

Transitivity in Political Discourse – A Study of the Major Process Types in the 2009 State-of-the-Nation Address in Ghana

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Abstract

The study uses the transitivity model to analyze how President John Evans Atta Mills manipulates language in his first State-of-the-Nation address to express his political message to his people. The study is premised on Halliday's Systemic Functional Grammar, and the qualitative research design was used for the content analysis of the text. The study applies the interpretative content analysis to investigate the communicative functions of the linguistic choices made in the address. 536 clauses in the State-of-the-Nation address were used for analysis. The clauses were parsed into their constituent parts, the processes were identified, coded and categorized and their roles determined. The study discovered that among the major process types, material processes dominate the speech with a total occurrence of 59.14% whereas the mental process types are used minimally in the speech with a total occurrence of 14.37%. The dominant use of material processes implies that Mills and his government are the main actors working on a number of concrete projects in an attempt to create a sense of developmental progression and continuity. The minimal use of the mental processes also implies that Mills gives few assurances and promises to the people, and rather tells things as they are. This means that the address calls for vigorous and rigorous action and not a mere formality of assurances and wishful thinking. The study concludes that language structures can produce certain meanings and ideologies which are not explicit for readers. This is in affirmation to the assumption that language form is not fortuitous, but performs a communicative function.

Keywords: John Evans Atta Mills, Ghana, Systemic Functional Grammar, Transitivity, State-of-the-Nation Address, Political Ideologies.

1. Introduction

Discourse analysis is a general term for the number of approaches to analyze written, vocal or sign language use or any significant semiotic event. The objects of discourse analysis- discourse, writing, conversation, communicative event are variously defined in terms of coherent sequences of sentences, propositions, speech or turns-at-talk. Contrary to much of traditional linguists, discourse analysts do not only study language use 'beyond the sentence boundary', but also prefer to analyze naturally occurring language in context.

Language is a form of social practice (Fairclough, 2001, p. 16) and a purposeful means of communication (Schaff, 1960, p. 292). It is, thus, viewed as a tool to express the self and to establish and maintain a certain relationship with the other. The speaker's use of utterances to do this reveals his intentions (D'Amato, 1989).

Charteris-Black (2005, p.1) argues that within all types of political system, from autocratic, through oligarchic to democratic, leaders have relied on the spoken word to convince others of the benefits that arise from their leadership. One of these types of expressions is political speech (Martins, 2012). Political speeches are used by politicians to argue, to reason, to sustain their ideas, to continue in power, to oppress people and nations, to establish and perpetuate ideas, and or to defend people in their needs, to promote civil rights, and peace (Fairclough, 2000).

Speech is a force or a power that is used to accomplish different ends or goals in different circumstances, and it is important to understand the purposes or goals of the communicator and the circumstances under which the communication is taking place (Medhurst, 2010). The goal of a given speech can be determined through its communicative function, which is rendered through the kind of speech acts performed (Trosborg, 2000), as speech acts constitute the verbal actions accomplished with utterances (Yule, 2002). With presidential speeches, Campbell & Jamieson (2008) assert that the communicative goals are diverse as the presidents attempt to perform a plethora of functions with their speeches.

According to Bayley (2008), political discourse is a wide and diverse set of discourses or genres or registers, such as: policy papers, ministerial speeches, government press releases or press conferences, parliamentary discourse, party manifestoes (or platforms), electoral speeches, and so forth. These speeches are characterised by the fact that they are spoken or written by (or for) primary political actors – members of the government or the opposition, members of parliament, leaders of political parties, candidates for office.

One aspect of political discourses is the State-of-the-Nation address (henceforth called SONA) which presidents deliver to Parliament or Congress. It is a mandatory constitutional duty, (Article 67 of the 1992 Constitution of the Republic of Ghana), which requires the president of the Republic of Ghana to deliver to Parliament a message on the State of the Nation at the beginning of each session of Parliament. It is one of the few avenues through which Presidents are obliged to communicate with their people. Being such a rare

opportunity to communicate with the citizenry, each year's state of the nation address must ideally perform three functions. It must first of all update the citizens on the progress of projects promised in the previous year's address by the President. Secondly, the address is to inform the citizenry of recently launched initiatives, and thirdly the address seeks to articulate the President's vision and plans for the future. The speech shapes the way in which the people understand the system of government on both theoretical and functional levels. The address is a form of rhetoric where presidents commemorate their nation's past, envision the future, and try to set the tone for the next years in office while focusing on the present (Sigelman, 1996). In short, the address is expected to cover the three spectra of the socio-political landscape of the economy: past, present and future.

