



A Thematic Analysis of Anthems of Ghana's Public Universities: A Case of Six

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Abstract

This study investigates the major themes that permeate the anthems of the three oldest and the three youngest public universities in Ghana and how the themes are conveyed linguistically and literarily. The University of Ghana, University of Cape Coast, and University of Education, Winneba are purposively sampled as representatives of the oldest public universities in Ghana. Representatives of the youngest universities sampled are University of Energy and Natural Resources, University of Health and Allied Sciences, and University of Mines. Findings reveal self-importance, knowledge, and religion as the major themes in the anthems of all six universities. These themes are projected linguistically by conscious content lexical items, namely, nouns, verbs, adjectives, and adverbs. Literarily, these themes are cast in such literary devices as metaphor, hyperbole, pleonasm, and personification. There is a major difference between the presentation of the theme of self-importance between the two groups of universities in that generally, the oldest universities are more definite and categorical in projecting their self-importance while the youngest universities are rather indirect and less categorical in their presentation of the theme of self-importance. This may be as a result of conscious respect for the oldest universities.

Keywords: anthems, figurative language, linguistics, literature, thematic analysis, themes, university anthems

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Introduction

Anthems are deep-seated expressions of a people's collective mind of a nation, an institution or organization. The words of anthems are, therefore, carefully chosen in order that the people behind the anthems are fully represented. Anthems, therefore, convey special themes about what and for whom they are composed. People are so attached to the anthems of their nations that they are moved to actions or emotions when these anthems are recited or sung. During sporting activities like the Olympic Games and FIFA World Cups, anthems of participating nations are sung and the response from both the sportsmen and sportswomen and spectators show the power that anthems have on a people. Like all discourses or literary pieces of work, anthems espouse themes. These themes are usually projected on conveyed on the shoulders of conscious diction and the literary use of language. Some scholars use the terms 'theme' and 'subject matter' synonymously and interchangeably; others clearly distinguish between the two terms as referring to two different concepts. Cuddon (2012, p. 913), for example, shows this difference by defining theme as follows:

Properly speaking, the theme of a work is not its subject but rather its central idea, which may be stated directly or indirectly. For example, the theme of Othello is jealousy.

It is observed from Cuddon (2012) that a theme is not the same as a subject matter but rather a subject matter's central idea. It follows that asking questions such as what, how, and why of a subject matter can lead one to its central idea – its theme. Cuddon (2012) also touches on how a theme is stated either directly or indirectly. The former way suggests that it would be easy to tell the themes as they could be explicitly stated without any sophistication. This explicitness must hang on the choice of lexical items as this is the major or perhaps the only way that discourses such as anthems are brought into being. On the other hand, themes can be stated indirectly or implicitly, which would require a close reading to be able to pinpoint them. These types of themes are likely hidden under figurative or literary language. By the employment of literary artistry, composers of literary pieces such as anthems may deliberately or inadvertently burry themes under connotative language that would require a careful analysis to unearth these themes.

They are a number of studies on anthems of nations such as Amenorvi and Grumah (2019), Cusack, (2005), De Souza (2006), Geisler (2005), and Sondermann (2013); all these showing that anthems are more than a song for a people. The thrust of the studies on anthems also reveal that they are loaded with meaning and should not be taken or understood denotatively. Organisations and institutions also have anthems. Among institutions that have anthems are universities. All universities in Ghana, for example, have their specific anthems or adopted songs of special interest to them. Just as national anthems carry messages on the shoulders of themes and are a mark of identity for a people, so do the anthems of universities in general. Universities in Ghana usually use orientation programmes to teach freshmen and freshwomen the university anthems. Some of these anthems, their lyrics and how they are sung can even be downloaded from the Internet.

