Drumspeak, Vol. 7 No. 3 (New Series) ISSN: 2821-8981 (online)
https://doi.org/10.47963/drumspeak.v7i2.1712

DISCURSIVE PRACTICES IN THE LANGUAGE OF PROTEST: THE CASE OF #FIXTHECOUNTRY DEMONSTRATION IN GHANA

[2]**Hannah Deloris De-Heer**
Department of English,
University of Cape Coast,
Ghana

&

[3]**Kwabena Sarfo Sarfo-Kantankah**

Department of English,
University of Cape Coast,
Ghana
ORCID: 0000-0001-5662-2886

Abstract

Although numerous studies have examined protest discourse across various global contexts, relatively few have focused on Africa, and even fewer on Ghana specifically. This gap is significant given the region's evolving democratic landscape and the role of protest as a means of political expression. Furthermore, while protest discourse has been explored through multiple theoretical frameworks, the application of Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL), particularly transitivity analysis, remains limited. This study addresses these gaps by analysing how language was used to construct discursive practices in the #Fix-the-Country protest in Ghana. Drawing on an interpretive content analysis of 137 placards and banners from the demonstration, the study applies transitivity analysis to demonstrate how different process types conveyed protester sentiments. The study found that material processes expressed resistance, relational processes signalled disillusionment, and mental processes revealed unfulfilled desires that fueled dissatisfaction and anger toward the government. The findings contribute to both protest discourse studies in Africa and theoretical claims within SFL, demonstrating how transitivity captures the linguistic construction of experiential reality in the contexts of dissent.

[2] Hannah Deloris De-Heer is a postgraduate student at the Department of English, University of Cape Coast, Ghana. She holds a Master of Philosophy in English Language from the University of Cape Coast. Her research interests include corpus linguistics, health discourse and functional grammar.

[3] Kwabena Sarfo Sarfo-Kantankah is a Professor of English language in the Department of English, University of Cape Coast, Ghana. He obtained his PhD from the School of English, University of Leeds, UK. His research interests include corpus linguistics, discourse analysis, political discourse, parliamentary discourse and pragmatics. He has previously published in journals such as *Journal of Pragmatics*, *Amapersand*, *Critical Approaches to Discourse Analysis across Disciplines*, *Corpora and Word*.

Keywords: Language of Protest, Discursive Construction, Transitivity, Fix the Country, Ghana

Background

Protests are integral to all cultures' civil, political, economic and social life (Hill, 2018). Various situations spark them, but their core causes, especially in democratic countries, are persistent social injustice, socioeconomic precariousness, sociopolitical unhappiness, oppression, and disillusionment (Hall, 2016). By their ability to shift public discourse (Dunivin, Yan, Ince & Rojas, 2022), protests have historically sparked positive social change and improved the protection of human rights. They continuously help define and protect civic space around the world (Fernández-Molina, 2015). Additionally, they help citizens engage more and become informed as they promote representative democracy by allowing citizens to participate directly in public affairs (Begum, 2015). People share their opinions and ideas through language, expose governance flaws, and openly demand that authorities and other powerful organisations address issues and accept accountability for their actions (Ben-said & Kasanga, 2016). The protesters' actions include various elements such as voices, written language, visual images, colours, chants, or slogans used within a certain period and with a certain expanse in space (Begum, 2015).

The language used in protest employs linguistic resources that express feelings of disappointment, desperation, disapproval, and other discursive practices. Halliday (1984) argues that whenever we communicate with one another through language, we construct our experiences through the choice of processes, as demonstrated by transitivity analysis. This means people represent patterns of experience that go on around and inside them, buttressing Hill's (2018) claim that the language employed in protest is composed of carefully constructed sentences or expressions that inspire actions, elicit feelings, and serve as persuasive tools. Thus, examining protest discourse through transitivity is essential for identifying how language conveys action, emotion, and persuasion, thereby deepening our understanding of how language functions in protest contexts, especially in this digital age.

There is a substantial body of literature on the subject of protest discourse (Begum, 2015). Protest language is usually a mediational means of representing an action (Kasanga, 2014). As a result, protests require language in a specific manner: language that probes, resists,

and demands. There are several studies on protest, which have been done in different regions such as Asia (Al-Naimat, 2020; Arege, 2021; Begum, 2015; Rahmasari, 2021), Europe (Beќar, 2015; Hall, 2016; Kliuchnikova, 2013; Niesen, 2019; Payson, 2015; Woolfson, 2011), United States of America (Gallagher, Reagan, Danforth, & Dodds, 2018; Weber, Dejmanee & Rhode, 2018) and Africa (Ben-said & Kasanga, 2016; Kasanga, 2014; Makina, 2009). Unfortunately, the literature available so far shows few studies on the discourse of protest in Africa. This may be attributed to the relatively recent adoption of democratic governance in many African countries compared to their European and American counterparts. Sarfo-Kantankah (2022) argues that few studies are found in Africa, in general, and Ghana, in particular, especially in political discourse studies, possibly because democracy is still relatively young in Africa. Thus, our knowledge of how politics works in Africa might be limited, which calls for more studies on political practices and activities in Africa, particularly in Ghana. Therefore, this study adopts transitivity analysis within the SFL framework to investigate how linguistic processes represent protester experiences, demands, and discontent. In doing so, the study presents a context-specific, linguistic account of how experiential meaning is constructed in contemporary African protest movements. The study is informed by two research questions, namely:

1. What process types are dominant in the language of protest?
2. What discursive practices do the process types enact?

The rest of the paper is structured as follows: the next section presents an overview of research on (language of) protests. Section three does a theoretical review, while the fourth section describes the methodology. Section five presents the analysis, Section six focuses on the discussion, and the final section makes concluding remarks by highlighting our key arguments and the implications of the study.

Some previous studies on the discourse of protest

The study of protest or dissent as a form of political discourse is well established and has long been recognised as a catalyst for social change. Across different geographical contexts, scholars have examined protests to show their causes, evolution, and significance. Protest discourse has been approached as a reflection of grievance, a mode of resistance, a space for democratic engagement, and a persuasive tool for mobilisation. Rather than being regionally bound, studies

from Asia (Al-Naimat, 2020; Begum, 2015; Morva, 2016), Europe (Hall, 2016; Niesen, 2019), the Americas (Gallagher et al., 2018), and Africa (Kasanga, 2014; Ben-Said & Kasanga, 2016; Arege, 2021) contribute to broader thematic conversations. These include how language is used to enact resistance, justify civil disobedience, demand accountability, and articulate visions for change.

Protest as Resistance

Protests function as a means for marginalised voices to challenge dominant power structures. Language is used to articulate resistance, a mediational tool through which dissent is performed, and legitimacy is contested. In the Asian context, Al-Naimat (2020), Begum (2015), and Morva (2016) demonstrate how the language of protest expresses resistance by foregrounding solidarity among protesters with shared beliefs, despite unequal power relations. These studies emphasise the role of spatial and symbolic practices such as reclaiming the street as vehicles for collective identity and opposition. Similar perspectives emerge from Arege (2021), Kasanga (2014), and Ben-Said and Kasanga (2016), who found that in Africa, protest signs and slogans comprise culturally grounded narratives of resistance; therefore, in these contexts, resistance is verbal as well as multimodal. These embodied performances strengthen the semiotic impact of protest.

