EXPERIENTIAL MEANING CONSTRUCTION IN POLITICAL DISCOURSE: A TRANSITIVITY ANALYSIS OF THE INAUGURAL ADDRESS OF NANA ADDO DANKWA AKUFFO-ADDO, THE PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF GHANA

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ABSTRACT: *The exploration of the interface between language and politics is taking a heightened dimension across disciplines. The study examined how language has been used by President Nana Addo Dankwa Akufo-Addo in his inaugural address to the people of Ghana from a functional perspective. The study is premised on Halliday's Systemic Functional Grammar and employs the qualitative research design in the analysis of the text. The main focus of the study was the analysis of transitivity in the address and the functions it plays in political discourse. The study applied the interpretative content analysis to investigate the communicative functions of the linguistic choices made in the address. The study used 284 clauses in the inaugural address for the analysis. It was discovered that material processes dominate the speech whereas the existential process types are used minimally. The dominant use of material processes implies that president Nana Addo and his government are going to be the main actors working on several concrete projects to create a sense of continuity in development and policy direction in a challenging administration he has inherited. The use of the material clauses, therefore, shows the enthusiasm with which the president intends to work in order to reform the challenging economy. The minimal use of the existential processes also implies that though there have been some attempts to solve Ghana's socio-economic challenges, some problems persist in the country. The speech recorded no behavioural process type because the study did not analyse the paralinguistic elements of the text. The study concludes that the president made use of more primary process types in his inaugural address than the secondary process types.*

KEYWORDS: transitivity, Nana Addo Dankwa Akufo-Addo, inaugural address, systemic functional grammar, process types.

INTRODUCTION

Language plays a very crucial role in the life of human beings. It is the communication tool that enables humans to share their thoughts. Human beings in every sphere of life depend on communication for their day-to-day activities. For instance, to share ideas and express or represent thoughts and beliefs, such as needs, wishes, intentions and desires, interlocutors depend solely on language to get these things accomplished. Essentially, language serves as a useful means of communicating the inner states and emotions of a speaker, among others. Jones & Peccei (2004) postulate that language can be used not only to steer people's thoughts and beliefs but also to control their thoughts and beliefs. Edelman (1985) is of the view that language is the key creator

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of the social world's people experience and it is so crucial to the human race. In short, human communication will be difficult without language.

In using language, especially, in political discourse, our words are rarely unbiased, straightforward or blameless. They generally convey the force and philosophies that mirror the interests of the individuals who speak or write them (Taiwo 2007). Kondowe (2014) believes that as language users, we have several words at our disposal to choose from when producing a text; the choice of certain words over others may reflect conscious and unconscious ideologies held by those who produce them. Linguists have for some time now desired to understand the nature of language. Bloor and Bloor (1995: 294) claim that "they have struggled to understand more about how human language is structured and to explain how communication takes place". This implies that the packing of information in a discourse demands attention from linguists to be able to explore its communicative worth.

Over the years, there has been an increased interest in studying the use of language in all fields of human life. Generally, the communication in these fields is done through verbal interaction and involves speaker(s), addressee(s) and sometimes hearer(s) who may not necessarily be the one(s) spoken to. More often than not, the interlocutors use certain linguistic strategies to perform variegated functions. In order to understand these functions, language users often analyse what other language users intend to convey. They do so by first looking at the accurate representation of the forms and structures used in a speaker's language. Besides this, they make a strenuous effort to discover the meanings carried in the linguistic forms identified by meticulously subjecting each linguistic element to interpretation within a given context. This enables the language user to better understand the intention of the speaker.

The current Ghanaian President His Excellency, Nana Addo Dankwa Akufo-Addo delivered his inaugural speech on the 7th of January, 2017. Presidential Inaugural Address is a speech delivered by a President at his/her inauguration ceremony, which formally marks the beginning of the tenure of office. In Ghana, the presidential inaugural address has become a de facto requirement for the president-elect to deliver an address at the inauguration ceremony though it is not a constitutional requirement. It is the first official communication from the president to his people and it is intended to shape the way the citizens will perceive and receive the new government and the policy it intends to initiate. Van Dijk (1993), is of the view that political leaders, in such speeches, try to influence the mental models, knowledge, attitudes and eventually even the ideologies of recipients using language. This assertion by Van Dijk is in sync with Halliday and Matthiessen's (2004, p.23) belief that "language is a resource for making meaning and that meaning resides in systemic patterns of choice."

