

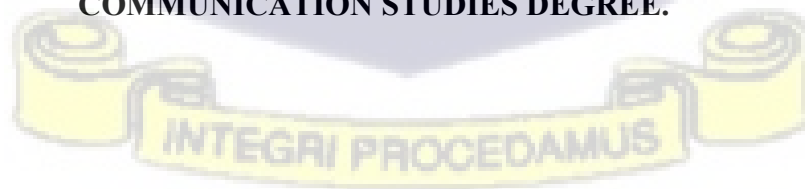
**AUDIENCES' PERCEPTIONS OF AKAN NEWS EMBELLISHMENT: A STUDY OF
URBAN AND PERI-URBAN AUDIENCES IN KUMASI.**

BY

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DECLARATION

I, **NATHANIEL KYERE BEKOE**, hereby declare that this study, except for other works which I have duly cited and referenced, is solely mine and was under the supervision of Dr. Sarah Akrofi- Quarcoo.

.....

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DATE: 20/08/2021

.....

Dr. Sarah Akrofi-Quarcoo
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DATE: 20/08/2021

DEDICATION

To God,
Ancestor, Dora Wireduwaa,
Dorcas Kyerewo-Bekoe.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

I am grateful to God for life.

To my siblings, they have been my “energy”.

To Dr. Sarah Akrofi-Quarcoo, my supervisor, your contributions, comments, and corrections have shaped this work.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

NCA- National Communications Authority.

GAW- Ghana Association of Writers.

GJA- Ghana Journalists Association.

NMC- National Media Commission.

ABSTRACT

This study explored urban and peri-urban Kumasi audiences' perceptions of the use of literary devices such as proverbs, humour, drama, and euphemisms in the presentation of Akan news. The use of these devices in local news presentation is perceived to embellish the news and challenge professional news delivery standards. Underpinned by the uses and gratification and symbolic interactionism theories, the study surveyed 160 people from eight urban and peri-urban localities in Kumasi to ascertain their perceptions. Findings indicate that both urban and peri-urban audiences were aware of the literary devices used in the presentation of Akan news. While respondents approved the use of devices such as proverbs and drama, they were less accommodating of others such as euphemisms. For example, respondents from both urban and peri-urban Kumasi strongly agreed that proverbs project aspects of Akan culture and therefore recommended their use in the news broadcasts irrespective of the broadcast content meeting general news standards or otherwise. Additionally, respondents were of the view that the use of drama in Akan news broadcast did not trivialize the news content as generally perceived in professional circles. In general, respondents from urban and peri-urban Kumasi are aware of the use of literary devices in the presentation of Akan news.

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of The Study

This study investigates audiences' perceptions of Akan news embellishments among urban and peri-urban audiences in Kumasi. The introductory chapter discusses the gap this study seeks to address, the objectives of the study, and the relevance of this study to academia and the media, specifically, the radio broadcasting industry.

1.1.1 LOCAL LANGUAGE RADIO BROADCASTING IN GHANA

Historically, local language broadcasting in Ghana started before World War II in a very limited way but was expanded during the war (Akrofi-Quarcoo &Gadzekpo, 2020). Radio broadcast in Ghana was largely in the English language, with limited local language radio broadcasts, until World War II, where it was expanded with the introduction of four indigenous languages: Ga, Fanti, Ewe, and Twi (Akrofi-Quarcoo &Gadzekpo, 2020). This expansion was to enable indigenes have access to war-related news. Local language announcers were recruited to translate war news to local audiences (Akrofi-Quarcoo & Gadzekpo, 2020). Broadcasts in the local language continued after World War II, however, the broadcasts had limited time slots on-air (Ansah, 1979). According to Akrofi-Quarcoo and Gadzekpo (2020), news in English from BBC was translated into Twi, Fanti, Ewe, and Ga and broadcasted as a 15-minute package each day.

After independence, the number of local languages used on radio stood at six. This includes Akan, which was used by merging Twi and Fanti languages (Akrofi-Quarcoo & Gadzekpo, 2020). In 1960, Radio One, a local language only station, was established. The station transmitted in the six local languages with each having their day of broadcast and slots. Rural Broadcasting was also established in 1962, adding to the objective of expanding the use of local languages on public radio.

Local language radio broadcast gained popularity from the late 1990s following the Ghanaian airwaves liberalization in the mid-1990s (Blankson, 2005). Records from the National Communication Authority (NCA), an institution responsible for the allocation of radio and television frequencies and licenses, show that 487 radio stations have been licensed in Ghana with 398 operating as of December 2018. Out of the total number, 358 are commercial (private) radio stations, 31 public radio stations, five public (Foreign) radio stations, 71 community radio stations, and 22 Campus Radio Stations (NCA,2018). It is not surprising that radio as a spoken communication medium has lent itself more ably than print to indigenous language use as Salawu (2006) asserts.

The privately-owned and community radio stations broadcast mainly in Ghanaian languages such as Akan, Ga-Adangbe, Dagaati, and Ewe. Volta Premier, Radio Latenu, and Zaa Radio are examples of local language stations that broadcast in Ewe, Ga, and Dagaati respectively. Akan is the dominant indigenous Ghanaian language used on radio (GeoPoll, 2018).

1.1.2 AKAN LANGUAGE USE IN RADIO BROADCASTING

Akan is spoken largely in Ashanti, Eastern, Central, Western, and the Brong Ahafo Regions of Ghana (Agyekum, 2010). Ansah (2008) notes that it is not an exaggeration to speculate that majority of Ghana's population (natives or non-natives) speak Akan.

Geopoll (2018) in a survey found that Akan radio stations are at the top of ratings in Greater Accra, Ashanti, and Western Region. For example, *Peace FM*, *Adom FM*, *Okay FM*, *Vision 1*, and *Asempa FM* are leading radio stations in Greater Accra. In the Ashanti Region, *Hello FM*, *Nhyira FM*, *Kessben FM*, *Angel FM*, *Otec FM*, *Silver FM*, and *Fox FM* lead as part of the top ten radio stations. In the Western Region, *Good News FM*, *Space FM*, *Skyy Power FM*, and *Rok FM* lead as the top four radio stations (Geopoll,2018).

According to Geopoll (2019), morning shows (6 am - 11 am) and drive time shows (2 pm - 7 pm) are the two “most important times” of the day in terms of radio listenership. Morning shows begin with a morning news bulletin whereas most, if not all, drive time shows end with evening news bulletins. Akan stations lead in regional ratings during these “most important times” of radio listenership across the country.

This study focuses on Kumasi, one of the largest Akan speaking centers in Ghana. Akan is predominantly spoken in urban Kumasi (a community or suburb of Kumasi) and the peri-urban areas (places found between urban Kumasi and surrounding rural areas).

1.1.3 LINGUISTIC/LITERARY DEVICES USE IN AKAN RADIO BROADCASTS

Statistics show that 70% of the Ghanaian population speak Akan or have an adequate level of proficiency in the language (Boateng, 2009). Radio stations that broadcast in Akan present their content in culturally significant ways to attract audiences with the incorporation of Akan cultural symbols, values, beliefs among others (Boateng, 2009).

Proverbs, idioms, humour, metaphors, and many others are examples of popular literary devices used in Akan radio broadcasting in Ghana (Agyekum, 2000). Below is an example of a proverb used in an Akan morning news bulletin on Peace Fm on the 11th of November 2020. The presenter used the proverb below in presenting a news item where Dr. Kwame Addo Kuffour, former minister of Defense under President John Kuffour, advised Ghanaians to emulate the peaceful democratic display during the US elections in the upcoming elections. The presenter in his own way used the proverb to illustrate how Ghanaians, yet to go to the polls, should learn from the United State of America.

“.. ampa deɛ odi akyire sua deɛ odikan nantee.” (Yeboah, 2020).

Directly translated as “...indeed the beginner learns the ways of a predecessor/ leader...”

These devices when used in news broadcasting add elements of excitement to the news piece but may at times, distort the true message in the story. Some stories end up being made grander than they would ordinarily be while others may be downplayed depending on the delivery by the presenter. The presenters' use of various literary devices that tend to embellish news has come under scrutiny in recent times.

