

The Relations of Dependency and Independency in the Inaugural Speeches of Three Vice Chancellors of a Ghanaian University

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Abstract

This study applies Systemic Functional Grammar Theory (Halliday & Matthiessen, 2004) to analyze the packing of sentence information in the inaugural speeches of selected Vice-Chancellors of the University of Ghana Legon. It explores the taxis system: parataxis and hypotaxis clauses which are dominant and how they relate in the inaugural speeches and orient in meaning in the speeches. The communicative implications of the choice of the taxis relations encoded in the inaugural speeches are also explored. With three (3) inaugural speeches from three Vice-Chancellors of the University of Ghana, Legon as the data, a qualitative and textual analysis is done on 234 clauses regarding their complexity and contribution to meaning in the speeches. Findings show that the selected Vice-Chancellors utilized paratactic structures more frequently than the hypotactic ones, which is contrary to the findings with editorial texts by Opoku and Adjei (2023). While hypotaxis recorded 74, representing 31.62%, paratactic clauses recorded 160, representing 68.38%. The predominance of parataxis than hypotaxis suggests the equality in importance and relevance of the different concerns expressed by the speakers, though the percentages of the clause complexes in each inaugural address vary. The study provides valuable insights into how language is effectively used to establish authority, persuade audience, and position self within respective academic communities. Insights into how language use reflects the socio-political contexts of academic leadership are also revealed.

Key words: Taxis, Parataxis, Paratactic, Hypotaxis, Hypotactic, Systemic, Clause Complexes

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1. Introduction and Background

Public speeches are delivered orally, and are often well-prepared in writing and presented on formal occasions (Feng and Liu, 2010). Based on the functions and contents, an inaugural speech is a kind of public speech with purposes to influence a certain group of people. Inaugural speeches are precisely the first speeches presented by people occupying leadership positions. Such speeches often serve as major means of appealing to people after a major selection, election, or appointment is announced or confirmed, as is the case of the inaugural speeches of Vice-Chancellors and presidents the world over. The presentation of inaugural speeches serves as a diplomatic means of selling new leadership ideas to people. It can also be referred to as *Acceptance Speech*. According to Ayeomoni (2007), an inaugural speech is equally regarded as a *Maiden Speech*. Language is distinctively a human phenomenon and the tool for all forms of human communication. Akinkulore (2013) argues that language is the best gift to man and it is as old as man himself. It is very obvious that the society at large depends so much on language for its continual existence. Once an individual acquires a language, it becomes the greatest tool in their existence as social beings as it is language which is the preserve for communicative function.

The four skills of language learning and usage in a second or foreign language context are complex (Owusu et al., 2014), however, speaking turns out to be more challenging because it requires critical thinking, fluency, and accuracy, in order to maintain meaningful interactions between those in the interaction process to establish meaningful relationships (Halliday, 1985, Halliday & Matlinsen, 2004; Eggins, 2004). In every academic discourse, there is a shared exchange between the speaker and their addressees, though the speaker controls the discourse. Mostly, the generic purpose of every discourse is to inform, remind, educate, entertain, motivate, and

direct in specific ways. Therefore, it becomes essential that the choice of language used by the speakers should acknowledge the listener or audience for which the message is meant to affect, especially in monologic speeches like the data for the current study, (Musyoka & Karanja, 2014, Adedun & Mekiliuwa, 2010). The inaugural speeches of vice chancellors of universities remain a topmost important discourse in every academic community due to the fact that, like the inaugural addresses of presidents, these speeches present the entirety of the visions of every newly appointed vice chancellor. Numerous studies have been conducted with different text types regarding the complexity of clauses used and the relationships there are, for the establishment of different communicative meanings, (Opoku & Adjei, 2023; Othman & Qutob, 2022; Nguyen, and Quynh (2020); Kurniawan, Luardini, and Karani, (2021); Mensah, 2019; Adjei & Opoku, 2017; Owusu-Ansah, 2013, etc.). Interesting findings have resulted from these studies to establish and also confirm the functional role of clauses and language use in general, for meaningful and purposeful communication. The interest in the application of the different metafunctions of SFG to the analysis of texts continues to grow in research in language in order to contribute to the creation and sharing of knowledge. Inaugural speeches/addresses are among the important pieces of communication that have attracted researchers attention for the analysis of discourses, and for the study of language. The inaugural speeches of vice-chancellors of the various tertiary institutions in Ghana are important pieces of communication that, due to their subject matter, are highly regarded in both academic and socioeconomic circles. These speeches are expected to communicate purposeful and meaningful messages. People have high interest in such speeches by vice chancellors in the same way that people are interested in presidential inaugural addresses. Analyzing vice chancellors' inaugural speeches will help to expand research on inaugural speeches, SFG and functional uses of language as well as the teaching and learning of English grammar.

