Mythological heroism in the discourse of Kwame Nkrumah

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ABSTRACT: This paper critically explores how an African independence leader uses his language to simultaneously construct heroes and villains, protagonists and antagonists forming part of an ideological mechanism that realizes an anti-imperialist rhetoric and a discourse of resistance. It combines discourse-historical analysis with discourse-mythological analysis to examine a number of speeches delivered by Kwame Nkrumah, a pioneering Pan-African and Ghana's independence leader. The analysis demonstrates that archetypal traits of mythological Heroism in Nkrumah's discourse are constructed through his identification of a Conspiratorial Enemy and his sculpting of identities such as a Valiant Leader and a Noble Revolutionary. These discursive constructions are realized by various de/legitimation strategies and rhetorical tropes. The analysis also reveals that Nkrumah's language has identifiable features of Ghanaian English, including the use of 'Ghanaianisms, coinages/neologism and idiomatic expressions, that helped him to (emotionally) connect with his audience and strengthen the persuasive impact of his speeches.

1 | INTRODUCTION

In the last decade, research on political mythology has gained ascendancy in the critical discourse analysis (CDA) literature, illuminating the persuasive force of mythic discourse in politics. These studies (e.g. Charteris-Black, 2011; Kelsey, 2015, 2016; Nartey, 2019a, 2019b) have illustrated the types of political myths, including conservation/foundation myths and radical/revolutionary myths, and have demonstrated the ideological and affective role of political myths in inspiring a certain course of behavior and building consensus for sociopolitical ideas. A political myth can be described as "an ideologically marked narrative which purports to give a true account of a set of past, present or predicted political events and which is accepted as valid in its essentials by a social group" (Flood, 2002, p. 144). That is, even though a political myth is not an ideology in itself, it invites listeners to assent to a particular ideological position. Unlike the common and derogatory usage of myth as mere fiction or the product of fantasy and wishful thinking, its academic usage points to the view that myths have unquestioned validity within the belief system of the social group that upholds them (Tudor, 1972). A political myth may, thus, be 'an empirical, but usually not verifiable, explanatory thesis that purports a casual theory of political events and enjoys wide public support' (Geis, 1987, p. 29).

Various political myths have been associated with different political leaders in the course of their political careers. Examples include Adolph Hitler's myth of the Aryan race, the presentation of the American Dream by various US presidents and Chris Patten's attempt to

project an honorable colonial legacy for Britain using its last colonial territory, Hong Kong (cf. Flowerdew, 1997, pp. 453-457). Geis (1987) identifies John F. Kennedy, Lyndon Johnson and Ronald Reagan with the Conspiratorial Enemy and Valiant Leader myths, while Lewis (1987) discusses Ronald Reagan in terms of his invocation of a myth centered on the origins of America and its rise to freedom and economic progress. In his analysis of political myth-making in the discourse of US and UK politicians, Charteris-Black (2011) argues that Ronald Reagan constructed a Romantic myth; Enoch Powel created the myth of the Oracle; Martin Luther King invoked a Messianic myth; Bill Clinton expressed an Image Restoration rhetoric; Tony Blair communicated a Conviction rhetoric; and Barack Obama echoed the myth of the American Dream. A common feature of all these myths is the element of manipulation which is exploited for achieving various sociopolitical goals and for mobilizing support for sociopolitical action.

Within the broad area of political discourse analysis, the notion of mythological Heroism and the construction of Hero figures have received scholarly attention with a major focus on Western politicians. For instance, Charteris-Black (2011) discusses Winston Churchill's Heroic myth characterized by Churchill's presentation of Britain as an embodiment of the forces of good with the capability to resist aggression from external forces and rescue mankind, in general, from barbarism and tyranny. He also associates Margaret Thatcher with a mythic recreation of the legendary Boudicca, a British folk hero. Further, Kelsey (2016) examines archetypal traits of mythological Heroism in the *Mail Online* and concludes that Nigel Farage 'is constructed as a man on a mission, fighting against the odds, overcoming trials and tribulations in his efforts to win the United Kingdom's democratic power back from the European Union' (p. 971). Generally, there is little work on political mythology as it pertains to African politicians and African politics. Such studies are, however, important as they can provide newer insight into the development of myth by, for example, identifying new ways of using myth. Another observation that can be made on the literature on political myth-making with respect to CDA research is that previous studies have hardly investigated the discourses on colonialism/imperialism even though such discourses can be considered as potential 'sites' for the manifestation of various mythic themes, including Hero mythology. To fill the lacunae identified, the current study examines how Kwame Nkrumah, a pioneering Pan-African and Ghana's independence leader deployed his discourse to concurrently construct heroes and villains, protagonists and antagonists as part of an ideological mechanism that realizes an aggressive anti-imperialist rhetoric and a discourse of resistance.

Although colonial discourse broadly refers to statements and views about or of colonized people and colonial powers and the relationship between the two, the present paper only focuses on the language of the colonized (here, the discourse of an independence leader) in their struggle to obtain freedom from the colonial powers. Given Nkrumah's major role in the African independence revolution that spread across the continent in the 1950s/1960s, an exploration of his discourse in useful in comprehending the history of Africa in the postcolonial period as well as understanding the role of language and (post)independence leaders in political decolonization.

Importantly, the paper argues that Nkrumah's language has identifiable features of Ghanaian English. Hence, in addition to shedding light on political mythology and the interplay of discourse, mythology and ideology in a setting under-researched in the literature, this paper bears implications for the relationship between CDA and World Englishes, and further, the Englishes of politics around the globe.