Over the years, following the assertion that political leaders are able to influence the mental models, knowledge, attitudes and eventually even the ideologies of their recipients (Van Dijk, 1993), there has been a heightened interest in studying the use of language in political discourse. Some of the studies (Alvi & Baseer, 2011a; Duran, 2008; Cheng, 2007; Boakye, 2014) focus on the inaugural and farewell addresses of presidents of nations in the perspective of Critical Discourse Analysis and Speech Acts Theories. Other scholars (Adjei, 2010; Kondowe, 2014; Ayoola, 2013; Frimpong, 2007) have used Systemic Functional Grammar to study theme-rheme analysis of newspaper editorials, meta-functional profile analysis of national anthems of Anglophone Africa, and modality in presidential keynote addresses in order to discover the intended meanings of the speakers.

2. Statement of Problem

The SONA is one the most important political genres very dear to the hearts of people of Ghana. This is because the address directly affects their livelihood. The SONA has since 2001, become an integral part of Ghana's democratic system, yet it has not received much attention in terms of research. Containing a lot of linguistic resources for analysis useful for language-based research, the SONA has rather received very little attention from scholars, especially in the domain of Functional Linguistics. As a result, people are not able to determine whether language has been used effectively in conveying the intended messages in the SONA or not.

This study analyses the language in the SONA in terms of its transitivity under Systemic Functional Grammar to know how effectively, or otherwise language has been used to present and convey the messages in the address. This will also enable the language user to better understand the intentions of the speakers in such addresses.

3. Purpose of the Study

The purpose of the study is two-fold: to identify the major process types used in the address, and to examine the communicative implications of the process types.

4. Systemic Functional Grammar

The study uses M.A.K Halliday's Systemic Functional Grammar (SFG) as its theoretical framework. The theory is termed systemic because it postulates that individuals have a wide range of choices available for them to produce linguistic utterances and texts. These utterances are, however, influenced by the social and cultural context in which they are exchanged, and that the processes of using language is semiotic: a process of making meanings by choosing. Christie (2002) argues that text and specific combination of situational context is a condition of cultural context. This means that choices from a given language are made in relation to a given context and the registers that are available to the language user. Whilst the system works as a network which integrates the notion of choice in language through grammar, the grammar offers language users a variety of options and choices. The theory is termed functional in the sense that language performs limitless practical functions in a variety of situations. The limitless practical functions may be generalized into a set of highly coded and abstract functions which are inherent in every language. These functions are ideational, interpersonal and textual.

According to Halliday (1994), language mainly serves three primary functions which are termed as metafunctions. The ideational metafunction considers the clause as a representation of reality. This means that the speaker or writer embodies in language his experience of the phenomena relating to the real world. This includes his experience of the internal world of his own consciousness, his reactions, cognitions and perceptions and also his linguistic acts of speaking and understanding. The ideational function mainly consists of transitivity and voice in which transitivity includes six processes called material, mental, relational, behavioural, verbal and existential. Amongst these processes, material, relational and mental processes are considered as primary whereas verbal, behavioural and existential processes are classified as secondary.

The interpersonal metafunction is concerned with establishing and maintaining the interaction between the speaker and the hearer. It sees the clause as an exchange. This indicates that language is used by the speaker as a means of his own intrusion into speech event, the expression of his comments, attitudes and evaluations, and also of the relationships that he sets up between himself and listener, in particular, the communication role that he adopts of informing, questioning, greeting, persuading and the like. Modality and mood are often used to

express interpersonal function. Mood shows what role the speaker selects in the speech situation and what role he assigns to the addressee. Modality refers to an intermediate range between extreme positive and negative. It objectively expresses speaker's judgement toward the topic, showing the social role relationship, scale of formality and power relationship.