Protest and Social Change

Protests mostly emerge in response to structural inequalities and with the aim of provoking long-term transformation. Gallagher, Reagan, Danforth, and Dodds (2018) highlight that protest movements in the United States have historically catalysed public debate and social progress. Della Porta (1999) similarly observes that protests contribute to democratic evolution by enlarging the scope of public discourse. In South Africa, service delivery protests reflect persistent socioeconomic disparities, particularly among poor and working-class black communities. Chikulo (2016) notes that despite government commitments to post-apartheid development, significant service backlogs remain, prompting widespread protests. Alexander (2010) characterises these protests as a "rebellion of the poor," marked by mass participation,

especially among unemployed youth. These protests signal grievance and enact resistance through the discursive redefinition of rights, dignity, and citizenship.

Protest Discourse and Democracy

Protest discourse is key in democratic participation. Enabling public critique and civic engagement allows protests to expand the boundaries of democratic deliberation. Fernández-Molina (2015) and Begum (2015) argue that protests help safeguard civic space by giving voice to the disempowered and compelling accountability from institutions. In Europe, Hall (2016) and Niesen (2019) examine how protesters use language to frame civil disobedience as a legitimate democratic act, thereby engaging in deliberative politics. Similarly, in South Africa, Netswera and Phago (2013) view protests as a contestation between public authority and the people, functioning as both coordinated and uncoordinated checks on power. Twala (2014) argues that the failure of the government to address community needs fuels ongoing protests, reinforcing its role as a feedback mechanism within democratic governance. These studies suggest that protests are beyond disruptions and are essential discursive practices that inform and shape democratic politics.

Protest Language as Persuasion and Justification

Language used in protest is rarely spontaneous; it is usually strategically constructed to persuade, mobilise, and justify action. Hall (2016) describes European protest language as both justificatory and deliberative, enabling protesters to rationalise civil disobedience while appealing to broader publics. Similarly, Woolfson (2011) and Payson (2015) show how protest language in transnational contexts functions as a rhetorical tool for mobilising resistance and confronting systemic injustice. In African contexts, Ben-Said and Kasanga (2016) explore how placards, slogans, and chants are semiotic resources used to create persuasive and emotionally resonant messages. This language constructs protest as morally legitimate through the alignment of personal grievance with collective purpose.

Studies show that throughout social history, countless social movements have emerged worldwide with purposes ranging from an exposition of political, economic, or social abuses to the complete usurpation of institutions (Jenkins, Wallace, & Fullerton, 2008). Protests often

take place against uncaring, self-serving and corrupt leaders, and are emblematic of a crisis of representation (cf. Chikulo, 2016). Thus, the current study contributes to the scholarly exploration and understanding of the role of language in the construction of social, political and economic protests. The paper demonstrates that the language of protests is a site for individuals, social and political groups to express a sense of belonging, self-expression and freedom of expression by which the disaffected confront injustice and call for political and socio-economic change and justice.

Theoretical review

Halliday's (1985) transitivity model, situated within the broader framework of Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL), underpins this study. SFL is a comprehensive, meaning-oriented theory of language that emphasises the relationship between linguistic choices and sociocultural context. As a semantically motivated and context-sensitive framework, SFL views language as a resource for making meaning, with categories such as the ideational, interpersonal, and textual metafunctions grounded in natural language use rather than abstract formal rules. That is, structures of language used in specified contexts present significant meanings, and these meanings are configured into metafunctions. Metafunction "encompasses the interpretation of language as a semiotic resource shaped intrinsically by the social functions it has evolved to serve" (Thompson, 2014, p.45). The metafunctions are categorised into three, namely: "the ideational (the experiential and the logical), the interpersonal and the textual" (Halliday, 1984: 108). The ideational metafunction is responsible for the linguistic resources speakers use to construe their inner and outer experience of the world through transitivity and ergativity. Meanwhile, interpersonal metafunction refers to the linguistic resources utilised in establishing interactive roles in a dialogue through modality and mood. The textual metafunction enables the construction of coherent, meaningful texts by combining the two metafunctions with theme and rheme (Halliday & Matthiessen, 2004). This study focuses on ideational metafunction, using transitivity analysis to uncover the experiences of the protesters. The ideational meaning refers to the grammatical resources for constructing our experiences of the world around and inside us (Prawiro, 2017). This is achieved through processes and their participants. Process refers to the verb (happening, doing, sensing, feeling, behaving, saying and existing) and its

expression of events, namely, physical, relational, mental, or emotional states (Halliday, 1984). This metafunction is analysed in terms of the transitivity system, thus, a choice between the six processes and the participants and circumstances associated with those processes (Haratyan, 2011). The process types identified by Halliday (1984) are listed in Table 1.

Table 1: Process types

Process	Participants
Material	actor and goal/range/beneficiary
Mental	sensor and phenomenon
Verbal	sayer, receiver and verbiage
Behavioural	behaver and phenomenon
Existential	existent

The transitivity system constitutes these types of participants and circumstances related to the processes (Lavine, 2010). With the process types and participant roles, each process type has a distinct participant role.

Methodology

This study employed a qualitative research design, specifically guided by interpretive content analysis, to examine how protest language on placards and banners constructs discursive meanings. Interpretive content analysis was appropriate for this study because it moves beyond literal or descriptive interpretations to explore underlying meanings, motivations, and implications within a sociocultural context (Krippendorff, 2018). The data comprised placards and banners used during the #FixTheCountry protest held in Ghana in August 2021. Given the transient nature of protest artefacts and limited real-time field access, data were retrieved from digital sources, specifically Google Images and YouTube, using search terms such as "Fix the Country demonstration Ghana placards," "Fix the Country protest slogans," and "Fix the Country protest banners." Online retrieval was considered methodologically valid, as social

media and digital platforms now serve as important archives for documenting protest practices, especially in contexts where access to physical data may be constrained. A purposive sampling technique was used to select 137 placards and banners based on three criteria: clarity of image, legibility of text, and uniqueness of message to avoid duplication. Each placard was treated as a unit of analysis and those containing multiple messages were segmented into clauses using clausal boundaries, following Halliday and Matthiessen's (2014) framework. A clause was defined as a unit expressing a process, along with associated participants and circumstances. The analysis focused on the transitivity system of Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL), which classifies clauses according to process types, namely material, mental, relational, verbal, behavioural, and existential. Each segmented clause was manually entered into Microsoft Excel for systematic analysis. Coding was carried out manually, and no predefined categories were imposed; rather, patterns and process types were identified inductively. To ensure trustworthiness and reduce researcher bias, a subset of 20 clauses was cross-checked by an independent expert in SFL. Discrepancies in the identification of process types were resolved through discussion, ensuring inter-coder consistency and analytic rigour. The placards were analysed individually, and the analysis focused on how specific linguistic choices reflected discursive practices. Ethical considerations were also observed by focusing mainly on the placards and banners and excluding identifiable images of individuals to ensure anonymity.

Analysis and discussions

This section analyses and discusses the data in line with the first research question: what process types are dominant in the language of protest? Since the research question is in two parts, the transitivity analysis will be done first, followed by the discursive constructions they enact. The section provides an overview of the data by listing the frequencies of the process types (see Table 2). Figure 1 shows the frequency of the processes in the language used on the placards and banners.