2 | THE DISCOURSE-HISTORICAL APPROACH

This paper is informed by analytic tools developed within Wodak's (2015) discourse-historical approach (DHA), with its focus on the interaction between discourse, ideology and society, how social reality is constituted in discourse and the various strategies by which sociopolitical actors achieve their aims. It is chosen because it provides a suitable framework within which a detailed analysis of Nkrumah's portrayal of a mythological Hero figure can be understood. It is, particularly, useful for explaining the how and why of Nkrumah's discourse and its possible rhetorical impact.

The main assumption underlying the DHA indicates that discourse is invariably linked to something in the past or present. Therefore, it 'attempts to integrate a large quantity of available knowledge about the historical sources and the background of the social and political fields in which discursive events are embedded' (Wodak, 2015, p. 3). In addition to historical contextualization of a linguistic phenomenon, the DHA focuses on how extra-linguistic social variables and situational frames shed light on meanings extrapolated from a text. It has three levels of analysis, namely the identification of 'the *specific content or topics* of a specific discourse', the examination of '*discursive strategies*' and the investigation of '*linguistic means* (as types) and context-dependent linguistic realizations (as tokens)' (Reisigl & Wodak, 2016, p. 32, emphasis in original). Similar to other CDA approaches, the DHA is interdisciplinary in nature and combines micro level linguistic analysis with social and historical-ideological analysis on a macro level. To Wodak, discourse is constituted by a set of context-dependent textual practices; hence, it is important to account for these elements that constitute context itself. In this regard, Wodak (2001, pp. 66-67) and Reisigl and Wodak (2016, pp. 27-28) identify three dimensions relevant to contextual analysis: intertextuality, interdiscursivity and field of action, the first two being particularly important to the current study.

Of significance to the DHA is the identification of discursive strategies. They refer to a set of practices, including discursive practices employed by social actors to accomplish specific objectives. Thus, they are systematic ways of using language that give an indication of the overt or covert intentions of language users and must, therefore, be explored in the analysis of discourses or texts. Five main discursive strategies are identified by Wodak (2015): nomination/referential (how persons, objects, phenomena and actions are named and linguistically referred to), predication (the characteristics, qualities and features attributed to

social actors), argumentation (the argumentative schemes employed in discourse), perspectivization (the perspectives from which nominations, attributions and argumentations are made) and intensification/mitigation (that is, of the utterances and the views or judgments expressed). These strategies can be linguistically realized by deictic, argumentative devices, membership categorization devices, evocations, rhetorical tropes, stereotypical and evaluative attributions, etc. Throughout the analysis, we draw on some of these strategies and linguistic devices. Central to the strategy of argumentation is the notion of topos/topoi. They refer to argumentative strategies that are used to persuade listeners of the legitimacy of claims that are made, and they are typically expressed in discourse via conditional and causal paraphrases. Examples include *topos* of difference/contrast, comparison, (external) threat, history and history as teacher.

The focus of the DHA on the pragmatics of discourse (i.e. how meanings are created and interpreted through indirect language) is what motivates its choice in this paper. Given its focus on both text and text-external or extra-textual factors, it provides us with an appropriate framework within which we can better appreciate how Nkrumah's discourse is shaped by the sociocultural and/or sociopolitical context within which it was produced. Our discourse-historical analysis is combined with discourse-mythological analysis, a critical and interdisciplinary framework that "helps us to construct and understand archetypal conventions of mythology" in discourse by integrating myth theory with CDA (Kelsey, 2015, p. 23). We made use of the following concepts found within the discourse-mythological approach: recurrence, metaphor, modality, lexical choices, ideological square, indexical meaning, generalization and context.

3 | DATA AND METHOD OF ANALYSIS

Fifteen speeches (listed in the appendix) delivered by Nkrumah revolving around Ghana's independence, particularly, and African freedom, in general, constitute the date for this study. Although the speeches were largely addressed to the people of Ghana, they invariably discussed the issue of African emancipation and Nkrumah's epic vision of a Union Government of Africa and the role of Ghana (as the first Sub-Saharan African country to gain independence) in achieving this goal. Thus, they present us with a broader context within which to analyze Nkrumah's anti-imperialist rhetoric and how he projects himself not only as Ghana's Hero, but also as the Hero of Africa. In terms of analytical procedure, we followed a three-stage process of identification, interpretation and explanation often used in CDA research. First, we identified archetypal mythological traits in Nkrumah's discourse which shed light on mythological Hero figures. We then interpreted these traits with recourse to the context of situation, available background information Nkrumah, Ghana's/Africa's history and where necessary the diplomatic circumstances under which the utterances were made. Finally, we explain the possible rhetorical impact of Nkrumah's attributions on his audience using the discursive strategies and

argumentative schemes found within the DHA. In what follows, we present a detailed analysis of Nkrumah's construction of a Heroic myth.

4 | ARCHETYPAL TRAITS OF MYTHOLOGICAL HEROISM IN NKRUMAH'S DISCOURSE

Nkrumah's construction of a mythological Hero figure is found to be realized by his identification of a Conspiratorial Enemy and his sculpting of the image of a Valiant Leader and Noble Revolutionary. He depicts himself and the African people as a force of good and the colonialists as an embodiment of evil. In doing so, he further characterizes himself as a selfless leader with righteous intentions who will deliver Africa from their repressors . Before we begin the analysis proper, it is important to state that in discussing Nkrumah's construction of himself at the frontline of the African independence struggle, we do not intend to downplay Nkrumah's role as an independence leader since his championing of Ghana's independence and contribution to Africa's freedom was brave and admirable. However, the discursive elements that put Nkrumah's heroics in the fore, including metaphorical constructions of war, can be considered as tools that contribute to political myth-making. The ensuing sub-sections are devoted to a detailed analysis of the archetypal mythological traits in Nkrumah's discourse which lend credence to the notion of mythological Heroism.

