



Systemic-Functional Theory in N Chomsky's Political Speeches: A Critical Discourse Analysis

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Abstract

This paper is concerned with the linguistics analysis of Halliday's Systematic Functional Grammar Theory in a selected political text in 2021. M. Halliday's Systematic Functional Grammar has been embraced for analyzing the speeches of the American linguist Noam Chomsky in 2021 in the hall of the United Nations to highlight the meta-functions of language, as well as the appealing processes of the transitivity system elected from the analysis of the speeches. This paper aims at identifying the linguistic processes in the speeches of Chomsky depending on Halliday's model.

It tries to answer the following questions: what are the linguistic processes of the transitivity system which occur in Chomsky's speeches on interviews in the United Nations in 2021? What are the frequent processes found in Chomsky's speeches? The objective of this study is to classify and describe the six processes types and identify the more frequent processes that Chomsky used in their speeches. This study is concludes that the analysis of the process types in Chomsky speeches in 2021 indicates that the most frequent types are material processes.

Keywords: Halliday's systematic-functional theory, the meta-functions of language, the linguistic processes

1. Introduction

1.1. Statement of the Problem

Language is a tool that is used to convey ideas into different people. It is used in different situations for different purposes. A crucial part of using language is the way of representing the speaker him/herself, the addresser or the participant in the action. This representation could be a reflection of the hidden ideological perspectives of the speaker towards different social phenomena. According to Halliday (1978:14) ^[5], language permits individuals to connect with each other and form groups. People cannot communicate without language. Furthermore, individuals must arrange or order their speech in order to capture the attention of others and convey their message clearly and simply. For this reason they need to use functions of language to express and analyze different discourses.

According to Halliday (1985,1994) there are three functions or meta-functions of language 1. Ideational, 2. interpersonal, and 3. textual, these functions forms the basic topics in Halliday Systematic Functional Grammar who considers language as a basic-resources of making language. As such, this study concerns itself with utilizing CDA to analyze and identify the main functions of language in Chomsky's public speeches. Very few studies have tackled these functions in political speeches in the light of CDA sphere. Thus, this paper attempts to bridge an important gap in the previous studies.

1.2. Aims of study

The primary aims of this paper are:

1. Investigating meta-functions of language of Halliday's Systematic Functional Grammar theory in political speeches.
2. Applying a critical discourse analysis on Noam Chomsky's political speeches this.
3. Identifying the six linguistic processes of transitivity system depending on Halliday's modal.
4. Exploring the frequent processes found in the selected speeches.

1.3. The Procedures

To achieve the research objectives, the following procedures are adopted:

1. Literature review of the basic principle related to study under investigation.
2. A qualitative content analysis methodology will be employed.
3. A carefully selected sample of political speeches will be selected, considering factors such as political contexts, speaker identify and the historical significance.
4. These speeches will be analyzed in term of their meaning and based on Halliday' Systematic Functional theory, and it provides an obvious comprehensive framework for comprehension meta-functions of language and the six linguistic processes of transitivity system.

1.4. Value of the Study

This paper contributes to the broader understanding of political communication by shedding light on the meta-functions of language and the linguistic processes in the transitivity system in interpreting political discourses. This study serves as a foundation for future research endeavors exploring the intricate relationship between language and politics. It is one of the few studies that have dealt with Halliday's systematic functional grammar as a tool for analyzing and interpreting political speeches.

2. Literature Review

2.1 Discourse Analysis

Discourse analysis "is a broad field of study that draws some of its theories and methods of analysis from disciplines such as linguistics, sociology, philosophy and psychology " (Ikenna and Ayo 2015:169). DA has developed models and methods for addressing problems that exist in fields such as education, cultural studies, communication and so on. The use of language can be described as discourse which is why DA has been referred to as the study of "language in action"(ibid). According to Fairclough (1989: 24) ^[2], "discourse" encompasses the entire process of social interaction, not only textual communication. DA is the study of linguistic forms above the sentence category. Often, "text" is used instead of "discourse." Discourse analysis examines not merely the abstract qualities of language, but also how it is applied. Language is employed in both social and cultural contexts.