This study therefore explores the language of inaugural speeches delivered by selected vice chancellors of the University of Ghana, the premier University in Ghana. The exploration involves an investigation/examination of how the grammatical choices help to enact meaningful interpersonal communication between the selected vice chancellor, the university community, and the nation at large. This is done by identifying the taxic choices and the relationships between them on one hand, and how the relationships help in meaning-making.

2. Literature Review and Framework

2.1 Literature Review

The theory underpinning this study is Systemic Functional Grammar (SFG) propounded by Halliday in the 1960s and Halliday & Matthiessen (1994, 2004, and 2014).

Jones-Mensah et. al. (2021) emphasize that SFG “indicates how language is considered as a dovetail or a grid of systems for generating the unambiguousness of thought”. This implies that the theory of SFG does not consider only the rules of language to create meaning, but rather, resorts to all the linguistic elements including the form to create meaning. Thus, meaning in SFG is dependent on the combination of words, phrases, and clauses in a text since the text is the product of the linguistic items that form the composition (Jones-Mensah et. al., 2021). This study employs the clause complex framework of the SFG. This framework enables the analysis of ideas across and beyond sentences. It also helps to reveal the meanings or ideas that writers hide behind the structures.

A clause complexing framework refers to a theoretical or conceptual model that is used to describe the organization and structure of clauses within a sentence or discourse. It provides a systematic way of understanding how different clauses are related to each other syntactically and semantically. In other words, it helps to explain how clauses function and interact within a larger linguistic context.

2.2. Empirical Review

On clause complexing, numerous studies have already been conducted from different perspectives such as media texts (Adjei and Opoku, 2017; Eid, 2016; Nasution, 2019), political texts (Adjei and Ewusi-Mensah, 2015; Adjei, Ewusi-Mensah and Okoh, 2016), or literary texts (Wulansari, 2017; Adjei and Enyan, 2018; Kurnia and Hidayat, 2019; Mayasari, Lubis and Putri, 2021). Other studies involving clause complexes have concentrated on academic texts with different focuses on: students' writings (Okor, 2023; Yuniar, 2018; Ngongo, 2018), abstracts (Rapatni, 2022; Nkansah, 2023), letters of recommendations (Donkor, 2023), problem statement sections (Abedu, Afful and Nsaidoo, 2024), etc. The majority of these studies have revealed that expansion relations are substantially used across the different text types. While some of these studies are immediately related to the one being conducted now, others may not be directly related to the subject at hand but still important for the investigation.

From the perspective of academic discourses, Leong (2021) studied research articles from the humanities and sciences as distinct varieties of texts, and found that the distribution of both dependent and independent clauses are equal with the sciences making a considerable use of clause simplexes and paratactic extensions as against embedded clauses and projections in the humanities. Leong (2021) points out that writing in the sciences makes more use of simple clause structures than the writing in the humanities. This study makes a good demonstration of variation across disciplines in the use of tactic and logico-semantic relations, making it significant for the current study.

Abedu, Afful and Nsaidoo (2024) explore the problem statement sections of MPhil theses from three disciplines (Nursing, English Language and Mathematics) from the notion of clause complexing in Systemic Functional Linguistics. Focusing on the taxis and logico-semantic relations, the study reveals that in terms of the basic clause complex structure in the three disciplines, English Language uses a lot of clause complexes than the two other disciplines. All three disciplines were also found to use hypotactic relations and hypotactic projection of locution instead of idea. This is because, in the statement of problems, writers report what others have said and not their own ideas/ in terms of expansion relations however, variations exist across the three disciplines with English using more elaboration, closely followed by Nursing, and Mathematics using extension and enhancement. The researchers conclude that clause complexing is not only determined by genre and mode but by the conventions of academic discipline.