At a lecture to commemorate the 79th anniversary of the Ghana Broadcasting Corporation (GBC) in Accra in 2014, Mr. Kwasi Gyan-Apenteng, the president of the Ghana Association of Writers

(GAW), observed that several Akan radio stations are undermining the sanctity of radio news broadcasting. He said: “these radio stations have introduced several linguistic embellishments that have turned news into farcical comedy” (Gyan-Apenteng, 2014). He opined that this is as a result of refusal to insist on standards.

Earlier in 2009, the National Media Commission, the independent body responsible for registering, regulating, and monitoring media content in Ghana, published guidelines on local language broadcast. In section 2.3.3, the guidelines state: “proverbs, anecdotes, and other linguistic devices that embellish news are prohibited” (NMC, 2009). The guidelines were put together following public concerns over the content of Akan news and style of presentation as most of the stations use literary devices which tend to embellish the news.

The Ghana Journalists Association’s code of conduct states emphatically that journalists in their line of work should differentiate between facts, opinions, and commentary such that news is presented objectively without any embellishments.

This study, therefore, seeks to explore audiences’ perception of Akan news broadcasts and the use of literary devices in news presentation.

1.2 Problem Statement

The number of private radio stations has been increasing since the liberalization of the airwaves in the late 1990s in Ghana. To reach a wider audience, most of these radio stations broadcast in local languages with Akan dominating as the most common language spoken on the airwaves. The Akan style of formal speech is replete with honorifics, proverbs, metaphors, and ornate expressions (Yankah, 1991 pg 1), and Akan news presenters are noted for incorporating certain

aspects of this speech culture into news broadcasts (Wiafe-Akenteng, 2009). The Akan broadcast uses literary devices such as proverbs, euphemism, drama, and humour which are perceived to embellish news content. Media experts have raised many concerns about the use of these literary devices in Akan news broadcasts. Many of them have argued that Akan news fails to meet the professional standards and accepted norms of news presentation because of embellishment.

Boyd (2001) recommends that the language of broadcast news should be simple, direct, concrete, and to the point in a way that everyone will readily understand. Lanson & Stephens (2008) also state that the language of news should be “concise, clear, direct and precise”.

Arguments from media experts, scholars, and guidelines show that Akan news does not meet the standards of news and broadcast in general. However, findings from Geopoll (2018) indicate that audiences stay tuned to Akan news and Akan radio stations in general. This could mean that regardless of the use of literary devices in Akan news, listeners consider it as a reliable source of information. Also, this means audiences may hold sentiments, views, and perceptions contrary to that of media experts and scholars. There is also evidence from Geopoll (2018) that Akan news or news broadcasts in the local language remain very popular.

Not much work has been done on the use of literary devices in Akan news, how audiences perceive these literary devices, and the standard of Akan news in general. It is generally assumed that listeners in peri-urban communities may be fond of using Akan as a common local language in daily interactions and may be comfortable with the use of these literary devices as compared to urban listeners who may come from diverse backgrounds and English may be the common language for communication.

This research seeks to fill that gap in the literature as it explores audience perceptions, views, and attitudes towards Akan news presentation that uses literary devices, the needs the embellished Akan news gratify as well as to explore whether there are conflicting audience perceptions about these literary devices that tend to embellish news in urban and peri-urban Kumasi.

1.3 Study Objectives

This research seeks to explore perceptions of radio audiences in urban and peri-urban Kumasi about embellishments used in Akan news. The study has the following specific objectives:

- I. To explore the views of urban and peri-urban listeners on the use of literary devices in Akan news presentations.
- II. To explore differences or similarities in perceptions of urban and peri-urban Kumasi listeners regarding Akan news embellishment.
- III. To explore the perceptions of urban and peri-urban Kumasi listeners on the quality of Akan news presented with literary devices.

1.4 Research Questions

In light of the study's objectives, which seeks to ascertain urban and peri-urban audiences' perceptions of Akan news embellishments, the following research questions will be interrogated:

- I. Do urban and peri-urban Kumasi listeners perceive the content of Akan news as embellished?
- II. What are the similarities and differences in views of urban and peri-urban Kumasi listeners with regards to the use of literary devices in Akan news presentation?
- III. What are the perceptions of urban and peri-urban Kumasi listeners on the quality of Akan news presented with literary devices?

1.5 Significance of the Study

Opare-Henaku (2016) discovered embellishment as a newsroom practice especially when it comes to local radio stations in Ghana. Perceptions of Akan news embellishment have come from media experts and practitioners. This study explored perceptions of Akan news embellishment from an audience perspective and filled, to an extent, that gap in media research in Ghana.

Also, this study provides media managers especially local media managers with empirical findings on how the audiences perceive news embellishments, especially the use of proverbs, humour, drama, euphemisms, and hyperbole in Akan news presentation. It additionally informs local media outlets of what the audience expects from them to satisfy their news needs. This study will also provide insights for media experts, managers, and practitioners to understand the people who consume their services better.

1.6 Organization of The Study

This research work has been divided into five (5) chapters. Chapter one covered the introduction which addressed the statement of the problem, research questions, the objectives

of the study, the significance of the study, the scope of the study, the structure and organization of the study, and some operational definitions to the study. The chapter two of the study covered the theoretical frameworks that underpinned the study. In this same chapter, some studies and articles related to this current study are reviewed; wherein various views from different authors were reviewed with regards to the nature of audience perceptions of Akan news embellishment and definition of variables. Chapter three highlighted the methodology of the research. Chapter four focused on reporting the findings, and results. Finally, chapter five covered a summary and discussion of research findings, conclusions, and recommendations.

1.7 Operational Definitions

The following concepts have been operationalized to fit the needs of this particular study:

NEWS: Information obtained, processed, and disseminated through the media and in this study, radio.

EMBELLISHMENT: Embellishments in this study refers to the presentation style of Akan news using literary devices such as proverbs, humour, hyperbole, anecdotes.

These devices are perceived to have the potential to add meaning to news stories.

Literary Devices/ Linguistic devices are used interchangeably in this study.

EUPHEMISM: Indirect words substituted for one that is considered too blunt, unpleasant, harsh, or embarrassing. It can also be words used to describe complex situations that do not have direct translations from English to the Akan language.

DRAMA: The verbal performance of an act/action in news stories. E.g. providing dramatized details of incidents that can be considered to be minor.

AKAN: An indigenous Ghanaian community that speaks a central Tano language. Akan is also a spoken language in Ghana.

AKAN RADIO STATION: A radio station that broadcasts in Akan.

PERI-URBAN AREA: An area between urban and rural areas. A Peri-urban area in this study refers to a community between Kumasi and a surrounding rural community. Selected locations were Ejisu, Mampong, Abirem, and Abuakwa.

URBAN AREA: Urban area in this study refers to a community or suburb of Kumasi. This study selected Buokrom Estate, Adum, Asafo, and Bantama to represent the urban Kumasi.

CHAPTER TWO

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK AND LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

This chapter discusses the theories governing the research and the studies that are relevant to it. The study is underpinned by the Uses and Gratification and Symbolic Interactionism theories.

2.2 Theoretical Framework

2.2.1 Uses and Gratification Theory

The Uses and Gratification theory is an audience-centered theory that considers audiences as active and not passive as earlier researchers have posited. Uses and Gratification theory suggests that media content users choose content that will satisfy their needs (Severin & Tankard, 2001).

Propounded by Elihu Katz and Jay Blumler in 1974, the Uses and Gratification theory is useful in explaining how individuals use the media to gratify their needs.

The theory posits that people choose what they want to see, read, or listen to satisfy their needs. This then provides an approach to understanding why and how people actively use specific media (Ko, Cho & Roberts, 2005).

This theory is relevant in this study because it plays a key role in understanding individuals' use of media. This means that, for instance, individuals (audience) can have different views, opinions, and purposes that Akan news embellishments serve for them. As a result, individuals may have diverse perceptions about Akan news embellishments.

Katz, Blumler, and Gurevitch (1974) posit a Uses and Gratifications model that includes the following elements:

- The audience is conceived of as active, whereby their use of mass media is assumed to be goal-directed.
- In the mass communication process, many initiatives in linking need gratification and media choice lie with the audience member.
 - The media compete with other sources that satisfy the audience's needs.