DA examines the relationship between languages and their use, including written, spoken, and institutionalized discourse. Ikenna and Ayo (2015: 169) emphasize the importance of well-organized papers.

Historically, the term Discourse analysis is coined in 1952 article titled "Discourse Analysis" by Harris (1952: 52) ^[9]. He assumes that DA can be used to examine similar speech or writing and extend analytical linguistics beyond single sentences. According to Van Dijk (1997: 12-3) ^[15], the term "discourse" might apply to a specific type of language use, such as public addresses, or spoken language in general speaking. Another informal interpretation focuses on the ideologies or philosophies of specific individuals or organizations. Van Dijk suggests that this approach prioritizes the thoughts or ideologies communicated over the specific terminology utilized by individuals or entities (ibid.).

As stated by Van Dijk (2001) ^[16], understanding the specialized meaning of discourse requires careful attention to the terminology employed during communication. A discourse analyst focuses on "who uses vocabulary, if, where, and why." A discourse analyst examines interactions such as meetings, telephone conversations, job interviews, and doctor's appointments (ibid). Basically, discourse can be conceptualized in both structural and functional term, and the best way to conceptualize discourse is to conceptualized it both in structural and functional terms in order to comprehend how and why language is used in social situation (Osoba and Sobola, 2014:201) ^[12].

2.2. Critical Discourse Analysis

According to Gee (1990: 72), the term "critical" in CDA refers to how individuals navigate power dynamics. The word is mostly composed of terminology that illustrates and questions. It exacerbates and replicates social imbalances while also revealing hidden power dynamics. The term "discourse" is contentious. Gee defines discourse with a small "d" as the use of words and language in social contexts. This approach to language analysis extends beyond sentences, allowing analysts to explore other issues inside the language. Examine each sentence individually to see this (ibid). Fairclough (1992: 64) ^[3], defines CDA as addressing power abuse and its consequences, including injustice and inequality. Fairclough (ibid.) maintains that to completely comprehend the complex relationships between power, society, text, discourse, social cognition, and culture, true inter-disciplinarily is necessary (ibid).

The term crucial in CDA is frequently related with the study of power dynamics. Critical theory originated from the Frankfurt School (Adorno, 1973; Adorno & Horkheimer, 1972; Habermas, 1976). The search and theory approach rejects naturalism, rationality, neutrality, and individualism. Critical research challenges Marxist social theory and advocates for a balance of individual agency and structural determinism. Critical discourse analysts, like any researchers, have biased goals (Rogers, 2004:2).

According to Janks (1997: 27) ^[11], CDA is founded on a critical linguistic theory that views language as a social practice. Besides, all social practices are limited to certain historical settings and serve to endorse or oppose current social practices and relations, while also serving various interests. People's interests may lead to questions about text positioning. What is the outcome of this positioning? Who benefits from this positioning? Whose interests are being argued, and how do

they relate to power dynamics? Critical analysis focuses on understanding how discourse reflects power dynamics, hence the term. As indicated by Van Dijk (2001: 97) ^[16], the primary question is, "How does critical discourse analysis work?"

Van Dijk (ibid) states that analysts first to recognize patterns of elite dominance or manipulation in texts, it's important to focus on specific structures and methods when analyzing both text and conversation. Discourse analysts should describe how inequality is represented, enacted, and legitimized. Recreated through text and speech." (ibid). CDA proponents typically point to certain language theories. In that situation, explicit CDA must have strong language foundations. Linguistics is viewed in a structural-functional perspective (ibid). Widdowson (2007: 130) ^[17], defines CDA as the use and abuse of language for sociopolitical control, ideology, or social opinion.

The CDA is the emphasis is on analyzing systemic relationships of domination, discrimination, authority, and control through language. CDA investigates the complex relationships between discursive behaviors, activities, and documents, as well as larger social and cultural systems (ibid).

Discourses are socially produced knowledge about reality, employing semiotic resources. According to Jones (2012: 21) ^[10], images can also serve as communication tools. The organization of expression and material articulation of the semiotic case and dissemination as the facilitation of the pragmatic functions of preservation and distribution are all mentioned to as Image production which refers to the process of preserving and disseminating information through semiotics (ibid). According to Ulinuha *et al.* (2013) ^[14], "critical" research involves challenging reductionism, dogmatism, and dichotomies, being self-reflective, and revealing opaque power structures and ideologies.