Nkrumah's identification of a Conspiratorial Enemy

In propagating a liberatory mythology (thereby making him the liberator) aimed at achieving African independence and Africa's economic reconstruction, Nkrumah constructs any opposed entity (real or perceived) as a Conspiratorial Enemy. That is, 'a hostile out-group plotting to commit harmful acts, which is perceived as different, homogeneous, highly potent or omnipotent, and conspiring to harm the in-group' (Geis, 1987, p. 26). Throughout the speeches, he makes it abundantly clear that Africa's arch-enemy is colonialism, imperialism and neocolonialism, and proceeds to describe these notions and their adherents as a thoroughly evil Other and an irrational threat. His ability to identify Africa's nemesis automatically qualifies him as a Hero of a sort given the implication that he has the skill and capability to defeat this enemy. Even though Nkrumah consistently referred to the colonialists as Africa's Conspiratorial Enemy throughout the speeches analyzed in this study, one speech that epitomizes this point is his opening address when he convened the Nationalists' Conference of African Freedom Fighters in 1962 in Accra following Ghana's independence. Extracts from this speech and other speeches are subsequently discussed.

(1)   … It is good for our cause to have a periodic meeting of this kind to examine our position in the great struggle to rid Africa completely and forever of imperialism and its hand-

maidens, colonialism, and neo-colonialism. ***It gives us the opportunity also to review our strength as well as that of the enemy and to re-organize our forces and our strategy … We can only know the extent of our task and our strength when we have examined and ascertained that of the enemy … Who is the enemy? The enemy is imperialism, which uses as its weapons, colonialism, and neo-colonialism. Let us be very clear about this. Let us not lose sight of the real object*** … ***which is the liquidation of colonialism and imperialism in all its forms*** … (Nationalists' Conference of African Freedom Fighters, 1962)

(2)   … you will agree with me that our task is only just beginning. ***We have a duty to gird our loins strongly, to order our lives austerely and to clench our teeth grimly in order to enter the battlements of the enemy and smash them to pieces. This, we must do at all cost with African nationalism as the liberating sword***. (The Convention People's Party 12ᵗʰ Anniversary, 1961)

In these extracts, Nkrumah explicitly identifies imperialism as the Conspiratorial Enemy of Africa, implying that imperialism and its hand-maidens are inherently evil since their only aim is to wreak havoc and inflict pain on Africa. At the other end of the mythic pair, he is indirectly presented as an embodiment of all that is good and one with purity of intentions who will help the African people to nullify the threat they are contending with. By identifying colonialism as Africa's number one enemy that must be resisted *at all cost with African nationalism as the liberating sword* (2), Nkrumah constructs a strict Us vs. Them polarity that pits two camps against each other. This distinction is strengthened by his use of war-time rhetoric metaphors realized by lexical choices such as *battlements, forces, strategy, struggle and weapons*, implying that force must necessarily be applied to the independence struggle. Unsurprisingly, the enemy is depicted as violent and malicious in intent via expressions such as *liberation sword*, *liquidation* and *smash*, which provide a justification for the insensitive approach to be deployed in combating the enemy. This negative and combative posture against the enemy forces of Africa is re-echoed by the adjective *great* in *great struggle* and the adverbs *completely* and *forever* in the expression *to rid Africa completely and forever of imperialism and its hand-maidens*. The expression *hand-maidens* used to represent Africa's history and struggle with its repressors and the word 'neocolonialism' in (1) can be analyzed as neologisms created by a politician to achieve a rhetorical/persuasive effect. As Rahaman et al. (2017) note, Nkrumah coined the term neocolonialism' in his 1965 book *Neocolonialism: The last stage of imperialism*. Such coinages have been found to characterize most New Englishes, including Ghanaian English (cf. Jibril & Gyasi, 2017).

Nkrumah's use of war imagery also recontextualizes his speech into a military briefing being given to armed men and women in a military barracks as part of their preparation and strategizing for warfare. In this way, Nkrumah casts himself in the mold of an Army General of the Africa Armed Forces issuing directives to soldiers, marshalling troops and strategizing battle plans. As war-time rhetoric strongly appeals to people's emotions (Charteris-Black, 2011), it can be said that its consistent usage in Nkrumah's speeches constitutes a mythic appeal by Nkrumah

to his audience encouraging them to vehemently oppose the evil axis of colonialism, imperialism and neocolonialism. This paper argues that the Nationalists' Conference of African Freedom Fighters and other such associations convened by Nkrumah enabled him to systematically frame colonialism, imperialism and neocolonialism against the interests of the African nation- as the evil Other. Consequently, his ethos is enhanced, his credibility is foregrounded and he is able to naturalize mythological traits into the consciousness of the public. We submit that such purposely created discourse events (whether newly introduced by a politician or a modification of current ones) present politicians with an effective means on a macro level to invoke, formulate or naturalize a political myth (cf. Nartey, 2019a).

