

## A Critical Discourse Analysis of a Female Vice-Presidential Candidate's Acceptance Speech

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### ABSTRACT

This instrumental qualitative case study examined the acceptance speech of Professor Naana Jane Opoku-Agyemang, the first female vice presidential candidate of a major political party in Ghana. The study aimed to identify the discourse elements and cohesive devices used in the speech and to evaluate how she conveyed her political ideology and gender identity. Specifically, the research question was: which discourse elements and cohesive devices were employed, and how were political ideology and gender identity manifested in the speech? The data consisted of an eight-page speech delivered on July 28, 2020, in Accra, containing 3,972 words. Fairclough's (2015) Three-Dimensional textual analysis model was used for data analysis, which includes description, presentation and interpretation, and explanation of social reasons. Results showed that Professor Opoku-Agyemang used discourse elements and cohesive devices such as 'however,' 'also,' and 'second' to highlight her academic and political expertise and present herself as a qualified vice presidential candidate. She aimed to inspire women and encourage them to aspire to any position, including becoming the president of Ghana. The study's findings contribute to existing literature and can inform future research on female political representation, exposing the approaches of a marginalized group and their use of speeches to gain recognition within Ghana's political space and beyond.



### 1. Introduction

Chen (2018) avers that language is fundamental to the existence of humankind and is essential in implementing a successful democratic rule in any country across the globe. Language is the conveyor belt of power that propels people to vote, to argue or to revolt, as Adaoma (2022) suggests. Language, which is essential to politicians, is a key explanation of political stability or polarisation, according to Abdelkadir (2021). According to Chen (2018), language is the primary means by which politicians carry out most of their activities, including campaigns, manifestos, rallies, elections, inaugurations and governance. The main goals of political speeches are to persuade, to educate and to inform the public, as well as to incite or to entertain them. According to Abdel-Moety (2015) and Soomro and Bahram (2015), discourse analysis entails linguistic analyses of connected works and speeches, including political addresses.

The centrality of political speeches to the governance of many states globally has resulted in attention being paid to political speeches and their linguistic associations and implications (Altikriti, 2016; Chen, 2018; Kimenye, 2022; Mutune, 2018; Robbert & Udoh, 2022). For instance, President Uhuru Kenyatta and Former Prime Minister Raila Amollo Odinga's political speeches were subjected to critical discourse analysis by Kimenye. Kimenye discovered that language was employed deliberately to convey the philosophy behind the handshake and initiatives to develop bridges. Additionally, Mutune examined the inauguration speech delivered by Kenya's President Uhuru Kenyatta on November 28, 2017, during his swearing-in ceremony, and he discovered that the president managed to win over the supporters by emphasising the importance of democracy, healthcare, education and the global community. Additionally, Hillary Clinton's interviews, the features of her political discourse and the covert tactics she used to represent her political ideology, were all examined by Abdel-Moety (2015).

Abdel-Motey discovered that Clinton deployed rhetorical persuasion strategies frequently and used linguistic devices to gain control over and influence conversation.

Within the Ghanaian space, evidence suggests that considerable attention has been paid to political acceptance speeches (Israel & Botchwey, 2017; Kantorgorje et al., 2021). For instance, Israel and Botchwey investigated the illocutionary acts used by the fourth republic presidents of Ghana in their Presidential Acceptance Addresses and their intended communicative effects on their audience. Kantorgorje et al. also investigated the use of Epistemic Modality (EM) in four ex-presidents of the fourth republic's chosen acceptance speeches. This data from the available literature implies conversely that research that pay attention to examining acceptance speeches of female Ghanaian opposition vice-presidential candidates' speeches are rare. Accordingly, this enquiry aimed to identify the discourse elements and cohesive devices Professor Naana Opoku-Agyemang employed and to evaluate how she manifested her political ideology and gender identity. The following research questions, therefore, guided the study: (1) what are the discourse elements and cohesive devices employed in the acceptance speech of Professor Naana Opoku-Agyemang? and (2) how do ideology and gender identity manifest in the acceptance speech of Professor Naana Opoku-Agyemang?.

Professor Jane Naana Opoku-Agyemang was selected as the running mate for the National Democratic Congress (NDC) to partner with John Dramani Mahama for Ghana's 2020 presidential and parliamentary elections. Before her selection, she had occupied the position of Minister of Education from 2013 to 2017 when the NDC was in power. She made a name for herself as an English language expert before entering national politics; she worked as a professor in the English Department at the University of Cape Coast (UCC), one of the top public universities in Ghana. She held important positions at UCC, including head of the English Department, the founding dean of the school of graduate studies and research and the first female vice chancellor. Running mates are important political players for three reasons: (1) they balance the qualities of presidential candidates, (2) they can affect how well presidential candidates do in elections and (3) should a president be elected, vice presidential candidates hold the second-highest position in politics in most nations (Sanders, 2019). Therefore, her appointment as the first female vice-presidential candidate of a major party in Ghana makes her speech a valuable resource worth investigating because her selection comes against a backdrop of a society where females are often relegated to the background within the political space.

According to [The Conversation \(2020\)](#), in 1960, a few years after Ghana gained independence, the

National Council of Women was established to recognise the critical roles women could play in Ghana's development. Ghana, subsequently, signed up to numerous regional and international protocols to attain gender equality and went further to establish an affirmative action policy in 1979 with a quota of 40% of all state and public boards, councils, commissions and committees envisioned to be occupied by females. Worryingly, six decades on, females constitute only 13.1% of parliamentarians, for instance. Similarly, [Bawa and Sanyare \(2013\)](#), commenting on the Ghanaian situation, indicate that females' political participation has gradually waned, contrary to optimistic reports that worldwide empowerment movements have ameliorated women's political involvement in Africa. [Norris \(1997\)](#) stated that there are few women in authority because there are few women leaders shown on the front pages. It is, followingly, vital to unceasingly study female participation in politics, thus the choice of Professor Jane Naana Opoku-Agyemang for this enquiry.

