

# The Rhetorical Agency of Ghanaian Celebrity Women: Exploring Celebrity Agency and Instagram Affordances in Sponsoring Literacies Among Ghanaian Youths

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In Ghana, West Africa, celebrities like Anita Akuffo and Berla Mundi are well-known in the Ghanaian media and digital space for their digital rhetorical work. Through a case study of these two Ghanaian celebrity women's Instagram posts, comment sections, and circulatory practices, this study discusses how these celebrities exercise rhetorical agency on Instagram through their embodied visual cues that sponsor literacy practices by crafting posts that reflect the celebrity identities in sponsoring literacies and Ghanaian contemporary socio-cultural knowledge systems. This study, through a Silicon Snowball Sampling technique and Transliteracy theoretical framework, provides an understanding of the influences of the kinds of digital literacies and linguistic forms enacted by the followers of these celebrities through their engagement with the celebrities' Instagram posts and the negotiation of Instagram affordances. While influencing their audiences through captioning, visuals, and interactive features like comments and Instagram affordances, this study argues that the celebrities' agencies and literacy sponsorship are expressed in how these actants use Instagram tools to influence audience literacies and how Instagram's affordances manipulate the mediation of this literacy. This study concludes that Instagram literacy provides an avenue for teaching and learning the rhetorical moves of cultural and transnational digital literacies in the classroom.

Amid the digital revolution, literacy sponsorship has broadened to include institutional bodies, corporate actors, and digital technologies, reflecting the evolving and innovative approaches to literacy (Alexander, 2023; Brandt, 1998). For this reason, the understanding of literacy now extends beyond the 'Literacy Myth' that portrays literacy as an independent variable that is independent of sociocultural influences (Graff & Duffy, 2008). Brandt (1998) argued that sponsors "are any agents, local or distant, concrete or abstract, who enable, support, teach, model, as well as recruit, regulate, suppress, or

withhold literacy—and gain advantage by it in some way” (p. 166). Thus, this highlights that literacy acquisition is not an autonomous acquisition skill but is dependent on sponsorship. As such, sponsors of literacy play an influential role in shaping literacy by promoting or restricting literacy development based on their own interests, power, and agendas (Brandt, 1998).

In today’s world that is heavily influenced by new technologies, digital tools like social media platforms, mobile applications, and online communities offer access to literacy sponsors by providing opportunities for creative expression, participatory culture, and access to global networks of information (Habes et al., 2019; Kovalik & Curwood 2019). Consequently, as a researcher of African descent, the numerous engagements of Ghanaian celebrity women on Instagram (IG) have piqued my interest, as I have noticed that their rhetorical activities on IG create opportunities and spaces for information and social interactions through comment sections. For that reason, I center the digital lived experiences of two Ghanaian celebrity women on IG to understand their agency in impacting literacy sponsorship among Ghanaian youths through their rhetorical activities that create opportunities for communication. By *agency*, I echo Glenn’s (2018) assertion that “Agency is embodied and kairic, dependent upon both the rhetor’s identity and the context (the material conditions, tradition, and audience) within which the rhetor acts, reacts, and interacts” (p. 81)

In that capacity, this paper argues that studying celebrity rhetorical activities on IG can help rhetoric, composition, and literacy scholars to study and account for the evolving agencies of bodies and literacy practices in digital spaces permeated by technology. Research in the field of literacy about brown and black bodies has focused on African American literacies (Browdy & Milu, 2022). Due to this focus, there is a gap in research that conceptualizes literacy from a non-African American literacy context, constraining the field from examining global experiences of literacy sponsorship. As part of a quest to disrupt this literacy conceptualization gap, this study asks in what ways does the agency of Ghanaian celebrity women foster literacy practices among Ghanaian youths on IG? Building on this, I argue that Ghanaian celebrity women’s engagement culture on IG not only portrays the rhetoric and agency of celebrity engagement. Rather, these celebrity agencies provide a digital archive of fluid African digital rhetorical literacy narratives that contribute to understanding some digital composing skills of the current digital generation in the Ghanaian context and the conceptualization of evolving transnational fluid digital literacies. Within the context of this study, the celebrity agencies refer to how these celebrities assert their individual celebrity status through text and their unique embodiments as seen in their photos and visual narratives that influence audience engagement and literacy practices. Because the “rhetor’s identity and

the context (the material conditions, tradition, and audience) within which the rhetor acts, reacts, and interacts” influence agency, I focus on how these celebrities enact agency on Instagram by navigating the platform’s affordances and constraints and the celebrity situatedness in Ghanaian cultural context through their embodied performances (Glenn, 2018, p. 81).