Process types and their frequencies

Our analysis shows that material processes appeared most frequently, that is, 83 (60.6%) clauses out of the 137 clauses analysed, which corroborates Thompson's (2014) assertion that

material processes form the broadest and most varied category in transitivity since they show actions.

Table 2: Frequency distribution of process types found in the data

Process type	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Material process	83	60.6
Relational process	31	22.6
Mental process	10	07.3
Verbal process	08	05.8
Behavioural process	04	03
Existential process	01	00.7
Total	**137**	**100**

The relational process is the second most dominant process type. This process explains or describes a phenomenon (Halliday & Matthiessen, 2014). Therefore, its presence seeks to explain and describe the current happenings in the county, demonstrating the protesters' awareness of the socio- political-economic situation in Ghana. This confirms Halliday and Matthiessen's (2014) statement that the relational process reveals characteristics and allows identification. The next dominant process is the mental process that presents the protesters' feelings and thoughts, while the verbal, behavioural, and existential processes occur less frequently. In the subsequent sections, we describe the process types in detail. Before delving into the analysis of transitivity structures in the placard texts, it is important to clarify how this study operationalises the notion of discursive practices. Drawing on Fairclough (1992), we see discursive practices as how language use enacts social identities, relationships, and systems of knowledge. In other words, discursive practices refer to the strategic use of language forms in protest communication to construct meanings that challenge or reaffirm social power, accountability, and political legitimacy. In the context of protest, discursive practices are linguistic strategies through which protesters construct resistance, express dissatisfaction,

demand accountability, and project political agency. Thus, the analysis identifies process types in protest inscriptions and interprets how these types linguistically instantiate protest goals and social critique.

Material processes

The prevalence of dispositive material processes indicates that protesters framed their grievances in terms of urgent and actionable demands.

A material process is an action that interprets a change in the course of events occurring as a result of energy input. The two main types of material processes are (a) creative and (b) dispositive (Gerot & Wignell, 1993. The creative type creates the actor or objective as the event develops. As a result, the participant's existence—which could be either the actor or the goal—is the result. On the other hand, a dispositive material process modifies some characteristics of an already established actor or goal. From Table 3, the data show the frequency of creative and dispositive types of processes that were used by the protestors.

Table 3: Frequencies of subcategories of the material processes identified in the data

Material Process	**Frequency**	**Percentage (%)**
Creative	03	04
Dispositive	80	96
Total	**83**	**100**

The prevalence of dispositive material processes indicates that protesters framed their grievances in terms of urgent and actionable demands. While creative processes suggested future-oriented expectations, the dominance of dispositive processes shows a rhetorical emphasis on transforming existing conditions, reversing policy failures, and demanding political accountability. Below are examples of creative processes.

Example 1

[Government]	Create	Jobs
Actor	***Creative***	***Goal***

The process of construing experience as creation or bringing it into existence is due to the use of processes such as "create," which brings into existence the goal of "jobs." The implied actor is the government. Exploring the socio-political implications of this inscription on a placard reveals that the protesters are seeking jobs in Ghana. This is the case because unemployment has been one of the country's major problems over the years. Sarfo (2016) and Sarfo-Kantankah (2018) state that Ghana's youth are greatly concerned about the unemployment rate in the country. Due to their desperation, graduate students in Ghana founded the Unemployed Graduates Association in 2012, which demonstrates the severity of youth unemployment in Ghana. Despite the frantic efforts of various governments, the unemployment problem still exists. In response to the unemployment challenges, in 2006, the Government of Ghana established the National Youth Employment Programme (NYEP) under the then New Patriotic Party (NPP) government. Later, the National Democratic Congress (NDC) government changed the name to Ghana Youth Employment and Entrepreneurial Development Agency (GYEEDA). In 2015, the NDC government changed the name again to Youth Empowerment Programme (YEP), "a more euphemistically positive name, signalling affirmation and attention given to the programme by the government" (Sarfo, 2016: 211-212). The programme highlights the problems of youth unemployment and various governments' attempts to tackle them (Sarfo, 2016). This explains why the youth protested out of frustration, which is similar to what Alexander (2010: 25) notes about South Africa, where a key feature of protests "has been mass participation by a new generation of fighters, especially unemployed youth but also school students".

Example 2

Corruption	Causes	Poverty
Actor	***Creative***	***Goal***

The second example employs the creative process ("causes"), that is to say, corruption creates poverty. Corruption has been one of the persistent socioeconomic issues holding back Ghana's development (Sarfo-Kantankah, 2018). A survey by the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (2022) reveals that corruption in Ghana has been baneful to socioeconomic and political advancement. Ghana is ranked 81 out of 180 nations in Transparency International's 2017 Corruption Perceptions Index (CPI), which was conducted as part of a recent study on the corruption index of African nations (Ghana Integrity Initiative, 2018). Because corruption distorts decision-making and diverts limited resources, it keeps people in poverty from accessing the resources and social services they need to improve their lives (Poverty and Corruption in Africa, 2012). According to Rahman (2018), corruption occurs frequently in Ghanaian governmental institutions across all of their divisions. Ghana is taking steps to reduce corruption, including the establishment of the Office of the Special Prosecutor and the anti-corruption campaign agencies. However, these measures are not curbing corruption; therefore, the protesters are drawing the government's attention to the adverse effects of corruption through a protest. Nevertheless, Table 1 shows that dispositive rather than creative processes were more frequently used in the protest. This demonstrates Halliday and Matthiessen's (2014) position that there are more dispositive material process types than creative ones. It shows that protests are more about action than creation. Instances of dispositives are shown below.

Example 3

Fix	the country
Dispositive	***Goal***

In Example 3, "Fix the country" illustrates a dispositive material process that encodes political dissatisfaction as a need for state repair. The word "fix" brings about the goal, "the country." To fix something means that something is broken and needs to be mended. The protesters claiming that the country needs to be fixed mean the country is broken. Since the economy has become messy, living conditions have become unbearable. This is due to price hikes in essential items like food, fuel, and utilities. Also, according to Jeng (2018), due to economic mismanagement, misplaced priorities, corruption, unemployment, failed education and

healthcare systems (people die due to lack of hospital beds; see example 4) and other socioeconomic and political inconsistencies, led Ghanaians to call out to the government to turn around these difficult situations. This structure critiques governance failure and reclaims citizen agency by assigning the government a responsibility to act. The protester, through this imperative construction, assumes discursive power to direct government behaviour.

Example 4

Stop	the no-bed syndrome	in our hospitals
Dispositive	***Goal***	***Circumstance***

In Example 4, "Stop the no-bed syndrome in our hospitals," the command to 'stop' a systemic failure highlights health-related neglect. Here, the clause functions as a critique and as a call for structural reform. In the example above, "stop" is the material process and "the no bed syndrome" is the goal. The "no bed syndrome" refers to hospitals' inability to accommodate new patients, especially in emergency rooms. The long-standing phenomenon highlights an imbalance in Ghana's healthcare system (Africa Health Pot, 2021). Due to a lack of beds to contain them in hospitals, people pass away. This partly accounts for the reason masses of Ghanaians hit the streets to protest against the government. This usage reflects a broader discursive strategy of using material processes as tools for voicing public outcry against institutional collapse.