McQuail, Blumler, and Brown (1972) through a study place audience needs and gratifications into four categories as following:

Diversion: audiences use media content as a sort of avenue for emotional release and escape from their routine life.

Personal relationships: audiences substitute the media for companionship and media information facilitates conversations.

Personal identity or individual psychology: audiences' values are reinforced and reassured and they can explore and understand various realities.

Surveillance: audiences receive information on things that might affect them or will help them do or accomplish something.

The Uses and Gratification theory is criticized for being audience-centered to the neglect of the role and effects of the media. According to Bajracharya (2018), the theory does not show the media to be important and overlooks the possibility of the audience being inactive at certain times. It is also criticized for being highly individualistic (Katz, Blumler & Gurevitch, 1973).

This notwithstanding, the theory maintains that media content serves several uses for individual audience members and audiences are active in the selection of media content that gratifies their need.

2.2.2 Symbolic Interactionism

Active audiences select the content that will gratify their needs and form opinions, and perspectives on the meaning of such media content (Dolan, Conduit, Fahy & Goodman, 2016). Meanings are formed when individuals interact or come into contact with media content. This notion has roots in the symbolic interaction theory.

Symbolic interaction theory is a social science theory that posits that objects do not get their meanings on their own but from social actors (Aksan, Kisac, Aydin & Demirbuken, 2009). The theory also focuses on meanings that emerge from individual interactions in society. According to Blumer, there are three core principles in symbolic interaction: meaning, language, and thinking principle (Aksan, Kisac, Aydin & Demirbuken, 2009). Meaning serves as the center of human behaviour. Language helps provide symbols that are given meanings. Thinking changes how individuals interpret symbols. The theory acknowledges that meaning is a principal factor in human behaviour (Aksan, Kisac, Aydin & Demirbuken, 2009).

This present study employed the symbolic interaction theory to help determine how individuals in urban and peri-urban Kumasi interpret the use of literary devices used in Akan news presentations and their views, attitude, and opinions formed towards these devices used. Both the Uses and gratification and symbolic interactionism speak of the agency of the audience or listener who is the primary target of the news.

2.3 Review of Related Studies /Literature Review

The related studies were reviewed according to three main themes identified: audiences' choice of media consumption, the use of Akan language in the media; and the perceptions and credibility associated with local news content.

2.3.1 Audiences choice of media consumption

Matani, Hasanzadeh and Farhangi (2012) state some of the reasons and needs audiences gratify when they use Persian Satellite channels. The study was a descriptive study which surveyed and gathered data through a questionnaire. Citizens of Qaemshar who are 16 years and above, and have access to Persian Satellite channels, formed the population of study. The research concludes that “the audiences tend to use the media based on cognitive and learning needs, entertainment, gaining an identity, and social needs. That is, the participants tend to approximately lend themselves to active audience models (Matani, Hasanzadeh, and Farhangi, 2012).

Herta Herzog's (1942) work “Motivations and Gratifications of Daily Serial Listeners” is considered as one of the initial studies on media gratification (Baran & Davies, 2003). She interviewed soap opera audiences to investigate gratifications sought when they watch soap operas. Her respondents were housewives and the findings revealed three major gratifications. Findings revealed that the soap opera served three major gratifications; “merely a means of emotional release,” “opportunities for wishful thinking,” and “the advice obtained from listening to daytime serials” (Baren and Davies,2003).

In a further study, Blumer and McQuail (1972) used a Uses and Gratifications approach for an audience study aimed at investigating why audiences watch or avoid watching political party broadcasts during the 1964 British general elections. The findings showed that individuals have

diverse reasons for viewing political campaigns. Their study revealed that 55 percent of respondents watched political campaigns to discover parties' actions when voted into power, 52 percent watched the campaigns to be updated with the main issues of the day, and 51 percent watched to judge the personas of political leaders.

2.3.2 Akan language use in the Media

Agyekum (2010) studied the use of Ghanaian languages, particularly Akan, on radio. In the study, local language use (Akan) was successful in educating, informing, and entertaining audiences. Data was gathered through interviews and questionnaires from listeners, producers, and presenters in local language programmes at various radio stations in Accra and Kumasi. Findings revealed, that in Ghana, mass media (radio) serves as a medium for storage expressions, phrases, proverbs, and other aspects of Ghanaian language and culture. As a result, the audience learns diverse aspects of the local language.

The study found that listeners discover new Akan words and terms used by news presenters and media personalities faster and wider than already-existing words used by the government and other agencies. Also, younger generation audiences who are exposed to various words, phrases, and speaking styles from the local languages on radio, spread, and develop its use faster (Agyekum, 2010).

Boachi (2010) investigated the differences in Akan news broadcasts of Uniq FM, a public station, and Peace FM, a private station. In the findings, it was observed that Peace FM used Akan oral literature as embellishments more than Uniq FM. Also, the study established that exaggerations, ideophones, idioms, and proverbs were the literary devices (Akan oral literature) in the form of embellishments used in Akan news.

This study will interrogate audiences' views and opinions of these embellishments used in Akan news in light of Boachi's (2010) findings.

Opare-Henaku's (2016) study, which employed the methods of case study and ethnography to gather data, investigated news routines of an English and a local language (Akan) radio station. The study found that an Akan news station, Adom Fm had a listenership of English-speaking audiences in addition to its target audience (18 to 50-year-old market women) as a result of its humorous content. The study also found that humor, proverbs, and exaggeration were the literary devices mostly used in the presentation of Akan news.

According to respondents who were mostly media practitioners—media managers, editors, and news presenters, humour is used to gratify the emotional and psychological needs of an audience (Flaherty, Weinberger & Gulas, 2004). Findings from the study suggest that news presenters intersperse news with proverbs which they believe conforms with the Akan culture and tradition and as a result reflects the African culture. Additionally, some editors believed that proverbs help in summarizing long narrations. According to respondents, exaggerations were used as an element needed to paint a mental image. Euphemisms, anecdotes, and songs are some other literary devices listed in the study that are used in the presentation. The study was underpinned by the sociology of news production theory, the theory of gatekeeping, the theory of news selection, and networked journalism.

Also, in the study, media practitioners identified competition as a reason why they employ the use of these literary devices in news presentations. The fear of losing audiences and advertisers to other competitors, that use these literary devices to make their news presentation attractive, forced them to use literary devices as well. However, respondents who were mostly media practitioners averred some of these literary devices do not in any way affect the message. With this knowledge, this study will investigate from the audience's perspective whether the use of

these embellishments attracts them to Akan news.

Gadzekpo et al. (2020) explored audiences' attitudes, preferences, and tolerance for emerging radio news practices in Ghana. Findings indicated that two-thirds of the respondents were accommodating with the use of proverbs in local language news bulletins. In general, respondents preferred news bulletins presented with a mix of English and local language. However, audiences would rather listen to the news in English than the local language if they had to choose between English only or the local language only. The study also indicated that audiences had no issues with the infusion of cultural norms into modern journalistic practices. The study employed a survey method of gathering data from five cosmopolitan communities. Based on findings from Gadzekpo et al. (2020), this study sought to explore audiences' perceptions of local language news broadcast specifically Akan news to ascertain whether audiences in Urban and Peri-urban Kumasi shared similar preferences or accommodating with the use of literary devices.

In another study, Blankson (2005) argue that albeit the availability of several emerging radio stations, they have failed to reflect and promote their society's cultures because most of the stations broadcasted in English. He suggests that the radio stations should consider the use of local languages in broadcast in order to promote the native languages and their cultures. He based this on the usefulness of culture as a means of communication that provides language for meaningful interaction (Blankson,2005). The study gathered data from an audience survey as well as in-depth interviews with government officials, Ghanaian broadcasters, media scholars and journalists in Accra. This present study therefore examined African language use as a means of promoting cultural expression and identity promotion.