The purpose for undertaking this study is hinged on two critical reasons. Firstly, this study deals with one of the gaps in CDA studies within the Ghanaian political landscape. Even though many experts have conducted CDA studies, virtually no study has focused on CDA from the perspective of female political candidates, especially female vice presidential candidates of the major political parties (the NDC and the New Patriotic Party [NPP]). Consequently, this study makes an essential contribution by revealing the discourse elements and cohesive devices employed by Professor Naana Opoku-Agyemang and how ideology and gender identity manifest in her acceptance speech. Secondly, as the first study on CDA which analyses the acceptance speech of a female vice presidential candidate of a major political party in Ghana, the study is envisioned to serve as a basis for further studies on the political speeches of other females and other marginalised groups within the Ghanaian political space. This will help stakeholders to understand the approaches of these marginalised groups through the use of speeches to heighten the chances of these marginalised groups in regards to making positive inroads in politics.

## 2. Literature Review

### 2.1 Political Speeches

The literature is awash with studies on political speeches through the CDA lenses ([Almahasees & Mahmoud, 2022](#); [Carreon & Svetanant, 2017](#); [Derakhshani et al., 2021](#); [Kanwal & García, 2019](#); [Sharififar & Rahimi, 2015](#)), albeit the attention has generally been on male politicians' speeches, with a few focusing on those of females. For instance, using Halliday's systematic functional linguistics lenses, [Sharififar and Rahimi](#) investigated the art of linguistic spin in Obama and Rouhani's political addresses at

the UN in September 2013. Sharififar and Rahimi averred that Obama employed colloquial language which was made up of simple vocabulary and short sentences which were easily comprehensible to his myriad audiences.

On the contrary, Rouhani adopted difficult language which was rather difficult and official. Carreon and Svetanant investigated the key essentials of the political speeches of the Thai Prime Minister, Gen Prayuth Chan-ocha, and they found that keywords relating to information conveyed by the Prime Minister constituted 62.86% while those related to functions of language constituted 22.04%. Hinged on Fairclough's CDA and Rhetoric, Derakhshani et al. investigated Donald Trump's maiden speech from the perspectives of frequency and roles of some rhetorical approaches, as delivered to the UN. Derakhshani et al. found that Donald Trump employed abundant rhetorical and CDA strategies; Donald Trump further employed attentive lexical varieties perceptively. More so, Alyeksyeyeva et al. (2021: 99) examined some features, such as war rhetoric, of the Australian Prime Minister's (Scott Morrison) speech in the parliament on 22nd March, 2020, and they found that "on the one hand, militarisation of health issues during the coronavirus period as the most pervasive strategy to address the public and, on the other hand, the Prime Minister's appeal to unite in the face of danger". On their part, *Almahasees and Mahmoud (2022, p.1)* investigated the persuasive techniques utilised in seven speeches of King Abdullah II of Jordan which were presented at the UN, European Parliament, Islamic Countries Cooperation and Arab League from 2007 to 2021. King Abdullah II used "creativity and metaphors, reference, circumlocution and intertextuality...to persuade the international community of his vision".

On the relatively meagre attention paid to female politicians' speeches, *Kanwal and García (2019)* analysed the campaign speeches of Hillary Clinton to unearth her projection of gender identity via frames. It was found that she employed the practice of framing for projecting her gender identity; she, more so, used the fight and family frames to amend the borders of American presidency regarding gender. From the foregoing discourse, it is palpable that attention to political speeches through the CDA perspectives and Fairclough's three-dimensional model are not scarce. However, that most of these studies are hinged on male politician speech analyses and that their female counterparts are virtually neglected is what makes the current enquiry which is hinged on a female politician's (Prof. Jane Naana Opoku Agyemang) acceptance speech more crucial. Also, that the current enquiry proceeds to identify the discourse elements and cohesive devices she employed and how she manifested her political ideology and gender identity is noteworthy and essential for consideration for further studies on female politician's speeches.

## 2.2 Discourse Markers in Speeches

Discourse markers connect discourse elements, such as linking signals, fillers in, discourse markers, temporisers (*Chubarova & Rezepova, 2016*). Discourse markers are linguistic tools, according to *Sun (2013)*, through which interlocutors enter a discourse to be heard, to inform the audience of the structure of the text or discourse, the process(es) used to create it and the interlocutors' intentions and attitudes toward the subject matter, the readers and their text. *Matei (2010)* classifies discourse markers into: additives, inferential, elaborative, causative and contrastive markers. On his part, *Al-khazraji (2019)* posits that discourse markers include: so, now, thus, therefore, anyway, finally, however, though, further, similarly, perhaps, maybe, probably, certainly, (un)fortunately, naturally. Discourse markers serve several purposes (*Müller, 2008; Murar, 2008; Schiffrin, 2006*). Discourse markers emphasise cohesiveness and coherence relationships in language and entail speaker choice, according to *Blakemore (2006)*. They are also used in speech to serve a deictic or indexical role, indicating their capacity to illustrate the connection between earlier and later discourse that must be made by the hearer (*Schiffrin, 2006*). According to *Murar (2008)*, discourse markers are useful components of discourse management.

Cohesive devices are used when some aspects of a discourse are interpreted in a way that depends on other elements, according to *Halliday (1982)* who defines them as the relationship of meanings that exist inside the text. *Karlina et al. (2015)* argue that speakers who employ effective use of cohesive devices show their competence in discourse. Therefore, speakers or writers' ability to use cohesive devices to convey their message(s) indicate their ability to produce good and quality discourse. A study by *Feng (2010)* on the role of cohesive devices and the quality of political speeches concluded that those speeches that effectively employed cohesive devices were rated highly. This means that cohesive devices have a greater role in the success of any written or spoken text. Evidence from the foregoing discourse suggest that discourse markers play pivotal roles in advancing the positions of speakers – a critical reason that informed the decision for this domain to be investigated in this enquiry.