## Towards Inclusive Literary Traditions and Media Use Among Ghanaians

Transnational rhetorical literacies have emerged as a vital area of inquiry within rhetoric and composition, challenging traditional, monolingual, and Western-centric literacy paradigms (Dingo et al., 2013). As traditional rhetorical studies often prioritize Western, male-dominated perspectives, Royster and Kirsch (2012) argued for a shift towards feminist rhetorical practices that embrace diverse voices and methodologies to promote an ethos of care and inclusivity. This insight from Royster and Kirsch (2012) inspired my interest in studying the Instagram practices of Ghanaian celebrity women to contribute to inclusive practices in the field of rhetoric and composition. Royster (2003) advocated for a paradigm shift in rhetorical historiography by engaging in ‘dramatic experimentation’ as a means of landscaping for the inclusion of female rhetoricians of African heritage. She highlighted Busby’s (1992) *Daughters of Africa* as a significant contributor shaping the discipline’s history of rhetoric, as it shows the work of 200 African women and that of the diaspora, which Busby situated as an “anthology among literary traditions, rather than rhetorical traditions” (Royster, 2003, p. 151). Because studies of literacy contexts in the United States and Britain have historically captured a narrow focus on basic parameters of context, what Levinson, as cited by Street (1993), described as an attempt to “faithfully represent the philosophic-linguistic tradition in the United States and Britain, rather than, for instance, that on the continent” (p. 440), this limitation constrains how we understand transnational literacies and their broader influences. In consequence, I situate my study within the context of IG use in Ghana, as the platform operates as a transnational rhetorical site where the two Ghanaian celebrity women for this study actively enact their agency through embodied photo posts and digital storytelling that promote their aesthetic self- and brand representation.

Social media adoption in Ghana, like WhatsApp, Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, Snapchat, Telegram, TikTok, and LinkedIn, continues to grow, with trends suggesting its sustained use for various activities in the future (Sasu, 2023). The use of these platforms serves diverse purposes for Ghanaians, including education, entertainment, and fostering social connections (Odoom et al., 2024). Several studies by scholars, media agencies, and NGO’s in Ghana

about the current wave of new media show that Ghanaians, especially feminists, participate actively on social media for their liberatory activities (Nartey, 2021). From my research so far, even though social media studies are getting much attention in Ghana, recent studies in the field have yet to consider how Ghanaian celebrity women on IG are enacting their embodied agency that influences and sponsors the digital literacy of their audiences who engage the celebrities' rhetoric.

IG has become a significant platform for Ghanaian celebrities, enabling them to shape their public personas, engage with audiences, and promote various social and commercial initiatives. Gbedawo (2021) highlighted IG's effectiveness in helping celebrity influencers promote small businesses to youth audiences, while Mattson (2023) showed how Ghanaian dancers use the platform to circulate art and foster cultural interaction. In a similar vein, Akingbade (2024) examined the political economy of influencer marketing, and Botchway (2023) focused on celebrity endorsements in the telecom sector. Adding a historical dimension, Agyepong (2017) explored celebrity capital in Ghanaian politics. Together, these studies underscore IG's multifaceted role in Ghanaian celebrity culture; however, there is still a need for research that explores how Ghanaian users engage rhetorically and construct literacy identities on the platform, because there is little research about IG, even though Kovalik and Curwood, (2019) studied Instapoetry on IG and their implications for teaching and learning in the English classroom.

## Methods and Methodology

### Case Study and Silicon Snowball Sampling

This study employs a case study method to investigate the digital literacies that emerge within the IG posts and comment sections of the two selected Ghanaian celebrities, where the analysis is guided by a Transliteracy framework inspired by Kovalik and Curwood (2019), which emphasizes the interconnectedness of multiple literacies across digital and cultural contexts. Case study research, as Yin (2009) described, is particularly suited for exploring contemporary phenomena within their real-life contexts, making it an appropriate method for analyzing the dynamic interactions of celebrities and their comment sections on Instagram. Before I selected my samples as cases to study, I defined the set of potential texts to analyze through the research question I wished to answer, which I mentioned in my introduction (Blythe, 2007, pp. 206-207). The data collection process for this study involves manual searching and sampling of the celebrity Instagram posts through a Silicon Snowball Sampling technique (Lee, 2024). Silicon Snowball Sampling "adapts the principles of traditional snowball

sampling to the virtual realm of online environments and is particularly useful in social media research” (Lee, 2024, p. 3). This sampling technique involves following “links, hashtags, mentions, and various connections within that space to discover additional sources of data” (Lee, 2024, p. 3).