From extracts (1) and (2), five main aspects of Nkrumah's construction of a Conspiratorial Enemy (and which are explicitly and implicitly found in other places in the data) can be identified: (1) the enemy does not deserve a hearing or an explanation; (2) no dialogue or negotiation must take place between Us and the enemy; (3) knowledge of Our strengths/weaknesses and resources is vital; (4) knowledge of the enemy's strengths/weaknesses is crucial; (5) it is important to periodically review war strategy and battle tactics. Apart from highlighting the power disparity between Nkrumah and his audience, the various aspects of the Conspiratorial Enemy deducible from Nkrumah's discourse emphasize his heroic qualities, including being knowledgeable, adept and skilled. Nkrumah's explicit use of the label *enemy* can be seen as a form of criminalization, an out-casting strategy and a means of establishing and maintaining a moral order (Lazar & Lazar, 2004). Bhatia (2008) adds that it helps to determine a missile target for an in-group to aim at while ensuring unity of purpose and singleness of vision. Interestingly, Nkrumah says *Let us not lose sight of the real object*. This expression together with the definite determiner *the* and the question-answer strategy in the form of the rhetorical question 'Who is the enemy' zeroes in on the enemy with specificity and the use of the phrase *real object* further underscores how Nkrumah aims at the object of attack with laser-like focus and a devouring intent. One of the key features of mythological Heroes in the course of their rescue missions is their ability to mobilize support from the masses and inspire sociopolitical action (Lule, 2001). In this regard, Nkrumah's use of the deontic modal *must*, the determiner *our*, the pronouns *we/us*, the prepositional phrase *at all cost*, the noun phrase *African nationalism* and the presupposition expression *you will agree with me that our task is only just beginning* can be analyzed as linguistic devices that help to build morale, galvanize mass support for his ideas and evoke a feeling of patriotism. The use of these grammatical resources can also be interpreted as a way of manufacturing consent and compelling the *good* people of Africa to rise up (in arms) against the enemy forces. Thus, they must *gird their loins strongly, order their lives austerely and clench their teeth grimly in order to enter the battlements of the enemy and smash them to pieces* (2). In addition to evoking a war-time rhetoric, clauses such as *gird their loins*, *clench their teeth grimly*, etc. reflects the tendency to use idiomatic expressions by speakers of Ghanaian English (Jibril & Gyasi, 2017) to arouse the appropriate emotions in their audiences. The intended effect of this

idiomatic usage is heightened by the 'Ghanaianism' *you will agree with me that …*, which is a direct translation of an expression in Ghanaian languages such as Gã and Akan.

The war Hero image created by Nkrumah is reinforced by the overall military tone of his discourse and the calculated military strategy he puts forward. In addition to extracts (3) and (4), phraseology such as *marshal*, *decimate our forces*, *holding guard*, *fighting banner* and *battle tactics* found in the data and used by Nkrumah to talk about colonialism and the African independence struggle illustrates the militarization of his discourse.

(3)   Now I come to the task of ***the fighters who are in the front rank of the struggle***. Unity, ***fellow freedom fighters, must be the watchword of those who are leading the masses into the battle for independence*** in the many parts of Africa which, alas, are still under the dragging yoke of colonialism. ***You must close your ranks and stand firmly together***. You must forget your theoretical differences … and ***come together in a solid phalanx to meet the enemy on a common front***. (Nationalists' Conference of African Freedom Fighters, 1962)

(4)   …obligation upon us who are independent ***to move our forces forward and make it plain to the colonialists and imperialists that we are adamant in our purpose to destroy colonialism in Africa. No lukewarm approach will avail. We must bring all our battalions into array to match the skill of our enemy. We must adopt a positive all-out anti-colonialist, anti-imperialist attack***, and this quickly, for we cannot afford the luxury of delay. Time acts for the enemy no less than for ourselves …***Let us determine what modifications are needed to adjust our strategy to counter the movements of the enemy and overcome him***. (Nationalists' Conference of African Freedom Fighters, 1962)

The strong militaristic tone of Nkrumah's rhetoric, indicating a military struggle between contending forces, is evidenced by lexico-syntactic devices such as *battalions, fighters, front rank, close your ranks, solid phalanx, meeting the enemy, movements of the enemy* and *adjust our strategy*. The use of military jargon can be analyzed as a legitimation strategy that stresses the urgency to effectively deal with the Conspiratorial Enemy. They also denote the decisive military action to be taken against the threat of colonialism since *no lukewarm approach will avail* (4). Use of army terminology like *phalanx*, referring to a body of troops standing in formation, is particularly instructive as it invokes images of trauma and triumph. When this term is combined with the instruction *We must bring all our battalions into array to match the skill of our enemy* (4), a powerful position against something is imposed, thereby validating whatever action is deemed fit to bring an end to that thing (Glover, 2002). Even though Nkrumah is supposed to be addressing a deliberative sociopolitical issue (i.e. African independence), he chooses to project an identity of one leading the African front-line troops so much so that for a moment we may think that there is an actual on-going war between armed men of Africa and the colonial powers. Thus, his use of military discourses which enable the creation of an enemy (Bishop & Jaworski,

2003) makes it possible for him to frame a political issue in war-like terms and to directly and indirectly convey the idea of a conquering Hero on a mission to defy the odds and win victory for Africa. Again, the use of idioms such as *under the dragging yoke of colonialism*, *unity must be the watchword*, etc. – asides from highlighting the militarization of Nkrumah's discourse – illustrates how his language reflects one of the typical features of the New Englishes (cf. Hibbert, 2003), especially given the idiosyncratic manner in which Nkrumah deploys these idioms, solidifying his identity first and foremost as a proud Ghanaian.

Nkrumah's construction of a Valiant Leader image

The presence of a Conspiratorial Enemy suggests that there must be a Valiant Leader who makes it his/her responsibility to subdue this enemy. That is, Valiant Leaders can emerge in dire situations where a social group faces extreme difficulties owing to threats (allegedly) instigated by Conspiratorial Enemies. The construction of a Valiant Leader, therefore, can be seen as an attempt to depict Nkrumah as brave and determined, emphasizing his leadership qualities (Geis, 1987). Hence, unlike other leaders who were found to discursively construct a Valiant Leader image as a repair strategy for certain personal weaknesses (cf. Geis, 1987), this study found that Nkrumah's representation of himself as a daring leader with the ability to take bold risks affirms his charismatic personality (Iijima, 1998) and contributes to his creation of a mythological Heroic figure.