## 2.3 Ideology and Identity in Speeches

From a CDA standpoint, ideology is a representation of power, dominance and legitimation by social groups (*Fairclough, 2015; Sarfo-Kantankah, 2022*). As *Abdel-Moety (2015)* and *Abdulkadir (2021)* advances, language shapes ideology and ideology shapes language; political ideology concerns how to allocate power and to what ends power should be utilised. According to *Kimenye (2022)*, some people adhere to a particular ideology fervently, while others get general inspiration from a network of

related philosophies without formally endorsing any particular one. Each political philosophy has beliefs on the ideal form of government as well as the soundest financial system. The literature is packed with positions on identity (Kamari et al., 2012; Schlenker et al., 2012; Zakaria & Lee, 1994). For instance, Zakaria and Lee perceive identity as the entirety of an individual's self-construal and how an individual construes himself or herself in the present, how an individual construes himself or herself as the individual was in the past and how an individual construes himself or herself as he or she aspires to be in the future. Kamari et al. define identity as the characteristics, attitudes, personalities, outward appearances or facial expressions that define an individual (self-identification, as described in psychology) or a group of individuals (collective identity, as usually stated in sociology). Although contextual, situationally adaptive and dynamic, individuals' identities are located. According to Kamari et al., because of their roots in the feeling of personal identification, identities tend to feel as though they are stable universal categories characterising an individual, despite their fluid qualities. Gender identity represents an important aspect of identity in psychology, since it can determine, to a substantial degree, how an individual perceives himself or herself, both as an individual and in connection to other people, ideas and nature (Schlenker et al.). It is obvious from the foregoing review that the centrality of ideology and identity in advancing the positions of speakers (and in this study, the position of a politician) cannot be overemphasised – a pivotal rationale that informed the decision for this domain to be investigated in this enquiry.

## 2.4 Theoretical Underpinning

Fairclough's Three-Dimensional textual analysis model was applied in this study because of its usefulness and appropriateness for analysing political speeches (Addy & Ofori, 2020; Handayan et al., 2018; Zhu & Wang, 2020). The significant contribution of Fairclough to CDA revolves around three dimensions. That is, the analysis of data involves three stages. The first stage is the text. Here, the acceptance speech was described. The second is the interaction. At this stage, the speech was presented and interpreted for meaning. The third is the context. Here, the speech was explained (socially and politically) in regard to the research questions that guided this enquiry (Fairclough, 2013). The cohesive and discourse markers analysed in this enquiry are contrastive and additive discourse markers. The relationship between meanings in a text is known as cohesion, and it arises when the interpretation of one piece in a speech depends on another (Halliday, 1982). A study by Feng (2010) on the role of cohesive devices and the quality of political speeches concluded that those speeches that effectively employed cohesive devices were rated highly. Furthermore, Hilker (1991) states that

cohesive devices have significant interactive roles in discourse, as they show a relationship between the interlocutors – speaker(s) and hearer(s). Examples of discourse markers analysed in this study are additive discourse markers (second, third, fourth, also), contrastive markers (but, however) and concession discourse markers (yes, at this time) (Fraser, 1999). The full text of Professor Opoku Agyeman's acceptance speech was downloaded and coded according to discourse markers and cohesive devices. To satisfy the second research question (how do ideology and gender identity manifest in the acceptance speech of Professor Naana Opoku-Agyemang?), the text was coded to identify portions that contain ideology and gender identity.

## 3. Method

### 3.1 Context

Madsen (2019) explains that Ghana gained independence in 1957 through Kwame Nkrumah's Convention People's Party (CPP). Women were afforded the opportunity to vote and to stand to be elected in 1954 during the independence struggle. Several women had prominent posts, including members of parliament, deputy ministers and district commissioners as compensation for their enormous contributions to Ghana's independence. The Representation of the People (Women Members) Act, passed in 1959, guaranteed the nomination and election of ten women to parliament, making Kwame Nkrumah one of the first African leaders to set a quota for women in politics (Allah-Mensah, 2007). Sadly, as the CPP lost power, the quota system was forgotten. Thereafter, a series of coups d'état occurred (Allah-Mensah, 2007). Madsen further explains that in 1981, Flight Lieutenant John Jerry Rawlings became president through a military coup, and, under his supervision, the first democratic elections for the fourth republic were conducted in 1992. Though Ghana is officially a multiparty country, realistically, it is a two-party country – the New Patriotic Party (NPP) and the National Democratic Congress (NDC) being the only parties to have won political power in the entire history of Ghana's Fourth Republic. The NDC received 50.7% of the vote in the 2012 elections. (<http://www.ghanaweb.com/GhanaHomePage/election2012/>) The New Patriotic Party (NPP), which was the main opposition party, received 47.7% of the vote, and the CPP received 0.18%. According to Madsen, just 11% of the candidates elected to Parliament were women, and the female to male ratio was 0.12. Furthermore, the NPP received 53.8% of the votes in the 2016 election, while the incumbent received 44.4% of the votes, with the CPP receiving just 0.24% (<http://www.ghanaweb.com/GhanaHomePage/election2016/>). Despite only 13% of those elected to parliament being women, women's achievements have slightly increased. Despite Ghana's adoption of the CEDAW (Convention on the Elimination of All

Forms of Discrimination Against Women), BFA (Beijing Platform for Action), the African Charter on Human and People’s Rights and the Maputo Protocol, Madsen claims that the proportion of women in Ghanaian politics is not encouraging.

Akita (2010) indicates that Botswana and Ghana are successful African democracies but Ghana seems to be the preserve of men only. As Madsen et al. (2020) opine, the choice of Professor Naana Jane Opoku-Agyemang in July, 2020 as running mate by the main opposition presidential candidate for the 2020 election advanced optimism for improved gender inclusiveness and raised the chances of fighting the male-dominated system embedded in Ghanaian politics. Her acceptance speech, therefore, is a landmark speech with the potential to impact gender representation in Ghanaian politics positively. Even though Brigitte Dzogbenuku of the Progressive People’s Party (PPP) and Nana Konadu Agyeman-Rawlings of the National Democratic Party (NDP) are females who have participated in top Ghanaian politics, none achieved this as members of a major political party.