It is in the light of this that the present study seeks to investigate how language has been used by Nana Addo (henceforth) in his inaugural address based on Halliday's Systemic Functional Grammar to see how he tries to use the inaugural address, his first official address to the nation as

president, to influence the mental models, knowledge, attitudes and even the ideologies of the citizenry into believing that they have the right leader in power.

Ghanaians have become politically alert that every speech of government officials, especially, the presidency becomes an issue of concern as soon it is delivered. Such speeches become topics of deliberation in both traditional and electronic media where panellists subject such issues under hot debates. In Ghana, the president's inaugural speech is usually looked forward to. The citizens want to find out the new government's plans for the nation. There is therefore much attention paid to such speech where government supporters try to justify the president's intentions for the nation whereas the opposition tries to criticize the reality and sometimes rationale for such intentions. It is as a result of this observation that we feel as linguists, it is important we participate in the analysis of such political speeches using appropriate linguistic tools to analyse what politicians say to bring clarity to such issues that are often hotly debated. We, therefore, find a transitivity analysis of the inaugural address appropriate as it allows a researcher to dissect a discourse and to reveal hidden meanings and ideologies.

The study, therefore, employs transitivity as a linguistic tool by Halliday and Matthiessen (ibid) in the analysis of the inaugural speech and to justify the assertion made by van Dijk (ibid) that through language, politicians try to influence the mental models, knowledge, attitudes and even the ideologies of recipients and that of Halliday and Matthiessen (2004) assertion that meaning resides in systemic patterns of choice. The study will specifically focus on the identification of the process types under transitivity used in the address and go on to explore the communicative functions of such process types.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The study is underpinned by Halliday's Systemic Functional Grammar (SFG). Halliday's hypothesis distinguishes the provision as a significant syntactic unit for interpreting our experiential world, establishing our reality's relational communications, and dealing with the free progression of talk across a text. Webster (2009, p.5) notes that "language is a fundamental asset of making and trading meaning". This is a real recommendation as it will be hard to decide the importance of an articulation outside the framework that makes it – language itself is an arrangement of frameworks. Webster's statement braces Halliday and Matthiessen's (2004, p.23) guarantee that language is an asset for making meaning and that importance lives in fundamental examples of decision.

Halliday (1985, p.14) believes that "a framework network is a hypothesis of language as a possibility." He clarifies that the framework addresses a language or any piece of a language, as an asset for making meaning by choosing. This implies that the language client has available to them a wide scope of choices and choices to look over at a specific time, both on the paradigmatic and syntagmatic layers. This consequently clarifies that the language that comprises the text is viewed as a bound together result of decisions made by the author or speaker either at the vertical

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or horizontal layers. While the paradigmatic hub centres around the semantic layers of the decisions made, the syntagmatic hub focuses on the syntactic design of the decisions. Adjei and Ewusi-Mensah (2016) depict the structure as foundational because they accept that language clients have options in language to choose from corresponding to a given setting.

The Hallidayan model is useful given the numerous reasons language is utilized (Halliday, 1994). As per Halliday and Matthiessen (2004), each language has three meta-functions: ideational, interpersonal and textual. The ideational meta-capacity of language focuses on how we construe our world of experience. The ideational capacity thinks about transitivity and voice, in which transitivity comprises the six cycles called material, mental, relational, verbal, behavioural and existential. The voice part comprises activisation and passivization of statements. The interpersonal (relational) metafunction is concerned with how connections are set up and kept up with between the speaker and the listener. The statement is viewed as a trade. Language is consequently seen as an instrument for making social contact and communications. Here, a relationship is set up between a speaker and an audience. Halliday and Matthiessen (2004, p.29) allude to this metafunction as "a recommendation, or a proposition, whereby we illuminate or question, provide a request or make a deal, and express our evaluation of a mentality towards whoever we are tending to and what we are discussing."