In accordance with Amoussou *et al.* (2018:11) ^[1], CDA is a multidisciplinary field developed by famous linguists and researchers such Theo van Leeuwen, Gunther, van Dijk, and Fairclough. Early 1990s. CDA's theories and procedures were developed to set it apart from other DA disciplines. Over time, this name has been associated with several distinctions. Scholars may use the terms Critical Linguistics (CL) or Critical Discourse Studies (CDS) based on their research topics. CDA is an interdisciplinary technique utilized by experts from many backgrounds and specializations, including historians, business entities, attorneys, and politicians, to conduct investigations social and cultural problems and troubles relating to their work (ibid).

CDA is both a theory and a methodology. CDA is a tool used by researchers to describe, understand, and explain links between language and society. This method differs from other discourse analysis methods in that it not only describes and interprets conversation in context, but also explains how it works (Rogers, 2004:2).

2.3. Principles and Rules of CDA

Based on Amoussou *et al.* (2018: 12) ^[1], CDA focuses on social concerns, including the role of discourse in power abuse and domination. CDA then establishes a link between language and power. The purpose of language analysis is to identify structural linkages of discrimination, dominance, control, and power, both implicit and explicit. Van Dijk (2002: 23) defines and explains the fundamental ideas and standards of the CDA discipline:

1. 1.Theoretical and methodological disciplines are related if they successfully address significant social issues, such as sexism, racism and other types of socioeconomic inequality.
2. 2.CDA research is multidisciplinary and focuses on the relationship between society and discourse to effectively analyze social issues.
3. 3.CDA is neither a school, field, or sub-discipline of discourse analysis, but rather a
4. critical method to comprehending text and talk.
5. 4.CDA evaluates power, dominance, and inequality in communities, as well as how
6. members apply text and language to create, replicate, or oppose these patterns of power.
7. 5.Investigations conducted by CDA often focuses on hidden ideologies that
8. perpetuate or oppose dominance, power, or inequality (ibid).
9. 6.CDA theories and studies aim to identify implicit or hidden aspects of discursive
10. dominance and underlying ideologies. CDA focuses on manipulative methods, such
11. as legitimation and consent-making, to influence people's minds and actions for the
12. benefit of those in authority (ibid).
13. 7.CDA studies aim to promote solidarity with dominated groups by proposing counter power and counter-ideologies through challenge and resistance practices (Amoussou *et al* 2018: 12-13) ^[1].
14. As such, CDA can be defined as an interdisciplinary approach to analyzing discourse
15. practices within a text's sociocultural, political, and ideological context.

3. Modal of Study, Data Analysis, Results and Discussion

3.1. Model of Analysis

In this section, the modal of analysis will be essentially based on Halliday's theory of systematic functional grammar using three functions or meta functions of language (Ideational function, interpersonal function, and textual function).

3.1.1. Meta-functions of Language

According to Halliday (1978) ^[5], there are three Meta-functions of language. These functions are used in different senses in the literature of linguistics, they are:

A. Ideational Function

This function cooperates in creating a connection between the outward and internal worlds of our world experience. It represents the speaker's experience of both the inner and outer worlds through the use of language. It is the function of content. Language encodes cultural experience as well as the individual's experience as a part of culture (Halliday, 1978: 112) ^[5]. The ideational function has two sub functions: the experiencing function and the logical function. The experiencing function is concerned with thoughts in general, but the logical function is concerned with their relationship. The transitivity system of language reflects and realizes the ideational function. According to Halliday (1994) ^[7], "transitivity turns the world of experience into a different universe." "The essence of representation lies in the relationship of 'who is doing what to whom?' " (Richardson, 2007:54). As noted by Halliday (1978:123) ^[5], "transitivity is the key to understand the text's ideational meaning" According to Halliday's theory, the English transitivity system has six process types:

- 1-Material
- 2-Mental
- 3-Relational
- 4-Behavioral
- 5-Verbal
- 6-Existential

He also categorizes the procedure into three sorts:

1. The procedure
2. The attendees
3. The circumstances around the process.

B. Interpersonal Function

The interpersonal function is concerned with the interaction of the speaker and the listener. It is the component via which the speaker inserts himself into the situation, "both conveying his own attitudes and 'making judgments and attempting to influence others' attitudes and behavior" (Halliday, 1978: 112) ^[5]. This function is mostly concerned with clauses as exchanges. Halliday mentions two components in a clause when analyzing it as an exchange of events: the mood and the residue. The mood bears the grammatical burden of the debate and advances the argument (Halliday, 1994:71) ^[7].