### 3.2 Sampling and Related Issues

This instrumental qualitative case study’s (Creswell, 2007; Stake, 1995) population comprised all political speeches in Ghana; the target population comprised all female vice presidential political speeches in Ghana. The sample size was one (the acceptance speech of Professor Naana Jane Opoku-Agyemang) because of its uniqueness. Her speech was purposively selected because she is the first female vice-presidential candidate of a major political party in Ghana. As Etikan et al. (2016) explains, purposive sampling involves the deliberate selection of participants because of their peculiar qualities. Although few speeches of female vice presidential running mates exist in Ghana, none of these females represented a major political party. This constituted the exclusion (other female vice presidential running mates) and inclusion (Professor Naana Jane Opoku-Agyemang representing a major political party) criteria for this enquiry.

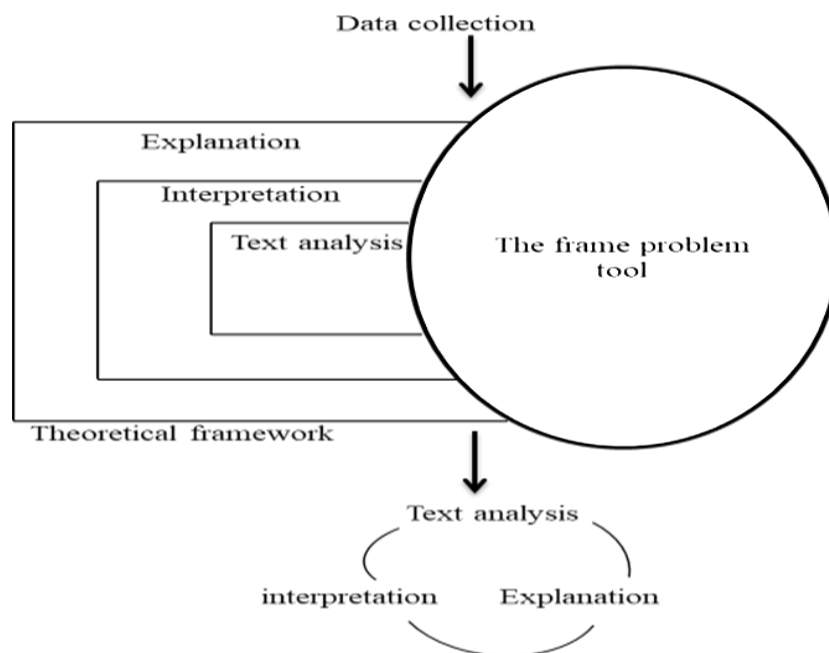


Figure 1 Adapted from Kanwal and Garcia (2019)

Her speech is, therefore, a valuable resource worth investigating because her selection comes against a backdrop of a society where females are often relegated to the background within the political space. Her speech which was delivered on 24th July, 2020 in Accra was eight pages long and contained three thousand nine hundred and seventy-two (3,972) words. The speech was sourced from the Ghana News Agency (GNA) at <http://www.faapa.info> using the google search engine. In order to ensure her rights to informed consent and participation, the researchers sought her consent after explaining the purpose of this

study to her. In order not to hurt any of the potential readers of this enquiry because of the sensitive nature of political discourse, the researchers have carefully conducted the study through academic lenses rather than through outright politically motivated lenses.

### 4. Result

This section of the study contains information on the summary of the speech. Thereafter, the analyses pertaining to the two research questions are presented.

#### 4.1 The Acceptance Speech: Summary

Professor Jane Naana Opoku-Agyemang made some profound statements covering subjects such as violence, poverty, gender, identity and equality. She assured the party faithful that she would satisfy them. She thanked Mr. John Mahama for selecting her as his running mate for the 2020 elections and espoused how people were excited about her appointment. She urged the electorate to turn up in their numbers to vote for her party on 7th December, 2020. She then continued by stating that Mr. John Mahama's choice of a woman as his running mate has gingered women in the country and impacted them positively. She ended her speech by appealing to all Ghanaians to give her the opportunity to serve them.

#### RQ 1: What are the discourse elements and cohesive devices employed in the acceptance speech of Professor Naana Opoku- Agyemang?

Discourse markers have peculiarities in spoken discourse (Matei, 2010). Discourse markers include elements that organise the discourse structurally and elements that express speakers' opinions and are

intended to establish some contact with audiences (Carreon & Svetanant, 2017). In this direction, the investigators sought to explore the discourse markers used in her speech. The acceptance speech produced thirty-two discourse markers and cohesive devices; the contrastive markers were nine, additive markers were eight and the concession discourse markers were fifteen. The results are found in Table 1. The presentation involves the category of discourse marker, its use in the speech and the page of occurrence of the cited use. The analysis shows that she employed numerous contrastive, additive and concessive discourse markers. Contrastive markers are used to mark contrast in texts or discourse (Al-Owayid, 2018). According to Blakemore (2006), contrastive discourse markers are important in creating coherent statements indicative of the relationship between the expressions in a statement. They also function as a link between or among opposing ideas or viewpoints. Followingly, this domain was explored to identify the type contrastive markers used in her and speech and the purpose(s) for which they were used.