A classic example of Nkrumah's claim to valiant leadership can be found in the declaration: 'We prefer self-government with danger to servitude in tranquility' (Nkrumah, 18/02/61). This proclamation, communicates the notion of someone Heroic leading a united people through use of the first person plural pronoun 'we'. This pronouncement is the motto of the *Accra Evening News* (a newspaper founded by Nkrumah in 1948 to promote his independence campaign) and the slogan of the Convention People's Party formed by him in 1949. We argue that this statement illustrates how language (here, a local slogan) shapes local politics and how in turn local politics shapes language in that Nkrumah capitalizes on the sociopolitical mood in Ghana/Africa at the time to formulate an emotionally-charged rhetoric which provides purpose for the masses. It is also important to note that the self-acclaimed bravado in the assertion is not verifiable, but implied to be self-evident. Thus, he arrogates to himself the right and power to determine what is best for the people and to articulate the same with audacity. However, its persuasive force is likely to be more impactful due to the context of situation and setting within which Nkrumah made this utterance. In this way, political discourse can take on certain linguistic features of the sociocultural and sociopolitical contexts in which it is conceived and produced to carve particular identities for the parties addressed. Here, the enormity of the challenge notwithstanding, Nkrumah attempts to convince his audiences that peaceful colonialization still amounts to more indignity than unstable freedom under self-rule.

In addition to Nkrumah's declaration that the people of Ghana/Africa prefer self-government with danger to servitude in tranquility, two other ways by which he created an image of a Valiant Leader were identified: (1) emphatically asserting his courage, determination and fearlessness; (2) building a strong bond of connection with the people in a way that makes them pledge their allegiance even if they are unsure of the future. As far as the foregrounding of his courage and heroics is concerned, Nkrumah does this by seizing every opportunity to show that he is always willing to take-on Africa's Conspiratorial Enemy. Against the backdrop that this enemy, to Nkrumah, is motivated by an insatiable desire to cause damage to Africa and is, therefore, on an unappeasable advance to utterly destroy, he is presented with the chance to display his bravery by conquering this enemy.

(5)   ***For my part, I must say that as long as I live and as long as any little vestige of colonialism and imperialism remains in Africa, I shall prosecute a ruthless war on these monsters, a war in which there shall be no truce***. Colonialism and imperialism have no honor, no shame, no morals, and conscience. (Casablanca Conference, 1961)

(6)   … Also, ***I want to thank the valiant ex-servicemen who have so cooperated with me in this mighty task of freeing our country from foreign rule and imperialism*** … Today, from now on, there is a new African in the world, that new African is ready to fight his own battle and show that after all the black man is capable of managing his own affairs … ***We have won the battle and again rededicate ourselves to the struggle to emancipate other territories in Africa***. (Declaration of Ghana's Independence, 1957)

To assert his courage and determination, Nkrumah uses the personal pronoun *I* to underlie his personal commitment and solemn vow to defeat colonialism, imperialism and neocolonialism, The extract in (5) can be analyzed as hyperbolic language as Nkrumah exaggeratedly states that he is no coward; therefore, he is forever determined to ruthlessly attack colonialism, imperialism and neocolonialism. The personal pronoun *I/my* in conjunction with the prepositional phrase *for my part* and the deontic modal *shall* gives credibility to Nkrumah's valiant posture. This view is amplified by the conditional clauses *as long as I live* and *as long as any little vestige of colonialism and imperialism remains in Africa*, which also realize an intensification and a hyperbolic function. Not surprisingly, Nkrumah justifies why the Conspiratorial Enemy must be defeated, providing a negative evaluation of the enemy using a number of pejorative attributes (*no honor, no shame, no morals and no conscience*) and the monster metaphor. This referential strategy exaggerates the wicked intentions of the imperialists, provoking fear and panic, as they are described as maniacs on a senseless mission to kill and destroy and capable of committing every kind of evil. Again, we submit that Nkrumah's choice of the monster metaphor and the abusive words *no honor*, *no shame*, *no morals* and *no conscience* is largely informed by the sociopolitical context in which his discourse was conceived, providing insight into how language (here, lexical choices)

can be colored by local politics. It is such lexicalization that provides an explanatory and argumentative thesis to the action that Nkrumah intends to take, as a Valiant Leader, against the Conspiratorial Enemy: *to prosecute a ruthless war on these monsters, a war in which there shall be no truce*. Thus, Nkrumah not only projects an image of a Valiant Leader, but also casts himself as a no-nonsense Special Prosecutor or Attorney General of a sort who will ensure that the colonialists are duly punished for all their heinous crimes against Africa and humanity in general.

Unlike the colonialists who are deprecatorily evaluated by Nkrumah, the veteran soldiers who played complementary roles during Ghana's independence struggle are described as *valiant* in extract (6). The view that, perhaps, these ex-servicemen played a supporting role is suggested by the predication 'cooperated with me'. Hence, if these individuals have been characterized as valiant, there is every indication that Nkrumah, the principal actor of the independence struggle is certainly a Valiant Leader. Further buttressing Nkrumah's ~~courage,~~ bravery ~~and fearlessness~~ is the phrase *mighty task* used in describing the independence attained and implying that if a might task, then a mighty man of valor was also required to accomplish it. Additionally, Nkrumah directly links Ghana's independence to the liberation of other countries in Africa stating that *We have won the battle and again rededicate ourselves to the struggle to emancipate other territories in Africa*. Thus, he expresses the idea that not only is he Ghana's Hero, but also the (would-be) Hero of Africa and is not afraid to take-on mightier tasks, tackle more severe problems and confront greater challenges. A warrior Hero, he is not resting on his laurels but is moving on to achieve other conquests *as long as any little vestige of colonialism and imperialism remains in Africa* (5).