In media texts, Adjei and Opoku (2017), the way the clauses are put together gives the editorials a variety of interpretations, from entertaining to informing. Using the framework of clause complexes, they clarify meanings and point out the objectives of particular constructions and writings. The findings showed that the clause complexes of elaboration, extension, and enhancement in the editorial texts. Overall, enhancement is most frequently utilized, followed by elaboration and extension. Given that each nexus (relation between clauses) inside a clause complex is characterized by the choice of expansion, recognition is generally good. However, the taxis component of the clause complex framework which is the focus of this study, was not examined by Adjei and Opoku (2017). It is hoped that the findings from this study will be a good complement to the findings of Adjei and Opoku (ibid).

Regarding vice-chancellors' speeches, Asafo-Adjei and Tetteh (2020) look at the implications of vice chancellors' speeches from a pragmatic perspective using the Gricean Conversational Maxims. Selected investiture speeches from vice-chancellors of selected Ghanaian technical universities were analysed using O'Leary's (2014) eight-step process for conducting document analysis. Findings revealed that the maxims of quality, quantity, and manner were deemed to have been broken in the speeches, even though the audience comprehended the implications of the speech due to the contexts, timing, and culture.

Opoku et al. (2022), conduct a textual analysis of modality in a Vice-Chancellor's matriculation speech, from the Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology. The results indicated that the declarative and imperative moods were utilized in the speech, with declarative dominating (86%). The study however found that the speech lacked the interrogative mood, which affects the communicative potential of the speech, because, the interrogative mood is foundational in upholding the interpersonal interaction between the speaker and the listener.

Other studies that analyse vice-chancellors' speeches have done so from the angles of CDA (Ibunan, 2023), Rhetorical structure (Abusah, 2023), etc. The current study explores clause complexity in the inaugural addresses of the vice-chancellors of the University of Ghana, Legon, looking at how meaning is systematically created through the ways in which clauses are combined in the presentation of arguments. The creation of logical relations between clauses is also examined to see how they contribute to the overall interpretation of the speeches. Compound, complex, and compound-complex sentences are the three sentence structural categories examined.

3.0 Methodology

Given the exploratory nature of the study, the qualitative research approach was used to investigate the relations of dependence and independence in the selected speeches. Creswell (2018) avows that qualitative research is an approach to exploring and understanding the meaning individuals or groups ascribe to a social or human problem. This implies that qualitative design is used to investigate what something expresses or represents. As noted by Creswell (1994), with its flexible procedure, qualitative design is the appropriate design for exploring and describing phenomena that are prominent to the researcher. The qualitative content analytic approach was

used since it is appropriate for the analysis of documents such as texts to systematically determine the presence of certain words, pictures, or themes. According to Hsei and Shannon (2005:1278), qualitative content analysis is a “research method for the subjective interpretation of the content of text data through the systematic classification processes of coding and identifying themes or patterns.” The qualitative content analytic approach helped us to use the clause complex system in SFL to create a coding frame for the data, and to quantify the patterns for the presentation of results.

3.1 Population and Sampling Techniques

The institutional context of the study is the University of Ghana, Ghana’s premier university. The University of Ghana has, and continues to produce highly qualified skilled manpower for both local and global market. As the premier university in Ghana, the University of Ghana has had more vice-chancellors than the others. It was chosen based on data availability from its website. The data consist of three inaugural speeches from three Vice-Chancellors of the University of Ghana. Purposive sampling technique was used to choose three most recent inaugural addresses from the University of Ghana, Legon. These were the inaugural speeches of the sitting vice-chancellor, and the two immediate past ones. The speeches were downloaded from the University of Ghana website. Data were coded to differentiate each speech from the other as in INAUG. SP1 to INAUG. SP3, and clauses within each speech from the other as CC1 to CC234 to present the speeches and clauses respectively. For the procedure of analysis, Halliday and Matthiessen’s (2004; 2014) notion of clause complex structure was employed. The clause complex structures in the selected inaugural speeches were used as data to answer the research questions.