Just like the national anthem of Ghana, university anthems are very popular and are held in high esteem by students and workers of each university. For example, during interuniversity games, the singing of the respective university anthems is followed by a lot of pomp and pageantry. Present and past students as well as workers of the universities also add to the euphoria and pride that accompany the singing of a university anthem. The same pride of being Ghanaian demonstrated during the singing of Ghana's national anthem can be seen as people show their passion as belonging to this or that university when a university's anthem is sung. What is responsible of this passionate attachment of people to the anthems of their universities? The answer definitely lies in the messages that these anthems carry as they perfectly connect with the people. These messages are buried in themes that the present study seeks unearthen. The present study, therefore, seeks to analyse the themes espoused in the anthems of Ghana's six public universities, comparing the three oldest to the three youngest universities. Besides, the study seeks to reveal how these themes are projected linguistically by the choice of lexical items, and literarily by the employment of literary devices and other aesthetic ways. The study is sectioned under the following sub-headings: research questions, literature review, methodology, findings and discussions, conclusions and implication.

Research Questions

The aim of this paper is to answer three questions, namely, to reveal the themes found in the anthems of Ghana's public universities; how these themes are projected linguistically and literarily; and the similarities or differences in the themes between the oldest and youngest public universities in Ghana.

Literature Review

Anthems have received some attention from scholars over the years. Some of these scholars are Amenorvi and Grumah (2019), Cerulo (1993), Cusack (2005), Митрофанова (2015), Neustadt (2011), Onal (2017) and Voros et al. (2016). Let us discuss a few of these studies in to contextualise the present study. One thing that stands out in all these studies is that they all concentrate on national anthems. The focus of the present study is not anthems of nations but those of universities in Ghana. The study fills the lacuna that too much attention is given to the study of national anthems to the neglect of anthems of smaller institutions such as universities and other organisations.

Amenorvi and Grumah (2019) investigated themes espoused in the national anthems of English West African which comprises Ghana, Nigeria, Liberia, Sierra Leone and The Gambia. The themes they discovered that run in the anthems of these countries are unity, religion, freedom and modesty. Their findings confirm the popular view that anthems of countries in close proximity share similar themes. It is likely that these themes would be presented in the anthems of Ghana's universities and that these themes may not be the sole possession of national anthems. Moreover, just as the creation of a national anthems are carefully done and their words carefully chosen, the same could be said of anthems of universities and other organisations. Besides, since universities hold the position of torch bearers in the

world, there is no doubt that anthems of universities will be products of careful deliberation. The deliberations will be presented by their choice of words, themes and the overall literary use of language. That is what the present paper seeks to achieve with university anthems as its focus.

Митрофанова (2015) by a thematic survey sought to reveal the general meaning in national anthems. His findings show that national anthems express the identity of a people and a core function of national anthems is that they serve as a source of unity to citizens. The themes Митрофанова (2015) found in the world's most famous anthems such as "The Marseillaise", "The Star-Spangled Banner" and "God Save the Queen" stretch around issues such as authority, religion and political devotion. His study shows that one has to do a critical reading of anthems to be able to unearth the hidden details in it.

Митрофанова (2015) has shown that anthems reveal the identity of its people and serve as a source of unity among a nation. For an anthem to be able to express the collective identity of a people as well as serve as source of unity, it must mirror the lives, values and traditions of the people whose anthem it is. We know, however, too that all anthems rely on the economy of words as very few words are employed to express the identity of a people. It follows that every single item in an anthem counts and that each is not the result of coincidence but born out of conscious efforts. Most countries in their quest to accurately represent their values have altogether changed their anthems or altered some parts of them. By observation, university anthems have also served as a source of unity between present and past students of universities. At said at the outset, universities in Ghana use orientation periods for freshmen and freshwomen to teach these anthems. These anthems can be found in student handbooks or any other important documents of a university. When these university anthems are sung during inter-university games, they present the atmosphere of belongingness to a particular university. These roles played by university anthems are enough for them to be given the attention they deserve in language and literacy studies.

Another study on national anthems is Voros et al. (2016) who investigated whether suicide rates and attitude towards self-harm among nations are reflected in the lyrics of their anthems. They compared anthems of six European countries. It came out that English and Canadian anthems contain the most positive contents while the anthems of Hungary and Poland contain more negative labelling emotions. Their study concluded that nations with positive contents in their lyrics have lower suicide rates while nations with lyrics that show some ambivalence, denial or loss have high suicide rates. It is very interesting and very informative to learn that even suicide rates in a country can be traced to that country's national anthem. It goes to show that subject matters and themes of anthems must promote healthy thoughts in order to promote even the mental health of citizens. This is further proof that anthems are more than just lyrics – they are pregnant with values, identities and deep reflections.