Halliday and Matthiessen (2004) clarify that textual (literary) capacity satisfies the prerequisite that language ought to be functionally pertinent, having surfaced in a genuine setting of circumstance that recognizes a living section from a simple passage in a punctuation book or word reference. Zhuanglin (1988) associates him with Halliday and Matthiessen (2004) by saying that language has the inside component to make any stretch of spoken or composed talk into an intelligent message and not just an irregular rundown of sentences. From this, it tends to be seen that the text-based capacity of language takes a gander at the inward association of data in a text. This inside association contains assets, for example, intra-sentential and between sentential strong gadgets just as between section connectors. Fundamentally, these assets assist with keeping up with solidarity and progression among the different ideational units in a text.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Many researchers have employed the transitivity framework in analysing literary texts and discourses from several and varying perspectives in some parts of the world; however, studies on the transitivity analysis of political discourse particularly presidential inaugural addresses, especially of African leaders, have not been vigorously pursued. Kondowe (2014) in a study analyses the inaugural address of the Malawian President, Bingu Wa Mutharika and observes that the material processes highly dominate the speech, distantly followed by relational, while verbal processes come third.

Unlike Kondowe's study of inaugural address, Naz et al's (2012) study examined the system of transitivity choices and functions in the political language of Benazir Bhutto in the context of

Pakistan. The study shows that the semantic function of each process type varies according to the context, giving more value to material clauses. Naz et al (ibid) state that Bhutto's use of 64% of material clauses portrays her as a woman of action.

From a similar functional perspective, Alvi & Baseer (2011a) examine transitivity in some selected political discourse of President Barack Obama. The results of the study revealed that Obama is successful in persuading the people that converged around him. The results also revealed that Obama employs material processes of action and event as well as mental process of affection to physically gather the people around him. Obama further uses relational processes as well to create a positive image in the minds of people. Obama seems much interested in using circumstance of location, both spatial and temporal, and circumstance of reason to make his account unbiased and dependable.

Wang (2010) in a similar study explores the language used in Barack Obama's political discourses from a functional perspective. The study reveals that Barack Obama utilizes more simple words and short sentences rather than difficult ones. Wang (ibid) asserts that Obama's language is simple and casual. Accordingly, it can without much of a stretch shorten the distance between him and the audience. From the transitivity analysis, the study showed that the material process, a process of doing, is dominant in his speeches. These results corroborate the findings in Alvi & Baseer (2011) which reveal that Obama uses more material processes of action and event as well as mental process of affection to persuade the people around him. Through this process, the audience is shown what the government has achieved, what they are doing and what they will do. The study indicates that Obama's speeches are simply an attempt to arouse the American people's confidence towards him and his government in the years ahead of him during his tenure. Similarly, through the analysis of modality, the study finds that Obama persuaded his audience to understand and accept his political speeches using modal verbs, tense and first-person pronouns.

Nadashkivska (2006) applies the transitivity model to the discourses of Ukrainian President Kuchma and the democratic leader Yushchenko. His examination uncovers that both leaders ably exploit linguistic resources to physically draw crowds around them. In Ghana, however, not much has been done in transitivity analysis in political talks of both past and present leaders of the country. Boakye (2014) in a study analyses the use of assertives in five presidential inaugural addresses delivered by presidents of Ghana from 1993 to 2009 and came up with far-reaching findings that the presidents of Ghana mainly employ assertives to contextualise the country in terms of its past, present and future circumstances. The presidents usually present the past of Ghana as murky, the present as encouraging and the future as promising. The assertives are thus used by the presidents to inspire confidence in the citizenry in their respective governments. Boakye's study applied mainly the Speech Act theories grounded in Austin (1962) and Searle (1969) for the analysis.

METHODOLOGY

The specific type of qualitative research design employed for the study was the content analysis. The study is exploratory so the content of the text was analysed and the findings described. The speech under study was obtained from www.myjoyonline.com, one of the official websites of the Multimedia Group Limited, a credible media house, based in Accra, the capital of Ghana. The study used the convenience sampling technique to select Nana Addo's inaugural address. The choice has no political inclinations; it was the one that was accessible and retrievable at the time.