2.3.3 Perceptions and credibility associated with local news content

Rao and Ravi (2015) explored audience perception of the credibility of local news channels in India using surveys and in-depth interviews. The study found that the advent of local news channels contributed to the success of Indian media in the past 20 years. However, this success came along with a decline in journalistic standards. Rao and Ravi found that the credibility of news presented in regional or local languages by local news channels was relatively low as compared to news presented in English by national news channels. Also, according to the audience, radio was “purely for music” and not news (Rao & Ravi, 2015, pg4). Based on the findings of Rao and Ravi’s (2015) study, the present study explored the roles of local Akan radio stations in gratifying the needs of urban and peri-urban Kumasi audiences.

Bonna (2016) explored audience (viewer) perceptions of messages in television advertisements of herbal medicine at Akosombo, a community in Ghana. The study revealed that more than three out of 10 Akosombo residents (respondents), which represent 35.7 percent of respondents said that exaggerations were used in messages of advertisements. Respondents “wanted herbal medicine advertisement messages to be regulated to reduce exaggerations” (Bonna, 2016, pg49). This is similar to Agyekum’s (2010) finding that literary devices were used in messages of advertisements and not in news. The present study will likewise explore if these literary devices or exaggerations used in Akan news content appealed to the audiences.

Sundar (1999) explored factors that underline the audience's perception of news content. Participants of the study were communications students from ‘a major public university in the Northeast’ and ‘undergraduate and graduate students from a private university on the West Coast.’ The study found that audiences use four key variables in their perception of news stimuli (online and print). The four variables that audiences used in the perception of news stimuli included liking, quality, credibility, and representativeness. Liking is an indicator of a receiver’s

feeling towards the news content. Quality means the degree of the overall excellence of a news story and an integral part of the overall evaluation of the content. Credibility is conceptualized as the global evaluation of the objectivity of the news story. Representativeness of a news story is a summary judgement of the extent to which it represents the content category of news. The study employed survey as data gathering method. Likewise, this present study looked at whether or not four variables discovered in Sundar's (1999) study applied to urban and peri-urban Akan news audiences.

Banjade (2006), in an audience survey of Madanpokhara (Nepal), found that media use across people living in the cities and their counterparts in the villages was not homogenous. Listening to radio was universal in the city whereas 15 percent of people in the villages reported not listening to a radio. The study gathered data through surveys. The study also notes that people in the city favour news-oriented programs whereas listeners in villages prefer "local activities and entertainment programmes". This present study will also ascertain the preferences of urban and peri-urban residents for Akan news content.

Tyagi and Majumdar (2009), in a survey revealed that most Indian news outlets have resorted to sensationalism in order to be popular since the introduction of 24-hour news channels. The study posits that Hindi news channels are well noted for sensational news and facts distorted to add drama. Findings also revealed that audiences are however able to distinguish between sensational and credible news stories.

On the other hand, Bhargava and Balhara (2017) found that audiences believe that Indian journalism lacks credibility because of sensationalism. The study suggests that sensationalism hampers actual news and causes deterioration in the quality of the news. Additionally, the study found that this caused a loss in viewership.

This present study sought to identify if audiences in urban and peri-urban Kumasi considered embellished news as credible or not.

2.4 Summary

In this chapter, the theory that underpins this study and other related studies were explored. Most of these studies, which were audience-related, investigated the various needs media content satisfies audiences as well as audience perceptions on such content. Most of these studies employed either a survey or an in-depth interview or both. These methods influenced the data gathering process employed in this study which the next chapter discusses.

CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

3.0 Introduction

This chapter looks at the approach to research that is employed in this study as well as the methods of data collection. Additionally, the chapter discussed the setting of the study as well as how data collected will be analyzed. The methodology was arrived at by also drawing on some of the various approaches and methods employed by audience-related studies particularly Rao and Ravi's study (2015).

3.1 Research Design/ Data Collection

Research design refers to the blueprint or structure of any research. That is, it serves as the “glue” that combines and holds all the parts in research together (Akhtar, 2016). In other words, it specifies the methods and procedures needed to collect and analyze the data needed for research work.

This study employed a quantitative approach to research. A survey method was used to gather data on audiences' perception of Akan news embellishment. Primary data is the factual first-hand information collected by a researcher (Mesly, 2015).

Lindolf (1995) avers that an important strength of a survey is its ability to give the distribution of behaviours, attitudes, and attributes in a population. Kumasi has a large population which makes direct observation difficult therefore a survey was the appropriate method to gather data. As suggested by Babbie (2007), a survey is a good research method to employ if collecting data from a large population. Respondents were sampled from four suburbs of urban and four peri-urban communities in Kumasi and were used to make inferences about the general population.

3.2 Population of The Study

One hundred and sixty respondents from eight urban and peri-urban suburbs in Kumasi were surveyed. The urban suburbs included Buokrom Estate, Bantama, Adum, and Asafo. The peri-urban suburbs included Abirem, Ejisu, Mampongten, and Abuakwa.

Kumasi is the traditional capital of the Ashanti Region. It is the second-largest city in Ghana with a population of about 1,730,249 (Amo-Asamoah, Owusu-Manu, Asumadu, Ghansah & Edwards, 2020; Population and Housing Census, 2010). Kumasi is known for its purpose as the political, cultural, administrative, and economic center for the Ashanti Region. It is a trading center because most, if not all, routes that connect the northern and southern parts of Ghana, meet there.

According to the Population and Housing Census (2010), Kumasi has a mixed population. Aside from the Asantes, who are a majority, it has a large number of people from other regions and particularly from the Northern Region and thus might have dwellers who are not native Akan speakers but listen to Akan news. This population was an added advantage to the researcher which helped to reduce cost and for timely collection of data for the research.

3.3 Sampling

This study employed cluster and simple random sampling methods. Firstly, urban suburbs in Kumasi were numbered and mixed in a bowl where four were randomly selected. The four selected areas were Buokrom Estate, Adum, Asafo, and Bantama. The same approach was done for peri-urban communities and four suburbs were also selected: Ejisu, Mampongten, Abirem, Abuakwa were selected as the peri-urban communities. In these selected areas, every household was given equal opportunity to be selected. House listings of the selected areas are difficult to

obtain. As a result, the researcher randomly selected a ‘commercial center’ of these areas and every seventh household was chosen and included in the sample. Additionally, seven households were counted from the left and a questionnaire was administered to a member of the household. To determine which member of a household to administer a questionnaire, papers were numbered 1-10, mixed up and a paper was randomly selected. The next questionnaire was administered to a respondent in the seventh household on the right. This process was repeated until 20 respondents were sampled from every suburb of the urban and peri-urban areas selected for the study.

3.4 Data Collection Instrument /Procedure

A structured questionnaire was employed for data collection. Although it is an Akan study, questionnaires were written in English. The questionnaire included mostly closed-ended questions. The questions were 28 in all. Part A of the questionnaire sought to obtain the demographics of audiences. Part B contained questions on audiences’ listening habits, perceptions of news standard or quality, perceptions of literary devices used as embellishment in Akan news, and needs gratified by Akan news. All questionnaires were filled and collected over a period of three weeks in February 2019.

Questionnaires were administered face-to-face by the researcher and an assistant. Some respondents could on their own understand the questionnaire in English. They were allowed time to fill and return them. Some respondents asked that the researcher comes for the answered questionnaire the next day or at their preferred time. Respondents who could not read but were willing to partake in the research requested that the researcher interpret the questions in Akan. In such instances, the researcher interpreted the questions and filled the questionnaire from their responses. Respondents who did not want to participate in the study were excluded.

Questions asked covered the objectives of this study as well as demographics. Refer to **Appendix A**.

3.5 Data Analysis

Responses from the questionnaire were coded and analyzed with IBM Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS). Descriptive statistics mainly tables were used to describe the data to enable the explanation of responses and also answer the research questions posed for the study. All 160 questionnaires were analyzed.

3.6 Ethical Consideration

The informed consent of all respondents was obtained from them before the questionnaires were administered to them. Respondents were informed of their right not to participate in the study or opt-out of the study at any point. To respect anonymity and confidentiality, personal details such as the name of respondents were omitted from questionnaires.

3.7 Summary

In this chapter, the research design, the universe of the study, and the sample size of the study have been outlined. The data collection methods and instruments were also discussed. The sampling method that was employed was also discussed.