Table 1. Types of Discourse Markers Used

Type of Discourse Marker	Example in Speech
Contrastive	<b>But</b> , as I keep assuring you, we have not always been like this. No, as you also know, Ghana has not always been like this. (p. 3)
	<b>But</b> importantly, it is a new focal point for girls and women; you have respected women; the women of Ghana will not forget. (p. 1)
	<b>However</b> , what I knew and believed then was that if I studied and focused enough, that if my actions benefited others before they benefited me; there was nothing impossible to achieve in our great country. I still believe in these values, that others matter, too. (p. 3)
	<b>However</b> , we will find safer ways to meet and talk and plan, and strategise for the good of our country. We will collectively work out the way forward. (p. 4)
Additive	There are <b>also</b> , sadly, reports of deaths of students. (p. 3)
	<b>As if this is not bad enough</b> , the level of violence, brute force, blood-letting and sheer breakdown of law and order in an otherwise straightforward act of registering to vote is unbecoming of this nation that was until recently, a fulcrum of democracy in our region. (p. 5)
	<b>Second</b> , we need meaningful, quality and comprehensive education that goes beyond access and responds to the future we can actualise. (p. 4)
	<b>Third</b> , we must leverage on vocational and technical training to equip many into meaningful and fulfilling work. (p. 4)
	<b>Fourth</b> , we must provide opportunities that transcend political patronage, 'connection' and the practice of whom-you-know. Equal and fair opportunities based on merit are an imperative for sustainable economic growth. The time for that shift is now. (p. 4)

Concession	<p><b>Yes</b>, it gets emotional sometimes, for which we will not apologize; emotions only confirm our humanity. (p. 2)</p> <hr/> <p><b>At this time</b>, may I say to the SHS students who are in school taking your final exams: I have children your age in same situation too, even if not biological. (p. 4)</p> <hr/> <p><b>All the same</b>, my condolences to the families; many of us share in your loss. (p. 5)</p> <hr/> <p><b>As if this is not bad enough</b>, the level of violence, brute force, blood-letting and sheer breakdown of law and order in an otherwise straightforward act of registering to vote is unbecoming of this nation that was until recently, a fulcrum of democracy in our region. (p. 5)</p> <hr/> <p><b>Truth be told</b>, despite all our challenges, Ghana remains a special place where any dream is possible, where every aspiration matters, and where anyone – be it a little boy from Bole or a little girl from Komenda – can grow up to be anything they want to be. (p. 4)</p>
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The result from [Table 1](#) suggests that predominant contrastive markers she employed are but and however. To a greater extent, these contrastive discourse markers helped her to achieve her intended purpose of comparing what her political party the NDC had done previously and would do if voted for in the 2020 general elections. Her arguments are based primarily on what she claimed to be bad governance of the ruling NPP. Firstly, there is a comparison between Ghana then and Ghana in 2020. She compared how Ghanaians were able to get employment no matter their tribe, religion or political affiliations and how the situation had changed. She used contrastive markers to paint a picture of how Ghanaians were no longer selfless but selfish. Evidently, she employed the contrastive devices to draw differences between her political party, the NDC and the ruling NPP. As an academic, she strategically used these contrastive markers to strike differences to convince the Ghanaian voters to choose her political party in the general election.

To connect discourse units with semantic similarity, additive discourse markers are used ([Hallyday & Hassan, 1976](#)). In order to maintain the coherence and continuity of a document, additives introduce the units of discourse that repeat and emphasise the crucial point or provide pertinent additional information to the expressions already mentioned ([Al-Khazraji, 2019](#)). Evidence suggests that her speech is characterised by the use of additive cohesive devices, as exemplified in [Table 1](#). The use of additive discourse devices at the start of the body paragraphs facilitates information flow from the previous paragraph. That is, as if that is not enough, second, third and fourth are indicative of her intent to add to the information already presented to her audience.

Concession discourse markers are used to identify semantic relationships that typically have an uncertain outcome ([Jarrah et al., 2021](#)). Concessive discourse

markers may serve some rhetorical purposes, such as persuading the listener of the argument being discussed, avoiding false accusations and providing information about unexpected events ([Jarrah et al., 2021](#)). Using concessive discourse markers at the beginning of the body paragraphs helps convince the audience of the argument under discussion. That is, At this time, Truth be told and Yes are indicative of her intent to convince her audience with the numerous points she raises to help her fight the status quo.

#### **RQ 2: How do ideology and gender identity manifest in the acceptance speech of Professor Naana Opoku-Agyemang?**

Ideology focuses on beliefs, philosophies, thoughts or systems an individual would like to uphold. This usually manifests in speeches – text or talk ([Kanwal & Garcia, 2019](#)) which are also critical to political discourse. Therefore, the researchers explored this domain to comprehend how she manifests ideology and gender identity. Evidence from her address indicates that she, to make known her ideologies or that of her political party to make the audience know the kind of system her political party would run if voted into government, used words which demonstrate solidarity, unity, team spirit, patriotism and harmony. Examples are presented in [Table 2](#). The presentation involves the ideologies and gender identity she espoused and the page of occurrence of the cited use.

It is evident from [Table 2](#) that her use of “My Brothers and Sisters...” indicates that she considers her audience as her siblings, making it sound as though they belong to the same family. This is an approach to make her audience feel connected to her. In human society, people, perhaps, feel connected to others who use words which suggest they (the people) are important and needed. She, therefore, very strategically employed these words to assure the people that she was always with them and would

always share in their predicaments and joy. In Extracts 2 to 5, her use of the name Ghana and the phrases my country and our country indicate solidarity and patriotism. She used these words tactically to show that she puts her country first. That is, she is more committed to the country's interests than her individual interests. Since she was representing the interest of her political party which places the country first, she used ideology and gender identity to convince the audience that, if the NDC was voted into power, they would ensure that the people are served committedly. Apart from the ideology that supports serving the country, she also indicated that she and her party had the people's progress and development at heart in Extracts 6 to 8. These statements are intended to depict how people-centred she and her party are. These were to draw the people's attention to the selfless nature of the NDC.

