

## **Transitivity Analysis of Process Types in the 2012 Independence Day Anniversary Speech of John Evans Atta Mills**

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### **Abstract**

This study examines the transitivity process types in the 2012 presidential Independence Anniversary speech delivered by John Evans Atta Mills. The analysis involves segmenting the speech into individual clauses and conducting a thorough clause-by-clause examination. The primary attention is on the transitivity choices made by President John Evans Atta Mills in constructing his 2012 independence anniversary speech and the communicative functions of the selected transitivity process types. The data for this research is drawn from the 2012 independence anniversary speech delivered by John Evans Atta Mills. The study identified five main process types. First, material processes dominate the speech, accounting for 63.6%, suggesting that Mills emphasises actions and events in narrating the nation's journey to independence more than other aspects of experience. Second, relational process types, which make up 20.9% of the speech, are used to assign attributes to the celebration and highlight key facts about Ghana's independence and its significance to the present.

Third, mental processes constitute 10% of the speech, employed to engage Ghanaians in reflecting on the events surrounding the attainment of independence. Fourth, verbal processes represent 5.5% of the speech, used to convey collective gratitude and appreciation to the forefathers who secured independence for the country. Behavioural and existential processes were not present in the speech. The study concludes that transitivity analysis reveals the way orators and authors encrypt their mental representation of their world view in language and the way their experiences are conveyed around them.

**Keywords:** *Independence Anniversary, Transitivity, Material, Relational, Verbal, Mental, Existential Processes*

### **Introduction**

Independence Day speeches serve as a platform to celebrate the nation's successes and achievements in overcoming past challenges, while also outlining aspirations for the future. These speeches have become an essential part of the political discourse, holding significant relevance for the people of Ghana. Despite their importance, Independence Day speeches have received little attention in research, particularly in the field of linguistic studies.

Recent studies on transitivity analysis of speeches delivered by presidents in Ghana have primarily based on topics including the State of the Nation Address (SONA) (Adjei, Ewusi-Mensah & Okoh, 2015; Dadugblor, 2016), New Year Messages (Anderson, 2014), Campaign Speeches (Adjei-Fobi, 2011; Mensah, 2014), and speeches delivered at International Meetings (Agyekum, 2004; Djabatay, 2013). The application of transitivity theory in speech analysis has been explored by Adjei-Fobi (2011) and Boakye (2014) in the context of Inaugural Speeches, by Anim-Ayeko (2012) in Political Advertisements, and by Adjei and Ewusi-Mensah (2016) in Farewell Speeches. The limited research on the linguistic analysis of Independence Anniversary speeches in Ghana includes work by scholars such as Mensah (2014) and Mwinwelle (2017). Using Leech and Short's (2007) framework of stylistic and linguistic categories, Mwinwelle (2017) performed a lexico-stylistic analysis of John Mahama's speeches, including his 2013 Independence Anniversary speech. Mensah (2014) used Lloyd Bitzer's (1968) framework on situation and Olbrechts-Tyteca's (1969) framework on argument to analyze Kwame Nkrumah's political speeches, particularly his

historic 1957 speech on independence. Additionally, Appiah (2015) applied Halliday's transitivity theory in a Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) of Jerry John Rawlings' June 4 Speeches.

Language politeness was examined by Adekunle and Adebayo (2017) in eight speeches given by Nigerian heads of state on the occasion of the nation's independence anniversary between 1960 and 2011. Furthermore, a transitivity study of a speech given by Pakistan's Prime Minister, Imran Khan, during the UN General Assembly was carried out by Mushtaq et al. (2020).

. Further studies using transitivity theory include Ali et al.'s (2021) analysis of Nelson Mandela's speeches and Yuqiong and Fengjie's (2018) examination of David Cameron's speech during the Scottish independence referendum to retain Scotland within the United Kingdom.

Ghanaian Independence Anniversary speeches have largely been overlooked in the field of Functional Linguistics, with minimal research dedicated to their linguistic analysis. As a result, understanding how language is used within the transitivity framework to convey targeted messages in these speeches has been challenging. This study addresses this significant gap in linguistic research and lays the groundwork for future studies in this area.

This paper aims to analyse the 2012 Independence Anniversary speech by John Evans Atta Mills to uncover the meanings embedded in the linguistic elements of the speech. The study explores the transitivity process types utilised in the structuring of information.

## **Literature Review**

### **Review of empirical studies that used the transitivity model**

Recent discourse analytic research on Ghanaian political speeches have looked at a variety of speeches, such as inaugural and victory speeches (Boakye, 2012; Anderson, 2014; Appiah, 2015), state of the nation addresses (Ewusi-Mensah, 2014), and farewell speeches (Adjei & Ewusi-Mensah, 2016). However, Independence Day speeches by Ghanaian presidents have received little attention due to transitivity analyses of Ghanaian political speeches, which have mostly concentrated on state of the country addresses, triumph, inaugural, and goodbye speeches.

Sing the ideational metafunction found in Halliday's (1994) Systemic Functional Grammar, Anderson (2014) uses the transitivity model to analyse a few of President John Evans Atta Mills' political speeches.

