

**EXPLORING DISCURSIVE STRATEGIES IN PARLIAMENTARY LEADERSHIP
COMMUNICATION: THE CASE OF RT. HON. ALBAN BAGBIN**

Perpetual Lariba Aniba Kaba¹ (MPhil), Kwasi Sarfo-Adu² (PhD) & Obed Atta-Asamoah³ (PhDc)

¹ Pentecost Senior High School, Kumasi

² Department of (English) Education, Christian Service University, Kumasi

³ St. Ambrose College of Education, Dormaa-Akwamu

ABSTRACT

In parliamentary leadership communication, the Speaker's discourse is decisive because it presents Parliament to the public and shapes how the legislature functions. However, notwithstanding the extensive research on parliamentary discourse, the discourse of the Speaker of Parliament appears to have attracted little scholarly investigation. Against this backdrop, we set out to explore the discursive strategies in some selected speeches of the Speaker of the 8th and the 9th Parliament of Ghana, Rt. Hon. Alban Sumana Kingsford Bagbin. We selected four speeches of the Speaker from *Myjoy Online* and did a qualitative content analysis to identify the discursive strategies and their discourse functions. The findings showed that the Speaker employed nomination, predication, argumentation, perspectivation and intensification for the achievement of his communicative intent. It was also found that the Speaker used nomination to direct attention to crucial topics while he employed predication to set expectations and build credibility. The study further found that he used argumentation and intensification as persuasive tools to assert his authority. It is expected that the findings will extend our knowledge of how the discourse of parliamentary leadership utilizes representations beyond grammatical level to convey recontextualized meaning to establish the nexus between power and ideology.

Keywords: *Discursive Strategies, Critical Discourse Analysis, Parliamentary Discourse, Ideology, Governance*

Publication History

Date received: 16-12-2025

Date accepted: 10-04-2026

Date published: 20-05-2026

Correspondence

Kwasi Sarfo-Adu

sadu@csuc.edu.gh

1.0 INTRODUCTION

Legislative discourse is divided into numerous subgenres, especially procedure-based communicative interactive instruments subordinated to certain parliamentary purposes. These are goal-directed demands or calls for action, reaction, and/or information. Ministerial remarks, interpellations, parliamentary addresses, parliamentary deliberations, parliamentary (oral and written) questioning, and question time are some of the most representative subgenres of parliamentary discourse (Ilie, 2010b). Among the various activities of each parliament are parliamentary speeches, which are intended to exhibit, in addition to facts or events, self-presentations and other-presentations. Other-presentations give equivalent information about other political parties and other MPs' sayings and actions, whereas self-presentations convey information about the speaker's own beliefs and experiences as well as the speaker's own party (Ilie, 2010b). In an era of growing political polarisation and interpersonal paradigm shifts, Ilie (2010b) suggests that it is vital to look at the more fundamental motives individuals have and the underlying negotiation processes, as well as how ideologies are institutionally represented—and misrepresented—in national parliaments.

In the Ghanaian context, previous research on political speeches have tended to focus on State of the Nation Addresses (SONAs) (Boakye, 2014; Sikanaku, 2022; Botchwey & Duah, 2023) Presidential Inaugural Addresses (PIAs) (Israel & Botchwey, 2017), examination and description of style (Anderson, 2014; Gameli & Angmorteh, 2016). Others have also undertaken rhetorical analysis and explored idealistic undertones in presidential speeches (Abokoma & Alofa, 2015; Addae, Alhassan & Kyeremeh, 2022; Adjei-Fobi, 2012; Djabetey, 2013; Sarfo-Adu, 2018). In comparison, little research has been carried out on parliamentary discourse (Sarfo, 2016; Appartaim, 2009; Sarfo-Kantankah, 2018; Akuka et al., 2021) and even less on speeches of Speakers of Parliament. This indicates a need to understand how the Speakers of Parliament couch their speeches to exert their authority to shape and influence parliamentary discourse.

Several questions, therefore, remain unanswered about the types of discursive strategies that permeate the speeches of Speakers of Parliament. It is against this backdrop that we aim to explore the discursive strategies and their implications in the speeches of Rt. Hon. Alban Sumana Kingsford Bagbin, Speaker of the 8th and the 9th Parliament of the Fourth Republic of Ghana. As the Speaker of Ghana's parliament, his political discourse provides a lens through which we can appreciate and understand how he crafts his language for purposes of identity construction and ideological inclinations. Our main objective in this paper is to examine the discursive strategies employed by the Speaker to construct political identities, power relations and ideological position within the Ghanaian parliamentary context. We employ Wodak and Meyer's (2001) discursive strategies to explore discursive strategies and their implications in four speeches of the Speaker. It is hoped that the findings will deepen our knowledge and understanding of the discourse of parliamentary leadership from the perspective of the Speaker.

2.0 LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Discursive Strategies

According to Wodak and Reisigl (2009), discursive strategies are specific linguistic and rhetorical techniques which are used by writers or speakers for the purpose of achieving goals such as persuading, legitimizing, marginalizing, or constructing identities. Writers or speakers achieve these by intentionally naming, describing (predicating), and debating about people, happenings, and issues, all within a historical and social context. They are referred to as strategies in so far as social actors deliberately select them to shape meaning, influence others, construct identities to present oneself as an expert, victim or authority or manage social relations such as politeness, solidarity and distance and also to legitimize or challenge power relations.

2.2 Theoretical Review

2.2.1 Wodak and Meyer's (2001) Discursive Strategies

Our examination of discursive strategies in the speeches of the Speaker is guided by Wodak and Meyer's (2001) discursive strategies. They propose five strategies that include referential/nomination, predication, argumentation, perspectivation, framing or discourse representation and intensification or mitigation to provide a systematic approach to language use.