Another scholar, Cusack (2005), investigated the themes and ideologies associated with the national anthems of Africa. His findings show that the anthems

of African countries look into the future as well as the past and their dominant themes convey this dichotomy. He mentions such themes as calls to awake and work for the progress of the nation, the honour to the already established state, traditions and culture and thanks to God among others. Cusack's (2005) study reveals that anthems of African countries focus on both the past and the future. This is the case likely because of the colonial history of African countries. If we take Ghana's anthem for example, we can see at least an indirect reference to her colonial past. The third and the fourth lines of the first stanza of Ghana's national anthem read:

Bold to defend forever
The course of freedom and of right.
(Ghana National Anthem, Stanza 1, lines 3-4)

The foregoing authenticates Cusack (2005) findings as we clearly see Ghana's reference to her fight for independence and freedom which happened in the past. Cusack (2005) also says that one of the themes that permeates the anthems of Africa countries is the expression of thanks to God, what Amenorvi and Grumah (2019) refer to as the theme of religion. Without going any further, we note this theme right in the opening words of the first stanza of Ghana's anthem, namely, "God bless our homeland Ghana". The prevalence of this particular theme in the anthems of Africa reveals that African culture is a very religious one. These themes may not only be found in national anthems; university anthems could also project them.

A final study to review in this paper is that of Onal (2017). Onal (2017) describes anthems as poetic verses that are sung to express the feeling, enthusiasm, hopes and joys of a nation. He focused on the musicality of the anthems of United Arab Emirates, Turkey, Israel, Egypt, Lebanon and Syria. He concluded that the basic musical elements of the sampled anthems are tone, tempo, meter, signatures and rhythm patterns; four of the anthems are composed in major tones while two are in minor tones. Onal (2017) connects the musicality of these anthems to the very themes they express. Onal (2017) shows that besides the use of language, anthems can be looked at from different angles. As stated at the outset, all the anthems discussed herein are national anthems. Anthems of smaller entities than a country such as universities have their themes that are also products of deep reflection. University anthems, therefore, deserve the same scholarly attention given to national anthems; a lacuna the present study fills and serves as a trigger to future studies on anthems of institutions and organisations rather than those of nations that have already received enough scholarly attention.

Methodology

The present study is altogether qualitative in that conclusions and inferences are descriptive rather than reduced to numerical bases. The anthems of six public universities in Ghana, comprising the three oldest and the three youngest are analysed to reveal the themes they espouse. The three oldest public universities in the country are the University of Ghana (UG), Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology (KNUST) and the University of Cape Coast (UCC),

founded in 1948, 1952 and 1962 respectively. However, KNUST has adopted a popular hymn for her anthem and has, therefore, been replaced with the University of Education, Winneba which has an original anthem for the purpose of this study. The three youngest public universities have also been considered for this study, namely, University of Mines and Technology (UMaT), University of Energy and Natural Resources (UENR) and University of Health and Allied Sciences (UHAS) founded in 2004, 2012 and 2012 respectively. Major themes are identified in the anthems of all six universities. Besides, the projection of these themes by lexical item choice and literary use of language are analysed and discussed. Finally, the differences in the way these two groups have presented the themes are equally discussed, making this paper purely descriptive.

Findings and Discussions

This section presents the findings of the present paper, answering the research questions one at a time. The main themes of the anthems in question are identified and attention is given how they are projected linguistically and literarily. First, we pay attention to the three oldest public universities in Ghana.

Self-Importance

Analysis has revealed that self-importance is a major theme that permeates the anthems of Ghana's sampled universities for this study. The expression "self-importance" does not appear explicitly in any of the anthems. This means that this theme is stated indirectly. Let us examine some examples that show the theme of self-importance.