Anderson applies the transitivity framework to four speeches to demonstrate how process types are utilised to establish President Mills as deserving of the title "Man of Peace." The speeches analysed were delivered at an inaugural ceremony, a victory celebration, and during New Year festivities. Nevertheless, the analysis did not include President Mills's Independence Anniversary remarks.

By examining a speech given by President John Evans Atta Mills on the occasion of his Independence Day, this study seeks to fill the data representation gap and either support or refute Anderson's (2014) conclusions.

Adjei, Ewusi-Mensah, and Okoh (2015) employed the transitivity model to examine the wording of President Mills' first State of the Nation Address, building on Anderson's 2014 work. Their findings revealed that material processes were predominant, accounting for 59.14% of the speech, while mental processes were significantly less frequent, at 14.37% below material processes. The extensive use of material processes in the speech was employed to portray President Mills' governance as proactive and developmental.

In a parallel study, Adjei and Ewusi-Mensah (2016) analysed the language in President J. A. Kufuor's Farewell Address to Parliament using Halliday's transitivity theory. They looked at each clause in the address using the Content Analysis Design. According to the study, material processes were the most commonly used of the six transitivity process types, whilst existential processes were the least used.

The predominant use of material processes highlights Kufuor's focus on recounting concrete achievements from his eight-year tenure and reflecting on his government's activities and current developments. Additionally, he made recommendations to the incoming administration to ensure the continuation of his administration's projects. Based on the study's findings, the three main process types that make up 90% of the speech are material, relational, and mental processes.

In other African countries, such as Nigeria, Independence Day speeches have garnered some linguistic research attention. Adekunle and Adebayo (2017), for instance, examined the instances of linguistic politeness in eight chosen speeches given by Nigerian heads of state between 1960 and 2011 on the occasion of their country's independence.

The most pertinent work for this study is Mwinwelle (2017), who used the framework of linguistic and stylistic categories created by Leech and Short (2007) to analyse speeches given by Ghanaian President John Mahama on the country's Independence Anniversary. According to Mwinwelle (2017), Mahama uses lexico-stylistic resources to draw attention to the problems facing the country and offer ways to solve them.

This study will differ from previous research by focusing on President John Evans Atta Mills' 2012 Independence Anniversary speech, during his presidency from 2009 to 2012, and applying the transitivity framework developed by Halliday and Matthiessen (2014). The analysis aims to confirm or challenge the findings of earlier related studies by examining this specific speech.

### **Theoretical Framework**

This section outlines the theoretical framework guiding the study. It begins with an overview of Systemic Functional Theory, the overarching theory employed, and then delves into the system of transitivity, the specific lexico-grammatical framework utilised for data analysis.

### **Systemic functional linguistics**

The Systemic Functional Linguistic (SFL) framework, created by M.A.K. Halliday (Halliday, 1961, 1966, 2008; Matthiessen, 2007; Martin, 2016; Mwinlaaru & Xuan, 2016), serves as the foundation for this investigation. Two aspects of Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL) are the subject of the study: "system networks" and the idea of language's metafunctions (Halliday, 1985, 2006; Halliday & Matthiessen, 2004; Halliday & Matthiessen, 2014). SFL is both functional and systemic.

The term "systemic" describes the variety of linguistic options that users have at their disposal, whereby these options are connected in their meaning.

The entire linguistic system influences the choice of certain linguistic traits (Halliday et al., 2014; Thompson, 2013). This system is thought to be the

process by which language acquires meaning. This framework is notable for its view that "language is a resource for making meaning," according to which "meaning resides in systemic patterns of choice" (Halliday and Matthiessen, 2004:23).

Viewing language as a resource means that speakers can choose from a variety of linguistic options based on their communicative goals. In other words, when speaking, individuals select particular words to fulfil specific functions.

Martin (2016) explains why Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL) is considered functional, highlighting the distinction between word function and word class. This distinction allows us to understand the various functions performed by different word classes and illustrates how language serves multiple functions. The primary purposes of language are divided into three categories by Halliday and his associates (Halliday & Hassan, 1976; Halliday, 1985; Halliday & Matthiessen, 2004; Halliday & Matthiessen, 2014): ideational, interpersonal, and textual.

These are collectively known as the metafunctions of language. The ideational function refers to how clauses express our beliefs, thoughts, and ideas about the external world and our internal mental states and is realised through the transitivity system. The interpersonal function is conveyed through mood and modality. The textual function pertains to how oral or written discourse relates to its context and situation and is realised through theme and information focus.

The transitivity system serves as the primary means of understanding the ideational function, which is the subject of this study. The key analytical framework is the idea of transitivity, which is covered below. The ideational function encompasses three sub-strands: register, modality, and transitivity.

### **Concept of transitivity**

Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL) is the primary theoretical framework guiding this study, with transitivity serving as the analytical tool for examining President John Evans Atta Mills' 2012 Independence Anniversary speech. The transitivity framework is a grammatical approach that explores how speakers construct their experiences through their grammatical choices from a range of linguistic options. It reveals how the meaning of experiences and events is conveyed through clauses (Halliday & Matthiessen, 2014). Factors

influencing linguistic choices can include the speaker's internal and external experiences, the subject matter, and the nature of the audience (Awuku, 2018). Unlike other structurally oriented grammatical theories, SFL emphasises how language is employed to create meaning (Halliday & Matthiessen, 2004).