Due to the vast curated archive of each celebrity’s IG posts, I narrowed my focus to the celebrities’ handles and posts from January to November 2024. The traditional snowball sampling technique mentioned above helped me to select 10 images and 5 video posts from each celebrity, Anita Akuffo and Berla Mundi, along with their corresponding comment sections and circulatory practices, which include reels, hashtags, likes, and stories that show audience engagement. I tracked reposts composed through reels, hashtags, and stories in which users tagged the celebrities’ initial posts within the time period I mentioned above. The captions from these interactions revealed users’ agency in circulating and reinterpreting the celebrities’ rhetoric across broader digital publics, demonstrating their digital composition and literacy skills.

### Unit of Analysis and Theoretical Framework

Using the case study method, I investigated the digital literacies that emerge within the celebrity IG posts, comment sections, and circulatory practices. Following Blythe (2007), I coded the data by sorting and classifying through a coding scheme I devised through the recurring literacy themes such as multimodal communication, informal English, Ghanaian sociolects, proverbs, monolexical communication, phrasal communication, appropriation of keyboard symbols, translingual practices, and the culture of commenting, reposting and circulation through celebrity agency interpretation as social learning, recaptioning, the literacy of tagging, and hashtags.

To ensure a seamless analysis, I first defined my unit of analysis, which refers to the clearly defined phenomenon that I wish to study (Blythe, 2007, p. 209). My unit of analysis focused on the verbal units within the written texts of comment sections and captions from recirculated posts. Verbal units consist of different types of analytical units, such as phrases, clauses, and rhetorical units that “help researchers explore how meaning is conveyed through what is said or written” (p. 211). As such, I coded my units of analysis, guided by my attention to a specific type of rhetorical unit known as the *macrosegment*, as highlighted by Blythe. For the context of my analysis, I characterized the macrosegments of the digital literacies *first* by focusing on the coherent rhetorical purpose of each celebrity’s embodied visual rhetoric through their pictures and videos on IG seen in followers interpretation of celebrity embodied visual cues shaped by the platform’s discursive interface; *second*, the creative adaptations of IG infrastructure as visual cues of follower literacy agency seen from followers’ comments and circulatory practices such as appropriation of

keyboard symbols and multimodality; *third*, the consistent set of linguistic choices employed by followers influenced by the platforms affordances and commenter's transliteracy identities.

Finally, I examine these units within the celebrities' embodied visual rhetoric alongside followers' comments in my discussion to identify the celebrity embodied agencies that wield various literacies emerging from interactions with the celebrity rhetorics and to understand how meaning and engagement unfold through IG affordances. Additionally, I tracked posts in which users tagged or reposted the celebrities, as these practices revealed how multimodality is negotiated and how users exercise agency in circulating and reinterpreting the celebrities' rhetoric across broader publics. These expressions of agency challenge traditional assumptions that Ghanaian communication occurs primarily through structured English forms, highlighting instead the creative and fluid linguistic practices that emerge in digital spaces.

I situated the analysis of literacy practices on IG from a transliteracy perspective by acknowledging four characteristics of literacy as articulated by Kovalik and Curwood (2019). According to them, Transliterations "characterise literacy in the modern world as having four key qualities: digital tools, multimodal representation, a global audience and dynamic movement across physical and virtual contexts, all facilitated by technological advancement" (Kovalik & Curwood 2019, p. 186). Transliteracy theory, while robust (Thomas et al., 2007), requires additional perspectives that attend to "how people make meaning across interactions among people, things, texts, contexts, modes, and media" (Stornaiuolo et al., 2017, p. 72). Integrating transliteracy within new media literacy studies accounts for fluid literacy identities and robust practices influenced by sociocultural contexts, the ecology of the digital spaces, their actants, and their power dynamics. Considering this, I conceptualized Transliteracy from the expanded definition of Stornaiuolo et al. (2017), who suggested a plural conception of the theory.

### About Anita Akuffo and Berla Mundi and Their Celebrity Agencies

Anita Akuffo and Berla Mundi, as they are publicly called on media appearances, are prominent award-winning celebrities in the Ghanaian media landscape and digital space for their work in media such as journalism, entertainment, and social advocacy (LinkedIn, 2025; Wikipedia, 2025). On IG, Anita Akuffo's verified handle is *ann\_ita1*, while Berla Mundi uses the verified handle *berlamundi*. They both engage their audience through similar content on Instagram, ranging from photos and videos captioned around fashion, lifestyle, professional skits, civic discourse, ambassadorial representations, advocacy, and social-cultural discourse. The intended audience for these celebrities is their fans, including the brands and media houses they represent