C. Textual Function

This function is involved in the production of text and the flow of information within a text, as well as how language relates to the spoken world and the context of a

situation. It is concerned with clause as a message is of significance. Halliday (1994:97) ^[7] refers to it as "relevance." A clause, according to him, is a combination of a theme and a Rheme. Eggins (1994:215) notes that "the subject is typically contains familiar, or supplied information which has been presented somewhere in the text, or is familiar from the context" In Halliday's words, "the 'speaker's text-forming capacity; it is that which makes language relevant" (Halliday, 1978: 112) ^[5]

3.1.2. Halliday's Theory: Six Types of process

There are six sorts of processes recognized: mental, material, behavioral, relational, verbal, and existential. At first, Halliday

identifies the material, mental, and behavioral, and relational as the three essential process types in the English transitivity system, and then finds the other three processes on the borderlines of the first three (Halliday:2004) ^[8].

1. The material process phrase refers to the act of performing as well as happening.

A " 'material' clause construes a quantum of change in the flow of events as taking place through some input of energy," (Halliday, 2004:179) ^[8]. He continues, "Material clauses construct figures of 'doing-and-happening'"(ibid). According to Halliday (1985:103) ^[6], they communicate "the notion that some entity 'does' something that may be 'to' some other entity". Halliday states (2004) ^[8], 'material' clauses are concerned with our perception of the material world. Material clauses do not just refer to concrete, physical events. They could represent abstract actions and events.

2. Mental process clause, i.e. the physical process.

"Mental clauses are concerned with our awareness of the world of our own consciousness," (Halliday, 2004:179) ^[8]. Consequently, he (ibid) claimed, these processes may represent abstract doings and occurring. These processes are recognized by verbs such as (feel, want, like, hate, know, think, fear, see, and so on). This type of process implies either flowing from or impinging on a person's consciousness.

3. The relational process Clauses are being and having procedures.

The third sort of process is the relational clause. According to Halliday (2004) ^[8], "relational clauses serve to characterize and identify" (p.210). Relational clauses are classified into three types: intense, possessive, and circumstantial. These sorts are classified into two categories: being and identifying. The attributive clauses define class membership by assigning an attribute to a certain item. (for more information see Halliday, 1994; Halliday, 2004; Eggins, 2004) ^[7, 8].

4. Behavioral process clauses governing the behavioral process.

Behavioral clauses, according to Halliday (1994:139) ^[7], are "processes of (frequently human) physiological and psychological operation such as breathing, coughing, smiling, dreaming, staring". He goes on to say that "they are partially like the material and partly like the mental" (p.250). There are two participants in these clauses. They are the 'Behavior' and the 'Behaver'.

5. Verbal processes, as well as communicating processes.

These process clauses are beneficial in a variety of types of speech. They contribute to the creation of the narrative by permitting the establishment of dialogic passages. According to Halliday (2004:225) ^[8], "Verbal clauses in news reporting allow the reporter to impute or assign knowledge to sources such as officials, specialists, and eyewitnesses".

6. Existential clauses, the process by which something exists or occurs.

Existential clauses are uncommon in discourse, yet they make significant contributions to a variety of texts. These clauses, for example, are employed in communication to introduce various participants. When used in existential sentences, 'there' allows the addressee to be prepared for something that indicates current knowledge about to be introduced (Halliday, 2004:257) ^[8].