The foregoing analysis shows that through transformative/dispositive and creative material process types, the protesters projected actions or measures they expected the government to take for the betterment of the living conditions of the people. In addition, they used the dispositive process to determine what the government should do differently. It suggests that the protesters were interested in the government acting and working in the interest of the citizens. In the next section, we analyse and discuss relational processes, the second dominant process type used in the data. To this end, material processes were used to articulate the protesters' experience of broken systems and to construct the protest space as one of public demand, resistance, and civic urgency.

Relational process

A relational process has two categories, namely, attributive and identifying. The attributive relational process has two participants, which are the Carrier (the entity that carries the attribute) and the Attribute. Also, the identifying relational process identifies one entity in terms of another. Intensive, circumstantial, and possessive are the three types into which these two can be classified. The intensive type demonstrates that entity *x* has a quality or value. The circumstantial type, in contrast, demonstrates that entity *x* is occurring on or at a specific time or day or that a circumstance *x* is determined to be *a*. Possessive shows that an entity *x* either has an attribute or that an entity is considered to be a possession of entity *x*. Table 4 lists the various relational process subtypes identified from the data.

Table 4: Frequencies of subcategories of the relational processes

Relational process		**Frequency**	**Percentage (%)**	
Identifying				
	Circumstantial	1	11	
	Intensive	8	89	
	Possessive	0	0	(100)
Attributive				
	Circumstantial	3	14	
	Intensive	18	81	
	Possessive	1	5	(100)
Total		**31**		

From Table 4, the use of the intensive subcategory in both relational attributive and relational identifying was dominant. This intensive relational attributive process depicts that entity *x* is

attributed to *a*. The implication is that the protesters mostly described the state of affairs in Ghana. Instances are presented below.

Example 5

Galamsey	is	an unpatriotic behaviour
Carrier	***Intensive***	***Attribute***

From example 5, "Galamsey" is the carrier, and the attribute given to it is "an unpatriotic behaviour." The inscription, "Galamsey is an unpatriotic behaviour," constitutes one of the major socio-political issues being fought in Ghana. This clause links a specific social issue to a moral judgment. The attribute "unpatriotic" performs an ideological function as it discursively positions galamsey as anti-patriotic, thus inviting state action and citizen disapproval. *Galamsey* is a popular term coined from the expression *gather them and sell*, which refers to small-scale illegal mining (Blay, 2022). Galamsey has been topical in the country because of the adverse effects it poses to the environment and health due to the dangerous chemicals used by the illegal miners; destruction of land, which results in a decrease in food production; pollution of water bodies, which results in poor drinking water; falling educational standards in the affected communities and blatant disregard for laws, order and custom (Gatsinzi & Hilson, 2022). These findings align with Nartey (2022), whose examination of #OccupyFlagstaffHouse and #RedFriday campaigns revealed that protests in Ghana are intended to increase pressure on the government to address deteriorating social conditions. These factors collectively explain why Ghanaians took to the streets to protest against the government.

Furthermore, the intensive subtype of the relational process in the "identifying" mode denotes the assignment of an identity to something. This indicates that one entity is being used to define the identity of another (Halliday & Matthiessen, 2014). Below are examples of intensive relational identifying processes found in the data.

Example 6

Why	Is	Dumsor	back?
Token	***Intensive***	***Value***	***circumstance***

In example 6, "why" is the token, and "dumsor" is the value. This means that "dumsor" is identified through "why." "Dumsor", which is a Twi (a Ghanaian language) word, means "off-and-on"; it refers to erratic power supply, that is, frequent and unpredictable power outages in Ghana. Under the National Democratic Congress (NDC) regime (2012-2016), the country experienced persistent power crises, which worsened by 2016. Due to this, the then-opposition New Patriotic Party (NPP) promised to solve the incessant power outages for Ghanaians to enjoy a stable power supply. However, "dumsor" appeared to have resurfaced after a few years into the NPP Government's reign, thus the question from the protesters, "Why is dumsor back?"

Example 7

Where	Is	the change?
Token	***Intensive***	***Value***

From example 7, "where" is the token and "the change" is the value. Here, "the change" is identified in terms of "where." The NPP government promised Ghanaians during their political campaign that they would change Ghana's socioeconomic situation. However, since they gained power, the change they promised regarding working on the exchange rate, ensuring quality education, and bettering the living conditions of the average Ghanaian has not seemed to have been fulfilled. Therefore, the protesters were asking where the change the NPP promised was.

Examples 6 and 7 use relational identifying processes to signal political betrayal and disappointment. The use of interrogatives enhances their rhetorical impact by transforming grievance into a public interrogation of political leadership. In both cases, relational processes support the discursive practice of disillusionment, a strategy of holding the government accountable by recalling broken promises. The analysis shows that the three subtypes of relational processes were identified in the data. First, the intensive relational process that defines or describes pattern *x* was dominant in the data. Hence, relational processes in the data serve to construct ideological opposition, moral judgment, and collective disappointment by highlighting how protesters reframe government actions (or inactions) through evaluative

attributions and identity critiques. This confirms Halliday and Matthiessen's (2014) assertion that the intensive relational process reveals characteristics and identification.

Mental processes

The term mental process describes what occurs in the mind and includes concepts, ideas, and observations. A mental process represents four categories of actions, viz: perception, cognition, desire and emotion. The process always involves two participants, the senser and the phenomenon (Halliday & Matthiessen, 2004). The protesters employed mental processes to convey their feelings, thoughts, and perceptions of the nation's problems. This is a reflection of the Ghanaian protesters' inner thoughts. The stated goal of this type of process is usually to stir up pent-up emotions. Table 5 provides a list of the various mental processes identified in the data, with their classification based on the subtypes of the mental process.

Table 5: Distribution of the mental process sub-types

Mental Process	**Frequency**	**Percentage**
Perceptive	1	10
Cognitive	1	10
Desiderative	4	40
Emotive	4	40
Total	**10**	**100**

From Table 5, desiderative and emotive mental processes were primarily used in the protest. The desiderative mental process shows the desire of the protestors, which is captured in the processes of "need" and "want," as indicated below.

Example 8

We	Need	Jobs
Senser	***Desiderative***	***Phenomenon***

From example 8, the senser is "we," which refers to the protestors/citizens, with "need" being the desiderative process and "jobs" being the phenomenon, and this is an expression of collective aspiration. This mental process discursively frames the protesters as deserving citizens whose desires have been systematically neglected. The protesters are asking the government to create job opportunities in the country, which they desire. According to a World Bank report (2020) titled Youth Employment Programmes in Ghana, Ghana's unemployment rate increased to 3.56% in Dec 2023, from the previously reported figure of 3.52% in Dec 2022. This demonstrates how persistent Ghana's unemployment problem has been. The processes, such as "need", project the desires of the citizens of Ghana. Another example is 9.