First, a referential or nomination technique is used to create and depict social players by forming in-groups and out-groups. Nomination creates in-groups and out-groups using membership categorization tools. Referential methods can be realized linguistically using expressive and deictic noun phrases. Second, predication strategies are an important part of self- and other presentations (Reisigl & Wodak, 2005). Evaluative attributions are used to designate social players in predication. These methods, which try to characterize social actors positively or negatively, are so strongly tied to nomination strategies. Furthermore, argumentation tactics and a wealth of topoi are used to justify and ascribe good and negative qualities, discrimination, inclusion, exclusion, and suppression to interstate interactions (Wodak, 2011).

Topoi are reasoning components that pertain to the required, either explicit or inferable, premises. As such, they provide justification for the movement from the argument or arguments to the conclusion (Kienpointner 1996). Argumentation is used to justify positive or negative attributions. In addition, one can concentrate on the perspectivation, framing, or discourse representation through which speakers express their participation in discourse and position their point of view in the reporting, description, narration, or quotation of relevant events or utterances that support their claim (Wodak, 2011). Finally, there are intensification strategies and mitigating techniques. Both contribute to the qualification and modification of a proposition's epistemic standing by increasing or decreasing the illocutionary impact of utterances (Wodak, 2011).

Their discursive techniques are intended to achieve specific goals such as political, socioeconomic, behavioural, or linguistic goals. Based on the formation of *Us* and *Them*, discursive tactics are implicated in the notions of positive self-presentation and negative other-presentation. Below are Wodak and Meyer's discursive strategies reduced to their basic essentials.

Table 1: Wodak and Meyer's (2001) Discursive Strategies

<i>Discursive strategy</i>	<i>Objective</i>
Referential/Nomination	This strategy is concerned with the speaker's attempt to categorize people into in-groups and outgroups.
Predication	This strategy refers to the intention of speakers to describe social actors negatively and positively. Metaphorical expressions are used in describing people
Argumentation	This strategy reveals the moments when speakers attempt to legitimize or justify the negative or positive acts they produce
Perspectivation	This strategy describes the attempt of a speaker to get his audience involved through a variety of techniques such as reporting, describing, narrating or quoting sentences.
Intensification	This strategy reveals the moment when the speaker intends to produce utterances implicitly or explicitly.

Source: Wodak and Meyer's (2001)

Wodak and Meyer's model serves as both the theory and analytical framework that underpins the study. Its application to the analysis of the four speeches allows for an in-depth discussion and interpretation of the choices made by the Speaker to legitimize his authority and reach out to his audience.

2.3 Empirical Review

Over the years, discursive strategies have been the subject in numerous studies in political discourse. Addae et al. (2022) explored ideological representations and discursive strategies in selected speeches of Kwame Nkrumah, the first President of Ghana. The study employed Fairclough's CDA theory and Van Dijk's socio-cognitive approach in analyzing the selected speeches. Through thematic analysis, the authors observed that Nkrumah projected power in his speeches. The speeches adopted discursive structures that reflected power production, sustainability and asymmetrical power relations between the President and his audience.

Eze and Amoniyani (2021) also undertook a discourse analysis of selected 2019 Nigerian presidential campaign speeches. The study examined the various discursive strategies employed in the speeches as well as the ideologies carried across in the speeches. From the analysis, the contestants employed parallel structures, rhetorical constructions and comparisons like metaphors to embody their political ideological standpoints. Parallel structures were used to emphasize the contenders' avowals and to also amplify the emotions of the discourse. Whenever the speakers conveyed ideas which were not obvious and wished to avoid giving defence to their earlier stated claims, they resorted to rhetorical structures. Generally, the contenders' speeches projected the ideology of personality profiling, social interaction and personal commitment and responsibility to a national course.

Another relevant study notable of mentioning is Ramanathan et al., (2020) which examined discursive strategies in the political discourse of the former Prime Minister of Malaysia, Najib Tun Razak and Prime Minister Narendra Modi. The analysis identified the use of perspectivation and predication in establishing strong connections between the politicians and the citizenry. Both figures maintained a sense of oneness and integrity between their citizenry and themselves using two major speech acts: directives and commissives. Likewise, Mwiinga (2015) employed the CDA framework to evaluate the parliamentary debate of the Zambian parliament. The text used for the analysis was the debate on the lifting of the immunity of the 4th Republican president of Zambia in 2013. The study identified the use of polarization in parliamentary debates. Members of parliament presented positive in-groups and negative out-groups. The debates were characterized by power inequalities where the majority members appeared to have higher freedom than the minority group and party.

Kondratenko et al, (2020) examined communication tactics and strategies in the Ukrainian parliament. The results showed that strategies employed by parliamentarians included cooperative strategy (i.e., regulatory strategy), which was achieved through 1st and 2nd person singular pronouns, active citations, reference to sources and known facts. Other strategies found were informative strategy, conflict strategies, argumentations (declarative strategy) and discrediting of interlocutors (confrontational strategy). Similarly, a speech act analysis of parliamentary discourse was also done by Reinig, Rehbein and Ponzetto (2024). The study showed that conflict communication dominated the speeches of opposition members than members of the incumbent government. The latter's speeches were mostly dominated by cooperative-consolidating speech acts.

In an earlier study, Vukovic (2014) also explored epistemic modality in parliamentary text in the United Kingdom (UK) context. Strong epistemic modality was typically expressed through the use of adverbs, specifically emphasizees. The parliamentarians also used epistemic verbs (must, should, think, believe, etc.), nouns (fact, confidence, evidence, truth, etc.) and adjectives (certain, obvious, sure, clear, etc.). Sarfo-Kantankah (2022) also studied questions in UK and Ghanaian parliaments. The key distinction between the two parliaments was in the use of indirect yes/no interrogatives. Indirectness dominated both parliaments which was realized as a feature of the adversarial nature of parliamentary discourse. Further studies by Sarfo-Kantankah and Agbaglo (2022) also reported on the discourses around children in Ghanaian parliament. The study showed that children were framed within the following contexts: child marriage, child rights protection, child trafficking and child labour.

The foregoing review shows that while parliamentary discourse is an emerging field for research, a disturbing trend is that little or no scholarly attention has been paid to the discourse of the Speaker of Parliament. The result is that our knowledge and understanding of discursive strategies

employed by the Speaker remain superficial. It is for this reason that our paper makes a modest attempt to plug this knowledge gap.

