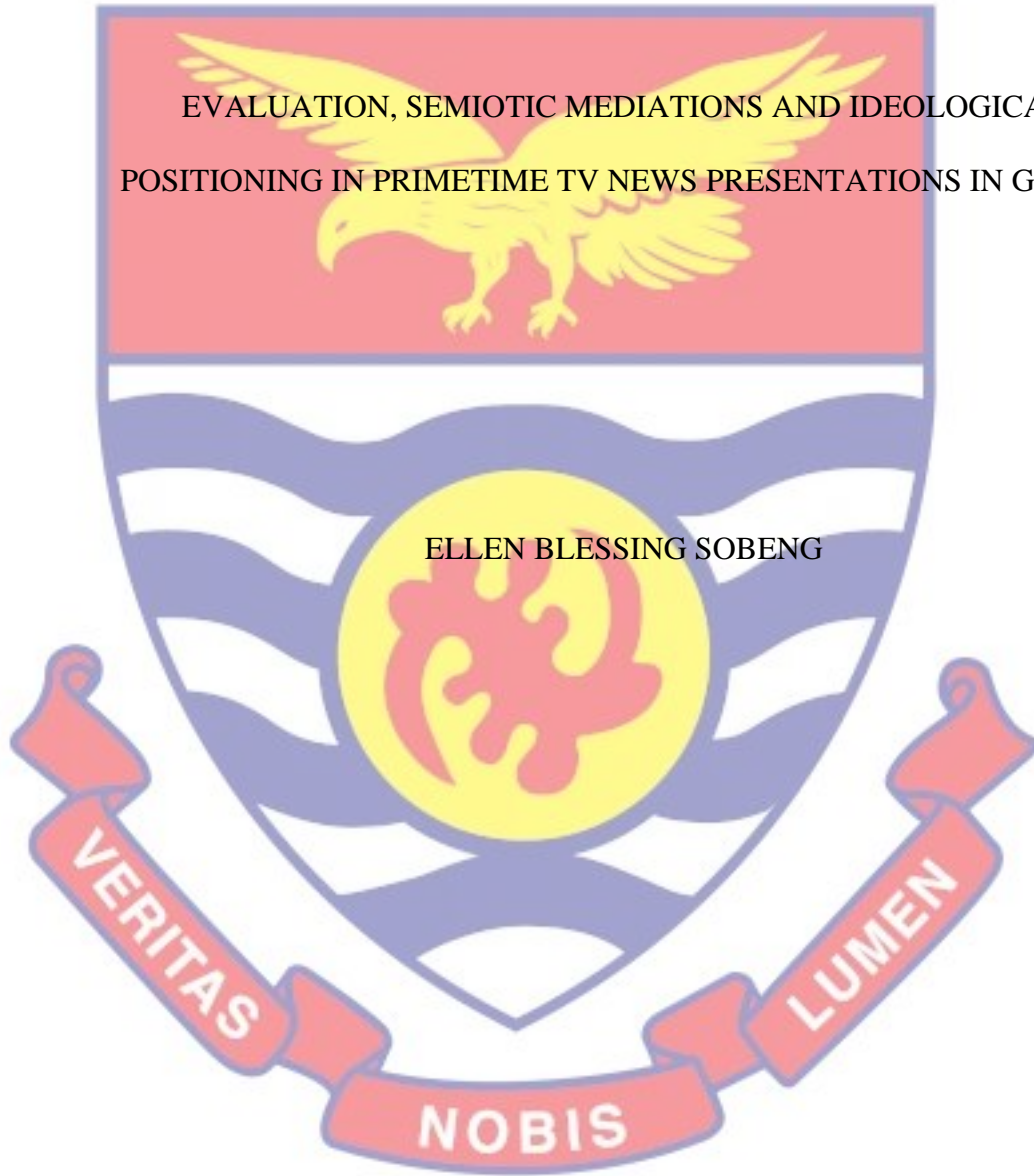


UNIVERSITY OF CAPE COAST

EVALUATION, SEMIOTIC MEDIATIONS AND IDEOLOGICAL  
POSITIONING IN PRIMETIME TV NEWS PRESENTATIONS IN GHANA

ELLEN BLESSING SOBENG



2022



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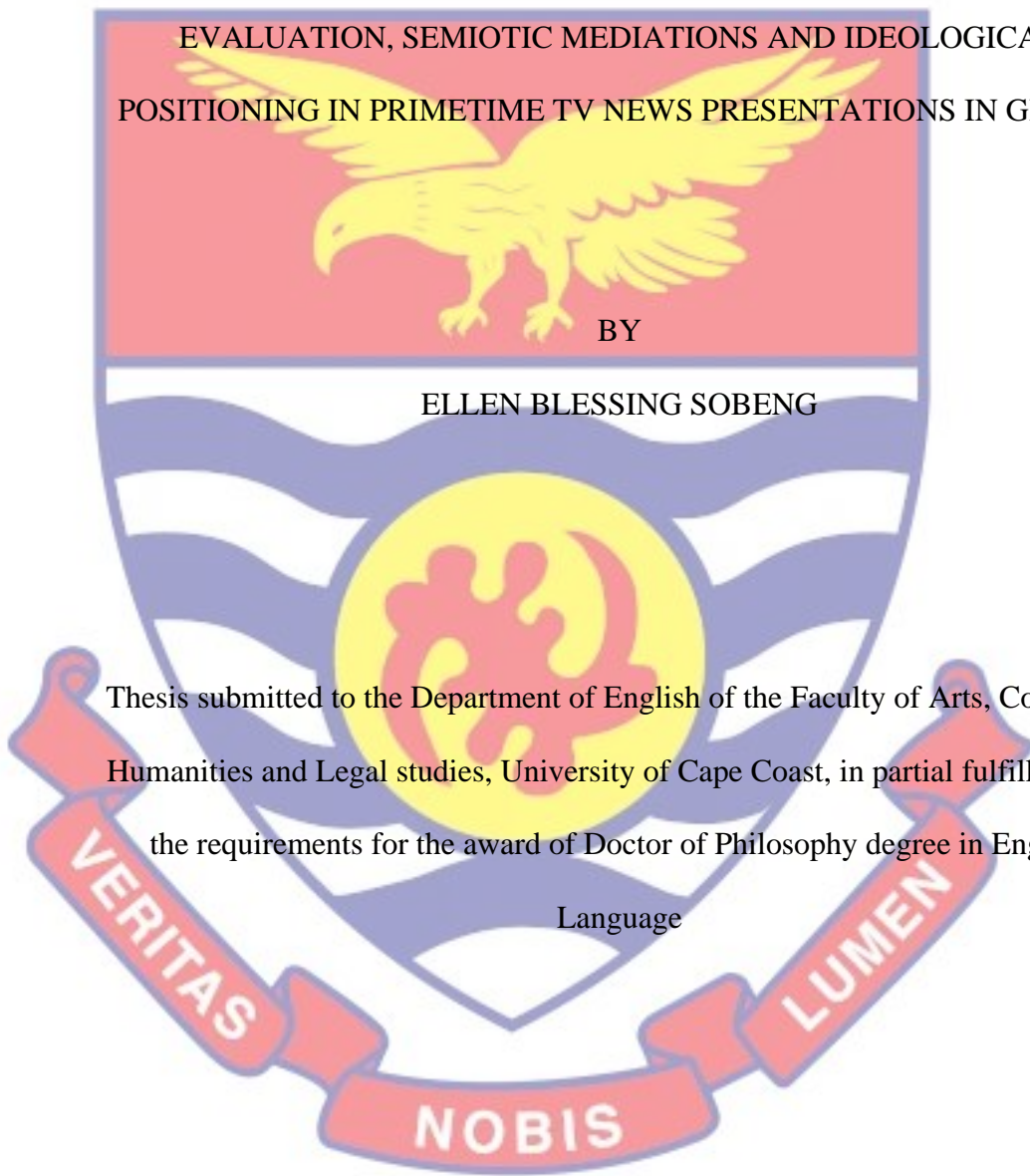
EVALUATION, SEMIOTIC MEDIATIONS AND IDEOLOGICAL  
POSITIONING IN PRIMETIME TV NEWS PRESENTATIONS IN GHANA

BY

ELLEN BLESSING SOBENG

This thesis submitted to the Department of English of the Faculty of Arts, College of  
Humanities and Legal studies, University of Cape Coast, in partial fulfillment of  
the requirements for the award of Doctor of Philosophy degree in English

Language



FEBRUARY 2022

## DECLARATION

Candidate's Declaration

I hereby declare that this thesis is the result of my own original research and that no part of it has been presented for another degree in this university or elsewhere.

Candidate's Signature..... Date.....