The textual metafunction is concerned with presentation of ideational and interpersonal meanings as text. It considers the clause as message. Relating to textual function, Zhuaglin (1988) believes that language has mechanism to make any stretch of spoken or written discourse into a coherent and unified text and make a living passage different from a random list of sentences. This implies that though two sentences may have exactly the same ideational and interpersonal functions, they may be different in terms of textual coherence. However, this study mainly focuses on how meaning of Mill's speech is represented and realized in the transitivity grammar of the clause, which is the crucial component under the ideational metafunction.

5. Transitivity System

The main argument of the transitivity system is that our most powerful conception of reality consists of "goings-on" of doing, happening, feeling, being (Kondowe, 2014, p.176). Halliday (1994) further explains that these goings-on are sorted out in the semantic system of the language, and expressed through the grammar of the clause. The clause is, therefore, seen as meaning potential and it is analysed for its potential to represent both the outer and the inner world of human beings. Filho (2004 cited in Kondowe 2014) avers that the representation of our world of reality is achieved by means of a set of processes along with their participants and the circumstances in which they unfold. It expresses what's happening, what's being done, what is felt and in what state it is, (Cheng Yumin, 2007).

The transitivity system embodies six processes: material, mental, relational, behavioural, verbal, and existential. The term 'process' is used here in an extended sense to cover all phenomena and anything that is expressed by a verb; this can be an event, whether physical or not, state, or relation, (Kondowe 2014).

5.1 Material Processes

These are simply processes of *doing* or *action*. Material process verbs are those which describe an action or event. They can help answer the question *what happened?* These processes are those involving physical actions: running, throwing, scratching, cooking, and sitting down, etc. Material processes have two inherent participant roles associated with them. The first of this is the doer, which is called the Actor (what some linguistic analysts might call Agent): any material process has an Actor even though the Actor may not actually be mentioned in the clause.

5.2 Relational Processes

Thompson (2004) describes relational processes as the process of being in the world of abstract relations. Normally, an abstract relationship that exists between two participants associated with the process is considered. Here, a participant does not affect the other participant in a physical sense. They signal that a relationship exists between two participants but without suggestion that one participant affects the other in any way.

According to Goathy (2003), relational clauses are used to describe and explicitly categorise the participant in the text. Relational processes concern the specific types of relationships that are reflected in the language. Relational processes can be classified into two types: Attributive and Identifying (Thompson, 2004). Attributive relational process expresses what attributes a certain object has. This type of relational process basically suggests the relationship of 'x carries the attribute y,' where an attributive adjective is assigned to a participant, the carrier. The relationship between the attribute and the carrier is commonly expressed by the verb *be*. The identifying relational process expresses the identical properties of two entities. This process contains two independent participants: a Token that is a holder or an occupant that stands to be defined, and a Value that defines the token by giving it meaning, referent, function, status, or role (Halliday, 1994). It may be (a) *intensive*, expressing an 'X is a' relationship; (b) *possessive*, expressing an 'X has a' relationship; or (c) *circumstantial*, expressing an 'X is at/ on a' relationship.

5.3. Mental Processes

These are the processes of *sensing*: something that goes on in the internal world of the mind. Mental processes encode the meanings of feeling or thinking. They are internalized processes, in contrast to the externalized processes of doing and speaking. Halliday and Matthiessen (2004) observe that, unlike material processes, mental processes always involve at least one human participant who has the mind in which the process occurs. The participant involved in the mental process is known as Sensor. The Phenomenon is the entity which is felt, thought, or perceived by the sensor. Simpson (1993) is of the view that mental processes may be more delicately defined as perception processes (seeing, hearing), *reaction* (sometime called *affection or emotion*) process (liking, hating), and processes of *cognition* (thinking, understanding). There are two inherent participant roles

associated with mental processes, which are Sensor (the conscious being that is perceiving, reacting or thinking) and Phenomenon that can be a person, a concrete object, an abstraction, and so on (that which is perceived, reacted to or thought about) (ibid). It can be said that mental processes quote or report *ideas*.

6. METHODOLOGY

A: Materials and Sources

The speech under study was obtained from www.parliament.gh/publications/49, the official website of Ghana's Parliament on March 3, 2015.

B: Analysis Procedure

Having retrieved the address, sentences were analyzed according to Hallidayan Systemic Functional Grammar in which the most attention is paid to individual clauses which operate as indexes enabling the researcher to identify the processes. The identification of the process types was done by isolating the process types, and categorising them into six groups as explained in the transitivity method. Consequently, the processes were interpreted to get their communicative implications. The study focused on the three primary process types: material, relational, and mental processes.