3.0 METHODOLOGY

3.1 Research Design

The paper adopted a qualitative content approach rooted in the interpretative research paradigm to analyse four speeches that served as our data set. The qualitative descriptive approach allows for the categorization, description and interpretation of the discursive strategies identified in the speeches. Lambert and Lambert (2012) argue that qualitative descriptive approach is data-driven where the researcher generates codes from the data for a forthright description of the object of investigation. Our justification for adopting the qualitative research design is that the object of investigation is speech texts which enables us to unearth themes or generalizations to analyse the speeches to present a lucid reliable representation of Speaker Bagbin's parliamentary discourse in terms of the deployment of discursive strategies.

3.2 Data Source

The speeches were selected from *My Joy Online* a media outlet in Ghana noted for its credible and authentic reportage. Purposive sampling was used to select the speeches based on the fact that they were prepared texts delivered on special occasions unlike extempore speeches delivered by the Speaker on the floor of parliament. The speeches include:

- i. The Speaker's first speech on the first sitting of the 8th Parliament of the Fourth Republic - delivered on January 5, 2021 (3801 words, 7 pages)
- ii. The Speaker's acceptance speech at his conferment of the Millennium Excellence Award, as the Parliamentarian of the Decade Award - delivered on July 26, 2021 (2146 words, 5 pages)
- iii. A formal statement on the rejection or rescission of the 2022 budget statement and economic policy of Ghana - delivered on December 16, 2021. (2996 words, 6 pages)
- iv. The Speaker's remarks on censure motion against the minister responsible for finance - delivered on December 8, 2022 (3275 words, 6 pages)

The Speaker delivered all the speeches on the floor of parliament during the 8th Parliament.

3.2.1 Data Processing and Analysis

We did a preliminary reading of the selected speeches. The goal of the preliminary reading was for us to become familiar with the contents of the speeches. Then, we developed a coding procedure based on the discursive framework. We adopted a qualitative content analysis approach proposed by Zhang and Wildemuth (2009). After reading through the speeches, we agreed on "theme" as the unit of analysis. Next, we developed coding categories and a coding system after which we tested the coding scheme on one of the speeches. After this, all four speeches were coded and assessed for coding consistency.

In all, there were three individual iterative coding processes (based on Wodak and Meyer's discursive strategies) until we arrived at a final inter-coder agreement of 82%. We achieved this by using percentage agreement to calculate the number of agreements between the individual coders and divided them by the number of possible agreements and multiplied by 100. According to Leclerc (2010), percentage agreement is the commonest method used in inter-coder reliability, particularly, in a situation where the analysis does not need a high level of exactness, as in finance or health (Nili et al., 2017). The purpose of the coding was to help operationalize the discursive strategies and make them measurable, consistent and replicable. It was also done to improve reliability and reduce bias and subjectivity.

4.0 RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This section addresses the research question that guides the study. As stated earlier, the discursive strategies proposed by Wodak and Meyer (2001) informed the analysis. These included referential/nomination, predication, argumentation, perspectivation, framing or discourse representation and intensification or mitigation.

4.1 Referential/Nomination Strategy

This strategy focuses on how individuals refer to or nominate entities, objects, or concepts within their discourse. According to Wodak and Meyer (2001), referential or nomination is used to create in-groups and out-groups. This is achieved through the use of membership categorization tools.

The Speaker gives recognition to first-time Members of Parliament in his first speech delivered to the 8th Parliament. In his speech, the Speaker gives special welcome and recognition to the first-time members of the 8th Parliament, acknowledging their new status as "Honorable" and emphasizing their responsibility to serve with honor and integrity. This is exemplified in extract (1):

1. *...assuming your seats as Members of this House for the first time. You have now earned the privilege to be addressed in this Chamber as "Honorable".*

The objective of referring to roles and responsibilities and recognizing first-time members is to establish the expectations and standards for Members of Parliament. It aims to reinforce the importance of their position, emphasizing honour, privilege, trust and service. By highlighting the responsibilities of MPs, the Speaker aims to encourage a sense of duty and commitment to serving the constituents and the nation. Recognizing first-time members acknowledges their entry into a position of leadership and signals their inclusion in the parliamentary community.

The Speaker employs nomination in his remarks on the censure motion against the Minister of Finance. In this text, the Speaker refers to the motion of censure as an important and unprecedented event in the House, emphasizing its significance by invoking specific constitutional articles and standing orders. Extract (2) exemplifies this:

2. *For the first time this House is confronted with handling a motion calling on it to pass a resolution of a vote of censure on a Minister of State...*

Similarly, the Speaker nominates the Deputy Majority Leader's argument regarding the Minister's right to a fair hearing, acknowledging and addressing it within the discourse. Extract (3) illustrates this:

3. *The Deputy Majority Leader further contended that even if Parliament had jurisdiction over the matter, the Minister responsible for Finance is entitled to be heard in defence.*

In this quote, the Speaker refers to individuals and institutions in specific, purposeful ways. He uses institutional titles instead of personal names. These designations nominate individuals by their institutional roles, not by personal names. This does three things. First, it emphasizes official authority rather than personal identity. Second, it distances the Speaker from the individuals involved and keeps the tone formal and procedural. Third, it frames the issue as institutional rather than personal, thereby reinforcing parliamentary protocol. The statement also highlights hierarchical position. The Speaker's use of the exact titles indexes their places in parliamentary hierarchy and their legitimacy and formal responsibilities. This nomination elevates the actors as authoritative and relevant stakeholders, legitimizing their involvement in the matter. The phrases "the Deputy Majority Leader" and "Minister responsible for Finance" represent functional nomination in that they name actors by the functions they perform rather than who they are. This suggests that the actors are involved not because of personal interest but because of their portfolios, and the right "to be heard in defence" emanates from institutional role making the justification appear procedural and impartial.