and work for in Ghana. In addition to their unique visibility through international travels or media appearances, due to algorithmic influence, their posts sometimes become globalized through tags and hashtags; hence, their posts reach many other audiences in the diaspora and those who may or may not be interested in their rhetoric. Both Anita Akuffo and Berla Mundi post similar forms of content, yet they each embody it uniquely through multimodal visual cues in their image composition and video framing such as filters, captions, emojis, poses, gestures, fashion choices like hairstyle, clothing and adornments, background aesthetics, color palettes, and camera angles, which collectively construct and communicate their individual, distinct rhetorical identities. This study conceptualizes their unique embodiments of visual cues as seen in Figures 2.1, 2.2, 2.3, 2.4, and 2.5 as their rhetorical agency. Consequently, I argue that these visual cues provide an agency for their audience to participate through the comment section and circulatory practices, which impact their audience literacy performances on IG.

## **Discussion: Celebrity Agency and the Rhetoric of Instagram Ambience Affordances**

The macrosegment rhetorical unit guiding my analysis in this section is first celebrity agency and second followers' creative adaptations shaped by the platform's interface and users' fluid multiliteracy practices that foreground their creative literacies and multimodal interactions through IG's affordances. By celebrity agencies, I refer to how the various modes of interaction and visual cues embodied in the celebrities' posts work together as celebrity agency to portray a shared communicative goal reflected through followers' comment mediated by IG's affordances. In other words, while the celebrity's agency on Instagram emerges from their rhetorical intentions expressed through the visual cues embedded in each celebrity's posts which, though diverse in style, and embodiment, creates rhetorical meaning that invite followers' engagement and literacy practices. These interactions are further shaped by how these users are navigating the platform's features to comment, remix emojis and keyboard symbols, and recirculate the celebrity content across Instagram depending on their digital disposition and how they are interacting with each celebrity's unique embodied agency. Gallagher's (2020) discussion on "ambient affordances" reiterates discursive interface by Stanfill (2015) as they mentioned that affordances, while intentional design, do not completely delineate user communication, but also shape normative communication patterns, an intention of designers. Figures 2.3 and 2.4 show the celebrities posts with commenters' literacy practices on Instagram which reveal how followers engage with the celebrities' visual cues as agencies by navigating the

platform's affordances to enact their digital literacies in the comment section. From the commenting and circulatory practices observed, the digital literacies are shaped by the platform's affordances and normative communication patterns, such as the constant use of the emojis ❤️, 🤩 to express admiration and love for the celebrities' post.

The findings from my case study reveal how some commenters were appropriating keyboard symbols, such as the closing parenthesis ) to represent the Twi language alphabet [ɔ], likewise the number 3 to represent [ɛ] in constructing meaning in the Twi language such as "3w)h)" (understood in context as 'its been there'), "3ny3" (understood in context as 'isn't that'), and "Kyeres3" (understood in context as 'meaning'). The repeated use of keyboard symbols and varieties of similar emoji's especially the love emoji and its colorful variants, in expressing commenters' reactions may either be portraying commenters creative literacy inventions, preference for a specific IG tool, or digital rhetorical sovereignty. This may also be a revelation of IG's constraints in perpetuating power dynamics of sponsoring normative literacy. Arola (2017) in advocating for indigenous interfaces reiterated that "the fixed template-driven design of most social media platforms appears to limit the ways in which one is able to compose oneself and one's relations online" (p. 210). As such, she called for decolonizing social media interface with inclusive design elements and communication tools that can foster indigenous ways of being. Considering this, it will be prudent that designers of digital platforms provide inclusive interface design and localized affordances, such as indigenous emojis, that will permit varieties of cultural and indigenous writerly forms if users want to communicate translingual and situated meanings.

I argue that even though celebrity agency and IG affordances contribute to digital literacy sponsorship, the literacy agencies within IG show that the rhetorical situations of these literacies are influenced by the power dynamics of the platform's affordances and constraints. This reaffirms one of the tenets of transnational feminist rhetoric on "a cogent analysis of power" as highlighted by Chen (2025, p. 452), as they echoed Dingo et al (2013). Dingo et al. (2013) argued that "to be responsible, authors and rhetoricians must show the inherent influence each site has on one another" (pp. 518-519). Considering this, my focus on digital transliteracy iterations on IG from a Ghanaian context is to illustrate another dimension of a rhetorician being responsible in showing an understanding of IG's inherent power dynamics and affordances on literacies sponsored through followers' interpretation of meaning embodied by the visual cues of human actants such as celebrities' visual rhetoric on IG. As such, both IG's affordances and the celebrity's visual rhetoric connects to provide a participatory culture of literacy sponsorship influenced by technological power dynamics that allow celebrities and followers to navigate their

literacies between the virtual and physical worlds. This ideology impacts my conceptualization of IG literacies as not limited to the expression of linguistic elements but a reflection of the product of the intersection of systems, bodies and circumstances that warrant and influence the emerging digital literacy productions by followers on IG. These include the rhetorical exigencies of users, the digital ecological space, its neoliberal ideologies, and the agency of users and their audiences.