1. Hail University of Ghana
The nation's hope and glory. – UG

2. Let the great tower of learning
Inspire both young and old – UG

3. UCC, UCC we're the loveliest of them all. – UCC

4. UCC, UCC we're the humblest of them all
UCC, UCC we're the bedrock of all knowledge. – UCC

From Example 1, we clearly see the theme of self-importance or self-praise in the University of Ghana's (UG) anthem's opening words "Hail University of Ghana". Other overlapping words that are similar in meaning to "hail" are "praise", "salute" and "acclaim", all showing deep reverence that is accorded to someone or something of great importance. We further see this theme carried on in the words "The nation's hope and glory." We notice the singling out of UG as not a hope or source of glory for the nation but "the hope and glory for the nation." The nation here refers to Ghana. UG is, therefore, singling out herself as very important without which Ghana may be without hope and glory. In Example 2, UG is said to be "the great tower of learning," not a great tower. These expressions are clearly self-

explanatory. If UG is the hope and glory of Ghana, if she is the great tower of learning in Ghana, it is impossible for Ghana to continue without UG. The message of self-importance is indirectly but unequivocally conveyed in UG's anthem.

For the University of Cape Coast (UCC), we notice from Examples 3 and 4 that she is the "loveliest" of them all, the "humblest" of them all and the "bedrock" of all knowledge. We see that incomparability nature that UCC projects by her choice of the superlative forms of the adjectives employed. Indirect but very categorical, the University of Cape Coast, like UG, clearly conveys a theme of self-importance in her choice of words in her anthem.

Let us now focus our attention on how the theme of self-importance is projected linguistically and literarily in Ghana's universities. Linguistically, we notice that there is the conscious choice of content lexical items in projecting the theme of self-importance in both the anthems of UG and UCC. In Example 1, we see the employment of the lexical items, "hail" (verb), "hope" (noun) and "inspire" (verb). The foregoing are all content lexical items and their choice is a conscious one. Amenorvi and Grumah (2019) submit that the national anthems of English West Africa employ the use of conscious content lexical items such as nouns, adjectives, verbs and adverbs in projecting major themes. This seems to be the case also in the case of Ghana's universities. These content lexical items are the storehouse for meaning and their choice guarantees the projection of concrete thoughts and ideas loaded with meaning.

For UG and UEW, we see the employment of the verb "hail" directed to the institution. 'Hail' has such overlapping meaning as espoused in the words as "praise", "honour", "salute", "recognize", "glorify" and "exalt". No doubt the lexical item "hail" is not a mindless choice but a conscious one in projecting the theme of self-importance in anthems of Ghana's public universities. UCC's choice of lexical items in projecting the theme of self-importance is fully captured in her choice of adjectives. For example, UCC is the "loveliest", "kindest" and "humblest". These adjectives of degree are presented in their superlative form, showing the high position the University places herself among her peers; for UCC, the first position is theirs as regards such qualities as loveliness, kindness and humility. UCC also employs the noun "bedrock" or foundation of "all", not some. It follows literally that without UCC, no one can acquire wisdom anywhere since she is the foundation or "bedrock" of all wisdom. The employment of the adjective "all" also places UCC above any other university. For UEW, the choice of the verb "uphold" and the adjective "proud" in its third metre also vividly captures the theme of self-importance. In all, we can conclude without a doubt that the conscious choice of content lexical items has squarely conveyed the theme of self-importance in the anthems of Ghana's universities. Let us now turn attention to how the theme of self-importance is projected literarily in the anthems of the tree oldest public universities in Ghana.

In projecting the theme of self-importance, Ghana's Universities of Ghana, Cape Coast and Education, Winneba, have employed literary devices. The University of Ghana has employed a metaphor in projecting this theme when she

refers to herself as the “great tower” of learning. A physical tower serves as a protective fort and refuge for people. Towers can also help one to be able to see very far ahead. What one could see atop a tower one could not standing on the ground or on top of a normal building. Towers are also usually built with concrete and are, therefore, hard to bring down. The significance of UG’s employment of the metaphor of the “great tower” of learning is that of the University would be able to figuratively see ahead and at the same time provide figurative strength to the mind of the nation. And since UG is no ordinary tower, it can serve people of all walks of life to be able to see ahead in the areas of teaching, research and community service which are a core mandate for universities. UG is, therefore, indirectly saying via the ozone of the metaphoric tower that she is the best there is and that people should come to only her to learn for the betterment of Ghana and the world. So vividly has this metaphor captured the theme of self-importance for UG that the literary projection of this theme only confirms that of the linguistic discussed earlier.