CHAPTER FOUR

FINDINGS

4.0 Introduction

This chapter presents findings from the data collected in the study. Data was collected from 160 respondents from urban and peri-urban Kumasi. All questionnaires distributed were filled and collected by the researcher, indicating a 100 percent response rate. This was because the respondents were semi-supervised by the researcher, allowing for the collection of all questionnaires after completion. Data obtained was analyzed quantitatively using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) v 20. The chapter is divided into sections with data presented in tables.

4.1 Audience News Listening Habits

This section presents findings from the news listening habits of respondents from peri-urban and urban areas of Kumasi. The listening habits of participants from both areas were explored to establish the level of respondents' engagement with Akan news on radio. One hundred and sixty respondents were surveyed from eight urban and peri-urban areas. Respondents were equally divided between urban and peri-urban areas, that is, eighty respondents from Buokrom Estate, Bantama, Adum and Asafo, and eighty from Abirem, Ejisu, Mampongte, and Abuakwa.

Respondents were asked how often they listened to Akan news. Responses for their frequency in listening were rated as once a day, every other day, weekly, once a while, and no response as seen in **Table 1** below.

Table 1: Frequency of Listening to Akan News

	Peri-urban	Urban
	Frequency/ Percentage	Frequency/ Percentage
Once a day	(18) 22.5%	(10) 12.5%
Every other day	(33) 41.2%	(36) 45.0%
Weekly	(2) 2.5%	(6) 7.5%
Once a while	(24) 30.1%	(26) 32.5%
No response	(3) 3.7 %	(2) 2.5%
Total	(80) 100%	(80) 100%

Table 1 above shows that 41.2 percent, representing the majority of respondents in peri-urban areas, listen to Akan news every other day, while 30.1 percent listen once a while. This was followed by 22.5 percent of respondents who listen to Akan news once a day, and 2.5 percent who listen weekly. The results indicate that respondents in peri-urban areas were more prone to listening to Akan news every other day than once daily. In urban areas, 45.0 percent, representing the majority of respondents listen to Akan news every other day, while 32.5 percent listen once a

while. This is followed by 12.5 percent of respondents who listen to Akan news once a day, and 7.5 percent who listen weekly.

4.1.1 Preferred Akan radio station

The Akan radio stations that broadcast to both areas included in the study included Hello FM, Nhyira FM, Boss FM, Kessben FM, Light FM, Otec FM, Oyerepa FM, and Angel FM. The radio stations broadcasted news around the same time, that is during the morning, and after drive time shows. The findings revealed that Nhyira FM is the most listened to radio station in peri-urban and urban Kumasi. Hello FM, Kessben FM, Angel FM, Boss FM, and Silver FM were the other preferred stations. **Table 2** below shows the radio stations with the highest respondent listenership.

Table 2: Preferred Akan radio stations

Station	Frequency	Percentage
Hello FM	34	21%
Nhyira FM	50	31.3%
Boss FM	8	4.8%
Kessben FM	33	20.8%
Angel FM	12	7.8%
Boss FM	7	4.3%
Silver FM	6	3.5%
Other	10	6.5
Total	160	100%

4.1.2 Preferred Akan News Bulletins

To determine which radio news bulletins were most listened to in peri-urban and urban Kumasi, respondents were asked to choose from the options morning news, midday news, or evening news. Respondents were not limited to selecting only one response but as many as suited them.

Table 3: Preferred Akan News Bulletins

		Peri-urban	Urban
Preferred News Bulletin	Morning News	36 (44.8%)	29(36.7%)
	Mid-day News	11(13.8%)	7(8.9%)
	Evening News	39 (48.3%)	30(38.0%)
	All Bulletins	8(10.3%)	16(20.3%)

As seen in **Table 3** above, 48.3 percent of respondents in peri-urban areas listen to the evening news, 44.8 percent listen to the morning news and 13.8 percent listen to mid-day news. On the other hand, 38.0 percent of respondents in urban areas listen to the evening news, 36.7 percent listen to the morning news and 8.9 percent listen to mid-day news.

4.1.3 Reasons for preferred time/bulletin

To ascertain the reasons for respondents' choice of news bulletins listened to in peri-urban Kumasi, the study gave some possible reasons for listeners' choices. As seen in **Table 4** below, 73.75 percent of respondents indicated that “free time” is a major factor in their choice of news bulletins. As seen in the table indicated, 12.5 percent of the respondents also stated that they prefer bulletins that cover major daily political issues while 10 percent prefer bulletins that cover mainly local economic issues. Also, 3.75 percent of respondents indicated that short bulletins are their preferred choice.

Table 4: Reason for Preferred Time/ News Bulletin – Peri-Urban Kumasi

		Frequency	Percent
Reasons	That is the time I am free to listen to the news	59	73.75%
	This bulletin's duration is short	3	3.75%
	The bulletin covers major daily political issues	10	12.5%
	The bulletin covers mainly local economic issue	8	10%

Findings from urban Kumasi were similar. As shown in **Table 5** below, 60 percent of respondents preferred news bulletins that were during their free time while 18.75 percent of respondents preferred bulletins that covered major daily political issues. 12.5 percent of respondents preferred

bulletins that covered local economic issues while 8.75 percent of respondents preferred bulletins that have short durations.

Table 5: Reasons for Preferred Time / Bulletin – Urban Kumasi

		Frequency	Percent
Reasons	That is the time I am free to listen to the news	48	60%
	This bulletin's duration is short	7	8.75%
	The bulletin covers major daily political issues	15	18.75%
	The bulletin covers mainly local economic issue	10	12.5%

4.1.4 Preferred bulletin content

As seen in **Table 6** below, the study further sought the views of the participants with regards to what they liked most about Akan news bulletins. Across urban and peri-urban Kumasi, preference of news bulletin was based on the content, accounting for 53.8 percent of respondents from both sampled areas. This was followed by the presentation style of the news broadcast and the standard with 31.8 percent and 6.1 percent respectively. Additionally, 4.5 percent of respondents preferred a bulletin that projects aspects of the Akan culture.

Table 6: Preferred bulletin content in urban and peri-urban Kumasi

Content Preference	Frequency	Percentage
Information content	86	53.8%
Presentation style	51	31.8%
Duration of news	4	2.3%
Standard of news	10	6.1%
Projects aspects of Akan culture	7	4.5%
Other, Specify	2	1.5
Total	160	100%

4.1.5 Undesirable bulletin content

The study also sought to discover respondents' undesired content in Akan news bulletins from both urban and peri-urban Kumasi. **Table 7** below shows that 39.2 percent of respondents disliked the presentation style used for news broadcasts. Additionally, 19.2 percent did not like the durations on the various news bulletins while 11.7 percent of respondents found the content of the news broadcasts undesirable and 8.3 found the standard of the news presentation undesirable.

Table 7: Undesirable bulletin content in urban and peri-urban Kumasi

Reason	Frequency	Percentage
Content of information	19	11.7%
Style of presentation	63	39.2%
Duration of news bulletin	30	19.2%
Standard of news	13	8.3%
Other	35	21.6%
Total	160	100%

4.2 Preferred presentation styles

The study further sought to ascertain the views of the participants with regards to the presentation styles used in the Akan news broadcast. To determine the style preferred by respondents, the following presentation style options: “presentation with proverbs”, “presentation with drama”, “presentation with euphemism” and “presentation that reflects aspects of Akan culture”, were given as options for selection. Respondents were free to choose as many as applied to determine a wide range of preferences for listeners. Responses are captured in **Table 8** below.

Table 8: Preferred Presentation Style

		Peri-urban	Urban
Preferred Presentation Style	Proverbs	66 (83.1%)	70 (88.3%)
	Drama	42 (53.2%)	44 (55.8%)
	Euphemism	22 (28.6%)	17 (22.1%)
	Reflects Akan Culture	40 (50.6%)	34 (42.9%)

For respondents in urban Kumasi, 83.1 percent preferred news bulletins that contain proverbs, 55.8 percent preferred drama in the bulletins, 42.9 percent preferred bulletin that reflects Akan culture, while 22.1 percent preferred content that made use of euphemisms.