Situating literacy sponsorship within the analysis of celebrity agency and the platform's literacy dynamics is important to understanding evolving transnational digital compositions as these literacies are influenced by "the interaction between uneven structures and sites of power that is crucial to understanding how rhetoric works in an era of neoliberal globalization" (Dingo et al., 2013, p. 519). The appropriation of keyboard symbols by the commenters such as using the number 3 to represent the Twi vowel [ɛ] or the closing parenthesis ) to signify [ɔ] illustrates a localized literacy innovation born from the material affordances and constraints of the English-dominant digital infrastructure. While a commenter from Anita Akuffo's post on November 7, 2024, seen in Figure 2.1, creatively repurposes the standardized English keyboard symbols mentioned above to express their cultural literacy interpreted from the celebrity's agency in her photo, the appropriation also limits the function of the indigenous vowel sounds' intonation which is supposed to convey an indigenous marker of meaning and emotion in the written speech of the translingual cultural literacy intended as seen in this translingual code meshing form "Kyeres3 ahouf3 no de3 3w)h) since childhood oo 😊😊" (*direct translation in English language reads 'it means the beauty had been there since childhood oo*). Composing the same phrase using the localized keyboard symbol in Twi could read 'Kyerese ahoɔfe no deɛ ewɔhɔ since childhood oo 😊😊' which would more accurately preserve the tonal and phonetic integrity of the Twi language, allowing the intended affect, emotion, and indigenous cultural nuance the Twi language fully convey.

The above linguistic identity thus reflects both resistance to and adaptation within the dominant technological systems, showing the commenters' fluid literacy agency in translingual language use yet also disclosing the unequal power dynamics embedded in the platform's design features in constraining translingual forms of meaning making. Even though these adaptations contribute to emerging transnational digital literacies, where users remix their cultural phonetic logic, platform symbols and local languages to construct meaning, one consequence of this is that to outsiders unfamiliar with Ghanaian languages and alphabets, the use of the numeral 3 in "Kyeres3" or "3ny3" may appear inappropriate or blur the meaning making process even when the foreigner enables the translation feature on IG.



*Figure 2.1. Selected comment section of Anita Akuffo’s Instagram post on 11/7/2024 showing translingual practices and appropriation of keyboard symbols.*

I make this assertion because the use of the numerical 3 erases the phonetic and cultural meaning markers that the localized alphabet would express in their written speech. Moreover, since the platform’s linguistic infrastructure is designed with Western linguistic norms, it may not recognize or interpret accurately such culturally specific creative adaptations by the commenters when the translation feature is enabled, thereby misreading or excluding their semantic and affective value in translation. This draws our attention to Chen’s (2025) and Dingo et al.’s (2013) assertions on how power circulates across sites of meaning-making, not only marginalizing non-Western languages and sponsoring normative digital expressions but also highlighting how non-Western users must constantly negotiate their indigenous linguistic visibility within digital spaces. Milu (2022), in discussing some decolonial possibilities for Translingualism, argued that “Indigenous languages and translingual practices in Africa are marginalized by imperial languages of Europe through the rhetoric of modernity and logic of coloniality” (p. 378). Consequently, the literary adaptations by commenters in this study contribute to the emerging fluid digital literacies and exemplify translingual composition agencies on digital platforms, reflecting instances of their resistance to and adaptation within the technological system.

## Celebrity Agency and Literacy Practices on Instagram

The third macrosegment rhetorical unit is the consistent set of linguistic choices employed by followers interacting with these celebrities' IG visual rhetoric. As established earlier in the bio section and preceding discussion, both Anita Akuffo and Berla Mundi assert their agencies as celebrities not only through photos and videos captioned to represent their identities, but also through their embodiments of visual cues which encompass the affordances, poses, gestures and fashion choices that influence the audience's literacy practices. The celebrities' embodiments, which impact their agencies through their visual rhetoric, influence how their audience engages their posts through writing and digital storytelling seen in the circulatory practices in followers' reels, stories, and recaptioned posts displaying the celebrities. From my case study, commenters enacted several linguistic forms listed in the *Unit of Analysis section* which I coded as themes because these themes were consistent linguistic forms through which commenters expressed their digital literacy agencies as they engaged in the comment section. This shows their interpretative meaning from celebrities' posts. Figures 2.2 and 2.3's comment sections show commenters' translingual and digital literacy enactments born from their interpretation of celebrities' visual cues which portrays the dynamic movement of followers' socio-cultural knowledge from the physical to the virtual contexts influenced by the visual cue of each celebrity.