Example 9

[Government]	Change	your attitude
Senser	***Emotive***	***Phenomenon***

In Example 9, "Change your attitude," the mental process is desiderative. The use of "change" addresses the government as a subject whose mindset must shift. This intensifies the interpersonal function of protest discourse, portraying protesters as emotionally affected and morally entitled. In this instance, "Government" is the senser, with "change" being the emotive mental process and "your attitude" being the phenomenon. This inscription refers to the attitude of the Government of Ghana. The Government aids foreign nationals to indulge in Galamsey activities, polluting water bodies, degrading lands, corruption and supporting governmental activities that do not help the country. Nevertheless, the cognitive and perceptive appeared least in the data because, in the language of protest, protesters share desires and feelings more than thoughts and perceptions (Niesen, 2019). Generally, using the subcategories of the mental process in the language of protest helps to figure out Ghanaians' feelings and desires and their thoughts and perceptions. Hence, mental processes, therefore, enact discursive practices of

desire. They are tools of affective persuasion, used to articulate how the state has failed to align with public sentiment.

Verbal process

A verbal process represents the act of speaking, such as when reporting an event. At the intersection of mental and relational processes is the verbal process. As a result, it exhibits the traits of these two processes. Thompson (2014) states that it represents humans' capacity for thought and meaning. One participant in this process—called sayer—is inherent and may be conscious or unconscious. This method was used to inform the government of how miserable the nation was and its citizens' difficulties. Here are some examples of the verbal processes found in the data.

Example 10

Ghanaians	have spoken
Sayer	***Verbal***

From the instance above, "Ghanaians" is the sayer and "have spoken" is the verbal process. This inscription constructs a collective speech act, giving symbolic voice to the otherwise voiceless. It reframes the protest as a national consensus. The sayer "Ghanaians" functions as a metonymic representation of the people, asserting collective civic identity. This tells that Ghanaians have spoken their minds and aspirations. The street provided the space for Ghanaians to vent their frustrations, despair and desires.

Example 11

[Government]	speak up
Sayer	***Verbal***

In this instance, "Government" is the sayer expected to "speak up". This clause shifts agency to the government, urging it to become responsive. This is a discursive practice of demanding transparency and reclaiming accountability. This inscription shows that the verbal processes

used admonished citizens to fight for good governance and for the government to work towards the provision of what rightfully belonged to them. Therefore, the government should speak up for the country to know that all hope is not lost.

Behavioural processes

The behavioural process displays actions like grinning, laughing, and looking (Halliday & Matthiessen, 2004). It exhibits an external manifestation of our mental activity. For instance, while seeing is a mental process, looking at something involves doing so, making it behavioural. This process sits on the line between physical and mental processes (Halliday & Matthiesen, 2004). It has a single built-in participant, behaver. An important component of protest that projects the sentiments and actions of the protesters toward the government is the use of behavioural process forms. Examples of behavioural processes are shown below.

Example 12

Children	are still learning	under trees
Behaver	***Behavioural***	***Circumstance: place***

From the example, "children" is the behaver, and "are still learning" is the behavioural process. The children, as behavers, symbolise a vulnerable population whose predicament indicts the state. The behavioural process here enacts a discursive practice of disillusionment, where the protest becomes a platform for exposing the ongoing hardship of what was promised to be worked on. This instance describes the lack of school infrastructure in the country by indicating that children are learning under trees. This has been one of the most pressing issues within the education sector. When communities lack properly built classrooms or structures for classes, the phenomenon known as "schools under trees" occurs. As a result, instruction and learning occur beneath a tree or trees, endangering both students' and teachers' lives. Additionally, this exposes teaching and learning to various interruptions, such as wind, rain, sunlight, and noises from animals. In general, successive governments have always received more blame for failing to support education by building enough classrooms.

Example 13

Arise	Ghana youth
Behavioural	***Behaver***

In the example above, "Ghana youth" is the behaver, and "arise" is the behavioural process. This functions as a behavioural command, a rallying cry that represents young people as political agents to rise against all the bad things that are being done. The imperative "arise" aligns the act of protesting with national renewal. One of Ghana's patriotic songs is "Arise, Ghana Youth." Throughout the demonstration, this was repeatedly chanted and written on placards. The song is the foundation for a challenge to Ghana's youth to strive for greatness and significance. This is a clarion call to action that the Ghanaian youth will always look up to (BBC, 2021). The youth must now take action because Ghana needs them, and they cannot afford to sit aloof. The time for the youth to act is now, since Ghana demands their devotion, and they cannot afford to sit and not act to save the country. Behavioural processes thus mediate between mental states and physical action. They are used to dramatise suffering and to prompt collective awakening, reinforcing protest as a call to action.

Existential process

An entity's existence is expressed through an existential process. It possesses both relational and material process characteristics. Usually, a sentence with an existential process begins with "there" (Halliday & Matthiessen, 2004). There is only one inherent participant, an Existent, in this process. A being called an Existent can be conscious or unconscious. Since protests tend to focus more on actions and the expression of feelings than on processes, this kind of process is less frequently used. The data only shows one instance, which is shown below.

Example 14

There	Is	no better time	to fix it than now
	Existential	***Existent***	***Circumstance: purpose***

From example 14, the existent is "no better time." This clause expresses temporal urgency. The use of "there is" projects the current moment as opportune and unrepeatable. This aligns with the discursive practice of immediacy, which legitimises public action as both necessary and overdue. This process indicates the protesters' belief that if the government does not fix the country now, there will not be an appropriate time again. It shows the urgency of the protestors' call for action.

The analysis demonstrates that protesters strategically used different process types to construct a range of discursive practices. These discursive moves reflect a contestation of political legitimacy and a reclamation of civic voice. By mapping transitivity structures onto protest discourse, the study affirms the utility of SFL in revealing how citizens use language to perform social critique and construct experiential meaning in times of political unrest.

Discussion: Discursive practices enacted through the transitivity system in the language of the #Fix-the-Country protest

This part focuses on discursive issues that emerged during the analysis: resistance, disillusionment, and desire. Despite allowing for political participation, social movements set protests apart from other types of political unrest (Tilly & Tarrow, 2015). Moreover, they show how people with similar identities have been mobilised for change. For instance, participants in the #Fix-the-Country demonstration had a common goal and traits, which allowed them to oppose the government's policies.

The discursive construction of resistance

Tens of thousands of people in the country are without hope, and resistance through protests portrays an atmosphere of annoyance, disillusionment and outrage at the government system (Campbell & Wolbrecht, 2020. In this context, protest becomes a point for discursive enactments, that is, a way of using language to enact social agency, critique authority, and construct oppositional identities (Fairclough, 1992). In the #FixTheCountry protest, the language choices evident in the placards portray how transitivity structures, especially material and behavioural processes, were mobilised as rhetorical tools of resistance.