In peri-urban Kumasi, 83.1 percent of respondents preferred proverbs in their news bulletins, 53.0 percent preferred drama, 50.6 preferred content that reflects Akan culture and 28.6 preferred content that made use of euphemisms.

4.3 Perception of Embellished Akan News and embellishments

This section presents the perception of respondents with regards to literary devices or embellishments used in Akan news as well as general perceptions on embellished Akan news. To achieve this, each respondent was made to respond to a series of statements using the Likert scale

ranging from 1 – 5, where 1 = Strongly Agree, 2 = Agree, 3 = Neutral, 4 = Disagree, and 5 = Strongly Disagree.

4.3.1 Perceptions on Embellished Akan News

As shown in **Table 9** below, general perceptions of peri-urban participants reveal that they think literary devices are used in Akan news. Findings from peri-urban Kumasi indicate that 36.3 percent strongly agree that Akan news contains a lot of embellishments. 30.0 percent agreed, 16.3 percent of respondents remained neutral whereas 12.5 percent and 5.0 percent disagreed and strongly disagreed respectively. Findings from urban participants indicate that 35 percent and 33.8 percent of participants strongly agreed and agreed while 22.5 percent remained neutral, 7.5 percent disagreed, and 1.2 percent strongly disagreed

Table 9: Perceptions of the general use of embellishment in Akan news.

		Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Total
Peri-urban Kumasi	Akan news contains a lot of embellishments	(29) 36.3%	(24) 30.0%	(13) 16.2%	(10) 12.5%	(4) 5.0%	80 100%
Urban Kumasi	Akan news contains a lot of embellishments	28 35%	27 33.8%	18 22.5%	6 7.5%	1 1.2%	80 100%

4.3.2 Perceptions on embellishment used in the presentation of Akan news bulletins.

Responses from respondents with regards to the use of embellishments in Akan news were recorded and presented in **Table 10** below.

Table 10: Perception of Literary Devices used in Akan News – Peri-urban Areas

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
Proverbs/Idioms enrich the news presentation and story	35 43.8%	32 40.0%	11 13.7%	1 1.3%	1 1.2%
Euphemism do not distort the standard/quality of news story	11 13.8%	28 35.0%	22 27.5%	16 20.0%	3 3.8%
Drama in Akan news does not make news trivial	11 13.8%	32 40.0%	22 27.5%	8 10.1%	7 8.6%
Proverbs/Idioms used in Akan news project aspects of Akan culture	25 31.3%	33 41.3%	14 17.5%	5 6.3%	3 3.8%
Proverbs/Idioms does not prolong the duration of Akan news	10 12.5%	16 20.0%	23 28.8%	23 28.7%	8 10.0%

As seen in **Table 10** above, in peri-urban areas, radio audience perception reveal that the use of drama did not make Akan news trivial. Responses from peri-urban Kumasi indicate 13.8 percent strongly agreed and 40.0 percent agreed with the statement “*drama in Akan news does not make news trivial*”. The majority representing over 80 percent strongly agreed and agreed that “*Proverbs/Idioms enrich the news presentation and story.*” Audience perception also reveal that embellished Akan news projects aspects of Akan culture. A total of 70 percent of respondents from peri-urban communities strongly agreed and agreed respectively that “Akan news projects aspects of Akan culture.” Peri-urban respondents were of the view that euphemisms do not distort the standard/quality of the news story with 35 percent of respondents being in agreement.

As shown in **Table 11** below, in urban Kumasi, 8.3 percent of respondents strongly agreed that drama in Akan news does not make news trivial, 50.0 percent agreed and 28.8 percent remained neutral. On the other hand, 6.3 percent disagreed and 6.3 percent strongly disagreed with the statement on drama not trivializing news. To the statement, “*Proverbs/Idioms used in Akan news project aspects of Akan culture*”, 67.6 percent of participants from urban Kumasi strongly agreed and agreed to the suggestion. Additionally, 25 percent of respondents agreed that euphemisms do not distort the quality of the news story while 41.3 percent agreed that Proverbs or idioms enrich the news presentations.

Table 11: Perception of Literary Devices used in Akan News – urban Areas

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
Proverbs/Idioms enrich the news presentation and story	21 26.3%	33 41.3%	17 21.3%	3 3.8%	6 7.5%
Euphemisms do not distort the standard/quality of news story	11 13.8%	20 25.0%	25 31.3%	15 18.8%	9 11.3%
Drama in Akan news does not make news trivial	7 8.3%	40 50.0%	23 28.8%	5 6.3%	5 6.3%
Proverbs/Idioms used in Akan news project aspects of Akan culture	23 28.8%	31 38.8%	16 20.0%	2 2.5%	8 10.0%
Proverbs/Idioms does not prolong the duration of Akan news	14 17.5%	15 18.8%	24 30.0%	20 25.0%	7 8.8%

4.4 Recommended Literary devices

The study further sought the views of the participants on which of the literary devices they are likely to recommend for use in Akan news. Respondents were not limited to selecting one option but as many as suited them. Findings from peri-urban Kumasi, as seen in **Table 12** below indicate that 72.6 percent of respondents recommended the use of proverbs/idioms while 38.6 percent did not. With regards to euphemisms, 55.7 percent of respondents did not recommend its use in Akan news broadcasts. On the other hand, 26 percent of respondents recommended the use of drama in Akan News, and 14.3 percent of respondents did not recommend the use of drama in the news.

Table 12: Literary Devices- Recommended/ Not Recommended- Peri-Urban Areas

Literary Devices	Recommended	Not Recommended
Proverbs/ idioms	58 (72.6%)	30 (38.6%)
Euphemism	5 (6.8%)	44 (55.7%)
Drama	20 (26.0%)	11 (14.3%)

Table 13 below presents data on some literary devices in urban Kumasi. Euphemism was highly rejected for use in Akan news, recording 75 percent of responses gathered. On the other hand, proverbs/idioms were highly recommended by 69 percent of respondents. Drama also was recommended by 28.2 percent of respondents.

Table 13: Literary Devices-Recommended/ Not Recommended - Urban Areas

Literary Devices	Recommended	Not Recommended
Proverbs/ Idioms	55 (69.0%)	6 (8.3%)
Euphemism	6 (8.5%)	60 (75.0%)
Drama	22 (28.2%)	18 (22.2%)

4.5 Perception of Akan News Standard/Quality

This section presents data on the perception of respondents on the quality of Akan news content. To achieve this, each respondent was made to respond to the questions using the Likert scale ranging from 1 – 5 where 1 = strongly agree, 2 = agree, 3 = neutral, 4 = disagree, and 5 = strongly disagree. According to Sundar (1999) quality means the degree of the overall excellence of a news story and an integral part of the overall evaluation of content.

Table 14: Perception of Akan News standard/ quality – peri-urban Kumasi

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
Akan news is a reliable source of information	27 33.8%	39 48.8%	9 11.3%	4 5.0%	1 1.3%
Akan news is not biased	10 12.5%	38 47.5%	26 32.5%	4 5.0%	2 2.6%
Akan news is credible (believable)	6 7.5%	29 36.3%	25 31.3%	11 13.8%	9 11.3%
Akan news is comprehensive	25 31.3%	34 42.5%	13 16.3%	7 8.8%	1 1.3%

Findings from peri-urban Kumasi revealed that 82.6 percent of respondents, agreed that Akan news is reliable, 60 percent agreed that Akan news is not biased, 43.8 percent agreed that Akan news is credible, and 73.8 percent agreed that Akan news is comprehensive as shown in **Table 14** above.

As seen in **Table 15** below, respondents from urban Kumasi hold positive perceptions about the standard or quality of Akan news presented. Respondents who strongly agreed that Akan news is reliable was 82.6 percent, while 73.8 percent agreed that Akan news is comprehensive. Additionally, 62.5 percent of respondents agree that Akan news is not biased and 51.1 percent find Akan news to be credible.