In his formal statement on the rejection or rescission of the 2022 Budget Statement and Economic Policy of Government, the Speaker's use of nomination identifies key issues and concepts that form the basis of his communication. For example, the Speaker nominates the conduct of members, the legality of decisions, the role of parliamentarians and the need to strengthen democratic governance.

Journal of Applied Science, Arts and Business (JASAB)

Nominating these topics, the Speaker establishes a framework for the subsequent discussion and emphasizes their significance. This is found in the following statements of the Speaker:

4. *The conduct of members on those days also touches on the legality of the decisions arrived at in the House and how we arrived at those decisions.*
5. *Members need to think about how to strengthen the work of this House and by extension, strengthen Ghana's democratic governance...*
6. *Members must bear in mind that as Members of Parliament, they also represent the people – the citizenry – not just political parties...*

The use of the nomination strategy is also observed in the Speaker's acceptance speech at his conferment of the Millennium Excellence Award, as the Parliamentarian of the Decade.

7. *To my guardian angels, here I mean, the good people of Nadowli/Kaleo...I will forever remain indebted to you for your unflinching support.*

In extract (7), the Speaker refers to the 'guardian angels' and clarifies that he is addressing the constituents of the Nadowli/Kaleo constituency. The Speaker had served as the Member of Parliament for the constituency from the 1st to the 7th parliaments of the Republic of Ghana. This nomination strategy establishes a personal connection with his constituents and acknowledges their support as a significant factor in his political career. This fosters a sense of appreciation and personal connection with the Speaker's supporters, strengthening their loyalty and dedication to him. Referring to specific entities and predicting future developments, the Speaker establishes personal connections with various stakeholders and sets clear goals for his leadership tenure. These references add depth and personalization to the speech, creating connections with the audience and reinforcing the Speaker's messages. He also uses the nomination/referential strategy to list the various positions he held during his political career. This is exemplified in extract (8):

8. *...then as Chairman of various Committees, Minority Leader, Majority Leader, Second Deputy Speaker and today, the Speaker of this Parliament...*

By referring to his past roles, he presents a concise summary of his political achievements, highlighting the progression that culminated in his current position as the Speaker of Parliament. The Speaker also nominates and refers to the award he is receiving from the Millennium Excellence Foundation. Stating its full name "...the Millennium Excellence Prize for Leadership and Excellence," he acknowledges the significance of the award and its purpose of recognizing leadership and excellence.

The Speaker also nominates the National Democratic Congress as the catalyst for his political success as he remarks:

9. *...to the great National Democratic Congress, the platform that propelled me to stardom...*

In extract (9), the Speaker acknowledges the party's roles in his political success and expresses his confidence in its [the party's] contribution to the development of iconic leaders. He makes special mention of his party and acknowledges their significant contribution in his political career and progress. This singling out of the party shows the impact the party has had on him and how indebted he is to the party.

In-groups are constructed through the use of nomination strategy. Throughout the speeches, the Speaker consistently uses pronouns such as 'we' and 'our' to refer to Members of Parliament, the Parliamentary Service and Ghanaians. The repeated reference to 'Members of Parliament' specifically identifies a subset of individuals who share the same role and responsibility as the Speaker. This inclusive language creates a sense of belonging and emphasizes the shared identity among those within the parliamentary and national community.

Nomination strategy constructs out-groups when the Speaker calls out members with rancorous and unruly behaviour. The Speaker acknowledges the conduct of "some members" that raises issues of disregarding parliamentary practice, procedure and process. The Speaker subtly distinguishes these individuals from the in-group of Honourable individuals who are required to uphold parliamentary etiquette by drawing attention to their actions. This categorization creates an outgroup of members

Journal of Applied Science, Arts and Business (JASAB)

who are seen as disruptive or problematic. The Speaker also indirectly references political parties when he states:

10. *Members must bear in mind that as Members of Parliament, they also represent the people – the citizenry – not just political parties.*

The discourse suggests an outgroup dynamic wherein members who prioritise party interests are distinct from those who prioritise the interests of the people by drawing a distinction between party identification and representation of the general populace. In one instance, the Speaker refers to ‘Ministers of State and other government officials’ in the context of their accountability to Parliament. The Speaker indirectly creates an out-group made up of people who could have previously been indifferent to legislative demands for accountability by separating these officials from Members of Parliament.

In his acceptance speech at his conferment of the Millennium Excellence Award as the Parliamentarian of the decade, the Speaker also mentions that Ghanaians voted against ‘extreme partisanship characterized by acrimony and rancour in our debates on the floor of the House’. Here, the phrase ‘extreme partisanship’ constructs an out-group, implying a negative perception of individuals or actions associated with excessive division and conflict based on political affiliation. The Speaker positions this out-group as the opposite of the cooperative and constructive approach he advocates.

4.2 Predication Strategy

Predication, according to Wodak and Meyer (2001), is a strategy employed in designating social players by giving them evaluative attributes. This strategy is key in self and other presentations. They are used in discourse to present social actors either positively or negatively. In the Speaker’s remarks on the censure motion against the Minister of Finance, predication is used to guide the audience’s anticipation of the procedural steps and to also prepare the audience for potential objections or challenges. In the extract below he poses a rhetorical question to set members cogitating.

11. *How could Parliament be seen to have given the Minister a fair hearing in a motion to pass a vote of censure without an inquiry into the grounds on which the motion is based?*

This rhetorical question prompts the audience to consider the potential unfairness of the process without an inquiry, thereby influencing their expectations and understanding of the importance of an investigation. In his utterance: ‘*The House may now proceed to debate the motion.*’, the Speaker predicts the next step of the debate. He sets the audience’s expectations and prepares them for the forthcoming discussion and voting process.