Analysis Procedure
The simple clause was used as a unit of analysis because of its meaning potential. The text was parsed into its constituent clauses. The processes were then identified and isolated. The processes are coded and categorised into six groups under the transitivity model and the results from the categorisation are tabulated. The study then determined which participant is doing which process. The study applied the interpretative content analysis to investigate the communicative functions of the linguistic choices made in the address. This was done by examining the roles played by participants concerning the process types used in a given context in a particular clause.

ANALYSIS AND FINDINGS

The results of the analysis are examined by identifying the process types used in the inaugural address and the communicative implications encoded in them. Below is a table that illustrates the process types used in the address and their frequencies.

Table 1: Frequency of Occurrences of the Process Types Used in the Address
The table below answers the first research question

PROCESS TYPE	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE
Material	125	54.35
Relational	50	21.74
Mental	30	13.04
Verbal	22	9.85
Existential	3	1.30
Behavioural	0	0
TOTAL	230	100

The above table shows that the total number of processes used in the inaugural address is 230. From the table, it can be seen that the material process type dominates with a frequency of 125 representing 54.35% of the data analysed. The second most dominant process used in Nana Addo's address is the relational process which has a frequency of 50 representing 21.74% of the data analysed. The third most frequently used process type in the address is the mental process with a frequency of 30 representing 13.04% of the total data analysed. This is marginally followed by the verbal process type with a frequency of 22 representing 9.85%. The corpus analysed shows that

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the existential process type is used minimally and it has a frequency of 4 representing 1.30%. Nonetheless, the corpus analysed did not record any occurrence of the behavioural process type. The results affirm that "Material, mental and relational are the main types of process in the English transitivity system" (Halliday & Matthiessen, 2004, p.171) whereas the verbal, existential and behavioural types represent the peripheral process types in the transitivity system. This assertion is further corroborated by Adjei & Ewusi-Mensah (2016). Below are the in-depth discussions of the various process types used in Akuffo Addo's address and their communicative implications.

Material Clauses
Nana Addo uses the material process type to set in motion his developmental agenda in terms of wealth creation, proper economic management, promotion of democracy and provision of direction and vision for nation-building, among others. The material clauses below buttress this claim: *(1) We must create* wealth *and restore happiness to our nation*. *(2) We must protect the public purse*. 3. *We will provide vision and direction.* The material processes *create, restore, protect* and *provide* are action-oriented and show the urgency with which he seeks to implement his policies as an in-coming President. It can be observed that the material clauses provide hope and assurance to the citizens. Further analysis of the material clauses reveals that Nana Addo uses nine different actors to impinge on the material processes used. Although he makes use of these nine actors, the most dominant actor is the first-person pronoun 'We' with a frequency of 34 representing 49.30%. This is distantly followed by 'I' and 'The Ghanaian people' with frequencies of 8 and 7 representing 11.60% and 10.14% respectively. The use of this actor shows that the president encourages all-inclusive governance. As a man who believes in the rule of law, he does not intend to be an autocratic leader. He, therefore, encourages all to get involved as he leads the crusade of economic transformation of the country. Even though the President believes in collective governance, he also feels that individual participation in nation-building is very crucial, as in: "*We must trust the individual and collective wisdom and good sense of our people*". The president is, therefore, not seen as the only actor working on the projects he intends to implement as a result of his dominant use of the actor '*we*'. By this, he seeks to portray himself as a democratic leader who believes in collective governance.

Relational clauses
There is always the need to describe actions, events or phenomena, hence the employment of the relational process which seeks to create a kind of metaphorical comparison for proper understanding of the speech. By so doing, a link is created between the subject and a particular phenomenon. Relational processes are generally used by political speakers to classify, describe and define their ideas. The President uses the relational processes to identify himself as someone poised for action, and with the dexterity to initiate positive changes. He is seen to be determined and with the disposition to be the man of the people. He creates a positive image of the nation in the minds of the people, assuring them that though it is a daunting task, it is surmountable. For instance, '*We have a proud heritage* is a refreshing statement that seeks to encourage the citizenry to cherish what the country has. He projects Ghana in a positive image, reassuring the citizens that Ghana has what it takes in terms of good values, resources, trade opportunities etc. to propel

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development, as in *We have an exuberant and young, growing population.* This statement affirms the abundant human resource that Ghana has and can utilize for economic growth and development.