At first, transitivity analysis was carried out to identify the three major process types. In this text, processes, participants, and circumstances were analyzed in line with the three steps developed by Burton (1982, p. 202) which are: (1) isolating the processes, and determining which participant (who or what) is doing each process, (2) determining what sort of processes they are, and which participant is engaged in which type of process, and (3) verifying who or what is affected or seems to be affected by each of these processes.

7. Results and Analysis

The results of the analysis are explained first by identifying the process types used in the address, followed by the analysis of the communicative functions encoded in the process types used in the address. The table below illustrates the process types used in the address and their frequencies.

Table 4.1 Frequency of Occurrences of the Process Types Used in the Address

PROCESS TYPE	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE (%)
Material	317	59.14
Relational	111	20.71
Mental	77	14.37
Verbal	26	4.85
Existential	5	0.93
Behavioural	0	0
Total	536	100

As can be seen from the table, the total number of processes used in the State of the Nation Address is 536. The process types that appear to be used the most predominantly are material processes with a frequency of 317 representing 59.14% of the data analysed. The second most frequently used in the address are relational processes with a frequency of 111 representing 20.71% of the data analysed. The third most frequent used process type is the mental group with a total frequency of 77 representing a percentage of 14.17 of the total data analysed. The mental process type is distantly followed by the verbal process with a frequency of 26 representing 4.85% of the corpus analysed. The existential process type follows with an insignificant frequency of 5 representing 0.93%. The Behavioural process, however, did not record any occurrence in the corpus analysed. The three major processes form about 94% of the corpus analysed, affirming what Halliday and Matthiessen say 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 minor process types in the transitivity system. The results of analysis of the three major process types are discussed in detail below.

7.1 Analysis of Material Processes Used in the Address

These are processes of doings or actions, usually concrete ones. They are divided into *actor* and *goal*. *Actor* is one who does something and *Goal* is an entity where process is extended. The material processes involve what is going on outside oneself. They express the idea that a participant (the Actor/Agent) does something to another participant (Goal/Object). In the address, we identify 317 'material' clauses. Examples of clauses with material processes are provided below. All clauses with material processes are labelled "Mt", with the corresponding clause number as counted in the address. The underlined expressions indicate the various components of the clause whereas the subscripts refer to the functional names assigned to the components. Some of the participant roles are illustrated in the following clauses as used in the address:

Mt14. I_{Actor} extend_{Material process} a hand of friendship_{Goal} to our brothers and sisters of the Minority_{Circumstance}

Mt21. As the third President in Ghana's Fourth Republic_{Circumstance} I_{Actor} will play_{Material process} my part_{Goal} to

add to their legacy Circumstance

Mt23. We Actor will depart Material process from the practice of undoing the valuable contributions of our predecessors Circumstance

Mt36. We Actor will address Material process transparency Goal through a three dimensional approach during this administration Circumstance

Mt46. We Actor shall introduce Material process a Bill Goal as promised in our manifesto to amend the Public Office Holders (Declaration of Assets and Disqualification) Act, 1998, Act 550 Circumstance

Mt50. Government Actor will support Material process such developmental projects, law reform and anti-corruption initiatives Goal

Mt60. I Actor made Material process a firm commitment Goal to stamp out drug trafficking Circumstance

Mt61. We Actor will review Material process the Narcotics Drugs Control, Enforcement and Sanctions Law Goal

Mt68. I Actor will begin Material process a monthly radio broadcast Goal to the nation as part of measures to enhance communication with the citizenry Circumstance

Mt164. We Actor will work Material process to make the scheme truly national Circumstance

Mt165b. We Actor will seek to implement Material process a Universal Health Insurance Scheme Goal

Mt168. We Actor will pursue Material process the policy of de-linking children from their parents Goal

We realise from the above clauses that Mills uses *I* and *We* actors to carry out the various material processes in the clause. These are all human actors; however the study also examines other nominal groups that have been assigned acting roles in various material clauses of the speech. A closer examination of actors and their roles indicate that they are ideologically motivated. The analysis of actor indicates that Mills identifies himself and his administration as main actors and sole doers of main developmental processes happening in the country. Actor *We* followed by *I* dominate the majority of clauses in the material world. The use of the pronoun *We* as an actor is traditionally associated with the ideology of inclusiveness (Halliday, 1994), and here, it is anaphorically employed in the speech to represent Mills himself and his administration, and sometimes, the citizens of Ghana.