Table 15: Perception of Akan News standard/ quality – Urban Kumasi

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Agree
Akan news is a reliable source of information	33 41.3%	33 41.3%	5 6.3%	1 1.1%	8 10.0%
Akan news is not biased	8 10.0%	42 52.5%	13 16.3%	9 11.2%	8 10.0%
Akan news is credible (believable)	9 11.1%	32 40.0%	13 16.3%	21 26.3%	5 6.3%
Akan news is comprehensive	24 30.0%	35 43.8%	9 11.3%	6 7%	6 7.5%

4.6 Needs Gratification

This section presents data on respondents' gratifications from Akan news broadcasts in **Table 16** below. Respondents were not limited to selecting only one response but as many as suited them.

4.6.1 Needs gratification in peri-urban Kumasi

Findings indicate that 83.3 percent of peri-urban Kumasi respondents say that Akan news provides comprehensive information on local and international happenings. Additionally, 56.4 percent of respondents indicate that they learn cultural devices like proverbs from Akan news while 30.8 percent learn cultural presentations from Akan news. Akan news as a means of entertainment or fantasy escape also recorded 26.9 percent of the data gathered from peri-urban Akan radio listeners. On the other hand, only 14.1 percent of respondents feel that Akan news gives them a sense of belonging.

4.6.2 Needs gratification in urban Kumasi

In urban Kumasi, 68.4 percent of respondents agreed that Akan news provides them with comprehensive information on local and international happenings. Additionally, 61.8 percent of respondents agreed that they were able to learn cultural devices like proverbs from Akan news while 48.7 percent indicated that Akan news serves as a means of entertainment or fantasy escape. Furthermore, 38.2 percent suggest that they learn cultural presentations from Akan news.

Table 16: Needs Gratification – Peri-Urban/ Urban

		Peri-Urban	Urban
Needs Gratification	Akan news serves as a means of entertainment/fantasy escape	21 (26.9%)	38 (48.7%)
	Akan news provides comprehensive information on local and international happenings	66 (83.3%)	54 (68.4%)
	I learn cultural devices like proverbs/idioms etc. from Akan news	45 (56.4%)	49 (61.8%)
	I learn cultural presentations from Akan news	24 (30.8%)	30 (38.2%)
	Akan news gives me a sense of belonging	11 (14.1%)	22 (27.6%)

4.7 Summary

This chapter presented findings from data gathered. Data were analyzed with SPSS. Tables were used to present these findings. Findings included audiences listening habits, perceptions of embellished Akan news and literary devices, differences or similarities between the audience's perceptions, and the audience needs gratified by Akan news.

CHAPTER FIVE

DISCUSSIONS, CONCLUSION, LIMITATIONS AND RECOMMENDATION

5.1 Introduction

This chapter includes the discussion, conclusion, limitations, and recommendations of the study. The discussions of findings are connected to relevant theory and other related studies or literature

This study was aimed at exploring audiences' perceptions of Akan news and the use of literary devices that tend to embellish Akan news. The literary devices include proverbs or idioms, drama, and euphemisms that are used in Akan news. People in peri-urban areas are assumed to be exposed to these devices in their speech more than those in urban areas. As a result, the study sought to find the differences in perceptions of Akan news by people in these areas of Kumasi.

5.2 Views of urban and peri-urban Kumasi listeners on the use of literary devices in Akan news.

Findings from existing literature (Opare-Henaku, 2016) show that media practitioners employed the use of literary devices to embellish Akan news in their efforts to project certain aspects of the Akan culture. Similarly, this study revealed that over 70 percent of respondents from peri-urban Kumasi and 67.6 percent from urban Kumasi perceived those aspects of Akan culture are projected when literary devices are used to embellish news. As posited by the Uses and Gratification theory (Severin & Tankard, 2001), which states that audiences choose media that satisfies their needs, this study also found that listeners in urban and peri-urban Kumasi choose Akan news because Akan news projects aspects of Akan culture. Additionally, findings confirm one of the four categories McQuail, Blumler and Brown (1972) characterized audience needs and gratification

into, which is the personal identity or individual psychology. As revealed in the responses recorded from both urban and peri-urban respondents, the projection of Akan culture in Akan news bulletins helps listeners identify with their cultural backgrounds, and this gives respondents a sense of identity.

Even though Mr. Gyan-Apenteng, president of the Ghana Association of Writers, asserts that literary devices that embellish news have turned Akan news into a “farcical comedy”, findings from this study did not support this assertion. The study revealed that audiences find that the inclusion of drama in news presentations does not make the information presented trivial. Collectively, a representative 53.8 percent of peri-urban Kumasi respondents strongly agreed and agreed that drama did not trivialize the news broadcasts and 58.3 percent of urban Kumasi respondents also had the same assertions. This suggests that audiences and experts hold different views on the use of literary devices in Akan news.

Agyekum (2010) posited that literary devices are present in media content like advertisements but not the news. However, findings from Opare-Henaku (2016) and Boachi (2010) found that literary devices are used in the news, highlighting exaggerations, ideophones, and proverbs as examples of literary devices that were used in Akan news presentations on radio. Findings from this study agree with Opare-Henaku (2016) and Boachi (2010). Respondents affirmed that they find “a lot of embellishment devices in Akan news”. The study further revealed that respondents recommended the use of a literary device like proverbs in Akan news presentations. This finding is similar to the study of Gadzekpo et al. (2020) which revealed that respondents had no reservations with the use of proverbs in local language news.

However, whereas Gadzekpo et al. (2020) found that radio audiences were less accommodating on dramatization of news, respondents of this study were less accommodating to the use of euphemisms in Akan news presentation.

5.3 Differences between Urban and peri-urban listeners' views with regards to Akan news embellishments.

This study agrees with Agyekum's (2010) findings that the use of Akan on radio has been successful in educating and informing audiences. Listeners (respondents) from both urban and peri-urban Kumasi affirmed that Akan news has been their major source of information. The study finds that irrespective of the use of literary devices in Akan news, listeners consider Akan news as a reliable source of information. A total of 82.6 percent of respondents from peri-urban Kumasi agreed that Akan news is a reliable source of information with 33.8 percent strongly agreeing and 48.8 percent agreeing. Similarly, urban Kumasi also recorded 82.6 percent agreement with Akan news being a reliable source of information; 41.3 percent strongly agreed and 41.3 percent agreed. This shows that there was no marked difference between the views of urban and peri-urban Kumasi respondents views on the reliability of information from Akan news bulletins with embellishments.

Similar to McQuail et al. (1972) diversion categorization of audience needs gratification, this study found that 48.7 percent of urban Kumasi Akan news listeners had their need for entertainment and/or fantasy escape satisfied. This is different from the 26.9 percent recorded from peri-urban Kumasi listeners. This suggests that respondents from urban and peri-urban Kumasi have slightly different needs gratified when they choose Akan news.

Furthermore, this study found that listeners from urban and peri-urban Kumasi still find Akan news as a reliable source of information because it provides them with local and international

happenings which agree with McQuail et al. (1972) surveillance categorization. Urban Kumasi listeners, representing 68.4 percent of respondents, and 83.3 percent of peri-urban listeners are of the view that Akan news provides comprehensive information on local and international happenings.

5.4 Perception of the quality of Akan news presented from urban and peri-urban audiences.

Findings from this present study show that urban and peri-urban audiences in Kumasi consider Akan news reliable regardless of the use of literary devices. However, with regards to credibility, the majority of respondents had a neutral stance while a significant number disagreed with the statement “Akan news is credible”. The percentage of respondents from peri-urban communities who remained neutral was 31.3 percent while 13.8 percent disagreed, and 11.3 percent strongly disagreed. For urban communities, 16.3 percent remained neutral whereas 26.3 percent disagreed and 6.3 percent strongly disagreed. These findings suggest that respondents doubt the credibility of Akan news. This is parallel with findings from Rao and Ravi (2015) where audiences in Bangalore did not consider news in local languages as credible.

The study also indicated that audiences perceive Akan news as comprehensive. Majority of respondents from urban and peri-urban ‘strongly agreed’ and ‘agreed’ that Akan news is comprehensive. While 30 percent of urban Kumasi respondents strongly perceived the news as comprehensive, 31.3 percent of peri-urban respondents strongly perceived the news as comprehensive. Further, while 52.5 percent of urban Kumasi respondents agreed to Akan news as not biased, 47.5 percent of peri-urban Kumasi respondents agreed to Akan news as not biased. These findings suggest that respondents from both urban and peri-urban Kumasi respondents perceive Akan news bulletins positively.