Table 1: A Summary of all the Types of Process and Their General Category Meaning

Process type	Meaning	Direct participants	Oblique participants
Material: Action Event	Doing Doing happening	Actor, Goal	Recipient, Client, Attribute
Behavioral	Behaving	Behaver	Behavior
Mental: perception cognition desideration emotion	Sensing, seeing thinking, wanting feeling	Senser, Phenomenon	
Verbal	Saying	Sayer, Target	Receiver, Verbiage
Relational: Attribution Identification	Being attributing identifying	Carrier, Attribute Identified, Identifier, Token, Value	Attributor Assigner
Existential	Existing	Existent	

(Halliday, 2004: 260)

3.2. Data collection

The data selected for this study is presented by extracts taken from collected speeches delivered by American linguist N. Chomsky, who emerges as a historian, social critic, and political activist, in specific situations such as Political condemnation, terrorism, and the Israeli-Palestinian war. The data have been selected depending on the aims of the study to be effective, reliable and valid. This data is taken in their transcribed forms from websites (will be listed in the reference in detail) such as: <https://chomsky.info/20210512/> <https://eightify.app/summary/international-relations/the-u-s-support-for-israel-historical-religious-and-geostrategic-factors>

3.2.1. Noam Chomsky

Avram Noam Chomsky, born in 1928, is a multifaceted American scholar known for his contributions to linguistics, philosophy, cognitive science, history, social critique, and activism. Often hailed as the "father of modern linguistics," he holds the title of Institute Professor Emeritus at MIT and has authored numerous books covering diverse topics like linguistics, politics, and media. Chomsky's ideological stance leans towards anarchy syndicalism and libertarian socialism. He has been actively involved in critiquing U.S. foreign policy since the 1990s, particularly emphasizing the country's pursuit of dominance through economic and political control over other nations. Chomsky advocates for increased public awareness to challenge imperialist actions by governments worldwide. Chomsky argues that the War on Terror is a continuation of longstanding U.S. foreign policy, emphasizing the country's pursuit of "imperial grand strategy." He criticizes U.S. actions, focusing on establishing control over "open societies" for economic and political gain. Chomsky believes in correcting historical narratives that whitewash imperialism and advocates for public awareness to oppose imperialist policies. He supports a democratic state in the Levant for Jews and Arabs, considering a two-state solution if both nations are equal, leading to his exclusion from Israel in 2010 due to criticisms of Israeli policies.

3.3. Analysis

Text 1:

"Israel was free to pursue the policies that persist today, with massive U.S. support."

Analysis:

This text is ideational due to discusses Israel's policies and relationship with the United States. It is also interpersonal in that it expresses a judgment or opinion regarding Israel's relationship with the United States, as well as the extent to

which Israel receives US assistance. The text also functions as a textual function since it gives context and background on the issue under consideration.

1. Israel: actor
2. was free to pursue: mental
3. the policies: goal
4. that persist: mental
5. today: existential
6. always: existential
7. with massive U.S. support: relational, attribute

Text 2:

"Israel serves as a military officer of the US with close intelligence relations".

Analysis:

The principal role of the text is ideational, particularly because it offers information on Israel's military cooperation with the United States. The second purpose is interpersonal, which transmits a truth regarding Israel-US ties that influences the reader's viewpoint. The third role is textual, which conveys a clear explanation that the reader may readily comprehend.

1. Israel serves: behavior
2. as a military officer: behavior
3. of the U.S.: attributor
4. with close intelligence relations: existential

Text 3:

"The US supported Israel due to its military potential and cooperation during crises, leading to established relations in 1967".

Analysis:

The main aim of this text is to convey information concerning why the United States supported Israel. This text focuses on the connection between Israel and the US and their collaboration during the crisis. The text also serves its linguistic aim by describing the sequence of events that led to the establishing of relations in 1967. The U.S: actor

1. Supported Israel: material
2. due to its military potential and cooperation: attribute
3. during crises: existential
4. leading to established relations: material
5. in 1967: existential

Text(4):

"The U.S. support for Israel is seen as an invasion and an act of aggression, with President Obama's opposition being

compared to the German general staff's response to Hitler's invasion of Russia.”