The dominant use of the material process gives out the impression that Mills portrays himself as an active participant, a person of actions who cherishes his own values and would continue to be guided by them. He assures the masses that his administration has the sole responsibility of developing the nation and that he would continue to tap ideas from other sources to enhance his governance. He foregrounds himself as a leader with democratic credentials and thus delegates certain key responsibilities to his subordinates and other people and institutions that are not part of his government. The president identifies himself as the main actor charged with the responsibility of adding to the legacy bequeathed to the nation by past governments in terms of democratic rule and nation building.

In Mills' address, he uses passivisation to hide agency, that is, he effaces himself and puts in his place the idea mooted by the general public. It is indeed a way of highlighting the information and decisions taken consensually by his government, thereby pushing the speaker (the President) to the background or removing him altogether. In situations where the names of the speakers are completely removed, individuals cannot usually take too much glory for the success of their suggestions or actions. This alludes to the fact that Mills wants to act in connection with other members and institutions in his government, party members, and all stakeholders involved in national development. An example of such agentless clauses is:

Mt72 "*The implementation of the following planned projects will commence*".

On the contrary, Mills will not accept too much blame when his decisions or actions cost the nation. After all, there is no record of his responsibility in getting the idea through. This also implies that if Mills fails to implement those policies and promises he made during the electioneering campaign, he cannot be held accountable for he is not the sole actor. In clause Mt121a, Mills claims that "The private sector development agenda will be driven and monitored". The construction above does not have an actor acting or impinging on the material process "drive" and "monitored". The construction above does not have an actor acting or impinging on the material process "drive" and "monitored". The president disassociates himself from the statement and cannot be held responsible for any shortfall in the implementation of his promised policies.

According to Wang (2010), material process as a process of doing, is a good choice in presidential addresses to demonstrate what the incumbent government has achieved; what project and development it is carrying out and what the government will do in different aspects of the economy, home and abroad. In a similar manner, Mills uses the material processes to recount the contributions made by distinguished personalities in the country with special references to the former presidents of Ghana and other non-political figures. The president uses the material processes to arouse the confidence of the people towards his government and to get their support in stringent and austere measures the government will take in his tenure of office. He concretises his vision and calls on the people to rally behind the government in the implementation of set target. It is important to note that the material processes are used to set new vision for accomplishment.

Mills thus uses material processes to set out his political and economic principles that would govern the

new administration by demonstrating what the new government has put in place in terms of policy, what they are doing in terms of projects, and what they will do in different aspects of the economy. Through the processes of doings and actions, he affirms his commitment to values the nation has pursued so far by creating a sense of continuity between the glories of the past chalked by past leaders and the challenges of the present he is poised to face, and to reassure his audience that the transition to the new tenure in office will not pose any threat to the nation's historic legacy.

7.2 Analysis of Relational Processes used in the Address

These are processes of being and becoming. These processes have two modes, attributive mode and identifying mode. Attributive processes describe the entity and contain two participants, *Carrier* and *Attribute*. Identifying processes are the kind of processes which identify one entity in terms of another. Identifying processes also contain two participants, *Token* and *Value*. They use verbs such as “be”, “have”, “become”, etc. The relational processes involve classifying and identifying one experience with other experiences. They relate two or more terms in a variety of ways. The relational processes are similar to how the verb “to be” is used in English. They serve to identify and characterize, and are further subdivided into processes of ‘being’ (intensive and circumstantial) and ‘having’ (possessive), (Halliday & Matthiessen, 1999).