4.0 Analysis and Discussion

4.1. Structural Sentence Types used predominantly in the Inaugural Speeches

Numerous clause complexes that equally or unequally highlight the concepts put out by the Vice-Chancellors were found in the inaugural speeches under consideration. Each of the three (3) inaugural speeches had an average of between thirty-one (31) and ninety- eight (98) clauses, both simplexes and complexes. The inaugural speeches were coded from INAUG. SP 1 to INAUG. SP 3; each speech's clause complexes were given a number and a clause complexes code ranging from CC1 to CC234. The distribution of sentences running in the various inaugural speeches shown in the subsequent tables below addresses the question; *what taxis relations of clause complexes are used in the inaugural speeches of the Vice-Chancellors?*

4.2 Types of Interdependencies Employed in the Inaugural Speeches

Interdependency implies a grammatical system that determines the sentential relationships which exist between structural types of sentences. To explore the prevailing selections of sentence information in the inaugural speeches, the results of the analysis are elucidated by identifying the structural sentence types used in the inaugural speeches. The results on the systems of interdependencies illustrate the taxis types and their frequencies in the inaugural speeches under study and are tabulated below.

Table 1: Taxis types and their frequencies in the inaugural speeches

INAUG. SP	CC	PARATAXIS	PERCENTAGE	HYPOTAXIS	PERCENTAGE (%)
INAUG SP. UG. 1	73	49	67.12	24	32.88
INAUG SP. UG. 2	63	48	76.19	15	23.81
INAUG SP. UG. 3	98	63	64.29	35	35.71
Total	234	160	68.38	74	31.62

The examination of clause complexes shown in the table above suggests that parataxis or compound sentences predominate over hypotaxis or complex sentences in the inaugural addresses. This demonstrates that the inaugural addresses feature both forms of interdependency interactions between clauses: parataxis and hypotaxis, which alternate across the text span with a wide range of independent relations.

It is evident that selected Vice-Chancellors use both equal and unequal status sentences when writing their speeches, especially inaugural speeches, with the intention that while their speeches may be lengthy, they appear to effectively manage time given that all inaugural speeches must be delivered quickly. According to the

numbers, the selected Vice-Chancellors utilize parataxis more frequently than hypotaxis; their usage is almost twice as great. There were 234 clause complexes in the inaugural addresses, as can be seen. While hypotaxis recorded 74, representing 31.62%, and parataxis connection recorded 160, representing 68.38%. When there are both equal and unequal concepts present in a sentence, the dominant or equal thought is referred to as the domain, and the dependent or unequal idea is known as the coDomain. The coDomain must exist for the Domain to make sense, therefore if the Domain is absent, the coDomain is given less weight or authority. As they describe how the speaker or writer conceptualizes the link created between one sentence and another, at one point in the discourse, Downing and Locke (2006) claim that the semantic connections and consequences are variable in this sense. Relationships between units of uneven status are dependent ones. Subordinating conjunctions (subordinators) such as *because, although, if, as, which, who, when*, and others are the ones that most clearly indicate the dependent connection in terms of syntax and semantics. These links do not just connect clauses inside sentences; they also connect clauses within paragraphs and paragraphs within discourse. This suggests that while parataxis is more common than hypotaxis, the percentage of separate sentence complexes in each inaugural address varies. The predominance of parataxis clauses over hypotaxis clauses appear to demonstrate the equality of different thoughts and issues. As a result, if a thought is presented on an equal footing, it means that the concerns are equally important and relevant.

4.3 Degree of Parataxis or Equivalence in the Inaugural Speeches

The association between equal status and often similarly shaped units is known as parataxis. Each clause's content must be seen semantically as having some relation to the others. The Vice-Chancellors use these relationships to equitably promote their thoughts in the inaugural addresses, according to the statistics. By using synchronizers like *and, or, and but*, the connecting relationship is made clear. In the inaugural addresses, it was noted that clause complexes are all synced paratactically to balance the notions. These compound clauses or paratactic clause complexes include two or more main concepts that stand alone as independent clauses and are given equal significance.