Mental clauses

The President tries to convince the people that he shares their sentiments and that there is a need for collaborative efforts to ensure national development. This can be seen in his statements "*We know the areas that require change*"; and "*I know that Ghanaians at home and abroad will rise to the occasion*". Upon reflection, Nana Addo perceives that Ghana, as a nation, has not achieved much after sixty years of independence and is of the view that successive governments have not done much to develop the country. He, however, envisages rapid transformation under his stewardship and believes that the people will embrace his vision. He, therefore, assures the people of governance as expressed in his statement, "*I assure you, my fellow citizens. I see exciting times ahead."* '*We*' and *'I'* are the main sensors in the mental clauses, implying that every citizen can perceive the daunting task ahead, so the need for a consensus-building. When consensus building is entrenched, he feels his countrymen and women "…*will rejoice."*

Verbal clauses

The President is seen as the main sayer in expressing gratitude to both God and the people of Ghana for the opportunity to serve his nation and calls on them to pledge their allegiance to build their communities and the nation at large. This is contained in the statements: *I thank the Almighty God* and *I thank you all, my fellow citizens, for making me president of this beautiful country.*
He uses the verbal process for a plethora of functions aside from using them to show gratitude to God and his countrymen. He uses them to make reference to his election as the new President and the oath he has taken to ascend the highest throne of the land. He further uses the verbal process to quote the scriptures and former heads of state, as in: "*Holy Scriptures says 'Let us not become weary of doing good…"* and *"Kofi Abrefa Busia said in these eloquent words."* He again uses this clause type to call on his fellow countrymen to be responsible citizens, not mere spectators and eventually calls on God to bless his country, Ghana. The verbal process is therefore seen as a tool of making reference to the past, reaffirming commitment and as a means to expressing gratitude.

Existential clauses

Eggins (2004, p.238) points that the existential process represents experience, positing that there was or is something. The obligatory participant, Existent, functions to show that something is assumed to be existing. The speech uses three existential clauses to point to the need to patronize locally made goods and services, and to harness local talents and resources than depending on foreign goods and aids. This implies that when local brains are tapped and utilized in the local context, the citizenry, will be proud of their efforts and they would not be ashamed to be called Ghanaians. This statement by the president: "There could not be a better opportunity to *Make in Ghana*'', enjoins all Ghanaian citizens to cherish what they have as a country. The statement further implies that though the citizens of the country are contributing immensely towards building economies of other nations, the best way is to come home to build the local Ghanaian economy

too: *"There should be no higher praise …"* to live and work in Ghana and to patronize goods and services within the enclave of Ghana. However, in the President's speech, he perceives that discipline in all sectors of our lives, as a country, is overtly missing. This can be seen in the statement, "*There will be discipline in all sectors of our lives*. This statement implies that the Existent, _discipline_, should be in place before any accelerated growth can be anticipated.

CONCLUSION

It was discovered from the study that material processes dominated the speech whereas the existential process types were used minimally. The dominant use of the material processes implies that Nana Addo and his government are going to be the main actors working on several concrete projects to create a sense of progression in vision, policy direction and development. The use of the material clauses, therefore, shows the enthusiasm with which the president intends to work in order to transform the challenging economy. The minimal use of the existential processes also implies that though there have been some attempts to solve Ghana's socio-economic challenges, some problems persist in the country. The speech recorded no behavioural process type because the study did not analyse the paralinguistic elements of the text. The study concludes that the president made use of more primary process types in his inaugural address than the secondary process types. The study affirms Halliday's (1985b, p.101) assertion that "Transitivity specifies the different types of processes that are recognized in the language and the structures by which they are expressed." The study is a contribution to the literature on the interface between language and political discourse from a function paradigm and has implications for further research.

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