The dominant use of material processes in the data signals the protesters' intent to direct action toward those in power. Within this category, dispositive material processes outnumbered creative types, emphasising the transformation of existing socio-political conditions. These processes embody the linguistic projection of force and urgency. Protesters used these clauses primarily in the imperative mood, indexing resistance through commands. This performative use of language constructs a power dynamic in which ordinary citizens adopt a directive voice, resisting the perceived passivity, corruption, or inefficacy of political leadership. This aligns with Hill's (2018) view that protest is the verbal performance of dissent, and with Weber, Dejmanee, and Rhode's (2018), who found that protest language is often action-framed, focusing on doing rather than merely describing. Similarly, Fernandes (2012), analysing protests in postcolonial African states, describes a familiar pattern of citizens contesting the failure of elected officials to meet basic needs. The #FixTheCountry demonstration follows this script. Placard texts referenced unresolved national issues such as the Menzgold financial scandal, the Woyome judgment debt case, and the unfulfilled promises of successive presidents. These references, conveyed largely through material process structures, reveal how protesters used linguistic resources to resist state narratives of progress and development. Material processes in the protest placards thus become a site of social action. They are used to demand change, hold power to account, and reframe governance failures as matters of public urgency. This aligns with Kasanga's (2014) argument that protest language, especially through placards, constitutes a form of social action discourse, an embodied practice where written language enacts resistance and accountability. In addition to material processes, behavioural processes played a significant role in the discursive construction of resistance. Behavioural processes represent the outward expression of inner psychological states, bridging the mental and material domains (Halliday & Matthiessen, 2014). In the data, verbs such as arise, are suffering, and are still learning appeared as behavioural realisations of protest sentiment. For instance, in the inscription "Children are still learning under trees," the behavioural process "learning" implicitly condemns the state for infrastructural neglect. This construction functions discursively as a testimony of suffering, invoking public sympathy while simultaneously accusing the state of abandonment. Similarly, the verb "arise", a recurring feature of placards and chants, functions as a mobilising metaphor. It compels citizens, particularly youth, as

political agents capable of altering the status quo. The behavioural process here is performative. It enacts a call to political awakening, aligning with the protest's broader discursive strategy of urging civic participation and resistance to complacency. Moreover, behavioural processes contribute to what Fairclough (1992) terms "discursive resistance", that is, the use of language to challenge and transform social situations. These constructions elevate protest from mere complaint to a public performance of structural critique.

In sum, the discursive construction of resistance in the #FixTheCountry protest is achieved primarily through the strategic use of material and behavioural processes. While material processes foreground demands, commands, and action-oriented resistance, behavioural processes provide testimonial and mobilising functions that expose suffering and inspire collective agency. These transitivity choices form a linguistic repertoire of dissent, giving voice to the marginalised, challenging institutional power, and affirming protest as a legitimate mode of political participation in Ghana's democratic discourse.

The discursive construction of disillusionment

Disillusionment is a feeling of disappointment that results from the discovery that government promises and policies have not been fulfilled as protesters believed they would be during the campaigning season (Payson, 2015). Disappointment is a feeling of sadness or frustration that arises when deeply held expectations are not fulfilled. In protest discourse, disillusionment serves as a discursive frame through which citizens articulate their sense of betrayal, loss of trust, and moral indictment of political leadership. According to Sleat (2013), people who have lost faith in politics are often disappointed because political systems have failed to deliver the outcomes they anticipated, revealing a discrepancy between what is and what ought to be.

In the #FixTheCountry protest, relational processes were deployed as a primary linguistic resource for constructing disillusionment. As Gerot and Wignell (1993) explain, relational processes express states of being and are used to categorise (attributive) or identify (identifying) entities. Protesters used relational clauses to characterise the socio-economic condition of Ghana, define government failures, and expose the gap between expectation and reality. Placard inscriptions such as "Galamsey is an unpatriotic behaviour" or "Where is the change?" rhetorically position the government as having failed its people.

These relational clauses function discursively by foregrounding attributes such as corruption, broken promises, and mismanagement. They represent protestors' attempts to hold leaders accountable by redefining national identity and reassigning blame. By assigning negative attributes (Ghana is hard, the system is broken), protesters map their disillusionment onto the national condition, making it visible and public. Thus, relational processes become tools of redefinition and renaming, which is central to the language of disillusionment.

In addition, verbal processes amplify disillusionment by expressing unmet expectations and direct appeals to leadership. In this protest, verbal processes were used to reiterate campaign promises, highlight state inaction, and demand accountability. Placards such as "Speak up," "Ghanaians have spoken," and "Fix it now" serve both as commands and as reports on citizens' dissatisfaction. These verbal processes enact two discursive moves: first, they remind the government of its civic obligations and broken promises; second, they function as performative speech acts of disillusionment, reclaiming citizens' right to speak and be heard. As Morrison and Love (2015) argue, disillusionment in democratic settings often stems from a breakdown in political accountability and communicative reciprocity. When those in power stop listening, citizens begin to speak louder, and protest becomes their amplifier.

This discursive enactment confirms Margulies' (2018) view that disillusionment, while signalling discontent, also holds potential for political reawakening and transformation. It is therefore not a loss of faith but a call for systemic re-evaluation. The #FixTheCountry protest illustrates this through messages that, while voicing disappointment, also present demands and alternative visions, which Schmidt (2022) describes as the rhetorical power of solution-oriented resistance. Therefore, the dominant use of relational and verbal processes in this protest is a deliberate strategy to articulate and publicise disillusionment. These processes enact disillusionment by reframing political narratives, questioning authority, and insisting on the possibility of reform. In doing so, they transform the language of disappointment into a potent tool for civic engagement and democratic pressure.

The discursive construction of desire

The discursive construction of desire in protest discourse is often expressed through linguistic markers of longing, aspiration, and unmet needs, words and expressions such as "wanting,"

"wishing," "longing," and "craving." In the #FixTheCountry protest, these desires were predominantly encoded through mental processes, which, according to Gerot and Wignell (1994), involve internal experiences such as feeling, perceiving, thinking, and desiring. Mental processes are inherently subjective, foregrounding the inner world of the protesters, their frustrations, hopes, and demands for reform.

In this study, mental processes, particularly desiderative (e.g., need, want) and emotive (e.g., hate, love), were key in projecting the collective desires of Ghanaians for improved governance and socio-economic justice. The discursive power of desire lies in its ability to transform individual suffering into collective action. As Payson (2015) argues, emotions such as anger, frustration, and aspiration often serve as triggers for political participation, particularly in environments where promises remain unfulfilled. Similarly, Margulies (2018) notes that moral outrage and perceived group efficacy are central socio-psychological conditions that drive protest behaviour. In the context of the #FixTheCountry protest, these emotions and desires were textualised and made public through mental process clauses. This aligns with Weisser's (2008) assertion that emotion is instrumental in protest because it highlights lived experiences, personal narratives, and interpersonal connections. Protesters, through their language choices, assert what they think the government has failed to do, and what they feel and desire. Mental process types in the data thus present expressive and persuasive functions as they reflect affective positions and simultaneously mobilise collective sentiments.

Moreover, Kliuchnikova (2013) argues that citizens in democratic states often feel emotionally invested in their country's social and political life. This emotional involvement translates into active engagement, as seen in placards bearing statements such as "We need jobs," "We want better schools," or "Change your attitude." These expressions, grammatically realised as mental processes, signal the affective dimension of citizenship and the moral claims protesters make on the state. In this sense, the protest becomes a discursive arena where personal desires are transformed into political demands. As Peachy (2011) notes, the role of desire in democratic systems extends beyond emotion; it becomes a catalyst for shaping governance structures that reflect the will and needs of the people. It projects a better future by voicing what citizens feel is lacking in the present.