The use of predication strategy in the Speaker’s formal statement on the rejection or rescission of the 2022 Budget Statement and Economic Policy of Government establishes a sense of accountability and inspires confidence in his leadership and intentions for the future. Extract (12) exemplifies this:

12. *I promise to do everything within my power and authority to lead the House to chart a path of transformation, decency and change, a change for the better.*

The Speaker commits himself to a cause of action that he will exert his authority to foster transformation and create a more dignified and effective Parliament. It demonstrates the Speaker’s commitment to leading the House towards positive change. The Speaker also uses predication to encourage the continuation of practices that enhance communication, dialogue and stakeholder consultation as exemplified in the extract below:

13. *Let us continue to strengthen our channels of communication, foster dialogue, encourage broader stakeholder consultation and allow the processes we have adopted for our burgeoning democracy to thrive.*

In extract (13), the Speaker aims to emphasize the importance of these practices for the flourishing of Ghana’s democracy, indicating his vision for an inclusive and participatory legislative process. The Speaker highlights the role of communication, dialogue and consultations in sustaining the country’s

Journal of Applied Science, Arts and Business (JASAB)

democracy. He indicates that these parliamentary practices will allow for effective practice of democratic governance.

The predication strategy in the Speaker's acceptance speech at his conferment of the Millennium Excellence Award as the Parliamentarian of the Decade conveys his vision as a legislator for Ghanaians, expresses gratitude, recognizes achievements and outlines future aspirations. The Speaker uses the predication strategy to express gratitude to Almighty God for guiding and supporting him throughout his political journey. In extract (14) he declares:

14. *I thank the Almighty God whose favour and mercies have brought me this far and for guiding the recognition of me...*

Another point worth mentioning is that he recognizes the contributions and wisdom of fellow Members of Parliament, acknowledging their role in his political career. Expressing gratitude to God and acknowledging the contribution of others lend weight to his statements, reinforcing the audience's trust in his words. The Speaker's use of the predication strategy builds credibility. By making verifiable claims about his political journey, he establishes credibility and authenticity.

The Speaker also points out the change that has occurred in parliament and notes that the House which he leads will hold government officials accountable. Consider the following extract:

15. *The era when Ministers of State and other government officials ignored the call of Parliament to account for their stewardship is gone...*

Using the predication strategy, as illustrated in extract (15), the Speaker highlights past happenings and shows the transformation which has occurred in the current parliament. The Speaker presents a new image of parliament as one that will continually check the performance of public officers. The strategy emphasizes the positive changes that have occurred and signals the Speaker's commitment to transparency and responsible governance.

Through the strategy, the Speaker as well conveys his aspirations for the development of democracy in Ghana. This is exemplified in extract (16):

16. *The House, by this, has succeeded in sending a message of unity...*

In extract (16), the Speaker predicts that the unity and resolve shown by the House will lead to greater dividends for the country's democracy. This indicates his vision for a more collaborative and progressive parliamentary process.

Overall, the predication strategy reinforces the Speaker's commitment to transparency and accountability. Asserting that the era of lack of accountability is past, the Speaker inspires confidence in the public that Parliament is taking steps to enhance accountability and governance. The prediction that the unity of the House will lead to greater dividends for democracy promotes a sense of collective responsibility among Members of Parliament. This implication encourages collaboration and cooperation in parliamentary proceedings, fostering a more harmonious and effective legislative body. The strategy outlines the Speaker's aspirations for the future development of democracy. This sets clear expectations for the actions and policies he envisions, providing a roadmap for parliamentary conduct and national progress.

4.3 Argumentation Strategy

The argumentation strategy implies an intention to present logical reasoning, evidence and persuasive techniques to support a specific claim or viewpoint (Purwant, 2017). The objective is to persuade the audience by providing convincing arguments, evidence and examples that support the speaker's or writer's position and ultimately influence the audience's opinions or beliefs (Sharndama, 2015).

The objective of critiquing the constitutional arrangement and calling for minimizing its negative impact is to advocate reforms and improved governance. The aim of the critique is to highlight the weakening of Parliament's role and underscore the need for a more effective system. The Speaker offers a call to action while recognising the shortcomings of the current system by criticising the constitutional setup. He urges all parties involved to recognize their responsibility and contribute (s) to mitigating the negative consequences, thereby promoting more robust parliamentary functioning.

Journal of Applied Science, Arts and Business (JASAB)

In the Speaker's remarks on the censure motion against the Minister of Finance, he uses argumentation to persuade and justify the legality and authority of the parliamentary procedure and in addressing potential objections and concerns. The Speaker avers:

17. *The process for a vote of censure is not a trial, not a criminal trial... Parliament is therefore intra vires and not ultra vires in admitting and permitting the Minority Leader to move the motion.*

The Speaker's argument rests on a definitional premise differentiating between censure motion and a criminal trial. The purpose of this distinction is to claim that parliament is operating within its legal powers (*intra vires*). In effect, parliament is not overstepping its authority (*ultra vires*) when it hears or admits the motion. This reasoning implies that in so far as it is not a criminal trial, the procedural obligations and limitations that are related to judicial trials are not applicable here. The Speaker strategically resorts to this argument to prevent possible demurrals that the process breaches standards of even-handedness or due process associated with criminal proceedings. The argument is lucid and coherent and it serves to validate parliamentary procedure that the process is lawful and supports parliament's admission of the motion by drawing a distinction between a trial and a vote of censure. The Speaker's use of argumentation ties in with the findings of Purwant (2017) that argumentation strategy legitimizes political actions.

The Speaker also highlights the potential benefits of a standing orders committee.

18. *The House is yet to establish a specific committee to do so as has already been done by other parliaments. The process we are developing now, in my humble view, will be of immense assistance to Parliament in its ongoing efforts to revise the current Standing Orders of Parliament.*

The first takeaway in the Speaker's argument is his appeal to conventional institutional norms. The reference to "other parliaments," means he appeals to legitimacy and precedent; Ghana's parliament can take a cue from other legislative democracies with dedicated committees. This is a persuasive strategy to argue that Ghana's parliament should adapt similar standards. Again, the statement recognizes the need for institutional reform. It acknowledges a gap "yet to establish" and portrays self-awareness. It shows that the leadership recognizes shortcomings and is taking measures to fix them, rather than play-acting everything is fine. Not only that, the statement is couched in a forward-thinking and constructive tone. The Speaker frames the change as a process, not a criticism. He offers a pre-emptive plan "the process we are developing now", which intimates willingness to deal with the complication of amending internal rules, culminating in conscientious leadership. The statement is also imbued with potential for improved clarity and reliability. A committee that is dedicated has the potential to ensure that Standing Orders are systematically appraised. Thus, it will fine-tune ambiguities and update rules to reflect contemporary realities, thereby strengthening procedural integrity, pellucidity, and equality in parliamentary proceedings.