The choice of the transitivity framework is based on its ability to express experiences and events through clauses, which encode people's ideas, thoughts, and experiences. According to Mwinwelle, Duah, and Mensah (2021:42), "the framework consists of various patterns known as transitivity patterns or process types, which represent different aspects of human experiences." These patterns or process types reflect the grammatical and semantic configurations used to convey various forms of human experiences and thoughts within clauses. Each clause typically includes three primary elements: the process, participant, and circumstance. The process, conveyed by the verb, represents the central idea of the clause and is expressed over time (Downing & Locke, 2006). The participant is involved in the clausal events and can be either animate or inanimate, represented by a nominal group (Halliday & Matthiessen, 2004, 2014). The circumstance, usually represented by the adjunct, provides additional background information relevant to the transitivity system.

### **Process types**

The transitivity system is a lexico-grammatical framework that demonstrates how language conveys experiences, according to Halliday and Matthiessen (2004, 2014). They contend that our understanding of these experiences consists of a series of occurrences or "goings-on," which are expressed by the grammar of the clause.

The six processes in English are material, mental, relational, behavioural, verbal, and existential, according to Halliday (1994, 2014). Material, mental, and relational processes are the most important of these, according to Halliday and Matthiessen (2004, 2014). They observe that compared to mental processes, material and relational processes are employed more frequently. Verbal processes, which involve language acts like saying and meaning, straddle the line between mental and relational processes because of human consciousness, whereas behavioural activities fall between material and mental processes. Between relational and material processes, existential

processes deal with events that are simply defined as "being," "existing," or "happening" (Halliday & Matthiessen, 2014).

### ***Material process***

The material process involves actions, events, and changes (Halliday & Matthiessen, 2004; Eggins, 2004). A material clause denotes a shift in the course of events, usually brought about by an energy input (Halliday & Matthiessen, 2014). It is the broadest and most varied category within the transitivity framework, characterised by action-oriented verbs that describe physical actions or events (Thompson, 2014). This process depicts situations where one entity performs an action that either impacts another entity or does not affect any entity at all. The fundamental principle of the material process is that it involves an action, regardless of whether that action is directed towards another entity. As the most dominant process type, material processes include several subtypes that can be further categorised into different groups. Halliday and Matthiessen (2004) and Thompson (2013) explain that all material processes involve an actor. While the actor may not always be explicitly mentioned in the clause, it is implied. Material processes can be classified into various subcategories, such as creative and transformational. These processes can either bring entities into existence—by creating something that did not previously exist—or transform existing entities from one state to another. Halliday and Matthiessen (2004, 2014) refer to these as creative and transformative processes, respectively. In material processes, two key participants are the actor and the goal. The actor is the entity performing the action, while the goal is the entity affected by the action. In other words, the actor carries out the action, and the goal is the target or recipient of the action. The following clauses illustrate examples of transformational and creative material processes:

This year, we (Actor) have reformatted the parade (Goal) (Transformational).

We (Actor) build a Better Ghana (Goal) in which the dreams of our children can become a reality (Creative).

Halliday and Matthiessen (2004, 2014) identify additional participants commonly associated with material processes, including the Initiator, Scope, Recipient, Client, and Attribute. The Initiator often appears alongside the Actor in situations where the action is influenced by an external participant

who, although not directly involved in the process as the Actor, still exerts agency over it. Like the Goal, the Scope is a participant who is not immediately impacted by the activity. The Recipient is the participant that receives something—whether concrete or abstract—from the Actor. The Client, on the other hand, is the participant who receives a service indicated by the process.

Halliday and Matthiessen (2014) explain that transitivity highlights the distinction between active (operative) and passive (receptive) constructions and their impact on participants. They suggest that in an active (operative) clause with a single participant, that participant is the Actor. In contrast, in a passive (receptive) construction, the Goal becomes the subject of the sentence, as demonstrated in the following example.

Active: The teacher (Actor) beat (Material Process) the student (Goal)

Passive: The student (Goal) was beaten (Material Process) by the teacher (Actor)

Halliday also identifies additional participants associated with material processes, including the range/scope, initiator, beneficiary (comprising the client and recipient), and attribute. The terms "range" and "scope" are often used interchangeably, as noted by Bloor and Bloor (2004), who suggest that scope can be considered a subcategory of range. According to Awuku (2018), the range or scope in a material process refers to the nominal group that follows the verb and enhances the meaning conveyed by the verb. The key difference between the range and the goal is that while the goal represents an entity affected by the action of the actor, the range is not an entity but instead extends or clarifies the meaning of the verb within the material process. Additionally, when the goal is not impacted by any action, it may be classified as range or scope. Examples illustrating the use of range are provided below.

John (Actor) bought (Material Process) a car (Goal).

President Akufo-Addo (Actor) sang (Material Process) a song (Range/scope).