In the address, we identify 111 relational clauses. All relational processes were labelled “Rp”, with their corresponding numbers as counted in the address. The underlined expressions indicate the various components of the clause whereas the subscripts refer to the functional names assigned to the components. The various participant roles are illustrated in the following clauses as used in the address:

Rp8. The measure of the accomplishments of this House _{Token} must be _{Circumstantial relational process} the degree to which its results benefit the nation _{Value}

Rp16a. Consensus-building _{Carrier} is _{Intensive relational process} vital _{Attribute}

Rp16b. Time _{Carrier} is _{Intensive relational process} very precious _{Attribute}

Rp19. Ghana _{Carrier} is _{Intensive relational process} indeed grateful to them for their service to our Nation _{Attribute}

Rp20. We _{Carrier} are _{intensive relational process} also grateful to them _{Attribute}

Rp24. A house that is constantly rebuilding its foundation _{Carrier} is _{Intensive relational process} doom to remain stuck to the foundation level _{Attribute}

Rp33. They _{Carrier} are _{Intensive relational process} under resourced _{Attribute}

Rp35. Transparency in government and the fight against corruption _{Carrier} are _{Intensive relational process} cardinal for sustainable development _{Attribute}

Rp43. Which _{Token} is made up of _{Circumstantial relational process} all the political parties with representation in Parliament _{Value}

Rp45. The Bills _{Token} are _{Circumstantial relational process} Public Financing of political Parties Bills etc _{Value}

Rp48. The criticism of the Executive starving them of funds _{Token} will be _{Circumstantial relational process} a thing of the past _{Value}

In clauses Rp19 and Rp20 above, the carrier is seen to carry some load of gratitude in honour of its past political leaders. This load is made manifest in the attribute through the intensive relational processes as shown in the clauses above. These relational processes establish a symbiotic relationship between the carrier and the attribute. Mills identifies himself as a lover of consensus building and time consciousness. These two factors are very essential in his discharge of responsibility of renewing the hopes and aspirations of his people whose expectations are squashed in a dying economy. Mills is hopeful that the burden of sacrifice will result in great opportunities and progress for the people of Ghana. Again, he stresses that he is committed to bringing the fiscal excesses under control. Here, Mills identifies himself as the sole person who has been charged with the responsibility to restoring hope to his people, hence we see him as the main carrier of the idea for restoring lost hopes and aspirations.

The analysis further discovers that Mills evenly distributes attributive and identification clauses in the introductory part, but hugely preferred identifications in the main body of the address. He further uses most relational clauses to identify himself as the main carrier who spearheads the government's “Better Ghana Agenda”. Mills uses these relational clauses to provide definitions and explanations of the power he wields, and the political and economic state of the nation. He, therefore, renders himself an interpreter of the current situation that assigns attributes to the participants involved. Just like Obama's speech, as observed by Wang (2010) cited in Kondowe (2014), Mills chooses processes of being as an appropriate way to explain the complex relationship between some abstract items such as “time and precious” and “consensus building and vital” etc because they sound definite. These processes elaborate the relationship between ideals and speaker's beliefs which can reach their aim of making the reasoning naturally and unconsciously accepted by the audience. In relational clauses, Mills is portrayed as an interpreter of the then Ghanaian situation that assigned attributes to the participants involved by tactically choosing identifications of positive values to create good impression to the citizens and solidify his political image.

We further observe from the circumstantial relational clauses that they are predominantly occupied by the process “to be” notable amongst them is the “be” element “is”, which occurs thirteen times in the circumstantial relational clauses. Other verbs which occupy the process slot are “am”, “are”, “must be”, “has been”, “will be” and other stative processes such as “remains”, “becomes”, “made up of” among others. These process types are not action-oriented but show the state or condition of being. These relational processes serve to link the carriers and their attributes and make their relationship clear to both the reader and the listener. We see that the inherent ideological loadings found in the carriers are made manifest through these relational processes.

In essence, President Mills uses the relational processes to assert himself as the president by virtue of the power that he now holds, and to identify himself with the people, and to indicate his new position that will mandate him to carry out certain policies which hitherto he would not have been able to. Mills’ use of relational processes is an effort to create a very positive image of himself in the minds of the masses. It is in this light that he needs to identify himself, his new position, authority and vision for the country. His use of the relational processes is in line with Halliday’s relational assertions of ‘being’ and ‘having’ (Halliday & Matthiessen, 1999). Mills’ use of these relational processes explains how he is going to use his new position and authority to propel development and his party’s “Better Ghana Agenda.