Argumentation strategy in the Speaker's formal statement on the rejection or rescission of the 2022 Budget Statement and Economic Policy of Government is used to persuade his audience. The Speaker uses argumentation to convince the audience of the truth and relevance of his views, therefore enhancing his authority and credibility. The Speaker retorts:

19. *Members need to consider the precedents we set by every decision and action we take in this house.*

The objective of this argumentation is to emphasize the importance of setting precedents and considering the implications of decisions made in Parliament. The Speaker urges members to reflect on the long-term consequences of their actions, emphasizing the responsibility they hold as lawmakers and representatives of the people. Even though the statement is short, it is normatively, institutionally, and procedurally rich. Parliament is not only bound by written rules but also by precedents. Rulings, decisions and practices of the past become part of the procedural agenda. Again, MPs can cultivate the long-term value of precedents, implying that MPs should not allow political affiliations to overshadow institutional norms.

Journal of Applied Science, Arts and Business (JASAB)

The statement as well draws MPs' awareness that whatever behavior they put up currently has the potential to shape future interpretation of Standing Orders or conventions. Once something untoward is done, and it is not countered, it becomes part of parliamentary "tradition" as it is not easy to reverse precedents. This suggests that future Speakers of Parliament could be obligated to uphold a certain inimical practice, based on a previous poor precedent. In short, parliament stands to gain when precedents are stable, principled, and reflective of constitutional norms.

Argumentation is also used in this text to raise concerns about the legal basis and implications of a letter presented by the Minister of Finance. Extract (20) illustrates this:

20. *The legal basis of the laying of such a letter and what actions Parliament may take as a result leaves a lot to be desired.*

In extract (20), the Speaker aims to provoke further scrutiny and discussion regarding the letter. He encourages Parliament to assess its legitimacy and decide on appropriate actions. In the phrase, "leaves a lot to be desired", the Speaker deprecates the actions that Parliament may take with regard to the legal grounds on which the Minister of Finance presented to Parliament.

4.4 Perspectivation/Framing Strategy

Perspectivation or framing strategy implies a deliberate selection of language, emphasis and context to shape the audience's interpretation and understanding of a topic. The objective is to influence how the information is perceived and evaluated by presenting it from a particular perspective or frame of reference (Sharndama, 2015). This strategy can help shape the audience's attitudes, beliefs or responses.

The objective of framing the people's expectations and rejecting business as usual, in the Speaker's first address to the 8th Parliament, is to foster a sense of change and renewed focus on national interests. It aims to challenge partisan politics, encourage co-operation and prioritize the needs and concerns of the people. The Speaker links himself with the people's demand for sensible and practical answers to everyday issues by shaping their expectations. He seeks to create a sense of urgency and motivation for MPs to work collaboratively, transcend partisan divisions and prioritize the development and progress of the country. This finding supports Ramanathan et al. (2022) who found that the perspectivation, using directives, helped the former Prime Minister of Malaysia, N. T. Razak and Prime Minister Narendra Modi to influence their audience and shape their thinking.

The use of perspectivation or framing in the Speaker's remarks on the censure motion against the Minister of Finance emphasizes the political nature of parliamentary procedures and also highlights the importance of open debate and democratic principles. The Speaker provides context and perspective for the audience to analyse and comprehend the proceedings by relating parliamentary processes to politics and highlighting the value of free and open discussion. This is observed in extract (21):

21. *The law and custom of Parliament and parliamentary practice and procedure are more in the world of politics than law...Parliament must provide unlimited opportunities for open debate in consonance with the rights and freedoms, privileges and immunities of members and officers of the House.*

The framing of the stage as a debate also highlights the democratic nature of the process and positions the upcoming discussion within a specific perspective, encouraging the audience to engage in reasoned deliberation. In the speech, the use of framing shapes the audience's interpretation or understanding and establishes the context and perspective of the discourse.

In the Speaker's formal statement on the rejection or rescission of the 2022 Budget Statement and Economic Policy of Government, perspectivation/framing guides the audience's understanding and interpretation of events, influencing their attitudes and responses. The Speaker for instance retorts:

22. *I am convinced we should accept the view of the conscience of the nation that we owe Ghanaians an apology and I will proceed to do just that.*

Journal of Applied Science, Arts and Business (JASAB)

The objective of this perspectivation is to frame the Speaker's apology as a response to the conscience of the nation and the expectation of Ghanaians. The Speaker intends to position his apology as a necessary and responsible action, aligning it with the expectations and values of the citizens. The Speaker's use of perspectivation in this text also provides context and establishes a foundation for his proposed actions and recommendations. Extract (23) shows this:

23. *To do this, it is necessary to summarize a few proceedings in order to lay a foundation for me to propose the way forward.*

In extract (23), the Speaker aims to create a comprehensive understanding of the issues at hand and set the stage for the subsequent course of action. This ensures clarity and coherence in the discourse.

4.5 Intensification or Mitigation Strategy

Intensification or mitigation strategies imply the use of language to amplify or diminish the impact of statements or actions. The objective of intensification is to emphasize or highlight certain aspects to create a stronger emotional response or emphasize the significance of a particular point (Sharndama, 2015). Mitigation, on the other hand, aims to downplay or soften the impact of certain statements to reduce potential conflicts, mitigate negative reactions or manage delicate situations (Sharndama, 2015).

In the Speaker's first address to the 8th Parliament, the objective of intensifying commitment and mitigating unruly behaviour is to assert the Speaker's authority and maintain the dignity and decorum of the House. It aims to establish expectations for respectful behaviour, fair decision-making and the protection of parliamentary rights. The Speaker aims to earn the members' confidence and respect by reinforcing his commitment to being fair, unbiased, and firm. He establishes the tone for a polite and orderly parliamentary atmosphere by addressing the disorderly conduct and voicing his strong displeasure, highlighting the significance of maintaining the dignity of the House.