She (Actor) played (Material Process) chess (Range/scope) yesterday (Circumstance)

"Recipient" and "client" are phrases used to describe participants who get something from the process, such as products or services. The client is the person to whom services are rendered, whereas the recipient is the one who gains anything from or receives things. In order to distinguish between recipient and client, Thompson (2014) points out that various prepositions are employed: "recipient" is usually linked with the preposition "to," whereas "client" is associated with "for." The following is an illustration of a material process involving these individuals.

The teacher (Actor) gave (Material Process) a book (Goal) to the student (Beneficiary: Recipient)

### *Mental process*

As the name implies, the mental process pertains to the workings of the mind and is concerned with experiences within a person's inner world. It involves the processes of sensing, feeling, thinking, and perceiving the events that occur internally. Thoughts, observations, and emotions serve as channels through which a particular phenomenon is sensed in the mental process. Downing and Locke (2006) emphasise that not all experiences are outwardly expressed; some occur internally without any visible action. In essence, mental processes encompass the experiences that unfold within the mind.

One does not need direct access to the human mind to uncover a speaker's thoughts, the choice of verbs in speech acts as a key indicator of mental processes within the transitivity system. Like the material process, the mental process is divided into subcategories. Verbs like "love," "admire," and "like" indicate emotional processes; verbs like "know," "understand," "believe," and "forget" reflect cognition; verbs like "feel," "hear," "notice," and "taste" reflect perception; and verbs like "hope," "want," "wish," and "desire" indicate desideration (Downing & Locke, 2006; Halliday & Matthiessen, 2006; Thompson, 2013).

The mental process involves two key participants: the senser, who experiences the sensation, and the phenomenon, which is the entity being sensed. Examples of mental process clauses include:

The boy (Senser) knows (Mental Process: Cognition) the truth (Phenomenon).

I (Senser) heard (Mental Process: Perception) the news (Phenomenon) this morning.

Women (Senser) hate (Mental Process: Emotive) snakes (Phenomenon).

The man (Senser) desires (Mental Process: Desideration) a wife (Phenomenon).

### ***Relational process***

As the name suggests, the relational process is concerned with the connections between or among entities. According to Halliday (1994), this process creates a link between two different entities without suggesting that one has a direct impact on the other. It captures various ways in which states of being or possession are expressed through clauses. Unlike material and mental processes, the relational process is unique in its structure. The carrier, the clause's subject or topic, and the attribute, a descriptive element about the carrier that is frequently an adjective or a noun, are the two primary players in relational clauses, according to Halliday and Matthiessen (2014).

Relational processes are categorised into two types: attributive and identifying. The attributive process assigns a quality or characteristic to an entity, while the identifying process reveals or determines an identity (Gerot & Wignell, 1994; Zhao & Yi Zhang, 2017). In identifying processes, the "value" represents a more generalised entity, while the "token" embodies a more specific instance or embodiment of that entity (Thompson, 2014). Examples illustrating these processes are provided below.

The car (Carrier) is (Relational Process: Attributive) very expensive (Attribute).

The box (Token) is made up of (Relational Process: Identifying) paper (Value).

Awuku (2018) points out that a key distinguishing feature between identifying and attributive relational clauses is the principle of reversibility. In identifying relational clauses, this principle allows the clause to be reversed, whereas in attributive clauses, this reversibility is not possible. The examples provided below demonstrate how reversibility differentiates identifying relational clauses from attributive ones.

His job (Token) is (Relational Process: identifying) his utmost priority (Value)

or

His utmost priority (Value) is (Relational Process: identifying) his job (Token).

John (Carrier) is (Relational Process: attributive) strong (Attribute)

### ***Verbal Process***

In the transitivity system, the verbal process is a minor kind that sits between the mental and material processes. It represents the expression of thoughts through speech, effectively manifesting what occurs in the mind as verbal actions. Verbal processes typically convey acts of saying. Depending on the type of text being analysed, verbal processes can be either major or minor. For instance, in Awuku's (2018) study on the transitivity analysis of the Sermon on the Mount, verbal processes emerged as one of the dominant types, contrasting with findings by Mushtaq et al. (2020), who regarded verbal processes as minor. Three people are involved in the verbal process: the verbiage (the substance or what is said in the clause), the sayer (the one who speaks), and the receiver (the one to whom the speech is addressed). The examples below illustrate these elements within the verbal process.

The boy (Sayer) thanked (Verbal Process) him (Receiver)

The pastor (Sayer) announced (Verbal Process) to the church (Receiver) the amount raised from the harvest (Verbiage).

### ***Behavioural process***

Among the six process types, the behavioural process is considered one of the minor types. According to Okoh, Adjei, and Ewusi-Mensah (2015), behavioural processes reflect the outward expressions of inner states, essentially acting out processes of consciousness and physiological conditions. This process type reveals a person's awareness and physical state through observable human behaviours. Positioned between mental and material processes, behavioural processes are typically represented by verbs such as *cough*, *sneeze*, *yawn*, *blink*, *laugh*, and *sigh*. As noted by Downing and Locke (2006), these processes are often involuntary, with the verbs generally being intransitive. The behavioural process involves two key participants: the *beholder*, who performs the action, and the *range*, also known as the behaviour, which is the action being performed. Expanding on the concept, Eggins (2004) compares the behaviour in the behavioural process to the range in the material process, noting that there may also be another participant, known as the

*phenomenon*, which is distinct from the restatement of the process. Examples of the behavioural process and its participants are shown below.