7.3 Analysis of Mental Processes Used in the Address

Mental processes encode the meanings of feeling or thinking. They are internalized processes, in contrast to the externalized processes of doing and speaking. Halliday and Matthiessen (2004) observe that, unlike material processes, mental processes always involve at least one human participant who has the mind in which the process occurs. They involve the human senses - perception, affection, and cognition. They entail the processes of encoding meanings of thinking, feeling, perceiving or desiring. These are processes of sensing, thinking, feeling and perceiving, having *Sensor* and *Phenomenon*. *Sensor* is the person who senses, *Phenomenon* is the object involved in the process. It is the entity which is felt, thought, or perceived by the sensor.

The president uses seventy-seven mental processes in his address for different purposes. Clauses with mental processes are labelled “Mc” with their corresponding clause numbers as counted in the address. The underlined expressions indicate the various components of the clause whereas the subscripts refer to the functional names assigned to the components. The various participant roles are illustrated in the following clauses based on the sub-sections as used in the address:

Mc9. Ghana _{Sensor} expects _{Mental process} that you will work in the National interest _{Phenomenon}

Mc12. I _{Sensor} remind _{Mental process} my brothers and sisters of the Majority in this House _{Phenomenon}

Mc13. We _{Sensor} should never forget _{Mental process} the men and women whose worries stretch from pay day to pay day _{Phenomenon}

Mc54. We _{Sensor} believe _{Mental process} also that _{Phenomenon}

Mc67. We _{Sensor} recognise _{Mental process} our responsibility to the media _{Phenomenon}

Mc69a. We all _{Sensor} value _{Mental process} accountability of government and free expression _{Phenomenon}

Mc69b. We _{Sensor} expect _{Mental process} the media to look at its own inadequacies _{Phenomenon}

Mc99. I _{Sensor} assure _{mental process} you that we shall all benefit when the good times come _{Phenomenon}

Mc241. The three regions of the north and the central Region _{Sensor} show _{Mental process} unacceptable levels of poverty and deprivation _{Phenomenon}

Mc273. I _{Sensor} believe _{Mental process} it is possible to bring back smiles to the faces of all Ghanaians _{Phenomenon}

Mc278a. I _{Sensor} believe _{Mental process} that all Ghanaians would join me to elevate Ghanaian politics beyond pettiness _{Phenomenon}

From the clauses above, clause Mc9 is seen to have a non-human sensor “Ghana” cognitively sensing the phenomenon of working in the national interest through the mental process “expects”. The sensor can perceive that sometimes certain things done by the House are not in the interest of mother Ghana. Clause Mc12 also has a similar structure: a human sensor *I*, cognitive mental process *remind* and phenomenon *my brothers and sisters of the Majority in this House*. This clause indicates that the sensor sees from afar that politicians sometimes fail to keep faith with the men and women who gave them the mandate to rule. The sensor is therefore using this endearment phrase to entreat his side of the House to remember the suffering masses on whose vote they are rejoicing. Similarly, in clause Mc13, the president reiterates his empathetic feeling toward the ordinary Ghanaian citizen. He does this through the cognitive sub-category of sensing “should never forget” which serves as a bridge between the sensor and the phenomenon. The sensor has the phenomenon at heart and therefore reminds his government functionaries of the obligation to keep faith with the citizens at all times, not only in the campaign periods.

In clause Mc99, the sensor gives assurance to the audience in order to calm their nerves after telling them of the economic situation that obtains in Ghana. The sensor hopes for good times to come. It can be inferred that before the good times come, the sensor is implicitly entreating Ghanaians to summon a new spirit of patriotism, of responsibility, where each of us resolves to pitch in and work harder and look after not only

ourselves but each other. By so doing, the good times perceived by the sensor will come where there will be new energy to harness, new jobs to be created, new schools to build, and threats to meet, alliances to repair. These two examples reveal that Mills hopes, Ghanaians can join together and rebuild their confidence and he also believes his government is capable of surmounting any unforeseen phenomenon against the nation.

Mills again uses one mental clause (Mc241) to talk about the perception of poverty and deprivation prevailing in the three regions of the North, and the Central Region. Here, the sensor is “the three regions of the North and the Central Region”, sensing the phenomenon “unacceptable levels of poverty and deprivation” through the cognitive mental process “show”. Mills recognises that the level of poverty and deprivation endemic in the three regions of the North and the Central Region is not a mere perception, but that which is backed by national statistics. Clause Mc241 is indicative of the fact that communities in these four regions exhibit worsening trends of infant, child and maternal mortality, yet these regions possess great potential to propel the country into a more buoyant and vibrant economy. The mental process “show” used in this clause helps us to visualise the extent of deprivation prevalent in these four named regions.