Figure 2.2. Commenters interpreted Berla Mundi's celebrity agency by reading and responding translingually to the embodied visual cues presented in her Instagram photo on 11/01/2024.

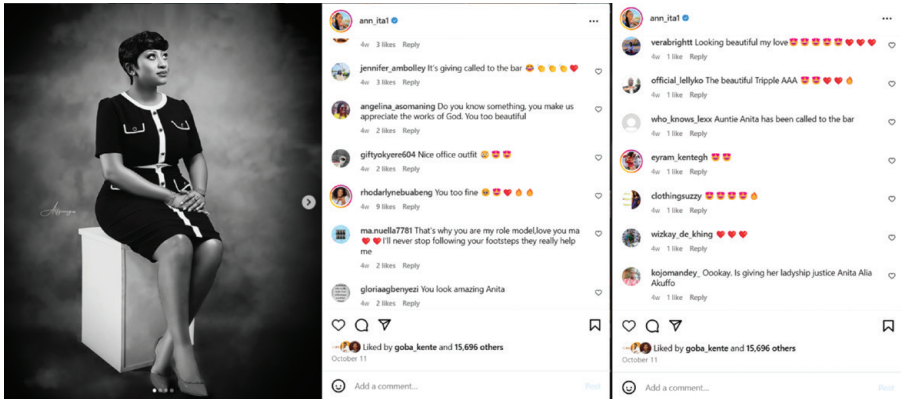


Figure 2.3. Through a situated embodied knowledge, commenters interpreted Anita Akuffo’s celebrity agency more formally influenced by her embodied visual cues presented in her Instagram photo on 10/11/2024.

Figure 2.2 shows Berla Mundi’s poised presence at New York’s Times Square, elegantly seated with a cup of coffee, which elicited interpretive responses from commenters such as “*International Mundi 😊*” and “*You don Jakpa again?? 😊*” (Jakpa, which means travel, is a borrowed Nigerian pidgin phrase now commonly used by Ghanaians. In context it reads ‘you have travelled again?? 😊’). Berla Mundi could have shared a simple photo from her lodging room; however, her agency in posting Figure 2.2 allowed commenters to interpret the visual cues in her photo through shared cultural, geographic, and social knowledge that resonate within the Ghanaian digital discourse as commenters linked her posture, setting, outfit, and style to her cosmopolitan identity and global success, reinforced by her appearances on international media platforms and her role in hosting major global events.

Similarly, Figure 2.3 shows Anita Akuffo’s professional photoshoot, which her commenters gave interpretation such as “*Its giving call to the bar 🍷🍷🍷🍷🍷🍷🍷🍷*”, “*Ookay. Is giving her ladyship justice Anita Alia Akuffo*”, and “*Corporate woman Whattt 🍷🍷🍷*”. The commenters’ interpretations of Anita Akuffo’s post through the visual cues of her short hair and black formal dress reflect a situated understanding of the current wave of Ghana’s contemporary career culture, particularly as social media annually celebrates the many Ghanaians called to the bar each year who post their photos embodying similar agencies as Anita’s photo portrayed. This contextual meaning aligns with Tekobbe’s (2025) call for relational and reciprocal approaches to storytelling to avoid the extraction of cultural knowledge. Unlike Anita Akuffo’s initial post in Figure 2.1, which garnered numerous translanguaging comments such as the repeated phrases *Emashi* and *kpen kpen*, reflecting how her embodied agency invited culturally situated linguistic play, Figure 2.3 instead elicited more formally structured English responses,

probably with the association to a lawyer, though many replaced punctuation with emojis. This shift suggests that this celebrity’s agency is fluid, context-dependent by her visual cues in a particular rhetorical situation, and how audiences interpret her agency by aligning their linguistic and expressive choices with the visual, setting, and perceived persona conveyed in each visual composition. In this way, the meaning-making and literacy practices that emerged from Anita Akuffo’s post can be viewed as negotiated and participatory.