She wanted her audience to understand that all efforts by her political party are geared towards creating good and reliable economic and social systems for the people in order to create opportunities and a conducive environment for the ordinary people in the country to thrive. These are all communicative strategies to get the audience to accept the NDC and to vote them into power on December 7, 2020. In Extract 9, she also tried to make the people

understand that her party supports inclusive governance, where everyone is needed to help contribute to decisions and strategies for running the affairs of the country. This was to assure the audience that the NDC stands for togetherness. It was to make the people understand that everyone's ideas would be valued and considered in shaping the overall decisions for the nation. She connected with her audience to make them feel that her situation had not been different from that of the people in Extracts 10 and 11. She used these statements to make the audience understand that they also have the potential to get to where she, the Professor, is now. This is aimed at encouraging the people and, therefore, is likely to make the people believe that voting for the NDC to come into power would improve their livelihoods, as the NDC understands their problems and needs. Professor Naana Opoku-Agyemang strategically used these statements to show some level of association between herself and her audience. Playing the gender card, this was aimed at influencing both sexes to make decisions that may be in favour of her political party.

She also made it clear that the NDC is a unifying political party that runs a system devoid of discrimination based on religion, ethnicity, race, age and gender, as evidenced in Extracts 12 to 14.

**Table 2.** Ideology and Gender Identity Used

Type	Extract Number	Examples in Speech
Ideology	1	My Brothers and Sisters...
	2	Ebenezer, this is how far you have brought your handmaids; this is how far you have brought Ghana.
	3	...usher Ghana into recovery and prosperity.
	4	...opportunity to serve my country...
	5	...for the good of our country.
	6	What matters is to hold the door open for those behind us and create other avenues for self-actualisation for many more.
	7	...translate our excitement into action for the benefit of the good people of our beloved country.
	8	...that others matter, too.
	9	Together, we can strategise...
	10	Villages and towns across our country are full of stories like mine.
	11	...whose experiences echo mine.
	12	Whether you are Ga, Mfantse, Sisala, Ewe, Gonja, Asante, Nzema, Mamprusi or any other ethnic group, you are valued as a Ghanaian.
	13	...our Muslim brothers and sisters...
	14	Come, men, women, our youth, our children-together...



- 15 To my daughters and sisters, we are in this together.
- 16 ...it is a new focal point for girls and women...
- 17 ...you have respected women; the women in Ghana will not forget.
- 18 ...weight of responsibilities and concerns we bear as women.
- 19 ...women have always played pivotal roles...
- 20 ... by your choice, you have turned the struggles of so many women who have come before this moment into a probability.
- 21 I pay homage to those many, many unknown women, the silent and invisible and unacknowledged women...
- 22 ...let me once again congratulate Prof. Rita Dickson, recently appointed Vice Chancellor of the Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology” and “Congratulations as well to Dr. Koryoe Anim-Wright, who becomes the first female Registrar of UPSA, where this event is taking place.
- 23 If we choose to be anywhere as a country, the destination should not include a place where a 90-year-old woman, Akua Denteh, is stoned to death because someone has decided that she is a witch.
- 

This is a strong ideology that projects the party as being for everyone, regardless of background. Also, she demonstrated the ideology of oneness or togetherness and patriotism in the use of words such as “we”, “our”, “together”, “us”, “Ghana”, “country” and “nation”. “We”, “our”, “together” and “us” appeared ninety, fifty-three, seven and eighty-six times, respectively. These were used to indicate that her party stands for unity and togetherness. Also, “Ghana”, “country” and “nation” appear twenty-five, thirty-nine and twenty times, respectively. These show that the NDC places the country first. This was a way to draw audiences’ attention to the selfless nature of the NDC and its leadership.

In respect of how she projected her gender identity, in Extract 15, she made it clear to her audience that she would prioritise women’s and girls’ interests. She made the audience, especially the females, part of her family, and this projected her identity as a soft, a caring and a loving female whom the voters must choose. Universally, most women are perceived as home builders. In this regard, she made it known to her audience that with her identity as a female and a loving woman who understands women and girls, she would focus on decisions which positively impact women and girls in the country (Extract 16). Generally, in Extract 17, she wanted to draw the audience’s attention to the importance of women in society. Since she is a woman and saw herself in her current position as the running-mate of a major political party in Ghana, she could only call on her fellow women to show appreciation for the party’s decision to choose one of them. This, again, shows Naana Opoku-Agyemang’s identity as a woman. Thus, for women not to forget what her party had done for

them by choosing one of them into such a high and enviable position, indirectly, she was calling on her fellow women to show appreciation by voting her party into power on December 7, 2020. Again, she identified herself as a woman who understands the struggles women go through, the weight of responsibilities many women have to carry in order to make their families and homes work, how women are indispensable in society due to the various roles they play, how important her choice as the running-mate is to her fellow women and her understanding and knowledge about how it feels to be a woman (Extract 18 to 21).

Though many men in Ghana have achieved respectable heights, she chose to highlight the achievements chalked by some selected women in the country. This shows the kind of connection she has with her fellow women. That is, in Extract 22, she congratulated Prof. Rita Dickson, the current Vice Chancellor of the Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology and Dr. Koryoe Amin-Wright, the first Registrar of the University of Professional Studies, Accra (UPSA). Additionally, though many men in Ghana had suffered some form of brutality, Naana Opoku-Agyemang only mentioned one old woman who was murdered (Extract 23). These prove that Professor Naana Opoku-Agyemang is a women’s advocate. Such gender identity presentation is to make women join hands with her to raise her to the position of the first female vice president of Ghana. Finally, to very strategically project her identity as a woman, she frequently used the word “woman” or “women” in her speech. Altogether, “woman” and “women” were used twenty-two times. Generally, it is noteworthy that she

made giant strides, through this landmark speech, to position herself through a strategic utilisation of the gender card to project the abilities of women, not only to occupy critical political positions but, also, to permeate other spheres or sectors of Ghanaian leadership because of their positive multifaceted dispositions.