As should be expected of Valiant Leaders, Nkrumah establishes a relationship with the masses in a way that makes them loyal followers who are willing to trust his leadership even if the future is uncertain. So, he directly asks for their support or imposes on them certain responsibilities. Regarding the latter, he indirectly charges the Ghanaian people to put the country's interest above their personal interest and be prepared to contribute to national development.

(7)   ***I am depending upon the millions of the country, the chiefs and people to help me to reshape the destiny of this country. We are prepared*** to build it up and make it a nation that will be respected by every other nation in the world. ***We know we are going to have difficult beginnings, but again, I am relying upon your support … We are going to demonstrate to the world, to the other nations, young as we are that we are prepared to lay our own foundations***. (Declaration of Ghana's Independence, 1957)

(8)   ***Countrymen, the task ahead is great indeed and heavy is the responsibility, and yet it is a noble and glorious challenge*** – a challenge which calls for the courage to dream, the courage to believe, the courage to dare, the courage to do, the courage to envision, the courage to fight, the courage to work, the courage to achieve…. (Address to the National Assembly, 1965)

In his role as a Valiant Leader, Nkrumah inspires confidence in the people by assuring them of a great future under his able leadership, a future in which Ghana *will be respected by every other nation in the world* (7). This prepares the ground for him to solicit their support and indirectly impose on them certain responsibilities he expects them to perform. While admitting that *the task ahead is great indeed and heavy is the responsibility* (8), he also maintains that *it is a noble and glorious challenge* (8). By striking this balance, he projects a confident posture, allays any fears or doubts of the people (in a reassuring tone) and makes a claim to honest leadership. Using constructions such as *we are prepared to build, we are prepared to lay our foundations, we are going to have difficulties, we are going to see that we create* and *never on a silver platter*, Nkrumah presents himself as a knowledgeable leader, in touch with reality and mindful of the challenges ahead, yet undeterred by them – posturing as a patriotic leader seeking only reciprocation of that same national loyalty. And to demonstrate that he is not lacking in courage as is required of a Valiant Leader, he reiterates its significance to the economic reconstruction of Ghana via the following parallel structure: *a challenge which calls for the courage to dream, the courage to believe, the courage to dare, the courage to do, the courage to envision, the courage to fight, the courage to work, the courage to achieve* (8). Altogether, the effect, if not the intent, of the linguistic resources in Nkrumah's oratory is that it creates an image of a Valiant and Heroic leader who *dares to ask for more in life* (8). As already indicated, Nkrumah's language has identifiable features of Ghanaian English that, perhaps, helps him to connect with his audience so as to promote his ideals (which are implied to reflect those of the nation as well). In the extracts above, clauses such as *I am depending upon …*, *I am relying upon …*, *We know we are going to …* etc. represent a Ghanaian tendency to extend the progressive form to nearly all verbs (Wiredu, 1998). As should be expected of a gallant leader, such formulation enables Nkrumah to communicate his message in an urgent tone, rally the masses for action and impose a moral imperative on them.

Nkrumah's construction of a Noble Revolutionary personality

Nkrumah's representation as a Noble Revolutionary also contributes to his mythic creation of heroes and villains. Geis (1987) defines this discursive construction as 'the attempt to overthrow any oppressive government is per se justified' (p. 30). This paper, however, takes the position that in addition to oppressive governments, a Noble Revolutionary may oppose and hopefully cause the abolition of what s/he considers to be unjust laws, repressive constructs and suppressive ideologies. As Tudor (1972) notes, 'the revolutionary regards his world as one riven by a conflict so fundamental that it brooks of no compromise, and he sees the revolution, not merely as altering a particular aspect or part of his world, but as changing that world as a whole' (p. 114). Hence, by leading the overthrow of an existing regime (i.e. colonialism, imperialism and neocolonialism) and championing the formation of a revolutionary republic (i.e. the *United States*

of Africa), Nkrumah believed that Africa would make 'the finest possible contribution to the peace for which all men and women thirst today, and which will lift once and forever the deepening shadow of global destruction from mankind' (Nkrumah, 24/05/63).

The analysis revealed that Nkrumah's Heroic myth as a Noble Revolutionary and a transformational leader is based on the central thesis and/or claim that he was not pursuing personal or even national (i.e. Ghana's) interest in his fight for independence and advocacy for a Union Government of Africa; instead, he was the archetypal selfless one who would deliver Africa from barbarism, tyranny and oppression. This is evident in his declaration of Ghana's independence speech where he asserted that 'the independence of Ghana is meaningless unless it is linked up with the total liberation of the African continent' (Nkrumah, 06/03/57). It can be deduced from this assertion that in addition to claiming that he was not fighting for national self-interest but was the epitome of altruism, Nkrumah presents himself as a man on an important assignment, ergo he is determined to contend against the forces opposed to Africa and overcome difficulties in order to protect Africa's supreme interest. Drawing on rhetorical tropes such as metaphor, contrast, recurrence and hyperbole, Nkrumah stresses his Noble Revolutionary status by creating confidence in his ideas, endorsing his identity as a successful (or heroic) leader and highlighting his noble intentions for Ghana and Africa at large. Consequently, his use of these linguistic resources can be characterized as a mechanism for advancing his world conceptualization and ideological position rather than for the formulation of actual political policy.