The University of Cape Coast (UCC) on the other hand, has employed a hyperbole in projecting the theme of self-importance in her anthem. Dupriez (2016) submits that a hyperbole presents an excessive exaggeration of a matter to serve as the laying of emphasis on a point. UCC employs an excessive exaggeration in the words “We’re the humblest.... kindest...loveliest of them all”. Much as we see linguistically that these words are used in their superlative degree, so do we realise the hyperbole espoused in them literarily. A part of the hyperbole that projects the sense of the theme of self-importance is the expression that UCC is the loveliest of “them all.” Of course, “them all” refers to either all the universities in Ghana or the whole world. In reality, if the University of Cape Coast’s use of “loveliest...humblest...kindest” refers to being the best in Ghana while it is usually the third best after UG and KNUST in Ghana’s University rankings, all this the more makes the theme of self-importance relevant as a way of projecting UCC’s self-image. Indeed, UCC’s use of this hyperbole is very effective even as her projection of self-importance goes beyond reality.

For the University of Education, Winneba, the whole of her anthem is an apostrophe. Cuddon (2012) has shown how the employment of an apostrophe presents an address towards an entity that is either present or abstract. In the first three lines of UEW’s anthem, the University is addressed as though she were a human. The lines go thus:

We hail you, On UEW
Your name is in our hearts
We uphold you...

By the use of this apostrophe which encapsulates a personification, UEW, like UG and UCC, is projecting the University as a person with a profound achievement that must be “hailed”. This is self-importance carried on the shoulders of an apostrophe punctuated with personification. By saying UEW’s “name is in our hearts”, not “our heads”, the persona, a representation of all who pay allegiance to UEW, is saying that they would not forget UEW, which is an act of praise to the University.

Religion and Knowledge

The next major theme across the anthems of the three oldest universities in Ghana are, of course, the theme of knowledge and that of religion. Let us look at the following examples.

5. Let the great tower of learning
Inspire both young and old – UG
6. We ask for strength and wisdom – UG
7. We learn to teach; we find out and pass on – UCC
8. For you make the Nation's Teachers strong
UEW shall grow
By the power of GOD – UEW

Linguistically, the themes of knowledge and religion are cast via a deliberate employment of simple and unambiguous content lexical items. In Example 5, UG employs the noun phrase “the great tower of learning” which no doubt substitutes for University of Ghana in that context, forming a cohesive tie. The verb “inspire” follows and carries the compound object “both young and old.” In casting the theme of religion, UG employs the verb “ask” (pray) for “wisdom and strength”. This no doubt is a prayer to a deity.

While UCC's anthem does not have a theme of religion, it definitely has that of knowledge, which is the very essence of an institution of a higher learning. UCC's theme of knowledge is captured in the words of Example 7: “We learn to teach; we find out and pass on.” We note the concrete verbs of “learn” and “teach” on one hand and the phrasal verbs “find out” and “pass on” on the other hand. We also take cognizance that this very theme of knowledge is conveyed by simple everyday words such as discussed above. The aim, of course, is to present this theme in a clear, straightforward and unequivocal manner.

The University of Education, Winneba (UEW), like UG possesses both the theme of knowledge and religion in her anthem. Example 8 shows clearly that UEW's choice of knowledge is to train teachers for the nation. UEW, therefore, poised to make the “Nation's” teachers “strong”. We see the use of the adjective “strong” in relation to teachers. Naturally, the words “knowledgeable” or “intelligent” and other overlapping words would have presented more sophistication and more appropriateness for that context than “strong”. However, since anthems are consciously written with every word carefully chosen, the employment of “strong” for teachers in UEW's anthem is not a coincidence; UEW is expanding contextually the semantic field of the adjective “strong” by broadening its field to include “knowledgeable”. This is one clear instance that anthems may look simple *prima facie*, but when scrutinised *in toto*, they are heavily pregnant with meaning. UEW also casts the theme of religion by her use of “by the power of God”.