Name: Ellen Blessing Sobeng

Supervisors' Declaration

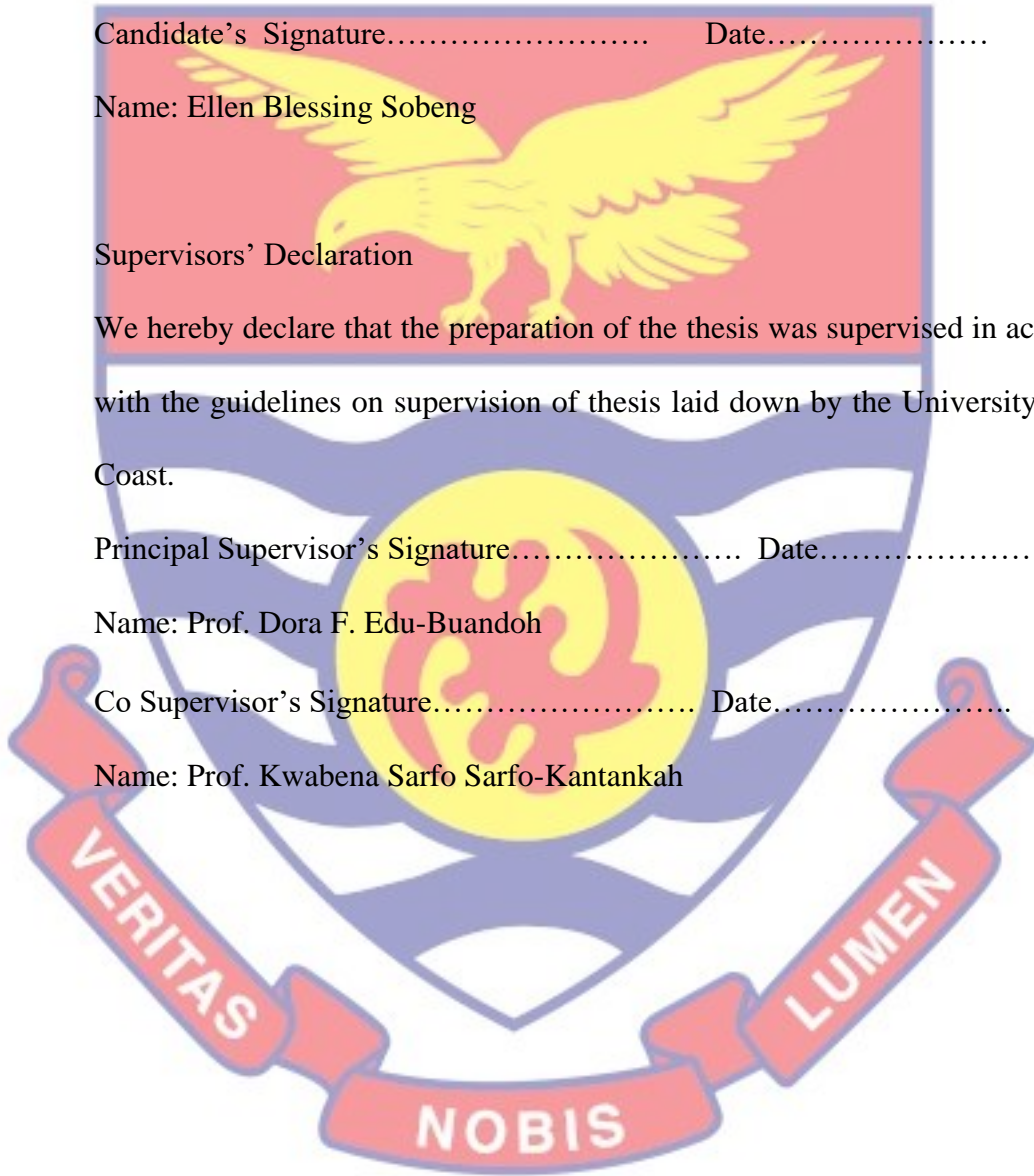
We hereby declare that the preparation of the thesis was supervised in accordance with the guidelines on supervision of thesis laid down by the University of Cape Coast.

Principal Supervisor's Signature..... Date.....

Name: Prof. Dora F. Edu-Buandoh

Co Supervisor's Signature..... Date.....

Name: Prof. Kwabena Sarfo Sarfo-Kantankah



## ABSTRACT

Since the 20th Century, language use in the media has received unparalleled attention among scholars, especially, linguists. Though scholars have established outstanding evidence for possibilities of the media universally, there is still the need to account for spoken major news presentation, which has been partially described for comprehensive descriptions of the language of television (TV). It is against this background that the present study presents an account of news presentations in Ghana. The general objective is to describe resources that construe evaluation, semiotic mediations in the news and ideological meanings at word, clause, and sentence levels. The account is based on primetime news presentations from four most influential TV stations in Ghana – TV3, Joy TV, GTV and Citi TV. The analysis and descriptive interpretation of the language is guided by the Appraisal Theory proposed by Martin and White (2005) and developed out of the broader theoretical framework of Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL). The study shows that evaluative resources are employed in primetime TV news to construe authorial Attitude, Engagement and Graduation. It again became clear that semiotic mediations enrich meaning of news stories. Finally, it was observed that linguistic resources (evaluative, semiotics, pronouns, and interpersonal expressions), enacted ideological positioning for subjects of primetime TV news presentations. The study will contribute to Appraisal analysis of media language and discourse analysis for specific purpose and African linguistics.