(9)   ***The devastation which they have wrought in Africa*** is without parallel anywhere in the history of the world, but now Africans have arrived on the scene. ***We have arrested their progress*** and are determined to give battle with the forces at our command ***until we have achieved the total liberation of the African continent. And have built a strong Union of the African States***. (Casablanca Conference, 1961)

(10)   … ***we shall make our advance***. ***We shall*** accumulate machinery and establish steel works… ***we shall*** link the various states of our continent with communications by land, sea, and air. ***We shall*** cable from one place to another… ***we shall*** drain marshes and swamps…. (Inauguration of the Organization of African Unity, 1963)

The point made by Lule (2001: 119) that '[m]yth celebrates dominant beliefs and values [and] degrades and demeans other beliefs and values that do not align with those of the storyteller' can be seen in extract (9) – on one hand, colonialism or imperialism is denigrated; on another hand, African independence is promoted. Nkrumah, as such, presents a discursive contrast of colonialist and patriot actions, implying that while one has brought devastation to the African continent, the other has brought peace and stability. The category work (Jayyusi, 1984) he does

on the colonialists and the different actions he attributes to them and the African freedom fighters can be seen as achieving a dual ideological function of attracting indignation for the colonialists and compassion and understanding for the people of Africa. In addition to lexical choices and predications such as *arrested*, *give battle* and *forces at our command*, the hyperbolic expression *without parallel anywhere in the history of the world* intensifies the derogatory characterization of colonialists, and heightens Nkrumah' heroic status in confronting the imperialist threat. This emotionalized blame attribution further legitimizes the overthrow of the regime (i.e. it is a noble revolution) in favor of a new African revolutionary government. The contrastive remark *but now Africans have arrived on the scene* is also worth commenting on given its rhetorical effect. Symbolically, it dramatizes a conflict scene on stage between a protagonist/hero (i.e. Nkrumah and the African freedom fighters) and an antagonist/a villain (i.e. the imperialists) who was on the rampage until Nkrumah and the African freedom fighters made their entrance onto the stage. The use of the subordinator *until*, connoting irreversibility and intentionality, reiterates archetypal traits of mythological Heroism and attributes a number of admirable qualities to Nkrumah, including credibility, perseverance and resilience. Additionally, the clause *we have arrested their progress* reinforces our previous analysis on the use of idiomatic expressions as a characteristic of Ghanaian English particularly and the New Englishes in general. Although Nkrumah uses *we* throughout in extract (9) which gives the impression that the heroic acts (past, present and future) referred to can be credited to other African leaders aside Nkrumah and by extension the people of Africa, this paper argues that the use of *we* is more of a politeness strategy of exhibiting deference to one's audience. A more nuanced interpretation is that Nkrumah is the African Hero and Africa's main man, more so since his audience is aware that he is the mastermind of the achievements mentioned and the originator of the future ideas for Africa which have been espoused and which we are told will be the game changer for the continent.

The massive transformation and comprehensive economic reconstruction that Africa will experience after the overthrow of colonialism is explicitly stated by Nkrumah in extract (10). Utilizing repetition and/or parallelism, he submits that the new African revolutionary republic will achieve outstanding feats in agriculture, education, manufacturing, telecommunications, etc. This means that a noble leader is not only required to topple the iniquitous system of colonialism in Africa, but also to revolutionize every sector of the continent in the new African republic. Hence, even though Nkrumah uses *we/our* again throughout in extract (10), a much deeper, yet subtle, interpretation is that he indirectly attributes the attainment of success in Africa in the post-independence period to his vision and innovation. By equating specific Nkrumah goals to general African aspirations, however, Nkrumah is able to elevate his ideas from the ordinary to the heroic, from the normal to the phenomenal. Moreover, the use of 'we' portrays Nkrumah as a people-leader and a voice of the voiceless, constituting a form of populist discourse which according to Kelsey (2016) represents an important ideological mechanism by which

mythological Heroism is discursively constructed. The effect of repetition 'is to convey conviction, persistence and obduracy in a way that is memorable' (Charteris-Black, 2011: 36). Hence the combination of repetition and parallelism is capable of producing a more persuasive impact on listeners. This is realized at the levels of grammar and vocabulary and entails the repetition of *we* (implying oneness in vision and singleness of purpose) and *shall* (which foretells the future) alongside certain heroic feats. And they are iterated into the space produced by the syntactic pattern: WE + SHALL + POSITIVE MATERIAL VERB + HEROIC FEATS. Through this mechanism, Nkrumah is able to naturalize his beliefs and ideals as commonly shared African dreams as is required of a Heroic leader. Further, the use of the verb *harness* in *We shall harness the radio, television, giant printing presses to lift our people from the dark recesses of illiteracy* is instructive in that it connotes that Nkrumah is strong and skillful and has the ability to make informed choices about Africa's resources and to manage and utilize them for the benefit of Africa. This is an important aspect of political myth-making as it offers the citizenry inspiration to rely on strong leaders who claim to have the wherewithal and requisite knowledge to make correct decisions necessary to guarantee the people's welfare (Charteris-Black, 2011).

Nkrumah's framing of a Noble Revolutionary as part of his mythological Heroism was also evident in his rallying all sections of the African society to support the well-intentioned African revolution. He suggests via his discourse that the task of overhauling the existing order (and not only making substantial modification to it) is challenging in view of which all forces must be rallied and all hands must be on deck. We are, therefore, presented with a leader who not only fearlessly advocates radical change, but also charges the masses with a mandate to contribute their quota towards the realization of this noble dream no matter how grandiose.