As in the case of the theme of self-importance, the themes of knowledge and religion are also projected via the employment of figures of speech. UCC employs pleonasm in Example 7, a form of repetition, in casting the theme of knowledge. We note that the example comprises two clauses separated by a semi-colon. The key words of the initial part are “learn” and “teach”, while the key phrases in the latter part are the phrasal verbs “find out”, which means the same as “learn”, and “pass on”, which means “teach”. This use of pleonasm is phenomenally beautiful to behold and creates a sort of musical rhythm in that one beat is captured in the single lexical items ‘learn’ and ‘teach’ which are musically monosyllabic and translated into double beats of ‘find out’ and ‘pass on’ on the other hand. Even literally, the consciousness displayed in the seemingly simple words of the three oldest university anthems of Ghana is phenomenal.

Differences between Old and New Universities

We now turn our attention over to the three youngest public universities in Ghana side by side the three oldest universities to unearth any similarities or differences in themes as well as how they are cast. Analysis shows that these young universities also possess in their anthems the major themes of self-importance, knowledge and religion, captured in deliberate diction and in literary language. There is, however, a slight difference. Let us discuss the following examples:

9. Arise! Great giant
God bless UHAS
Move out.... with knowledge in excellence. – UHAS

10. Distinguished among your peers you shall show.
Beacons of hope to you God's light has shown.
Generate knowledge, in advance and apply. - UENR

11. God bless the University of Mines and Technology
Our motto is knowledge, truth and excellence
To fly above the limits of the sky – UMaT

For UHAS as shown in Example 9, the theme of self-importance is captured in the words “Arise! Great giant”. The “giant” here definitely substitutes for UHAS. So urgent is this sense of importance that the giant must “arise!” UHAS is unequivocal about the theme of knowledge by employing the very word “knowledge” in her anthem.

The other youngest public university in Ghana is the University of Energy and Natural Resources (UENR). In Example 10, UENR like all the other universities we have discussed so far, has the theme of self-importance in her anthem. That theme is captured in the words “Distinguished among all your peers you shall show.” The lexical item “peers” clearly refers to sister universities such as the ones found in this paper. The pronoun “you” substitutes for UENR, hence UENR shall be great amongst the other universities. Also, we find the theme of religion projected in

words such as “God’s light”; and not surprising is the theme of knowledge as portrayed in the lexical items “knowledge”, “radiance” and “apply”.

One of the youngest universities considered is the University of Mines and Technology. The theme of self-importance as we see in Example 11 is cast in the words “fly above the limits of the sky.” Even literally, this is self-importance in its purest form. Moreover, UMaT also speaks the theme of religion in her anthem as cast in the words similar to that of UHAS, namely “God bless the University of Mines and Technology.” The opening lines of the anthems of UHAS and UMaT are just a rereading of the opening lines of Ghana’s national anthem which opens with the words. “God bless our homeland Ghana.” According to Amenorvi and Grumah (2019), religion is one major theme in Ghana’s national anthem whose first stanza is altogether an apostrophe to God. The theme of religion is true in the anthems of the universities of Ghana as it is in the national anthem, revealing religion as a significant part of the lives of Ghanaians. Besides religion, UMaT also conveys the theme of knowledge as captured in Example 11 in the words “knowledge”, “truth” and “excellence”.

So far, we can confidently conclude that all six universities investigated in this paper possess the themes of self-importance, knowledge and religion and that all these themes are projected linguistically and literarily. The following paragraphs discuss how the youngest universities project these themes figuratively in their anthems.

Language is used both literally and figuratively even in the case of the three youngest public universities in their anthems. In Example 9, UHAS employs a metaphor, an apostrophe and personification in “Arise! Great giant”. The metaphor and personification lie in the comparison of UHAS to a giant as well as the humanising of UHAS. The significance of these figures of speech is that of bringing an inanimate thing to life and treating it as a human in order that it can “act” in respect to the ambition placed before it. For the apostrophe, UHAS is addressed as a human in “Arise! Great giant”. These cluster of literary sophistication in portraying the sense of self-importance reveals that this theme is one so cherished in the anthems of Ghana’s universities. Even without claiming absolute knowledge of all university anthems in the world, it is reasonable to say that the theme of knowledge may cut across university anthems, for their paramount reason for their establishment is the propagation of knowledge.

