when he puts on the Gãbusu.

## REFERENCES

- Abdela, H., & Keri, K. (2010). *Dressing Culture of the Siltie people. The Siltie Nationality:History, Culture and Language* (pp. 42-56). Worabe: Siltie Zone Culture, Tourism and communication Office.
- Adzobu, E. D. (2016). The Significance of Traditional Costumes and Designs as Cultural Symbols at Asorgli Festival in Ho, Volta Region. University of Education, Winneba.
- Asmah, A. E., Gyasi, I., & Daitey, S. T. (2015). Kente Weaving and Tourism in a Cluster of Kente Towns Inashanti. *International Journal of Innovative Research and Development*, 4(11).
- Badoe, W., & Opoku-Asare, N. A. (2014). Structural patterns in Asante Kente: An indigenous instructional resource for design education in textiles. *Journal of Education and Practice*, 25(5), 52-62.
- Boateng, Henry & Bhuva Narayan (2017). Social capital and knowledge transmission in the traditional Kente textile industry of Ghana. *Information Research* VOL. 22 NO. 4.
- Fening, K. O. (2006). History of kente cloth and its value addition through design integration with African wild silk for export market in Ghana.
- GoG. (2018). Adanwomase: The Town of Kente. Retrieved 07th May, 2018, from <http://ghana.gov.gh/index.php/news/regional-news/brong-ahafo/1148-symposium-onclimate-change-held->
- Gyekye, K. (1986). *An Essay on African Philosophical Thought: the Akan conceptual scheme*. Cambridge University Press.
- Gyekye, K. (1996). *African cultural values: An introduction*: Sankofa Publishing Company
- Hall, S. (1997). *Representation: Cultural Representation and Signifying Practices*.
- Idiens, Dale (1980). *Cook Island Art*. Bloomsbury Publishing Plc.
- Jones, S. J. (2005). *Fashion design*: Laurence King Publishing
- Kederala, Mohammed Ahmed (2017). *Clothes and Ethnic Identity: (Re) Constructing Identity*
- London: Saga p Siltie Zone Culture, T. a. (2009). *A Symposium on the Siltie Culture, Language and history. A Symposium on the Siltie Culture, Language and history*. Worabe: Siltie Zone Culture, Tourism and Public communication Office.
- Mortey, Favour Mawutorwu Randy, Kpeglo, Samuel Bruce and Akorli, Gideon Kofi (2019). A Sociolinguistics study of the language of the Ghanaian Ewe Kente Fabric at Agortime in the Volta region. *International Journal of Applied Research*. 5(6): 88-98.
- Ofori, W. Y. (2016). Aesthetics, Appreciation and Criticism among Ewe Kente Weavers; Its Implication for Art Education. University Of Education, Winneba.
- Omatseye, B. O., & Emeriewen, K. O. (2012). An Appraisal of the Aesthetic Dimension to the African Philosophy of Cloth. *Journal of Language, Technology & Entrepreneurship in Africa*, 3(2), 57-67.
- Schramm, K. 2010. *African Homecoming: Pan-African Ideology and Contested Heritage*. Walnut Creek: Left Coast Press

- Taylor Mithelman(2019). Craft production, development, and tourism: Evaluating the kente business in Kpetoe, Ghana. Published by ProQuest LLC.
- Tettehfiio, L. A. (2009). *The role of the indigenous Ghanaian textile industry in relation to the President's Special Initiative (PSI) on textiles and garment*. University of Education, Winneba (Kumasi campus), (an unpublished Masters dissertation).
- Tyler, M. S. (2016). *Meanings of Kente Cloth among Self-described American and Caribbean Students of African Descent*. University of Georgia.
- UNESCO. (1993). *International Consultation on New Perspectives for Unesco's Programme: The Intangible Cultural Heritage*, Unesco Headquarters, 16-17 June.