## KEY WORDS

Evaluation

Ideological Positioning

Media

News Presentations

Semiotic Mediations



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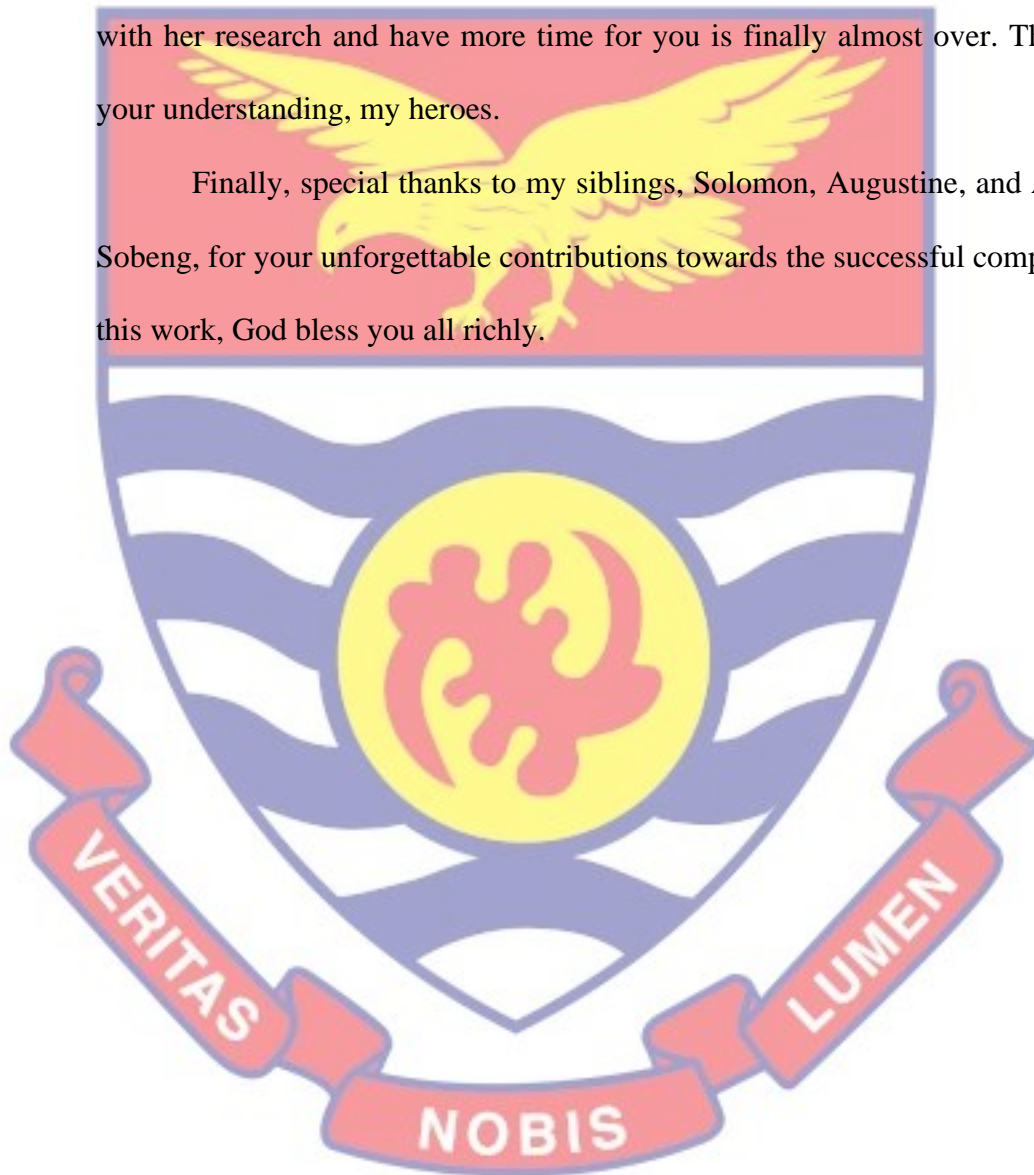
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## DEDICATION

To my parents: Very Rev. and Mrs. Solomon and Charlotte Sobeng; To my husband: Ing. Philip Agyeman Antwi; And to our children: Philp, Eva, and Emerald



## TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
DECLARATION	ii
ABSTRACT	iii
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	v
DEDICATION	vii
TABLE OF CONTENTS	viii
LIST OF TABLES	xiii
LIST OF FIGURES	xiv
CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION	
Background to the Study	1
The Media in Ghana Before and After the 1992 Constitution	3
Before the 1992 Constitution	3
After the 1992 Constitution	4
Broadcast News in Context	10
Statement of the Problem	13
Research Questions	14
Aims of the Study	14
Significance of the Study	16
limitation	17
Scope of the Study	18
Outline of the Thesis	19
Chapter Conclusion	19
CHAPTER TWO: THEORETICAL AND CONCEPTUAL APPROACH	