Table 2: Parataxis Relationships in the Inaugural Speeches

1 initiating clause	2 // continuing clause
<i>// CC27 my job is well cut for me</i>	<i>//but it is no mean one//.</i>
<i>//CC22 Other public universities went ahead of us in this advancement of gender equality,</i>	<i>// but when the University of Ghana did it, we did it in a comprehensive Style//.</i>
<i>//CC73 we can only get finer and better anniversary</i>	<i>// as we move towards our 75th in just about two years//.</i>
<i>//CC91 It is all the doing of the lord called you</i>	<i>//and you must know that the lord has to lead UG for a purpose//.</i>
<i>//CC88 Today marks another milestone in as The history of the University of Ghana</i>	<i>// as I take my turn to be inducted into office the 12th Vice-Chancellor of the premier university of Ghana//.</i>
<i>//CC225 that right is not provided in a Vacuum by society.</i>	<i>// but is generally regarded as essential in generating knowledge for development//.</i>

See the above examples in the appendix; INAUG. SP1 CC27, INAUG. SP1 CC22, INAUG. SP1 CC73, INAUG. SP2 CC91, INAUG. SP2 CC86, INAUG. SP2 CC99, INAUG. SP2 CC101, INAUG. SP2 CC107, 108,110,113,118,119, and INAUG. SP3 CC 173, 174,175, 180,186,187, 196, 197, 205,207, 208,209.

Clause complexes with the same or equivalent weights have been shown in the examples above. All of the clauses in the table's left column are dominant or domain clauses, and the clauses in the table's right column are also dominant or domain clauses. This suggests that every sentence on the left and right sides of the table is significant and extremely vital. Typically, they only include a handful of clauses, and more critically, none of them is related to one another. When there is no subordinate portion, the impact is that every part of the sentence is seen as equally essential. Paratactic clauses are used to highlight what the most important part (the independent clause) of a clause is. Because they start the growth of the clause complexity, the clauses with label 1 are the beginning clauses. Contrarily, the clauses with the numbers 2 or 3 are continuing clauses since they expand the original concept into a more intricate plan. The information supplied in one sentence is as important as that which is presented in the other and is introduced by linkers, these clauses have equal statuses in grammar. Some examples are provided below;

INAUG. SP1 CC22 /// *Other public universities went ahead of us in this advancement in gender equality, **but** when the University of Ghana did it, we did it in a comprehensive style.*///

INAUG. SP1 CC19/// *I am indebted to all my Destiny Helpers (too numerous to attempt to recount) – your prayers, advice, interventions, **and** reassuring messages sustained me through this journey.*///

INAUG. SP1 CC 28/// *Madam Chair, the University of Ghana has, over the years, lived up to its mandate, **but** this has not been easy.*///

INAUG. SP2 CC88/// *Today marks another important milestone in the history of the University of Ghana **as** I take my turn to be inducted into office as the 12th Vice-Chancellor of the premier university of Ghana.*///

INAUG. SP3 CC198 /// *They have governance structures that have evolved slowly **and** survived the test of time.*///

INAUG. SP3 CC234 /// *The Executive Committee has already taken a decision to comply with the court order granting the relief sought by the complainants **but** the bigger picture of this university's future and how Commonwealth Hall fits in remains to be addressed.*///

4.4 Degree of Unequalness or Hypotaxis in the Inaugural Speeches

When units of different statuses are connected, according to Downing and Locke (2006), the connection is one of dependence. A group of clauses or another clause is reliant on another clause. Therefore, there is instability in the connection between the clauses, just as there is with coordination and apposition. Grammatically, subordinating conjunctions such as because, although, if, and as are most effective at indicating the dependent connection.

Below are samples of the hypotaxis distribution of clause complexes in the Inaugural Speeches. Alpha (α) is for the dominant clause and beta (β) is for the dependent clause, each of them can begin the sentence. From the analysis in Table two above, we observed that there were **87 hypotaxis** clause complexes in the inaugural speeches under study. Examples of hypotaxis from the inaugural speeches are;

*' α ' represents the primary β ' represents the secondary or
Or dominant clause dependent clause*

INAUG. SP2 CC122/// *α Specifically, my aim is that we inculcate in both students and staff, the sense of institutional ownership, / β where dedication to work, respect for one another, respect for processes and procedures, time management, and environmental cleanliness are upheld and jealously guarded as important core values of the University.*///