In addition, the comment sections of all five figures show commenters displaying fluid linguistic forms to make meaning and interpret the celebrities’ images. The use of multimodality and linguistic forms in Figures 2.4 and 2.5 reflect an intentional awareness of cultural linguistic usage, as the comment section and repost show a shared knowledge of similar types of digital literacies negotiated by the commenters. Some of the composition literacies include multimodality (seen in the use of *emojis* (❤️, 🤩), *GIFs*, *stickers*, *background music*, *celebrity images* with *Ghanian English pidgin captions*, and *celebrity tags* seen in the comment sections and repost in Figures 2.4 and 2.5), informal English (seen in through the graphological elongation or letter repetition in Figure 2.4 *Steeppppp on ussssssssss Queenn B!!!* ❤️❤️🔥🔥), and shorthand-informal way of writing words (*fyn, u*), punctuation ellipsis in Figure 2.4 and 2.5), Ghanaian sociolects, which is the fluid variety of using English by some social groups in Ghana (seen in Figure 2.3 *“The goddess is goddessing”*), monolexical and phrasal communication with emojis seen in all figures, and translanguaging practices. These literacies shows “the ideas of fluidity and change as ways to study digital writing and its afterlife” (Gallagher, 2020, p.157). Interestingly, the celebrities’ captions reflect fluid literacy practices that construct their literacy identities as they influence similar agencies among commenters that consequently sponsors commenter’s literacy.

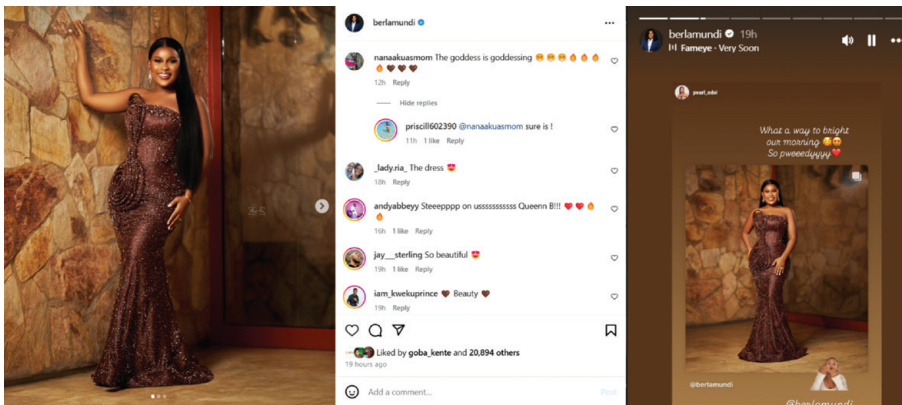


Figure 2.4. Selected comment section and repost of a follower’s Instagram story by Berla Mundi on 11/12/2024. Berla enacted her celebrity agency that has sponsored different literacy practices.

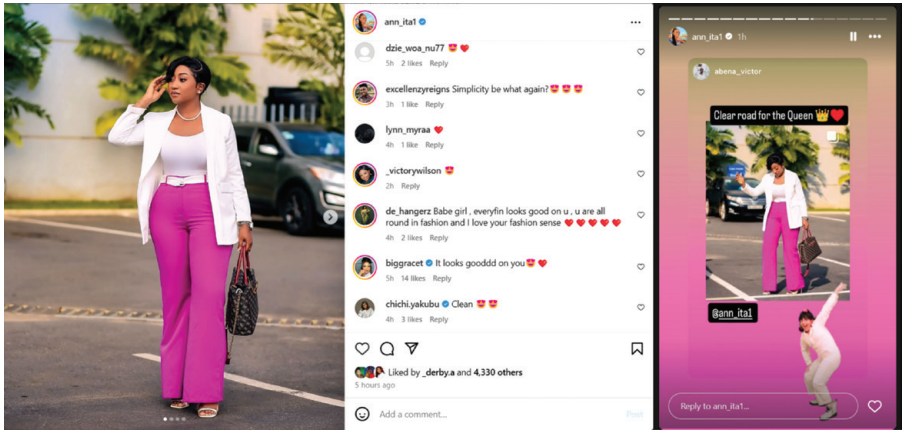


Figure 2.5. Selected comment section and repost of a follower’s Instagram story by Anita Akuffo on 11/12/2024. Anita enacted her celebrity agency that has sponsored different literacy practices.

## Conclusion

This paper argues that our historic moment, entangled in the web of evolving digital technologies and celebrity digital agencies through their visual cues on IG, is a ripe moment to reconceptualize transnational digital literacy and composition by studying its production, nature, and potential. The implication of the understanding of the rhetorical agency of celebrities in sponsoring followers’ digital literacies on IG suggests possible pedagogical moves that the field of computers and writing, and instructors might consider as writing pedagogy to help students understand the exigencies of digital compositions and the situated rhetoricity of cultural literacies in a digital context. When pedagogical practices in writing instructions consider IG literacies in literacy narrative and rhetorical analysis projects, this inquiry can equip students with the skills to analyze this digital platform as a rhetorical situation to understand rhetoric and embodied multimodal practices. It provides varied ways to discuss rhetorical appeals, such as celebrity agencies and platform design elements, and how they influence the audience and their digital compositions. Because the act of composing on IG is shaped by specific agency and the platform dynamics, I contend that any concept of digital literacy for rhetoric and composition should acknowledge the sociocultural and digital factors that intersect in digital spaces, shaping the fluid cultural compositions. Understanding literacy from this perspective helps instructors guide students to discuss the localized literacy practices and rhetorical appeals from their cultures that influence digital literacies and texts in order to understand the key forces that organize and shape them towards

an understanding of context on writerly forms. This can also offer a situational approach to teaching the genres of digital texts and rhetorical appeals.