This analysis underscores how mental processes construct a discourse of desire that is political. Through this construction, protesters assert their right to participate in governance and demand recognition, dignity, and structural change. In conclusion, the mental processes identified in the #FixTheCountry protest reveal how language serves as a conduit for emotional expression, political agency, and civic engagement. Desire becomes a mode of resistance, bridging the psychological with the structural and turning individual affect into collective momentum for change.

Conclusion

This study set out to examine how protest placards from the #FixTheCountry demonstration in Ghana used language to discursively construct their experiences. By applying Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL), the study analysed how various process types were employed by protesters to articulate political voice, critique governance, and demand accountability. The study found that material processes were the most dominant, with dispositive material processes accounting for 96% of all material processes identified. These processes were used to encode explicit actions demanded of the government. This dominance reflects how protesters utilise language to enact agency and pressure the state to act, an expression of discursive resistance that aligns with the findings of Weber et al. (2018) and Fernandes (2012). The frequent use of behavioural processes complemented this resistance by presenting the lived experiences and actions of citizens. In contrast, relational processes, especially those of the intensive attributive type, were used to describe states of being and identity to discursively construct disillusionment, a recurring theme reflecting the gap between political promises and the lived realities of citizens. Verbal processes also portrayed protest as a form of public reporting and moral appeal, further presenting the protesters' expectation that political leadership must be responsive and accountable. Mental processes, particularly desiderative and emotive subtypes, captured the emotional and psychological dimensions of the protest. The protesters expressed their inner thoughts and feelings by effectively constructing desire. These mental processes reflect collective hopes and disappointments. Therefore, the protest functions as a space for linguistic acts of resistance, disillusionment, and emotional expression.

The theoretical contribution of this study demonstrates that transitivity can be used to explore discursive practices in protest discourse, particularly in African contexts. It supports Fernández-Molina's (2015) claim that transitivity enables researchers to analyse how linguistic choices reflect and shape experience, while also affirming Halliday and Matthiessen's (2014) assertion that language construes social reality. In doing so, the study contributes to the growing body of literature on political dissent. From a contextual perspective, the study highlights how Ghanaian protesters use language to demand accountability, express disappointment, and advocate reform. This echoes the view of Begum (2015) that democratic citizens often push back against state failures through organised resistance. In Ghana, the language choices on placards critique and express disillusionment while keeping alive the possibility of transformation. The #FixTheCountry protest reveals how ordinary citizens in a democratic African state use language to participate in political discourse, express collective emotions, and contest power. The study concludes that the language of protest is a constitutive resource through which resistance, disillusionment, and desire are enacted, negotiated, and made visible.

Based on the findings of this study, we recommend two key areas for further research. First, future studies could explore the textual metafunction in protest placards to understand how information is organized for emphasis and persuasion. Second, further research could examine indigenous language forms and code-mixing. Although this study focused on clauses written in English, it observed the presence of code-mixing, pidgin, and indigenous language forms, which hold significant sociolinguistic values.

References

Alexander, P. (2010). Rebellion of the poor: South Africa's service delivery protests – a preliminary analysis. *Review of African Political Economy*, *37*(123), 25–40. https://doi.org/10.1080/03056241003637870

Al-Naimat, G. K. (2020). Semiotic analysis of the visual signs of protest on online Jordanian platforms: Code choice and language mobility. *Theory & Practice in Language Studies*, *10*(1). 61-70

Arege, J. B. (2021). *Linguistic and semiotic analysis of labour protests by Kenya's public university lecturers in 2017* (Doctoral dissertation, Kisii University, Department of English).

BBC (2021). *Ghana IMF bailout: Timeline of Ghana International Monetary Fund loans - BBC News Pidgin*. BBC News Pidgin. https://www.bbc.com/pidgin/articles/c84x5z53q3go

Begum, G. (2015). Critical discourse analysis of the protesters' language. *Language in India*, *15*(3), 85-95

Bekar, M. (2015). Space, language and power: The rhetoric of street protests. *Социолошки преглед*, *49*(3), 337-348.

Ben-said, S. & Kasanga, L. A. (2016). The discourse of protest: Frames of identity, intertextuality and interdiscursivities. *Negotiating and contesting identities in linguistic landscapes*. *9*(2), 71-83.

Blay, J. K. (2022). *A phenomenological study of artisanal and small-scale gold mining in Ghana: Rural poverty mitigation or aggravation?* (Doctoral dissertation, Niagara University, New York, Department of Linguistics).

Campbell, D. E., & Wolbrecht, C. (2020). The resistance as a role model: Disillusionment and protest among American adolescents after 2016. *Political Behavior*, *42*(4), 1143-1168.

Chikulo, B. C. (2016). "The Smoke That Calls": A Review of Service Delivery Protests in South Africa 2005-2014. *Journal of Human Ecology*, *55*(1–2), 51–60. https://doi.org/10.1080/09709274.2016.11907009

Day, S., Cornell, J. & Malherbe, N. (2021). Discourses of 'service delivery protests' in South Africa: an analysis of talk radio, *Critical Discourse Studies, 18* (2), 245-262, DOI: 10.1080/17405904.2019.1676279

Della Porta, D. (1999). Protest, protesters, and protest policing: Public discourses in Italy and Germany from the 1960s to the 1980s. In Marco Giugni, Doug McAdam and Charles Tilly (eds.) *How Social Movements Matter, 10,* pp.66-96. University of Minnesota Press.

Dunivin, Z. O., Yan, H. Y., Ince, J., & Rojas, F. (2022). Black Lives Matter protests shift public discourse. *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences*, *119*(10), e2117320119.

Ghana Integrity Initiative. (2018). *Corruption Perceptions Index 2017: Ghana's performance vis-à-vis other Sub-Saharan African countries* [Press release]. Ghana Integrity Initiative

Gallagher, R. J., Reagan, A. J., Danforth, C. M., & Dodds, P. S. (2018). Divergent discourse between protests and counter-protests: #BlackLivesMatter and# AllLivesMatter. *PloS one*, *13*(4), 195-644.

Gatsinzi, A., & Hilson, G. (2022). 'Age is just a number': Articulating the cultural dimension of child labour in Africa's small-scale mining sector. *Resources Policy, 78*, 102-779.

Fernandes, T. (2012). Late neoliberalism and its discontents: The case of Portugal. In *Late Neoliberalism and Its Discontents in the Economic Crisis* (pp. 169-200). New York: Palgrave Macmillan, Cham.

Fernández-Molina, I. (2015). Protests under occupation: The spring inside Western Sahara. *Mediterranean Politics*, *20*(2), 235-254.

Gerot, L. & Wignell, P. (1993). *Making sense of functional grammar: An Introductory Workbook.* Berlin: Gerd Stabler.

Jeng, A. M. (2018). *Studying the relationship between corruption and poverty, public debt, and economic growth: A case study of The Gambia (1996–2016)* (Master's thesis, KTH Royal Institute of Technology). DiVA Portal. https://www.diva-portal.org/smash/get/diva2:1295375/FULLTEXT01.pdf

Jenkins, J. C., Wallace, M., & Fullerton, A. S. (2008). A social movement society?: A cross-national analysis of protest potential. *International Journal of Sociology*, *38*(3), 12-35.

Hall, M. (2016). South Africa's student protests have lessons for all universities. *The Guardian*, *3*.