INAUG. SP2 CC126/// *α It is only appropriate, at this point, that I salute the six other great and competent women and men / β who competed with me for the position of Vice-Chancellor.*///

INAUG. SP2 CC128/// *α I intend to create -an atmosphere in which the true meaning of "Academic Freedom" will flourish; / β where staff and students will be encouraged to express their views freely and with mutual "RESPECT".*///

INAUG. SP2 CC129/// *α We will, also, subject the university to yet another external review by a visitation panel / β whose main task will be to review the strengths and weaknesses of our current system and offer suggestions for improvement to ensure that the University continues to remain internationally competitive and relevant to national and world development.*///

INAUG. SP2 CC132 /// *α There are some uncompleted projects and plans on campus / β which could be potential sources of IGF.*///

INAUG. SP2 CC133 /// *α These include the stadium and a list of other academic units' projects / β which should benefit from PPPs.*///

INAUG. SP3 CC137/// α I am excited about the fact that I have the opportunity to manage / β what is probably the greatest public institution in this country///.

INAUG. SP3 CC138/// β When I met the Search Committee, / α I sold to the members my idea of turning the University of Ghana into a World Class University///.

INAUG. SP3 CC149 /// β When the University of Ghana began, the aspiration was generally to produce graduates / β who could achieve the same degree of learning and knowledge acquisition as they would have, / α had they gone to university in places like Edinburgh, Newcastle, Birmingham, Manchester, Reading, etc///.

4.5 Communicative Implications

We can communicate with people most effectively through language, which we may also utilize to convey ideas and express our thoughts. Although there are several approaches to developing communicative experiences for readers, students, and listeners, they are all predicated on the notion that the communicative purposes of language should be highlighted. We noticed that from **INAUG. SP1 to INAUG. SP3**, the inaugural speeches contain the following communicative implications and reactions, which help to address research question three about the communicative implications that are raised in the speeches.

The aforementioned analysis makes it evident that the three Vice-Chancellors used comparable linguistic techniques to communicate their views on topics that had an impact on the university community and the nation as a whole.

Concerning the taxis relations (parataxis and hypotaxis), the paratactic clauses predominated in all three speeches, numbering 160 to a total of 74 hypotactic clauses. Communicatively, the selected Vice-Chancellors used more of the paratactic clauses to show their respect for all university stakeholders and as such their independencies in the discharge of their duties as the university is viewed as system. Also, they used quite a number of hypotactic clauses to indicate the unequal power relations in the university. Also, the use of paratactic clauses implied that these academic leaders will give equal attention to all matters in the university community but occasionally some issues will be give much attention than others hence the sporadic use of hypotactic clauses.

5.0. Conclusions

Based on the key findings of the study, it is concluded that the information packaging in the inaugural speeches was that of equal footings hence each part was given equal importance in the discourse. This suggests that the selected Vice-Chancellors transmit their thoughts in the inaugural addresses with equal priority or importance since they do so through several clauses of equal footings or weight. Following analysis of each inaugural address, the results showed that, for a variety of reasons, these speeches featured more clause complexes than clause simplexes. A shortened sentence with two or more clauses is preferred by the Vice-Chancellors.

The SFG theory was exceedingly useful in helping to derive meanings from the inaugural speeches selected for the study. The theory places a strong weight on meaning and how language is used to convey various functions and messages. It provides a framework for analysing the functional aspects of language and how they contribute to the overall meaning of a text. By examining the choices made in the inaugurals, SFG helped to unearth the intended meanings and communicative effects.

Again, the SFG theory highlights language as a system that serves specific functions in dissimilar contexts in which the inaugural speeches were shaped which influences the meanings transported. The theory permits for the analysis of how language choices of the selected Vice-Chancellors reflected their intentions, roles and relationships of the participants involved providing valuable insights into meaning making.

Numerous studies, particularly those using the SFG approach to inaugural speeches, have been conducted. However, expanding the study to include other academic community discourses, such as valedictory speeches, vision statements of Vice-Chancellors, manifestos of prospective student leaders, presentations at academic conferences, and thesis defenses at graduate schools, will necessitate a more thorough and lively understanding of academic community discourse in general and its meticulous effects on readability.

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