The literacy practices manifested through the comment sections and recirculation shows that these celebrities' IG rhetorical agency yield literacy practices such as tags and hashtags which I echo "became an important rallying cry in social-practice perspectives, as local readers and writers were observed making meaning of literacy on their own turf and on their own terms" as permitted through the celebrities post and the platform's affordances (Brandt & Clinton, 2002, p. 341). This contextual understanding of digital writers' agency to composition can help instructors situate students into discussing and writing about algorithmic literacies and why users embody that to communicate rhetorically and technically. Gallagher contends that "When writers consider digital algorithms, they consider the various input features that become homogenized into a display on people's computers and mobile devices. To make the decision about when to write, these writers think about the calculations and procedures of an algorithm in addition to context-appropriate texts" (Gallagher, 2020, p. 73). Because social media participation remains prevalent among students (Habes et al., 2019), with platforms like IG and YouTube widely used in educational contexts, literacy practices students engage in outside class lead to the sedimentation of literacy norms that students bring to the class to approach their writing situations (Canagarajah, 2013). Considering this, I propose that instructors can leverage students' interests in social media, and online content creation to teach digital multiliteracies and multimodal ways of composing by digital natives.

As social media remains "new enough in the writing classroom despite its inclusion in daily life for over a decade" (Vie, 2018, p. 121), I argue that as instructors we can leverage young people's fascinations about celebrities on social media to research and learn about social media. This can help students understand the factors that influence the alternative social media literacy which students bring to the classroom. Instructors can employ celebrity visual rhetoric as a resource to learn and make comparisons between rhetorical choices people employ to compose across online and academic contexts. Currently in Ghana and the sub-West African countries, "contemporary practices of education have little to say about writing as a field" (Lampsey & Dumavor, 2021, p.133) due to colonial legacies in the educational and literacy practices (Bih-Ababio 2016). By problematizing academic literacy practices in the West African context, Lampsey and Dumavor (2021) invite scholars who are concerned about the notion of writing, its landscape, and pedagogies to "look beyond the colonial educational frameworks and ideologies that drive writing pedagogies in West Africa to a more local but practical one" (p. 137). One of the significances of my study on investigating the rhetorical agency of

Ghanaian celebrity women is that it provides an understanding of contemporary digital composition of digital writers contextualized in the Ghanaian digital culture and shows how digital rhetorical practices and literacies are embodied, which I believe can help the Ghana Education system develop a situated and localized writing pedagogy to understand its writing landscape to accommodate the fluid digital compositions of writers.

This disciplinary understanding also impacts the field rhetoric and writing studies by contributing to “Transnational Black language work that dialogues African languages,” which “offers the field one pathway to understanding rhetorical practices from other traditions beyond African American” (Browdy and Milu 2022, p. 233) as these celebrities’ IG agencies create a curated digital archive of transnational rhetorical and digital literacy narratives visible through their Instagram handles which can be accessed through silicon snowball sampling techniques. Recirculated multimodal posts of these celebrities that featured hashtags and tags create archives on Instagram that document how Ghanaians have been engaging in digital writerly forms by interpreting embodied visual cues to perform localized literacies. As such, paying critical attention to this digital archive of Ghanaian celebrity rhetorics can reveal how localized literacies are embodied through translanguaging and multimodality through the combination of visual cues and the creative adaptation of platform affordances to embody cultural rhetorical ingenuity that Western-centric notions of digital literacy and multimodality may not account for. I see a potential opportunity for my future research on digital accessibility to consider literacy sponsorship for individuals with disabilities, or how the rhetorical agency of disabled individuals might manifest within the IG space. For teachers and researchers in the field, this study offers another perspective for reimagining culturally situated digital composition literacies, multimodality influenced by human agency and platform power, communal and negotiated digital literacies, fluid transnational digital compositions influenced by digital agencies, usability of digital platforms, and embodied linguistic and socio-cultural knowledge forms as legitimate forms of rhetorical knowledge and digital literacy. This study contributes another layered understanding of literacy sponsorship from a contextualized cultural perspective.

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