Introduction	21
Theoretical Approach	21
Systemic Functional Linguistics	21
Underlying Concepts	34
News	34
Debate on Hard and Soft News	35
Evaluation	38
Semiotics	43
Ideology	45
Prior Research	49
Language Use in Online and Social Media	49
News Presentations	53
The Ghanaian Media	57
Chapter Conclusion	61
<b>CHAPTER THREE: METHODOLOGY</b>	
Introduction	62
Research Design	62
Data Gathering and Descriptions	64
Sources of Data	65
TV3	65
GTV	66
Joy News	67
Citi TV	67

Sampling of News Presentations	68
Data Coding	76
Procedures for Analysis	76
Reliability and Validity	78
Ethical Issues	78
Treatment of Data	79
Chapter Conclusion	81
<b>CHAPTER FOUR: EVALUATION IN PRIMETIME TV NEWS PRESENTATIONS</b>	
Introduction	82
Evaluative Resources in Primetime TV News Presentations	82
Attitudinal Resources in Primetime TV News Presentations	83
Affect realizations in Primetime TV News Presentations	83
Judgement Realizations in Primetime TV News Presentations	93
Appreciations in Primetime TV News Presentations	96
Engagement Resources in Primetime TV News Presentations	98
Graduation Resources in Primetime TV News Presentations	109
Chapter Conclusion	126
<b>CHAPTER FIVE: SEMIOTIC MEDIATIONS IN PRIMETIME TV NEWS PRESENTATIONS</b>	
Introduction	128
Semiotic Mediations in Primetime TV News Presentation	128
Semiotic Mediations Bring out Meanings in News Stories	153

Semiotic Mediations Co-construct Meanings in News	154
Signs and Evidence	155
Relevance of Semiotic Mediations in News Presentations	162
Chapter Conclusion	163

**CHAPTER SIX: IDEOLOGICAL POSITIONING IN PRIMETIME TV NEWS PRESENTATIONS**

Introduction	164
Ideological Positioning in Evaluative Resources	164
Ideological Positioning in Primetime News Semiotics	171
Ideological Positioning Through Some Linguistic Features in Primetime News	186
Interactional Roles in Primetime TV News Presentations	187
Pronouns in Primetime TV News Presentations	190
Observations	194
Chapter Conclusion	195

**CHAPTER SEVEN: CONCLUSION**

Introduction	197
Aims and Procedures	197
Evaluation, Semiotic Mediations, and Ideological Positioning	199
Implications of the Study	200
Theoretical Contributions	200
Contributions to Research	201
Practical Applications	202

Recommendations for Further Research	203
REFERENCES	205
APPENDIXES:	224
APPENDIX 1	222
APPENDIX 2	223
APPENDIX 3	225
APPENDIX 4	226
APPENDIX 5	227