## 5. Discussion

The issues pertaining to her use of discourse markers, cohesive devices, political ideology and gender identity, as related to the findings of this enquiry, are discussed sequentially in this section. She exhibited her prowess in the use of discourse elements and cohesive devices. Her use of the discourse markers and cohesive devices was not done in isolation, but was melded with aspects of how she projected her political ideology and gender identity. Most often than not, men in politics seem to preach unity and togetherness during election periods. However, she uses novel approaches, through discourse elements and cohesive devices, to project her support for unity, patriotism and solidarity, among others. This is in line with how Hilary Clinton used her speech to build her own fight frame that a woman can equally fight for the welfare and betterment of her society (Kanwal & Garcia, 2019).

Pertaining to the discourse markers, the language of politics is persuasion (Chen, 2018), and that can only be achieved through parallel constructions and comparison (Sun, 2013). The discourse markers suitable for comparison are the contrastive markers (Matei, 2010). She used contrastive discourse markers to draw two types of comparison: gender and political ideology. In respect of gender comparison, her speech emphasises her choice as the first female running mate of one of Ghana's two major political parties. This was captured in her speech as: "...however, you have respected women; the women in Ghana will not forget". In this example, she compares her political party, to the NPP. Interestingly, the latter have never chosen a female as their running mate. Her use of 'however' is, therefore, intended to significantly strike this contrast with the aim of registering the uniqueness of the NDC regarding her selection to the presidential running mate position. Evidently, her selection is a crucial step in addressing the gender imbalance at the echelons of Ghanaian politics, and that trump card is what she plays. As Chubarova and Rezepova (2016) aver, discourse markers – in this case, contrastive discourse markers – reflect the intention of speakers and their reaction(s) towards what they are communicating. In respect of political ideological comparison, there was a comparison of political ideologies between the NDC and the NPP, where she espoused that her political party believes in the welfare of all Ghanaians, not a selected few. These are exemplified in: "But, as I keep assuring you, we have not always been like this. No, as you also know, Ghana has not always been like this"... "However, we

will find safer ways to meet and talk and plan, and strategise for the good of our country. We will collectively work out the way forward." Evidently, she uses 'but' to indicate to her audience that, prior to the NPP taking over power in 2016 from the NDC, the situation of Ghana was better. That is, Ghanaians are not being governed to the level that the NDC seeks to provide, should the NDC be voted into power. She then used 'however' to offer a promise to Ghanaians that, should the NDC be voted into office, unlike the ruling NPP which does not meet with the people to plan and strategise for the good of Ghana, her NDC would do that to ameliorate the Ghanaian situation. These intentions are in consonance with the suppositions of Titscher et al. (2000) who opine that politicians employ contrastive discourse markers to discredit their political opponents.

She employed additive discourse markers to great effect, too. Through the additive discourse markers, she advanced her political ideology by revealing what her political party would embark on to transform the country when Ghanaians vote for them into power. "Second, we need a meaningful, quality and comprehensive education that goes beyond the access and responds to the future we can actualize. Third, we must leverage vocational and technical training to equip many into meaningful and fulfilling work." In these two examples, she listed what her political party would do when elected. By emphasising quality education, especially vocational and technical education, she indicated an intention of a shift from the existing theoretical dominated education to a more hands-on education that could drive Ghana's developmental agenda. In addition, she carefully used additive discourse markers to drum home the ills of her political opponents – the NPP, for example: "As if this is not bad enough, the level of violence, brute force, blood-letting and sheer breakdown of law and order in an otherwise straightforward act of registering to vote is unbecoming of this nation that was until recently, a fulcrum of democracy in our region." Here, she painted a picture of the country's gloomy nature in terms of using violence to harm fellow countrymen and women. This, she believed, was unacceptable. Additive discourse markers, according to Al-Khazraji (2019), aid in maintaining attention among interlocutors. Again, Chubarova and Rezepova (2016) and Karlina et al. (2015) are among the scholars who have found that additive discourse markers aid politicians and speech deliverers to espouse their ideologies coherently.

In addition, she employed concession discourse markers to great effect. These markers were used to create an expectation, to lament and to empathise with the citizenry. For example, she mentioned that "As if this is not awful enough, the degree of brutality, brute force, bloodshed and utter collapse of law and order in an otherwise simple act of registering to vote is unworthy of this country, which was, until recently, a

center of democracy in our region". This is lamentation to suggest that Ghanaians have suffered pain and that the ruling NPP without bereft of ideas to ameliorate the situation. Again, she used concession discourse markers to give hope to many Ghanaians who had lost hope on how the country was being governed. "To be told, despite all of our difficulties, Ghana continues to be a unique nation where anyone - be it a little boy from Bole or a young girl from Komenda - can grow up to be anything they want to be" (p. 4). This was to inspire young men and women not to leave the country for other countries in search of greener pastures. She also used the concession discourse markers to empathise with the citizenry: "yes, it gets emotional sometimes, for which we will not apologise; emotions only confirm our humanity" (p. 2). This aligns with [Jarrah et al. \(2021\)](#) who affirm that speakers employ concessive discourse markers to empathise and lament.

Particularly on how she presented her political ideology outside the context of the cohesive and discourse elements, she gave the impression that her political party is committed to ensuring that the law is upheld to the letter by abiding by the established procedures for administering the people in a young democracy like Ghana's: "we must provide opportunities that transcend political patronage, connection, and the who-you-know principle. For sustained economic growth, merit-based opportunities must be available to all. The moment has come for that change." She expressed the belief that the rule of law, which is the bedrock of every democratic society, is missing in Ghana because people get into positions not through merit but through the influence of political party members in government. She also painted her political ideology as the only political tradition that is sensitive to the many difficulties confronting the citizenry. She demonstrated that her political party's ideology duly follows the constitution and shows concern for individuals during challenging moments – "What matters is to hold the door open for those behind us and create other avenues for self-actualisation for many more". The ideological leaning towards the masses by politicians in political speeches when politicians are looking for political power is what [Appiah \(2015\)](#) describes as a perfect strategy politicians employ when they are in opposition and want the citizens' votes.