Analysis:

The purpose of this speech is to provide information and convey a certain viewpoint on the US' support for Israel. Comparing President Obama's reaction to the German General Staff's reaction to Russia's invasion reveals a critical view of the United States' activities, which appear invasive and aggressive to the reader. This analysis is based on experiential language, which depicts events and behavior in a certain context, and it may be considered an ideational function. The language also serves a second purpose: to communicate a judgment or appraisal of the situation in light of the reader's personal experience. For instance, the language used to indicate a poor perspective of the USA's support of Israel, resulting in it appears invasive and forceful, and drawing comparisons to historical events for emphasis, so it performs an interpersonal role. Overall, this data serves the textual meta-function.

The U.S.: actor

1. support for Israel: mental
2. is seen as invasion and an act of aggression: material
3. with President Obama's opposition: mental /verbal
4. being compared to the German general staff's response to Hitler's invasion of Russia: relational

3.4. Results

Table 2: Transitivity Analysis of N. Chomsky's Speeches (2021)

Selected Texts	Material process	Mental process	Relational process	Behavioral process	Verbal process	Existential process	Total Number
Text 1	0	2	2	0	0	2	6
Text 2	0	0	1	2	0	1	4
Text 3	2	0	1	0	0	2	5
Text 4	1	2	1	0	1	0	5
Text 5	1	1	2	0	0	0	4
Total	4	5	7	2	1	5	24

The results of transitivity analysis of the speeches of N. Chomsky in (2021) show differences in the process types. As shown in table (2), Relational processes (7) are the most common or frequent, followed by Mental (5) and Existential (5) processes, then Material processes (4), Behavioral processes (2), and Verbal processes (1).

4.1. Conclusions

Material processes according to Halliday's theory are used to describe actions, events, or processes that can be physically observed or experienced. It typically involves a subject (the doer of the action), a verb (the action itself), and an object (the receiver of the action). That's why material processes frequently occurred during n Chomsky's speeches. In his speeches Chomsky confirms the deep impact of the U.S on supporting Israel. He in most of his speech uses the explicit name of the U.S obviously which means that Chomsky wants the world to realize that the U.S is the strong supporter of Israel's actions in the region. In Halliday's theory of language, the notion of mental processes falls under the category of experiential meaning, which focuses on how language is used to construe human experience.

Mental processes refer to the cognitive activities a person

Text (5):

Trump went beyond his predecessors in providing free rein for Israeli crimes. One major contribution was orchestrating the Abraham Accords, which formalized long-standing tacit agreements between Israel and several Arab dictatorship”

Analysis:

This passage functions both ideational and interpersonal by discussing President Donald Trump's actions related to Israel's crimes and agreements with Arab dictatorships under the ABM accords. It critically evaluates Trump's actions, suggesting they exceeded those of his predecessors, with a negative tone towards his decisions and their regional impacts. The text is structured to present a thorough argument on Trump's role in enabling Israel's crimes and Arab agreements, offering background details, key points, and conclusions on their effects. Additionally, it highlights how language shapes communication and influences opinions, attitudes, and evaluations as part of its textual function.

1. Trump went beyond his predecessors in providing free rein: material/ actor
2. for Israel crimes: Attributor
3. One major contribution was orchestrating the Abraham Accords: Attribute
4. which formalized long-standing tacit agreements between Israel and several dictatorship: mental.

engages in, including processes such as thinking, perceiving, imagining, believing, and more. Chomsky's political remarks demonstrate an immediate connection between material and mental percentages. He frequently gives speeches about materialistic occurrences rather than mental ones in conveying the actual message of the external environment. The results reflect Chomsky's perspective on the outside world.

Existential sentences describe the process by which something exists or happens.

Existential clauses are uncommon in language, but they add substantial value to a variety of texts. These clauses are commonly used in communication to introduce participants. When used in existential statements, 'there' permits the recipient to be prepared for something indicating present knowledge is about to be introduced. Thus, Chomsky in most of his speeches managed to introduce the recipients to a present fact that the U.S is supporting Israel now, in the past, and will be constant to the future.

The relational process Clauses are being and having procedures. According to Halliday (2004), "relational clauses serve to characterize and identify". Relational clauses are classified into three types: intense, possessive, and

circumstantial. These sorts are classified into two categories: being and identifying. The attributive clauses define class membership by assigning an attribute to a certain item. That is, Chomsky is considered a critical factor in manipulating a various processes whenever required.

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