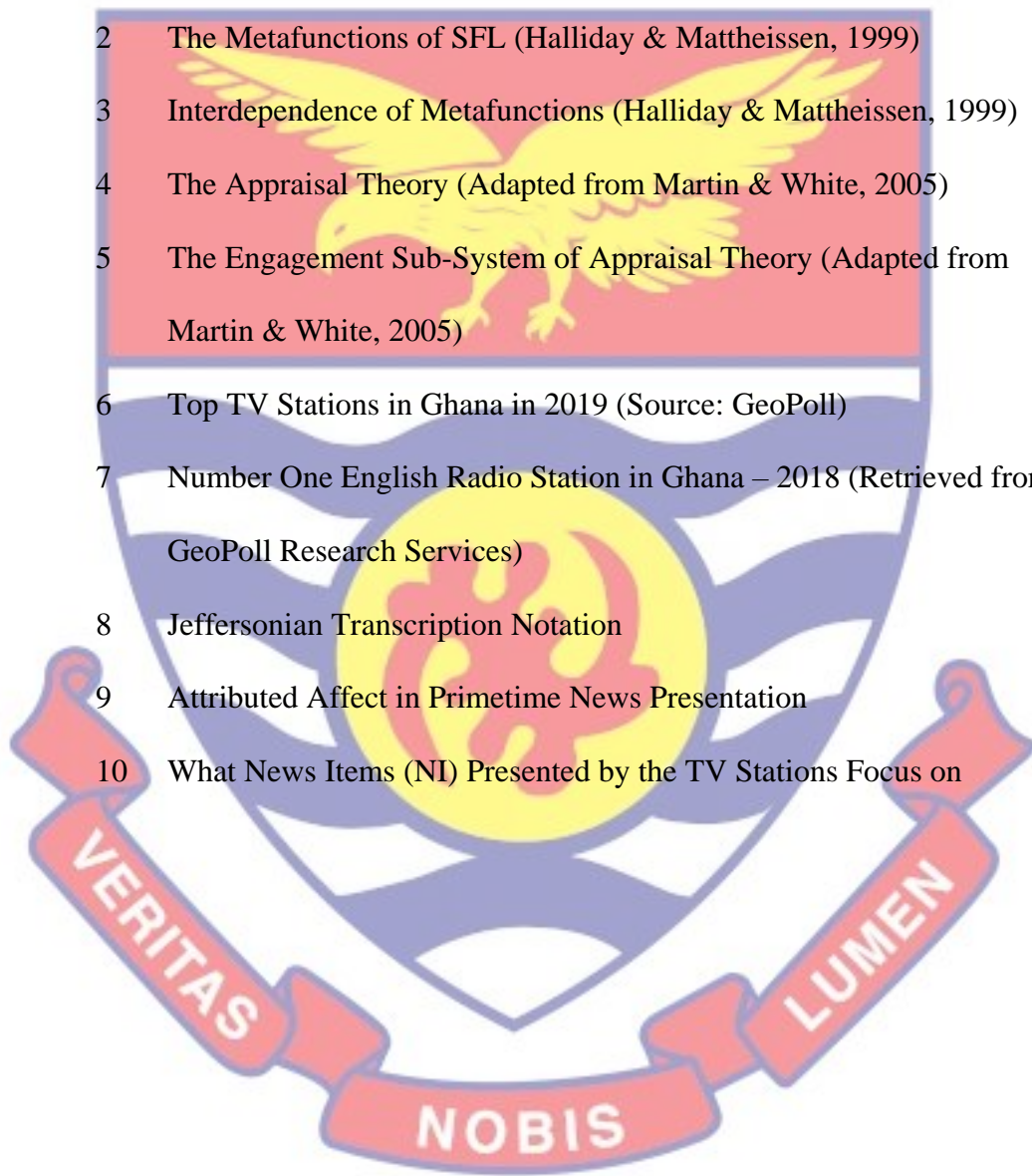
## LIST OF TABLES

Table	Page
1 Ghana's Republics and their Constitutional Provisions	4
2 What News Items (NI) Presented by the TV Stations Focus on	75
3 Frequency of Evaluative Resources Used in News Presentation	124



## LIST OF FIGURES

Figure		Page
1	Locating Subjects in Television News Presentation Practice in their Hierarchical Order (Adapted from Mahfouz, 2012)	9
2	The Metafunctions of SFL (Halliday & Mattheissen, 1999)	22
3	Interdependence of Metafunctions (Halliday & Mattheissen, 1999)	25
4	The Appraisal Theory (Adapted from Martin & White, 2005)	28
5	The Engagement Sub-System of Appraisal Theory (Adapted from Martin & White, 2005)	31
6	Top TV Stations in Ghana in 2019 (Source: GeoPoll)	72
7	Number One English Radio Station in Ghana – 2018 (Retrieved from GeoPoll Research Services)	73
8	Jeffersonian Transcription Notation	79
9	Attributed Affect in Primetime News Presentation	90
10	What News Items (NI) Presented by the TV Stations Focus on	183





## CHAPTER ONE

### INTRODUCTION

#### Background to the Study

The media in Ghana have survived a long tradition of state ownership, control and severe tension prior to the 1992 Constitution, which presented liberalized media airwaves to Ghanaians. Gadzekpo (2007) notes that “the history of the press in Ghana has been chequered and marred by decades of political and economic instability” (Gadzekpo, 2007, p.89). The media in Ghana (then Gold Coast) started to emerge due to the publication of the first newspaper: *The Gold Coast Gazette* in 1822 by Sir Charles McCarthy, who was the country’s first Governor. This newspaper, according to Anyidoho (2016), aimed to provide British merchants in the Gold Coast (Ghana) with economic and commercial information as well as to disseminate news concerning Britain and the West African colony. The period between 1823 and 1856 in Ghana’s media landscape was characterized by the absence of newspaper circulation. Tenom (2013) points out that after the death of McCarthy and the *Gold Coast Gazette*, Ghana remained without any newspaper for 35 years until 1857 when two Ghanaian brothers, Charles and Edmund Bannerman launched *Accra Herald*, which was later renamed *West African Herald* (Tenom, 2013). *The West African Herald* was the first media house owned by a Ghanaian or an African.