(11)   ***The African press has a vital part to play in the revolution which is now sweeping over the continent***… to explain the meaning and purpose of the fight against colonialism, imperialism and neo-colonialism. It must explain the necessity for, and the meaning and purpose of, a Union Government of Africa. (Opening of the 2nd Conference of African Journalists, 1963)

(12)   … ***our revolutionary African press must present and carry forward our revolutionary purpose*** [which] is to establish a progressive political and economic system upon our continent that will free men from want and every form of social injustice and enable them to work out their social and cultural destinies in peace and at ease. (Opening of the 2nd Conference of African Journalists, 1963)

In these extracts, Nkrumah intentionally uses the word *revolution/revolutionary* to disabuse any minds still in doubt about his mission. He proceeds to charge the African media with the essential function of sensitizing the masses and orienting their minds to the all-important revolution. Thus,

they must *explain the meaning and purpose of the fight against colonialism, imperialism and neocolonialism* (11) and *explain the necessity for and the meaning and purpose of a Union Government of Africa* (11). The all-embracing nature of the revolution is emphasized by the relative clause *which is now sweeping over the continent* and *the masses of our people* (11) are called upon to lend their support to the wind of change blowing across Africa. It is insightful that Nkrumah uses the phrase *the masses of our people* as it can be analyzed as a form of populist discourse that exploits the notion of the people while promoting anti-system/establishment sentiments (Mudde, 2004). In addition to the phrase 'the masses of our people', he makes specific reference to certain groups of people (i.e. workers, trade unionists, peasants, university students, etc.) in the society who can be described as the ordinary folk (Hawkins & Kaltwasser, 2017). Thus, the revolutionary call to action Nkrumah makes, though all-inclusive, still targets and valorizes the ordinary people who typically constitute the bulk of the citizenry and can be seen as the embodiment of the interests of the nation state (Hawkins & Kaltwasser, 2017). As already noted, the Revolutionary regards his/her revolution not only as an attempt to change an aspect of the world which s/he finds undesirable, but as transforming the world as a whole. In this regard, Nkrumah claims that the achievement of an African revolutionary government *will free man from want and every form of social injustice and enable them to work out their social and cultural destinies in peace and at ease* (12). We, thus, see Nkrumah as a well-meaning and noble-minded Revolutionary Hero who will rescue not only Ghana and Africa, but also mankind in general from the forces of evil.

5 | CONCLUSION

Combining discourse-historical analysis with discourse-mythological analysis, this paper critically examined the discursive constructions of Hero mythology in the rhetoric of Kwame Nkrumah, a pioneering Pan-African and Ghana's independence leader. It analyzed how mythological Heroism manifests in colonial discourse, resulting in Nkrumah's simultaneous construction of heroes and villains, protagonists and antagonists as an essential aspect of an ideological mechanism that realizes a radical anti-imperialist rhetoric and a discourse of resistance. It was found that archetypal traits of mythological Heroism in Nkrumah's discourse were constructed via his identification of a Conspiratorial Enemy and his construction of a Valiant Leader and Noble Revolutionary image. These discursive constructions were realized by de/legitimation strategies such as membership categorization, labeling/stereotyping and positive in-group and negative out-group presentation and their interaction with figures of speech such as contrast, hyperbole, imagery, metaphor and repetition. These linguistic tools enabled Nkrumah to construct himself as a warrior on a solemn mission, fighting against the odds, overpowering challenges and difficulties in his efforts to win independence for Africa and ensure long-lasting peace and

stability on the continent through the formation of a Union Government of Africa. The analysis also revealed that Nkrumah's language has identifiable features of Ghanaian English, including the use of 'Ghanaianisms, coinages/neologism and idiomatic expressions, that helped him to (emotionally) connect with his audience and strengthen the persuasive impact of his speeches. As noted at the onset of this paper, the linguistic examination of political myth-making has largely focused on Western politicians. Therefore, this study contributes to an understanding of political mythology in a setting underexplored in the CDA literature. It also focused on a text type (i.e. colonial discourse) which has not received much attention from (critical) discourse analysts as far as the examination of political myth is concerned. This study, therefore, highlights the role of language or discourse and (post)independence leaders in political decolonization. And by focusing on an African leader and a sociolinguistic context under-researched in the literature, it demonstrates how language is colored by local politics and how local politics in turn shapes language use, thereby highlighting the nexus between CDA and World Englishes, and further the Englishes of politics around the globe.

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APPENDIX: KWAME NKRUMAH'S SPEECHES

1. March 6, 1957 - Declaration of the Independence of Ghana
2. December 9, 1958 - Address at the All-African People's Conference
3. January 9, 1960 - The 'African Hurricane' Speech
4. August 6, 1960 - The 'Africa's Challenge' Speech
5. September 23, 1960 - Address at the United Nations Assembly
6. April 7, 1960 - Address at the 'Positive Action' Conference for Peace and Security in Africa
7. July 1, 1960 - Republic Day Speech
8. January 7, 1961 - Address at the Closing Session of the Casablanca Conference
9. June 12, 1961 - Address on the Occasion of the Convention People's Party 12th Anniversary
10. June 4, 1962 - Address at the Nationalists' Conference of African Freedom Fighters
11. May 24, 1963 - Address to the Conference of African Heads of State and Government
12. May 25, 1963 - Closing Remarks After the Signing of the Charter of the Organization of African Unity

13. November 11, 1963 - Address at the Opening of the 2nd Conference of African Journalists
14. May 25, 1964 -Address on the Occasion of the 1st Anniversary of Africa Liberation Day
15. June 12, 1965 - Address to the National Assembly