For UENR in Example 10, the literariness is concentrated in expressing the theme of religion as captured in the words “...to you God’s light has shown.” In these words, UENR employs imagery where she is in a mental picture of darkness, a figurative way of portraying her relatively young age among the universities of the country. Then God’s light, blessing, has shone on her, revealing her beautiful qualities of hope for the nation. The mental image painted in expressing the theme of self-importance for UENR is beautiful to contemplate. So intense and compressed are the conscious choice of the words of the anthems in question that in parsing them to reach their linguistic, literary and aesthetic core, they explode with

unfathomable sophistication; that is the theme of self-importance and religion on the shoulders of linguistic, literary and aesthetic flamboyance.

We refer back to the theme of self-importance for UMaT as presented in Example 11. UMaT intends to “fly above the limits of the sky.” This is without a doubt a cluster of a hyperbole and a metaphor. The former is captured in the impossibility in real life of “flying above the limits of the sky” and the latter compares UMaT to a bird that could “fly”. UMaT’s “flying above the limits of the sky” brings to mind the cliché “the sky is the limit”. To UMaT, the sky is not the limit as she could “fly above the limits of the sky”. These figures of speech give UMaT the superiority she seeks as a way of promoting self-image. We have seen so far how the anthems of the six universities of the present study are similar in projecting the themes of self-importance, religion and knowledge. While these institutions demonstrate these similarities, there are some differences presented in the following subheading.

Differences in the Projection of Themes

The major difference found between the anthems of three oldest and youngest public universities in Ghana is seen in the way each side has presented the theme of self-importance. The oldest universities, particularly UG and UCC have cast this theme in a matter-of-fact way. For UG, they are “the nation’s hope and glory”, not a source of hope and glory for the nation. This straightforwardness in projecting the theme of self-importance in the case of UG may be because of UG’s position as being the very first university, public or private, in Ghana. Inherent in her name, ‘University of Ghana’, by itself is a proclamation of the theme of self-importance.

Like UG, UCC says in her anthem that she is the ‘loveliest’, ‘kindest’ of them all. UCC is very categorical in seeing herself as regards loveliness and kindness as the best among all the universities of the country. Paradoxically, UCC also proclaims to be the ‘humblest’ of them all. This paradox lies in the pride in proclaiming oneself to be humble. There is one thing worth noting though about the theme as proclaimed by UCC in her anthem. The words ‘loveliest’ ‘kindest’ and ‘humblest’ are not as categorical and heavy as those of UG’s nation’s ‘hope and glory.’ UCC’s choice may be determined by their acknowledgement that there is an older higher force like UG.

Moreover, the proclamation of self-importance in the anthems of the three youngest universities of Ghana is not as categorical as that of the three oldest universities. UENR’s “Distinguished among your peers you shall show” points towards the future, an acknowledgement in her anthem that there exist forces ahead of her to acknowledge. UHAS’s “Arise! Great giant” only refers to herself as a giant, not the giant, a recognition of the stronger power in the older universities of the country. UMaT’s “to fly above the limits of the sky” only projects UMaT’s singular ambition not in comparison with any other institution.

Conclusion and Implication

The present thematic analysis of the anthems of six public universities in Ghana has revealed the major themes of self-importance, religion and knowledge across the anthems of all six universities sampled in this study. It goes to suggest that all of Ghana's university anthems may project these themes too. Moreover, the themes are projected linguistically by conscious content lexical items, namely, noun, verbs, adjectives and adverbs. Figuratively, literary devices such as metaphor, hyperbole, apostrophe, pleonasm and imagery are employed to cast these themes. Finally, the older universities are more categorical in projecting the theme of self-importance while the younger universities are less categorical and rather general in the self-image proclamation. In all, this study has revealed that anthems of universities or any other organisations are equally as sophisticated in style and loaded with meaning as national anthems. The implication of this study is to draw attention to anthems of smaller organisations such as political parties, universities and religious groups and societies. This attention would help fill the lacuna in the study of anthems by taking the focus off national anthems to those such as mentioned in this study.

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