Halliday, M.A.K. (1984). *An introduction to functional grammar*. London: Arnold.

Halliday, M. A. K. (1985). *Introduction to functional grammar*. London: Arnold.

Halliday, M. A. K. (1994). *Introduction to functional grammar*. London: Edward Arnold.

Halliday, M. A. K., & Matthiessen, C. M. I. M. (1999). *Systemic Functional Linguistics: Construing experience through meaning.* London & New York: Cassell.

Halliday, M.A.K. (1985). *An Introduction to Functional Grammar*. London: Arnold.

Halliday, M. A. K., & Matthiessen, C. M. I. M. (2004). *An introduction to functional grammar*. London: Edward Arnold.

Haratyan, F. (2011). Halliday's SFL and social meaning. In *2nd International Conference on Humanities, Historical and Social Sciences*, *17*(1), 260-264.

Haryani, A & Putry, R. A. (2020). An investigation of mood and transitivity analysis in the short story "Fruit Passion." *Linguamedia Journal*, *1*(1), 48-62.

Kasanga, L. A. (2014). The linguistic landscape: Mobile signs, code choice, symbolic meaning and territoriality in the discourse of protest. *International Journal of the Sociology of Language,* (230), 19-44.

Hill, M. L. G. (2018). *The language of protest: Acts of performance, identity, and legitimacy*. USA: Springer.

Kliuchnikova, P. (2013). The language of protest, belonging and exclusion: Russian anti-election campaigns in Europe (2011-2012). *Ideology and Politics Journal*, *2*(4), 38-59.

Krippendorff, K. (2018). *Content analysis: An introduction to its methodology*. New York: Sage Publications.

Lavine, J. E (2010). Mood and a transitivity restriction in Lithuanian: The case of the inferential evidentiality. *Baltic Linguistics*, *1*(10), 115–142.

Makina, B. (2009). Re-thinking white narratives: Popular songs and protest discourse in postcolonial Zimbabwe. *Muziki*, *6*(2), 221-231.

Margulies, A. (2018). Illusionment and disillusionment: Foundational illusions and the loss of a world. *Journal of the American Psychoanalytic Association*, *66*(2), 289-303.

Morrison, A., & Love, A. (2015). A discourse of disillusionment: Letters to the editor in two Zimbabwean magazines 10 years after independence. *Discourse & Society*, *7*(1), 39-75. http://dx.doi.org/10.1177/0957926596007001003

Mwinwelle, P., Amoakohene, B. & Agyekum, O. N. (2020). Creating institutional solidarity: A transitivity analysis of anthems of selected Ghanaian Universities. *Advances in Language and Literary Studies*, *11*(2), 74-83. http://dx.doi.org/10.7575/aiac.alls.v.11n.2-p.74

Morva, O. (2016). The humorous language of street dissent. *The European Journal of Humour Research*, *4*(2), 19-34.

Nartey, M. (2022). Advocacy and civic engagement in protest discourse on Twitter: An examination of Ghana's #OccupyFlagstaffHouse and #RedFriday campaigns. *Communication and Critical/Cultural Studies*, 1-17.

Netswera, F.G. & Phago, K.G. (2013). How popular protests influence public discourse and public accountability - revisiting the theory of public spheres in South Africa. *Politeia*, *32*(1), 24-39.

Niesen, P. (2019). Reframing civil disobedience: Constituent power as a language of transnational protest. *Journal of International Political Theory, 15*(1), 31–48.

Payson, A. (2015). Moving feelings, intimate moods and migrant protests in Cardiff. *JOMEC Journal*, *7*, 1-16

Peachey, J. (2011). *What is the relationship between democracy and desire, and what critical role might this desire play?* Discuss in relation to The Republic and 'In the Loop.'

Prawiro, I. Y. (2017). The analysis of interpersonal meaning (mood), ideational meaning (transitivity) and textual meaning (theme) of the news item text entitled "Nikita Mirzani: I`m Not a Prostitute." *WEJ, 1*(1), 37-58.

Rahman, K. (2018). *Overview of corruption and anti-corruption in Ethiopia*. Transparency International. Ethiopia: Addis Ababa.

Rahmasari, S. (2021). Transitivity analysis representing the Hong Kong Protest 2019 in the Guardian News Article. *Journal of Language and Literature*, *8*(2), 196-210.

Sarfo, E. (2016). Questioning and debating in the UK and Ghanaian parliamentary discourse. Unpublished PhD Thesis, The University of Leeds

Sarfo-Kantankah, K. S. (2018). It's about people: Identifying the focus of parliamentary debates through a corpus-driven approach. *Corpora*, *13*(3), 393-430.

Sarfo-Kantankah, K. S. (2018). Corruption is a big issue: A corpus-assisted study of the discursive construction of corruption in Ghanaian parliamentary discourse. *Legon Journal of the Humanities*, *29*(1), 226-258.

Sarfo-Kantankah, K. S. (2022). The person or the issue? Relational process, person- and idea-targeted questions in UK and Ghanaian parliamentary questions. *Oguaa Journal of Social Sciences*, *10*(1), 18–33.

Schmidt, V. A. (2022). The discursive construction of discontent: Varieties of populist anti-system ideas and discursive interactions in Europe. *Journal of European Integration*, *44*(2), 165-182.

Sleat, M. (2013). Hope and disappointment in politics. *Contemporary Politics, 19*(2), 131-145.

Steyerl, H. (2003). *The articulation of protest*. Sweden: European Institute for Progressive Cultural Policies.

The Africa Health Pot. (2021). The Africa Health Pot | Homepage. Retrieved November 20, 2022, from https://www.africahealthpot.org/

https://www.unodc.org/unodc/en/data-and-analysis/world-drug-report-2022.html

Thompson, G. (2014). *Introducing functional grammar*. London: Routledge.

Tilly, C., & Tarrow, S. G. (2015). *Contentious Politics* (2nd ed.). Oxford University Press.

Twala, C. (2014). The Causes and Socio-political Impact of the Service Delivery Protests to the South African Citizenry: A Real Public Discourse. *Journal of Social Sciences*, *39*(2), 159–167. https://doi.org/10.1080/09718923.2014.11893279

United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime. (2022). *World Drug Report 2022*. United Nations. https://www.unodc.org/unodc/data-and-analysis/world-drug-report-2022.html

Weber, K. M., Dejmanee, T., & Rhode, F. (2018). The 2017 Women's March on Washington: An analysis of protest-sign messages. *International Journal of Communication*, 12, 2289–2313.

Weisser, C. R. (2008). Subaltern counterpublics and the discourse of protest. *JAC*, 608-620.

World Bank. (2020). *Addressing youth unemployment in Ghana needs urgent action, call.* The New World Bank Report. World Bank; World Bank Group.

https://www.worldbank.org/en/news/press-release/2020/09/29/addressing-youth-unemployment-in-ghana-needs-urgent-action.

Woolfson, C. (2011). Discourses of labour protest. *Atlantic Journal of Communication, 14*(12), 70–96.

Yujie, Z., & Fengjie, L. (2018). Transitivity analysis of Donald Trump's inaugural address. *International Journal of Literature and Arts, 6*, 28-32. https://doi.org/10.11648/j.ijla.20180602.11