With respect to how she played the gender identity card, she put forth issues related to women and those of Ghana generally. For example, she revealed: "... by your choice, you have turned the struggles of so many women who have come before this moment into a probability". Considered from [Amoli's \(2016\)](#) perspective, women can play the role of the head of a household or family. This, she addressed by applauding women for handling the weight of responsibilities and roles in their families. These were strategically delivered to convince the

audience and the public that she could function as the head of all women and even men if she was allowed to become the vice president of Ghana. Her speech, considered from a general perspective, has a huge and positive influence on the audience. Specifically, women might have been highly influenced by her speech, as women connect easily to one another as compared to their men counterparts ([Amoli, 2016](#)).

She makes four distinctions of alignment as she plays the gender card. Firstly, she aligns herself with women, for example, "...let me once again congratulate Prof. Rita Dickson, recently appointed Vice Chancellor of the Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology...Congratulations as well to Dr. Koryoe Anim-Wright, who becomes the first female Registrar of UPSA, where this event is taking place". Though many men in Ghana have achieved respectable heights, she highlighted the achievements chalked by only women in the country. This shows the kind of connection she has with her fellow women. Secondly, there is an alignment with the youth, and this was captured in her speech as: "our youth, our children-together are all part...." Thirdly, there is alignment with academia. She indicated that: "becoming the first female Vice Chancellor of a Ghanaian university was – for me – the most tangible testament to this fact". Finally, she aligns herself with the general Ghanaian populace: "whether you are Ga, Mfantse, Sisala, Ewe, Gonja, Asante, Nzema, Mamprusi, or any other ethnic group, you are valued as a Ghanaian". By aligning herself with women and young girls, she depicted that her political party has positive thoughts toward helping women and girls. Again, when aligning herself with the young people, she deliberately presented herself and her political party as entities trustworthy for safeguarding the interest of the youth. When she aligned herself with academia, she wanted those in academia to perceive her as one of them. Finally, when she aligned herself with the masses, she demonstrated oneness with the people. This affirms [Appiah's \(2015\)](#) assertions that politicians align themselves with the masses as a way of identifying themselves with them, with the ultimate aim of amassing votes.

Relevance from a CDA perspective. She attempted to change the status quo where, in the past, a woman would not be selected as the official nominee from any major political party because of gender biasness. She attempts to alter history by presenting her identity as a strong and level-headed woman capable of delivering at that high level. As [Schlenker et al. \(2012\)](#) essay, gender identity forms a vital part of identity in psychology, as it can determine, to a significant degree, how an individual perceives himself or herself, both as an individual and in relation to other people, ideas and nature. Her philosophy was based on placing her country and compatriots first. These manifested in her speech where she made use of words such as "country",

“nation”, “Ghana”, “we” and “our” which project solidarity and patriotism. All these are aimed at giving her an upper hand over her opponents in the presidential race.

She also clarified that she did not wish to be a vice president for only a few but rather for all, irrespective of background, race, ethnicity and gender. That is, she projected herself as a potential open-minded vice president who will serve all Ghanaians, regardless of gender, creed, religion or sect. Furthermore, she related well with her audience and all Ghanaians in her quest to become the next and the first female vice president of Ghana. These relatedness and all-inclusiveness were made known in her constant use of “we”, “us” and “our”. She, additionally, used effective strategies to convince her audience and the people of Ghana that, though she is a woman, she had the strength and vigour needed to become the first female vice president of Ghana. Also, it is the agenda of the NDC to include the minority group in their pool of voters, and she accomplished this by inculcating a sense of unity, togetherness and equality and by introducing herself as a sister, a mother and a grandmother to all, including individuals of the opposing political party. She also demonstrated unity by including in her concept of Ghanaian, Muslims, Christians and people of all ethnicities and races. According to [Kimenye \(2022\)](#), politicians preach unity whenever they know that a lot of people are watching them.

In a country like Ghana where the proportion of women in politics is not encouraging despite the nation adopting a number of gender protocols ([Bawa & Sanyare, 2013](#); [Madsen, 2019](#)), her speech serves as a catalyst to invigorate and to expedite the participation of women in politics. On the part of the males, her tactical play of the gender card and sagacious use of discourse markers to present her ideas could influence their perceptions and, possibly, result in them welcoming more women into the political world since [Akita \(2010\)](#) affirms that Ghanaian politics seems to be the preserve of men only. As [Madsen et al. \(2020\)](#) opine, the choice of Professor Naana Jane Opoku-Agyemang in July, 2020 as running mate improved gender inclusiveness and raised the chances of fighting the male-dominated system embedded in Ghanaian politics. All in all, her speech is a landmark speech with the potential of impacting gender representation in Ghanaian politics positively.

## 6. Conclusion

This CDA study aimed to investigate the discourse elements and cohesive devices used by Professor Naana Opoku-Agyemang in her acceptance speech as the first female vice-presidential candidate of a major political party in Ghana. Based on Fairclough's Three-Dimensional textual analysis model, the study aimed to examine how she

manifested her political ideology and gender identity. The data was analyzed to draw five key conclusions. Firstly, contrastive discourse markers were employed to discredit political opponents and advocate for future plans. Secondly, additive discourse markers were used to persuade audiences to vote for the political party by emphasizing quality education. Thirdly, concession discourse markers were utilized to increase the party's chances of winning the election. In terms of gender identity, Professor Naana projected a message of hope for women to become anything they wished, including becoming president of the country. Her speech also projected the NDC ideology of unity, patriotism, inclusiveness, and people-centredness. The findings of this study provide valuable information for gender inclusiveness and raise the chances of fighting the male-dominated system embedded in Ghanaian politics. However, the qualitative nature of this study and its small sample size may limit the generalizability of the results. Therefore, future research could explore a comparative analysis of male and female vice presidential candidates' acceptance speeches to provide a better understanding of the nuances of political speech.

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