Ghanaians began to launch newspapers owned by them to communicate the sociocultural and sociopolitical situations that existed during this era (Anyidoho, 2016). Newspapers launched by Ghanaians included the *Gold Coast*

*Times* by James Hutton Brew from 1874 to 1885; *Western Echo* by James Hutton Brew and J. E. Casely Hayford from 1885 to 1887; and *the Gold Coast Echo* by Casely Hayford was published between 1888 and 1889. Similarly, Timothy Laing launched *Gold Coast Express* between 1897 and 1900; *Gold Coast People* by J. Mensah Sarbah was established from 1891 to 1896; Casely Hayford et al. published *Gold Coast Leader* from 1902 to 1934; Alfred J. Ocansey, R.W. Dupigny, and R.B. Wuta-Ofei also launched *Gold Coast Spectator* between 1927 and 1955. The names of the newspapers suggest the sociopolitical and sociocultural atmosphere that existed within the periods before the 1992 Constitution. This atmosphere was a typically tensed one (Anyidoho, 2016; Gadzekpo, 2007). Besides the basic communicative function of every newspaper, which is to update citizens on daily events happening around them and the world, the Ghanaian newspapers served to convey to Ghanaians the societal challenges that existed in the various regions and cities of Ghana where these newspapers were published. Hence, a newspaper called *Gold Coast Express*, for instance, was obviously heralding societal issues mainly from Ghana's former capital town – Cape Coast. Additionally, the Ghanaian-owned newspapers promoted traditional core values (Anyidoho, 2016). Most of these newspapers, which represented the Ghanaian media, folded up few years after operation due to inadequate funds and lack of publication materials (Anyidoho, 2016; Davor, 2015).

## The Media in Ghana Before and After the 1992 Constitution

In this section, I pay attention to the nature of Ghana's media both before and after the 1992 constitution, when press freedom was enshrined in Chapter 12 of the nation's 1992 constitution (Asante, 2020). In the subsequent sections, I examine the media situation in Ghana prior to the establishment of Ghana's 1992 constitution and the change of the face of the nation's media after the 1992 constitution.

### Before the 1992 Constitution

Admittedly, the 1970s and 1980s in the Ghanaian press history were characterized by state interference in private newspaper publications. As Davor (2015) points out, the period before the 1992 Constitution abounds with state control and monopoly with its attendant "Culture of Silence" (Davor, 2015, p. 3). The unprecedented features of this season were military dictatorship. The media was ineffective in its role as the watchdog of the society due to such interferences (Gadzekpo, 2007, p. 89). Instead, it functioned as a tool for the succession of military regimes that ruled the country (Anyidoho, 2016; Gadzekpo, 2007). The media in Ghana were reduced to tools for political ends, such that media practitioners who refused to conform stood the risk of losing their lives. Table 1 below shows Ghana's Republics and their constitutional provisions before the 1992 constitution

**Table 1: Ghana’s Republics and their Constitutional Provisions**

Republics	Constitutional Provisions
1st Republic	1960 Constitution
2nd Republic	1968 Constitution
3rd Republic	1979 Constitution

*Retrieved from <http://www.constitution.org>*

**After the 1992 Constitution**

The Fourth Republican Constitution of Ghana was enacted through a Referendum on April 28, 1992 (Atawura, 2017). According to Atawura (2017), intense pressure from the international community and donors for economic mismanagement and to return Ghana to democratic rule, set the stage for the Fourth Republican Constitution, which was initiated in 1992; hence, the 1992 Constitution. Apart from the external pressures on the PNDC government led by the former president, Rawlings, Dzisah (2018) recounts that through the National Commission for Democracy (NCD), the ground was prepared for the country to embark on yet another experiment with multi-party democracy.

After Ghana finally embraced democratic rule and adopted the 1992 Constitution, there were remarkable changes. One of the areas that benefited from the Constitutional rule was the media. In the view of Nyarko (2019), the 1992 Constitution offered independence of the media in Ghana. It also provided opportunities for media pluralism and privatization. By implication, the 1992 Constitution opened the media landscape for more media organizations to operate. According to Atawura (2017), it also led to the establishment of the first private radio and television stations in Ghana. A lot of private newspapers surfaced, such

as *The Guide*, *The Insight*, *The Independent*, *The Chronicle*, *The Public Agenda*, *The Ghanaian Democrat*, *The Free Press*, *The Statesman*, *New Era*, *NPP News*, *Weekly Express*, *Ghana Palaver*, and *The Spark*, among a host of others (Atawura, 2017). The internet flourished, such that the online and social media have now become the second most patronized media in Ghana aside radio. The revolution of the establishment of radio stations broadcasting in the various local languages started with Peace FM in the Fourth Republic (Atawura, 2017).