This reflects the quality and high standards in the content and presentation of Akan news.

5.3 Conclusion

From the findings, it is observed that audiences from both urban and peri-urban communities listen to Akan news regularly. The evening news bulletin was the most preferred in both communities. Audiences in urban and peri-urban Kumasi confirmed that literary devices are used in Akan news.

However, the study highlights that regardless of all the literary devices used, Akan news informs audiences of local and international happenings. As a result, audiences have a generally positive perception of these devices used in the presentation of Akan news. Respondents say that literary devices like proverbs project aspects of the Akan culture and they highly recommend the use of proverbs in news presentations. Even though respondents did not recommend the use of euphemisms, respondents perceive Akan news presented as reliable.

Also, although Akan news gratifies the surveillance needs of audiences, they did not have a particular view or stance on the presentation style of Akan news. Audiences expressed like and dislike for “presentation style”. Respondents from urban and peri-urban Kumasi did not express outright dislike or like for the manner in which Akan news was presented.

5.4 Limitations

The structured questionnaire used to gather data may have limited respondents from expressing themselves with regards to the study. Most of the questions used in the questionnaire were close-ended and as such did not allow respondents to give more in-depth information.

5.5 Recommendations

Based on the findings, the following recommendations are suggested:

1. A qualitative approach should be used to complement the study to get further in-depth audience perceptions of Akan news that is embellished. In-depth interviews will allow respondents to express themselves as to what type of content is preferred.
2. More studies should be done on audience perceptions of local language radio and news presentation formats to provide media managers and practitioners with a fair idea of what audiences expect from them.
3. Other studies can consider gathering data from other Akan communities in other regions in Ghana. This will ascertain whether respondents from other Akan communities hold similar or different views on the use of literary devices in Akan news.

5.6 Chapter Summary

This final chapter presented the discussions on the main conclusions of the study, the limitations of the study, and some recommendations that could help other studies in the future.

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APPENDIX A

UNIVERSITY OF GHANA

DEPARTMENT OF COMMUNICATION STUDIES

MA COMMUNICATION STUDIES.

QUESTIONNAIRE FOR DATA COLLECTION

I am a student of the University of Ghana, Legon pursuing an MA in Communication Studies. I am conducting a research entitled “Audience perceptions of Akan news embellishment; a Study of Urban and Peri Urban audience in Kumasi”. The study is part of the requirement for the award of the M.A degree and I request your time to complete the following questions which seek your views on the subject. I assure you that the information provided will be considered highly confidential and it will be used for academic purposes only. Thank you.

N.B. Akan news embellishment refers to the proverbs, drama, idioms, anecdotes, humour, and other linguistic devices that is interspersed with news in Akan.

NB: Please tick [✓] where appropriate box or fill in where spaces are provided.

PART A: Demographics

1. **Gender:** Male [] Female []
2. **Age:** 18-25 [] 26-35 [] 36-45 [] 46-55 [] 56 and above []
3. **Educational Level:** Primary School [] Junior High School [] Senior High School [] Tertiary, please Specify [] Other, Specify.....
4. **Occupation:** Public Service [] Private Sector [] Self Employed [] Other, specify.....
5. **Place of residence,** Specify.....

PART B: AUDIENCE NEWS LISTENING HABITS.

6. Do you listen to radio news in Akan?

- 1) Yes [] 2) No []

7. How often do you listen to Akan news?

- 1) Once a day [] 2) Every other day [] 3) Weekly [] 4) Once a while [] 5) Other,
Specify.....

8. Which of these Akan radio stations do you listen to?

- 1) Kessben FM [] 2) Nhyira FM [] 3) Hello FM [] 4) Agyenkwa
FM [] 5) Any Other, Specify.....

9. Which of these stations is your most preferred? Specify.....

10. Which Akan news bulletin do you often listen to?

- 1) Morning News [] 2) Mid-day News [] 3) Evening News [] 4) All Bulletins 5)
Other, Specify.....

11. Why do you listen to the news bulletin selected?

- 1) That is the time I am free to listen to news. []
2) This bulletin's duration is short. []
3) The bulletin covers major daily political issues. []
4) The bulletin covers mainly local economic issues. []
5) Other, specify

12. What do you like most about Akan news bulletin?

- 1) Information content [] 2) Presentation style [] 3) Duration of news [] 4) Standard of
news [] 5) Projects aspects of Akan culture [] 6) Other, please state.....

13. What do you dislike most about Akan news?

- 1) Content of information [] 2) Style of presentation [] 3) Duration of news bulletin
[] 4) Standard of news [] 5) Other, please state.....

14. Which of these styles of news presentation do you prefer?

- 1) Presentation with proverbs. Yes [] No []
- 2) Presentation with drama. Yes [] No []
- 3) Presentation with euphemisms Yes [] No []
- 4) Presentation that reflects aspects of Akan culture Yes [] No []
- 5) Other, please state.....

PERCEPTIONS OF NEWS CONTENT (STANDARD/ QUALITY)

N.B WHICH OF THESE OPTIONS DESCRIBES YOUR THOUGHTS ABOUT STANDARD/ QUALITY OF NEWS IN AKAN?

15. Akan news is a reliable source of information.

- 1) Strongly agree [] 2) Agree [] 3) Neutral [] 4) Disagree [] 5) Strongly disagree[]

16. Akan news is bias.

- 1) Strongly agree [] 2) Agree [] 3) Neutral [] 4) Disagree [] 5) Strongly disagree[]

17. Akan news is not credible (believable).

- 1) Strongly agree [] 2) Agree [] 3) Neutral [] 4) Disagree[] 5) Strongly disagree[]

18. Akan news is comprehensive.

- 1) Strongly agree [] 2) Agree [] 3) Neutral [] 4) Disagree[] 5) Strongly disagree[]

19. Akan news is comical.

- 1) Strongly agree [] 2) Agree [] 3) Neutral [] 4) Disagree[] 5) Strongly disagree[]

20. Akan news contains a lot of embellishments.

- 1) Strongly agree [] 2) Agree [] 3) Neutral [] 4) Disagree[] 5) Strongly disagree[]

PERCEPTIONS OF EMBELLISHMENT DEVICES USED IN AKAN NEWS AND ITS PRESENTATION

N.B WHICH OF THESE OPTIONS DESCRIBE YOUR THOUGHTS ABOUT EMBELLISHMENT DEVICES USED IN AKAN NEWS/ PRESENTATION STYLE?

21. Proverbs/ Idioms enrich the news presentation and story.

- 1) Strongly agree [] 2) Agree [] 3) Neutral [] 4) Disagree [] 5) Strongly disagree []

22. Euphemisms distorts the standards/ quality of news story.

- 1) Strongly agree [] 2) Agree [] 3) Neutral [] 4) Disagree [] 5) Strongly disagree []

23. Drama in Akan news do not make news trivial.

- 1) Strongly agree [] 2) Agree [] 3) Neutral [] 4) Disagree [] 5) Strongly disagree []

24. Proverbs/ Idioms used in Akan news project aspects of Akan culture.

- 1) Strongly agree [] 2) Agree [] 3) Neutral [] 4) Disagree [] 5) Strongly disagree []

25. Proverbs/ use of Idioms prolong the duration of Akan news

- 1) Strongly agree [] 2) Agree [] 3) Neutral [] 4) Disagree [] 5) Strongly disagree []

26. Which embellishment devices will you recommend for use in Akan news?

- 1) Proverbs [] 2) Euphemism [] 3) Drama [] 4) Idioms [] 5) Other, Specify.....

27. Which embellishment devices will you not recommend for use in Akan news?

- 1) Proverbs [] 2) Euphemism [] 3) Drama [] 4) Idioms [] 5) Other, Specify.....

28. Which of these options best describes your needs that Akan news satisfy?

- 1) Akan news serves as a means of entertainment/ fantasy escape. []
2) Akan news provides comprehensive information of local and international happenings. []
3) I learn cultural devices like proverbs/ Idioms etc. from Akan news. []
4) I learn cultural presentation from Akan news. []
5) Akan news gives me a sense of belonging. []
5) Other, please state.....