The woman (Behaver) kept crying (Behavioural Process)

Paul (Behaver) gave (Behavioural Process) a coy smile (Behaviour)

The man (Behaver) looked at (Behavioural Process) the thief (Phenomenon)

### ***Existential Process***

The existential process is the last kind of process in the transitivity framework. An entity's existence and position are indicated by this procedure (Downing & Locke, 2004). The existential process, according to Hancock (2005:240), is a statement that asserts the existence of an entity without offering any details. The verb "BE" is used to describe the relational process (is, am, are, was, were), and the verbs "go," "come," "toil," "exist," "remain," "arise," "occur," "happen," and "take place" for the material process.

"There" or the verb "exist" are commonly used to start the existential process (Halliday, 1994). There is only one required participant, referred to as the existent, which is the thing or occurrence that is being claimed to exist.

A variety of phenomena, such as things, people, objects, institutions, abstractions, acts, or events, might be considered to be existent. The term "there" serves as the subject in the existential process, but it has no experiential meaning. Since there is only one participant, its main function is to fulfil the subject requirement without requiring or allowing for a second participant. The circumstance, which usually indicates the location of the existing, is an optional participant that occasionally shows up in the existential process.

There (Subject) was (Existential Process) confusion (Existent).

There (Subject) are (Existential Process) students (Existent) in the hostel (Circumstance).

### **Methods**

This paper employs a qualitative research approach to examine the patterns of a linguistic phenomenon and draw conclusions based on its analytical procedures. While primarily qualitative, the study incorporates descriptive statistics to enhance data analysis, including frequency tables and percentages. These tools, along with bar graphs, facilitate a detailed description and analysis of the process types.

This paper utilises content analysis as its research approach. Hsieh and Shannon (2005) define content analysis as a research technique that entails the subjective interpretation of textual data via a methodical coding and theme-finding procedure.

Purposive sampling was employed to select the 2012 Independence Day anniversary speech of John Evans Atta Mills. This speech was chosen because it was the last Independence Day address delivered by John Evans Atta Mills before his passing in July 2012. The paper also applied Halliday and Matthiessen's (2004; 2014) transitivity analysis method, which was instrumental in clearly identifying the processes and their discourse effects. This approach helped to determine the roles played by participants, identify the affected entities, analyse the types of processes used, and understand the circumstances that contextualised the speaker's thoughts and experiences in the address.

A consensual coding strategy was utilised, meticulously categorising the clauses into their respective process types. The sorting and identification of these process types were conducted using Microsoft Excel to detect any variations within each identified process type. Each specific process type, along with its participants, was identified and labelled. Following this, the labelled clauses were compared to synchronise any variations, resulting in the final categorisation of clauses under the various process types used for analysis. Frequency counts and percentages were then employed to identify the dominant transitivity patterns in the speeches, with the frequency distribution of process types serving as evidence to support the study's findings.

### **Analysis and Discussion**

First, the most common process types are identified, and then the communication functions embedded in these process types in John Evans Atta Mills' 2012 Independence Day anniversary address are analysed and discussed. The transitivity model was the main tool used in the study to analyse the address. The process types, frequencies, and percentages that were employed in John Evans Atta Mills' 2012 Independence Day address are shown in the table below.

Table 1: Distribution of process types in the speech

<b>Process Type</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage %</b>
Material process	70	63.6
Relational Process	23	20.9
Mental Process	11	10
Verbal process	6	5.5
Behavioural Process	0	0
Existential Process	0	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>110</b>	<b>100%</b>

According to the preceding table, John Evans Atta Mills' 2012 Independence Day Anniversary address primarily discusses material process types. Out of the 110 process types found in the speech, material processes were the most common, appearing in 70 cases or 63.6% of all clauses. This suggests that over 50% of the sentences under analysis are material processes. With 23 instances, or 20.9%, the relational process type is the second most common. The mental process, which makes up 10% and appears 11 times, comes next. Six verbal processes, or 5.5%, take place. There were no occurrences of either the existential or behavioural process types.

### **Analysis of material processes**

The predominance of material clauses in the speech suggests that John Evans Atta Mills primarily frames and interprets the world through actions, thoughts, and experiences related to Ghana's past struggles, achievements, and the current state of the nation (Zhao and Zhang, 2017). He strategically employs material clauses to serve multiple purposes. In the introductory sections of the speech, Mills uses these clauses to establish the speech's context, explain the purpose of the celebration, recount the past struggles and achievements of the nation's founding fathers and other dedicated forefathers, and outline the current state of the nation, including potential challenges it may face in the near future. The functional uses of material clauses in the speech are detailed and discussed below.

#### ***Material processes used to construe the context of the speech as Independence Day anniversary speech.***

John Evans Atta Mills begins by using material processes to establish the tone for his speech. He carefully selects the verbs "passed," "rest," and "celebrate"

in clauses 1, 2 and 3, among others, to frame the context of the speech as a celebration of independence.