In the Speaker's remarks on the censure motion against the Minister of Finance, intensification or mitigation strategy strengthens his convictions and positions and/or mitigates potential objections or concerns. Using the phrase 'firm opinion', the Speaker intensifies his belief in the legality of the procedure, reinforcing his position and conveying conviction. He uses the phrase 'of the firm opinion' in the expression:

24. *I am of the firm opinion that the procedure adopted by the referral of the matter to the ad hoc Committee for inquiry is well rooted in law.*

Also, through the use of 'not', the Speaker mitigates the absence of a specific committee, acknowledging the limitation while downplaying its impact on the current process. This is seen in extract (25):

25. *The House has not appointed any Committee on this subject matter.*

The use of intensification/mitigation strategy in the Speaker's acceptance speech at his conferment of the Millennium Excellence Award as the Parliamentarian of the Decade enhances the impact of certain statements, either by emphasizing strong commitments or softening past challenges. Intensification of confidence in receiving unwavering support from various stakeholders fosters a sense of unity and teamwork, promoting a collaborative and cohesive approach in Parliament. On the other hand, mitigation of past issues with accountability implies that the Speaker believes in the improvement of parliamentary accountability, encouraging a focus on positive developments and progress rather than dwelling on past shortcomings.

5.0 CONCLUSION

In this paper, we have demonstrated that the Speaker employed all five discursive strategies proposed by Wodak and Meyer (2001), to achieve specific communicative, social or ideological goals. He strategically used nomination, predication, argumentation, perspectivation/framing and intensification/mitigation to manage meaning, negotiate relationships, construct identities and legitimize his authority as the Speaker of Parliament. The Speaker tactically employed discursive

Journal of Applied Science, Arts and Business (JASAB)

strategies not only to convey his message but also to present a positive image of himself as a capable, committed, and accountable leader. This positive self-presentation enhances his authority and persuasiveness.

The implications of the findings are multifaceted and hold significance for both parliamentary discourse and effective political communication. The Speaker's use of discursive strategies enhances his ability to persuade and influence his audience. The in-group and out-group dynamics created through nomination in his speeches can contribute to effective parliamentary leadership. Fostering a sense of unity among members and holding them accountable for their behavior can lead to a more cohesive and responsible parliamentary body.

The Speaker's speeches, characterized by principles of good governance and transparency, have the potential to influence the political culture in Ghana. The findings on the Speaker's discursive strategies also contribute to the scholarship on political communication and parliamentary discourse. They offer illuminating insights into how linguistic and rhetorical techniques can be used effectively in political contexts. The findings contribute to the theoretical underpinnings of political discourse, specifically showing how the Speaker of Parliament uses language to shape and communicate political ideologies, policies and narratives.

REFERENCES

- Abokoma, A. A. & Alofa, B. A. (2015). *A rhetorical analysis of Osagyefo Dr Kwame Nkrumah's independence speech*. *New Media of Mass Communication*, Department of Communication and Media Studies, UEW – Winneba, ISSN 2224-2375.
- Addae, A., Alhassan, H. & Kyeremeh, Y. S. (2022). Discursive strategies of ideological representations in political speeches: a critical discourse analysis of selected speeches of Kwame Nkrumah. *European Journal of Literature, Language and Linguistics Studies*, 6(2), 141-162
- Adjei-Fobi, C. K. (2012). *A rhetorical analysis of political discourse: A comparative study of the use of metaphors in the speeches of Nkrumah and Rawlings*. Master's Thesis, Department of English, University of Ghana, Legon.
- Akuka, B. S., Hammond, C. & Wornyo, A. A. (2021). Politeness in Parliamentary Discourse: An Analysis of the Hansard of the Parliament of Ghana. *Studies in Linguistics and Literature*, 5(4). <https://doi.org/10.22158/sll.v5n4p1>
- Anderson, J. (2014). *A stylistics analysis of some selected political speeches by John Evans Atta Mills*. Master's Thesis, University of Ghana, Legon.
- Appartaim, A. B. (2009). *Prominence and rhythm of Ghanaian English speech: a case study of parliamentary discourse*. Master's thesis. University of Cape Coast.
- Boakye, J. S. (2014). "Our democracy has been tested to the utmost limit: an exploration of the use of Assertives in Ghanaian presidential inaugural addresses". *Language Discourse and Society*, 3 (1) 68-87.
- Botchwey, E., Duah, S.K., & Adade, D. (2023). Thematic Analysis of president Akufo-Addo's State of the nation Address, *Linguistic Initiative* 3, (2) pp. 140-156
- Djabetey, I. N. (2013). *Language, power and ideology: A Critical Discourse Analysis of selected speeches of Nana Addo Dankwa Akuffo-Addo and John Dramani Mahama*. Master's thesis, University of Ghana, Legon.
- Eze, C. E. & Amoniyani, O. M. (2021). Discursive strategies in selected 2019 presidential campaign speeches. *Dutsin-Ma Journal of English and Literature (DUJEL)*, 6(2), 113-137.
- Gameli, K. R., & Angmorteh, P. M. (2016). Analysis of the persuasive strategies in the 2016 state of the Nation's Address. *International Journal of Innovative Research in Education, Technology and Social Strategies*, 3(1), ISSN 2467-8163.
- Ilie, C. (2010a). Speech acts and rhetorical practices in parliamentary question time. *Revue Roumaine de Linguistique*. 4, 333-342.