In clause Mc273, the sensor is of a strong conviction that all hope is not lost and that it is possible to restore hope to the hopeless and perplexed Ghanaians. He is of a strong conviction that Ghanaians will back him to move politics in Ghana from triviality to serious-mindedness. Clause Mc280b has the relative pronoun “who” as sensor. This relative pronoun together with the clause it introduces modifies the object “Ghanaians” which is the implicit sensor in clause Mc280b. Mills uses the perceptive mental process “should see” in clause Mc280b whose phenomenon is “your teamwork as a prime example of peaceful and productive co-existence”. The meaning encoded in this clause is that Members of Parliament should strive to ensure unity in diversity. Though members differ with regard to political ideology and ethnicity, their speeches and deeds must show clearly to Ghanaians that the law makers are at peace with one another. The sensor will want to perceive a strong co-existence amongst our legislators.

In clause Mc285a, the president, who is the sensor “I”, affirms his belief in a cognitive mental process “believe” and assures the people in the phenomenon “that we can”. The phenomenon embodies our ability to build a unified country where all citizens have the opportunity to give off their best to Mother Ghana while earning a good education and a dignified standard of living, to live under the Rule of Law, whereby we are all governed by the same set of laws and are equal before the law, to build a better and prosperous Ghana that works in the interest of all Ghanaians.

These wishes are what the president thinks “we can” do as a people with a common destiny. From clause Mc269b to Mc285a, we are able to sum up the president’s stream of consciousness. First, he perceives that many factors militate against politics in this country and wants us to be kind and generous in resolving those perceived problems. By so doing, he believes it is possible to restore hope to all Ghanaians. He further believes that all Ghanaians should join him to uplift Ghanaian politics beyond triviality. He enjoins parliament to begin this step for others to see and imitate. These are the things he believes “we can”. From the analysis, it can be concluded that mental processes have the potential of arousing the emotions of our audience (Kondowe, 2014).

8. Conclusion

From the analysis, we realize that Mills uses more material processes than any other process type in the address. Material processes of transitivity are processes of doing, usually physical and tangible actions. Most of the concrete developmental projects outlined in the address are presented in material processes. In addition, relational processes are found to be the second highest used process type in the address. This means that Mills identifies himself with the people; asserts himself as the third president of the fourth republic which mandates him to carry out certain policies which hitherto he would not have been able to do. Mills’ use of relational processes is an effort to create a very positive image of himself in the minds of the masses. His use of these relational processes explains how he is going to use his new position and authority to propel development and his party’s agenda during his first tenure of office. Additionally, Mills usually encodes mental reactions such as perception, thoughts and feelings using mental processes. These processes give insight into Mills’ consciousness and how he senses the experience of the reality.

The study confirms that the choice of linguistic forms in any discourse is motivated (Halliday, 1971; Simpson, 2004). There are often several ways in which a writer can use the resources of language to express the same experience or event in a text. In the creative process and the political arena, literary writers and politicians respectively either consciously or unconsciously choose certain linguistic items over others to represent experiences or events for stylistic effects. A text will, therefore, always have an ideological orientation, which depends on the social, cultural and historical framework within which the text is produced.

The study affirms that the transitivity system helps users of language to express their experience, or what Bloor and Bloor (1995, p.107-109) call as “represent their perceptions of reality”. This 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.” From the quotations above, we can conclude that

analyzing clauses by the transitivity system enables the reader to know exactly all the processes in a given text; and this further helps him to know exactly how human beings state their experience in the world. The study has revealed that language structures can produce certain meanings and ideologies which are not always explicit for readers. This means that transitivity system has proven very useful in uncovering the participants involved, how the speaker/writer locate himself in relation to the others, and whether they take an active or passive role in the discourse. The analysis has further been used to discover the relation between meanings and wordings that account for the organization of linguistic features in the address. In summary, transitivity shows how speakers/writers encode in language their mental reflection of the world and how they account for their experience of the world around them.

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