John Evans Atta Mills employs the material process "passed away" in clauses 1 and 2 to refer to a student named Goni, who tragically lost her life during rehearsals for the 2012 Independence Anniversary. He further uses the material process "celebrate" in clause 3 to acknowledge the contributions of parade commanders, particularly Commander Colonel John Asabre, in the anniversary celebration. The following clauses illustrate these points:

1. *who **passed** away. (JEAM 2012)*
2. *May her soul **rest** in perfect peace and my heartfelt condolences to the bereaved family and entire staff and students of Ho Fiave Seventh Day Adventist School. (JEAM 2012)*
3. *to **celebrate** this day. (JEAM 2012)*

***Material processes used to appreciate the founding fathers and leaders of the nation from independence to its current state***

To honour the efforts and contributions of the founding fathers in achieving the country's independence, John Evans Atta Mills uses material processes such as "fight," "bring," and "salute" to express gratitude to all who played a role in securing independence.

4. *Ghana under Kwame Nkrumah made the **fight** for independence of other African countries, its prime occupation. (JEAM 2012)*
5. *who **bring** honour and joy to Africa's image in their daily endeavours (JEAM 2012)*
6. *I also **salute** the student; teacher; labourer; market woman; driver; and every Ghanaian past and present (JEAM 2012)*

The material processes *fight* and *bring* are used in clauses 4 and 5 above are used to denote the honour and prestige that the founding fathers brought to Ghana and Africa as a whole. The forefathers who helped in Ghana's independence also played a major role in helping some Africa countries in gaining their independence as seen in clause 5 above.

Apart from the founding fathers who contributed towards attainment of the nation's independence, Atta Mills through this material process, *salute* in clause 6 above, renders an appreciation to the entire citizenry such as students,

teachers, labourers, drivers and market men and women for their roles towards the growth and development of the country.

### ***Material processes used to construe the achievements of the country***

To highlight the nation's achievements, Atta Mills uses the material processes "sustain," "have toiled," and "have made" in clauses 7, 8, and 9. These processes illustrate the nation's accomplishments, particularly in maintaining peace and stability and upholding Ghanaian values since gaining independence.

7. *we have made some significant gains (JEAM 2012)*
8. *but to “sustain the peace” (JEAM 2012)*
9. *what we have toiled to build our Ghanaian values (JEAM 2012)*

Mills through the material process ‘*have toiled to build*’ in clause 9 points to Ghanaians the achievement they have made in the of Ghanaian values. This is seen in clause 9, *what we have toiled to build our Ghanaian values (JEAM 2012)*. He continues with material process *sustain* in clause, 8 to remind Ghanaians and other Africans of how they have toiled to build and sustain the peace the country is enjoying. This is seen in clause, 8 but to “*sustain the peace*” (JEAM 2012). He further tells Ghanaians through the material process, *have made* in clause 7, the various gains the country has made in various departments of the country. This is seen in clause 7. *we have made some significant gains (JEAM 2012)*.

### **Analysis of relational processes**

Statistically, relational processes were the second most common process type, occurring 23 times and representing 20.9% of the total. Relational processes primarily depict the relationship between an object and its qualities or features, as well as between an object and its identity or value. One category of relational process, known as the attributive relational process, highlights the attributes or qualities associated with an object. Another category, called the identifying relational process, involves defining one entity in terms of another.

The analysis of relational clauses focuses on two main types: attributive and identifying relational clauses. According to Akabuike (2020:223), "Attributive relational processes describe an entity by assigning attributes to it, while identifying processes are used to specify a person." Gerot and Wignell (1994) and Zhao and Yi Zhang (2017) note that identifying relational clauses directly

identify an entity, whether human or non-human. In attributive relational processes, the participant roles are "carrier" and "attribute," while in identifying relational processes, the roles are "identified" and "identifier" or "token" and "value." Generally, John Evans Atta Mills employs attributive relational clauses to describe various events and entities, whereas identifying relational processes are used to detail numerous facts about both animate and inanimate entities. The table below provides an analysis of the attributive and identifying relational clauses in the 2012 Independence Day Anniversary speech.

Table 2: Types of relational process

<b>Relational Process</b>	<b>Number of occurrences</b>	<b>Percentage %</b>
Attributive Relational Process	13	56.5
Identifying Relational Process	10	43.5
<b>Total number of relational processes</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>100</b>

From Table 2 above, out of 23 relational clauses, attributive relational clauses occurred with a frequency of 13 representing 56.5%, while identifying relational clauses had a frequency of 10 representing 43.5%. The sections that follow presents a detailed discussion of the use of attributive and identifying relational clauses in the speech.

### *Attributive relational clauses*

Attributive relational clauses appeared 13 times, accounting for 56.5% of all relational clauses, making them the predominant relational category. This indicates that the speech is highly descriptive, similar to Awuku's (2018) study of the Sermon on the Mount using Halliday's transitivity model. The attributive relational processes highlight the roles played by forefathers and others during the struggle for independence. Below are examples of attributive relational clauses found in the speech. The most frequent transitivity pattern identified is Career + Process + Attribute.