Journal of Applied Science, Arts and Business (JASAB)

- Ilie, C. (2010b). Introduction. In C. Ilie, (Ed.), *European parliaments under scrutiny: Discourse strategies and interaction practices* (pp.1-25). Amsterdam: Benjamins.
- Israel, P.C., Botchwey, E. (2017). Language and Politics: A Study of Presidential Speeches of Selected Ghanaian Leaders, *WORD* 63, 1-61
- Jorgensen, M. & Phillips, L. (2002). *Discourse analysis as theory and method*. London: Sage Publications.
- Kienpointner, M. (1996). Whorf and Wittgenstein. Language, world view and argumentation. *Argumentation*, 10(4), 475-494.
- Kondratenko, N. V., Kiselova, A. A. & Zavalska, L. V. (2020). Strategies and tactics of communication in parliamentary discourse. *Studies about Languages*, 36, 17-29. <https://doi.org/10.5755/j01.sal.0.36.23401>
- Lambert, V. A. & Lambert C.E. (2012). Qualitative descriptive research: an acceptable design, *Pacific Rim International Journal of Nursing Research*, 16, (4), 255-256
- Meyer, M. (2001). Between theory, method, and politics: Positioning of the approaches to CDA. In R. Wodak & M. Meyer (Ed.), *Methods of Critical Discourse Analysis*
- Mwiinga, C. (2015). *A critical discourse analysis of the parliamentary debate on the lifting of the immunity of the fourth republican president of Zambia in 2013*. Master's dissertation, University of Zambia, Lusaka.
- Nili, A., Tate, M., Barros, A. (2017). A critical analysis of inter-coder reliability ACIS Proceedings 99
- Purwanto, Y. (2017). Discursive strategies on Ridwan Kamil's status updates: a critical discourse analysis. *Humanora*, 8(2), 153-164
- Ramanathan, R., Paramasivam, S. & Hoon T. B. (2020). Discursive strategies and speech acts in political discourse of Najib and Modi. *International Journal of Education*, 8(3), 34-44.
- Reinig, I., Rehbein, I., & Ponzetto, S. (2024). How to do politics with words: Investigating speech acts in parliamentary debates. *International Conference on Language Resources and Evaluation*, 8287-8300.
- Reisigl, M., & Wodak, R. (2005). *Discourse and discrimination: Rhetorics of racism and antisemitism*. Routledge.
- Reisigl, M., & Wodak, R. (2009). The discourse-historical approach. In R. Wodak & M. Meyer (Eds.), *Methods of critical discourse analysis* (2nd ed., pp. 87–121). London, UK: Sage.
- Sarfo-Kantankah, S. K. & Agbaglo, E. (2022). "We owe this noble duty to our children": a corpus-assisted critical discourse analysis of Ghanaian parliamentary discourses around children. *Language, Discourse and Society*, 10(1).
- Sarfo-Kantankah, S. K. (2022). The politics of questioning: aspects of UK and Ghanaian parliamentary question types. *Ghana Journal of Linguistics*, 11(1), 66-92.
- Sarfo-Adu, K. (2018). *On the road to the presidency: a pragma-rhetorical analysis of the campaign speeches of John Agyekum Kufuor*. Unpublished Doctoral thesis. University of Cape coast.
- Sarfo-Kantanka, K. S. (2018). It's about people: identifying the focus of parliamentary debates through a corpus-driven approach. *Corpora*, 13(3), 393-430.
- Sarfo, E. (2016). *Questioning and debating in UK and Ghanaian parliamentary discourse*. PhD thesis, University of Leeds.
- Sharndama, E. C. (2015). Political discourse: A critical discourse analysis of president Muhammadu Buhari's inaugural speech. *European Journal of English Language and Linguistics Research*, 3(3), 12-24.
- Sikanku, G.E. (2022). Presidential Discourse, t State of the nation Address in the public and recurring themes: A political communication analysis of the 2019 State of the Nation Address in Ghana, *Communication and the Public* 7, (4)
- Vukovic, M. (2014). Strong epistemic modality in parliamentary discourse. *Open Linguistics*, 1, 37-52. <https://doi.org/10.2478/opli-2014-0003>

Journal of Applied Science, Arts and Business (JASAB)

- Wodak, R. (2001). What CDA is about - a summary of its history, important concepts and its developments. In R. Wodak & M. Meyer (Ed.). *Methods of critical discourse analysis*. New Delhi: Sage Publications.
- Wodak, R. (2011). *The discourse of politics in action: Politics as usual*. Springer.
- Wodak, R., & Meyer, M. (2001). *Methods of critical discourse analysis*. Sage.
<https://doi.org/10.4135/9780857028020>
- Zhang, Y., & Wildermuth, B.M (2009). Quantitative analysis of content. In B. Wildermuth (Ed.) *Applications of Social Research Methods to Questions in Information and Library Science*, (pp.308-319) Westport, CT: Libraries Unlimited

About the Authors

Dr. Kwasi Sarfo-Adu is a distinguished English language scholar, educator, and researcher with a deep passion for teaching and academic excellence. He is a Senior Lecturer with publications in reputable journals. He has also presented papers at international conferences. Currently, he is the Head of the Department of English and Mathematics Education at Christian Service University (CSU), where he teaches and mentors students in key areas of English studies. At CSU, Dr. Sarfo-Adu prioritizes strengthening graduate research and championing the MPhil English and Mathematics Education Programmes. His research interests include Presidential Rhetoric, Advanced Syntax, Speech Acts, Linguistic Politeness, New Englishes, and Generative Phonology.

Perpetual Lariba Aniba Kaba holds an MPhil in English Language from the Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology, Kumasi, and is a tutor at Pentecost Senior High School, Kumasi. Her research interests lie in discourse analysis with particular focus on parliamentary discourses and political communication. Her work engages with how language constructs meaning, ideology, and representation in institutional contexts.

Obed Atta-Asamoah is affiliated to the Department of Languages at St. Ambrose College of Education, Ghana, as an Assistant Lecturer. He is also a PhD candidate in English Language at the University of Cape Coast. As an interdisciplinary scholar, his research interests span discourse analysis, gender linguistics and institutional discourse with expanding interest in education and design cognition. His recent publications include an article on modality analysis in ceremonial discourses and ideological inferences in a concession speech. His interdisciplinary engagements in education and design cognition complement his core research by deepening his interest in meaning-making, interpretation, and the social construction of knowledge across contexts.