Clauses 10 and 11 are used to describe the features and roles of leadership from the time that the country gained independence to the current state. In clause 11, the attributive verb, "remain" is used to describe how committed leadership has been from the time of independence to the present. In clause

10, the possessive attributive relational process “have” is used to emphasise the good roles leadership is performing which the country cannot afford to lose. The following clauses support the above discussion.

10. *As a nation, we **have** no option (JEAM 2012).*
11. *and with the right leadership that continues to **remain** committed (JEAM 2012)*

### **Identifying relational clauses**

As noted in Table 2, identifying relational clauses appeared 10 times, constituting 43.5% of all relational clauses. These clauses typically followed the standard token-value mapping. This finding aligns with Halliday and Matthiessen’s (2014:284) observation that if token-value mapping predominates a text, it often indicates a scientific, commercial, political, or bureaucratic discourse. The token-value ordering is useful for examining ideological categories based on the experiential value in identifying clauses. Since this study focuses on political discourse, specifically Independence Day speeches, the token-value order is employed to allow President John Evans Atta Mills to highlight key facts about Ghana’s history of independence and its relevance to the current state of the nation. It also serves to identify the roles played by the forefathers in achieving independence. This approach helps the President to emphasise Ghana’s achievements and challenges, addressing both the Ghanaian people and the wider African continent. Through these identifying relational clauses, John Evans Atta Mills underscores that Ghana was the first African country to gain independence, referring to it as the "oasis of peace" in Africa. The most common transitivity pattern observed is Token + Process + Value (Identifier). The following clauses are examples of identifying clauses used in the speech.

Attah Mills uses identifying relational clause 12 to identify important facts about the history of Ghana’s independence and its relevance to the current state of the country. This is done by identifying the country, Ghana from the time it attained its independence by mentioning how long since the country achieved independence. This is evident in the excerpt from the speech below.

12. *Fellow countrymen and women, brothers and sisters, sons and daughters, Ghana our beloved country **is** 55 today, (JEAM 2012)*

### Analyses of mental processes

In line with Halliday and Matthiessen's (2014) assertion that the mental process is a major process type, this study found it to be the third most frequently used process. There were 11 instances of mental processes, representing 10% of the entire speech. The analysis of mental processes is categorised into four types: cognition, realised in verbs such as "know," "understand," "believe," and "forget"; desideration, reflected in verbs such as "hope," "want," and "wish"; perception, indicated by verbs like "feel," "hear," "notice," and "taste"; and emotion, evidenced by verbs such as "love," "admire," and "like" (Downing & Locke, 2006; Thompson, 2013; Anafo, 2017; Mwinwelle, Amoakohene & Agyekum, 2020). Among these, cognition processes are most prominently used to convey the remembrance of Ghana's independence and the related events. The table below shows the distribution of the sub-categories of mental processes.

Table 3: Categories of mental process

Process type	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Cognition	6	54.5
Desideration	3	27.3
Perception	2	18.2
Emotional	0	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>100</b>

Based on Table 3 above, mental process of cognition occurred with a frequency of 6 representing 54.5%, followed by mental process of desideration with a frequency of 3 representing 27.3%, mental process of perception occurred with a frequency of 2 representing 18.2%. Finally, mental process of emotion had zero frequency. The mental process clauses identified in the speeches construed President John Evans Atta Mills experience of the world around them and this projects mental alertness. The dominance of mental process of cognition suggests that the John Evans Atta Mills wanted to remind Ghanaians about the incidents and struggles surrounding attainment of independence.

#### *Mental process of cognition*

In clause 13 the speaker, J. E.A Mills uses mental process *will be remembered* to draw the minds of Ghanaians to the lady who lost her life in Ho whilst

rehearsing in preparation for the 2012 Independence Day celebrations. The clause below supports the above discussion:

13. *She will be **remembered** for her patriotic zeal to serve her nation. (JEAM 2012)*

### ***Mental processes of desideration***

Desiderative mental process is the second highest of the subcategory of the mental processes. It projects wishes or brings wishes into existence.

In clauses 14 and 15 mental processes of desideration *are enjoying* is employed by J. E.A Mills to express how Ghanaians are feelings towards attainment of the independence and for the celebration as a whole. The following mental clauses below support the above discussion.

14. *we are enjoying (JEAM 2012)*  
 15. *we are enjoying for granted (JEAM 2012)*

### ***Mental process of perception***

Most of the mental processes of perception appealed to the sense of sight. This indicates that President J. E.A Mills wanted the people of Ghana to see how colourful events are being carried out in the celebration of the anniversary.

The mental process of perception *watching* is used in clause 16 with the phenomenon participant *our youth* to interpret how J.E.A. Mills puts some kind of premium on the youth to rally behind him in the development of the nation. This is seen in the clause below:

16. *watching our youth (JEAM 2012)*

### **Analysis of verbal processes**

The verbal process is the process by which ideas in the mind are expressed or made visible through speaking. Thus, the process of saying is represented by verbal processes. Verbal processes happened with a frequency of 6, or 5.5%, according to the data.

In clause 17, verbal process *thank* is used to appreciate the audience for paying attention and listening to the speeches that were delivered. This is seen in clause 18 below. In addition, the verbal process *thank* is used in clause 18, to show gratitude to the almighty God for granting travelling mercies to those who came from near and far to attend the occasion. The following clauses support the above discussions:

17. *I thank you for your kind attention. (JEAM 2012).*
18. *18 we thank God Almighty for bringing us this far. (JEAM 2012)*

### Findings and Conclusion

The analysis shows that John Evans Atta Mills uses material process types more frequently than any other process type in the 2012 Independence Anniversary Speech. This high frequency of material processes indicates that material clauses are predominant in Ghanaian political speeches, emphasising actions and events more than other domains of experience (Anderson, 2014; Adjei and Ewusi-Mensah, 2016; Adjei, Ewusi-Mensah, and Okoh, 2015).

Additionally, relational processes are the second most frequently used process type in the speech. These processes serve two main communicative functions: attributive and identifying. Attributive clauses are employed to assign various attributes to the celebration, describing the events, entities, and context presented in the speech. They also specify the number of years since the nation gained independence. Identifying relational processes, on the other hand, emphasise significant facts about Ghana's independence and its relevance to the present state of the country.

Third, mental processes in the speech are used to emphasise to Ghanaians the significance of remembering the events surrounding Ghana's attainment of independence. These processes also highlight Ghana's prominent role as a pioneer of independence in Sub-Saharan Africa, noting its distinction as one of the few countries to achieve early independence on the continent. This finding supports Mensah's (2014) assertion that on March 6, 1957, when Nkrumah declared Ghana's independence, there were only eight independent African nations. Mensah (2014) confirms that Ghana was the ninth African country to gain independence and the first in the West African sub-region.

Finally, verbal processes are used to convey collective gratitude and appreciation to the forefathers who worked tirelessly to secure the country's independence, as well as to special guests, the military, school children, and all Ghanaians who participated in the celebration.

In conclusion, the transitivity analysis of the process types used in President John Evans Atta Mills' 2012 Independence Day speech offers valuable insights into how language reflects and shapes his ideological stance, communicative intentions, and experiences. By examining the distribution of

material, relational, mental, and other process types, we can understand how President Mills constructs and interprets the world, builds national identity, motivates collective action, and emphasises specific values and achievements. The dominance of material processes, for example, highlights a focus on actions and accomplishments, while relational processes emphasise the importance of unity and shared identity in celebrating the anniversary. Overall, this transitivity analysis not only reveals the linguistic strategies employed but also demonstrates how the speech aims to resonate with and inspire Ghanaians, reinforcing the significance of the independence anniversary in the national consciousness.

### **Implication of the Study**

The findings of this study on the transitivity analysis of process types in the 2012 Independence Day Anniversary Speech of John Evans Atta Mills have significant implications for discourse analysis, political communication, and linguistic studies.

1. The study highlights how language choices in political speeches shape meaning, influence public perception, and convey ideological positions. This enhances our understanding of how leaders use language to assert power, unity, and national identity.
2. By applying transitivity analysis, this research provides a systematic approach to examining how political figures construct reality through language. It reinforces the role of linguistic analysis in uncovering implicit messages in political discourse.
3. The study's insights can help speechwriters and political communicators craft more effective and persuasive speeches by understanding how different process types influence audience interpretation and engagement.
4. Educators and students in linguistics, communication studies, and political science can use this research as a reference for analysing speech patterns, fostering critical thinking and discourse analysis skills.
5. The study lays a foundation for future research comparing speeches from different political figures, time periods, and contexts, further exploring how linguistic choices evolve and reflect leadership styles.

## **Recommendation**

Based on the findings of this study on transitivity analysis in the 2012 Independence Day Anniversary Speech of John Evans Atta Mills, the following recommendations are proposed:

1. Future research should apply transitivity analysis to speeches from other Ghanaian and African leaders to compare how linguistic choices reflect political ideologies, leadership styles, and national priorities.
2. Linguists and discourse analysts should incorporate transitivity analysis into political communication studies to uncover deeper meanings in political rhetoric and its impact on public perception.
3. Political speechwriters and communicators should consider transitivity analysis when crafting speeches to ensure clarity, persuasive effectiveness, and audience engagement.
4. Educators should integrate transitivity analysis into language and discourse studies to enhance students' critical thinking and analytical skills in understanding political and public speeches.
5. Scholars from linguistics, political science, and media studies should collaborate in examining how language use in political speeches influences governance, media framing, and public discourse.

## **Ethical Statement**

This study involved non-human participants. The primary data for this study was text; that is, 2012 Independence Day Anniversary speech of the Former President of Ghana, Prof. John Evans Atta Mills. The speeches were downloaded from [www.gov.com](http://www.gov.com).

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### **Conflict of Interest**

The authors attest that they have no competing interests with regard to this article's publication.

### **Authorship Contribution Statement**

Adukpo: Research idea, formulating research questions, drafting manuscript. Gaaku: Research design, data collection, and analysis, formatting, citations, and compliance with ethical research standards. Wumbei: Review of relevant literature, developed the theoretical framework and proofreading.

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