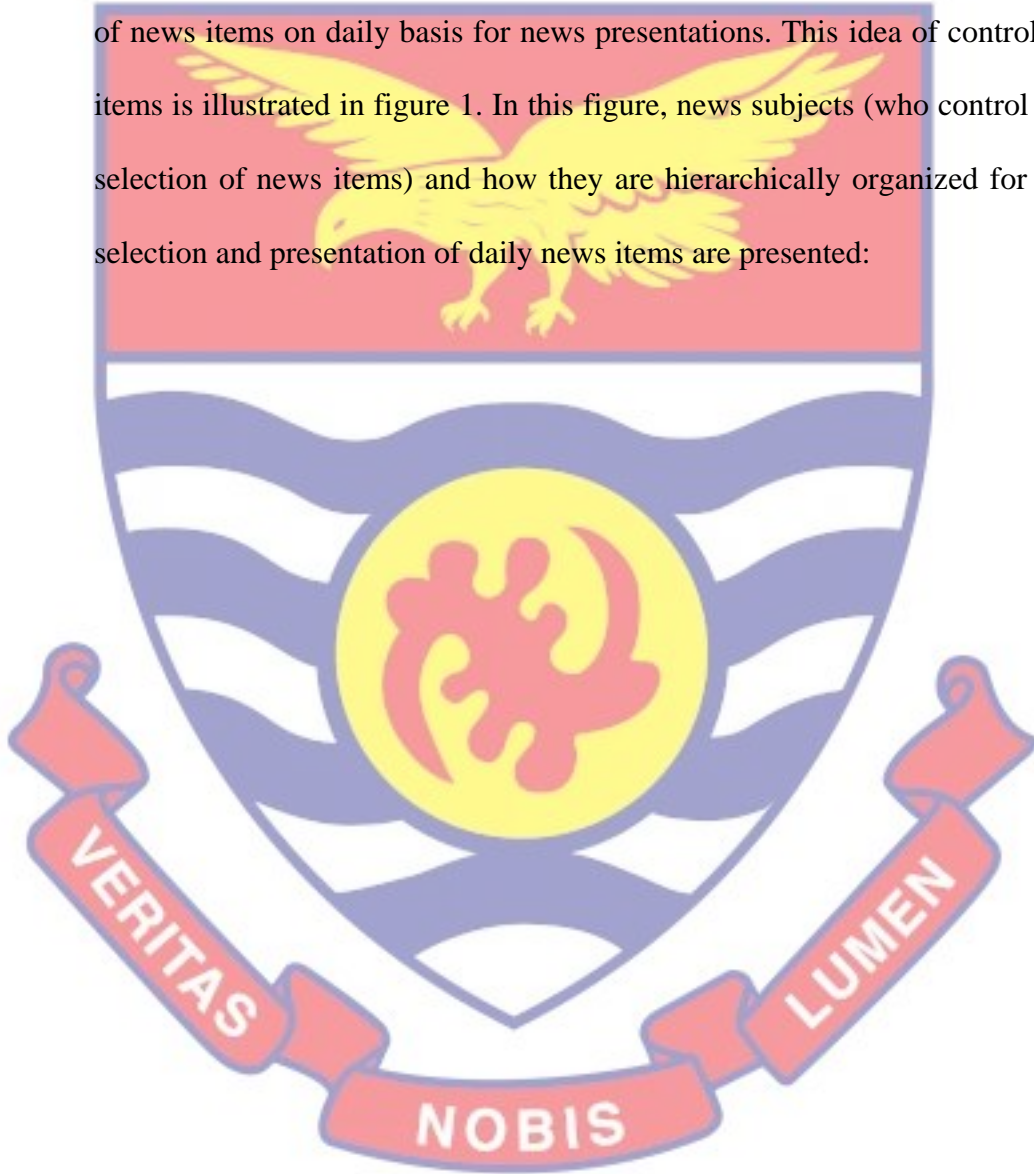
Freedom of expression and media protection are core features enshrined in the 1992 Constitution, Chapter 12, Articles 162 and 163 (Nyarko, 2019), leading to the rise in media houses and outlets. Davor (2015) explains, “the National Media Commission was established with the chief task of insulating state media from governmental control and ensuring high journalistic quality, thus, vastly improving the regulatory environment for journalists” (p. 6). There has been liberty in Ghana’s media since the inception of the Fourth Republican Constitution (1992 Constitution). Today, one finds a vibrant media environment where journalists expose corruption, highlight incompetence and crime, and demand a measure of accountability from the powerful (Asante, 2020). In other words, unlike the prior 1992 Constitution era, the media after the 1992 Constitution became liberated, such that journalists could now hold government officials and other relevant stakeholders responsible for several unlawful acts.

Both media practitioners and members of the society have, unfortunately, poorly handled the goodwill that ended the “culture of silence”, which characterized the period before the 1992 Constitution. This has given room to the

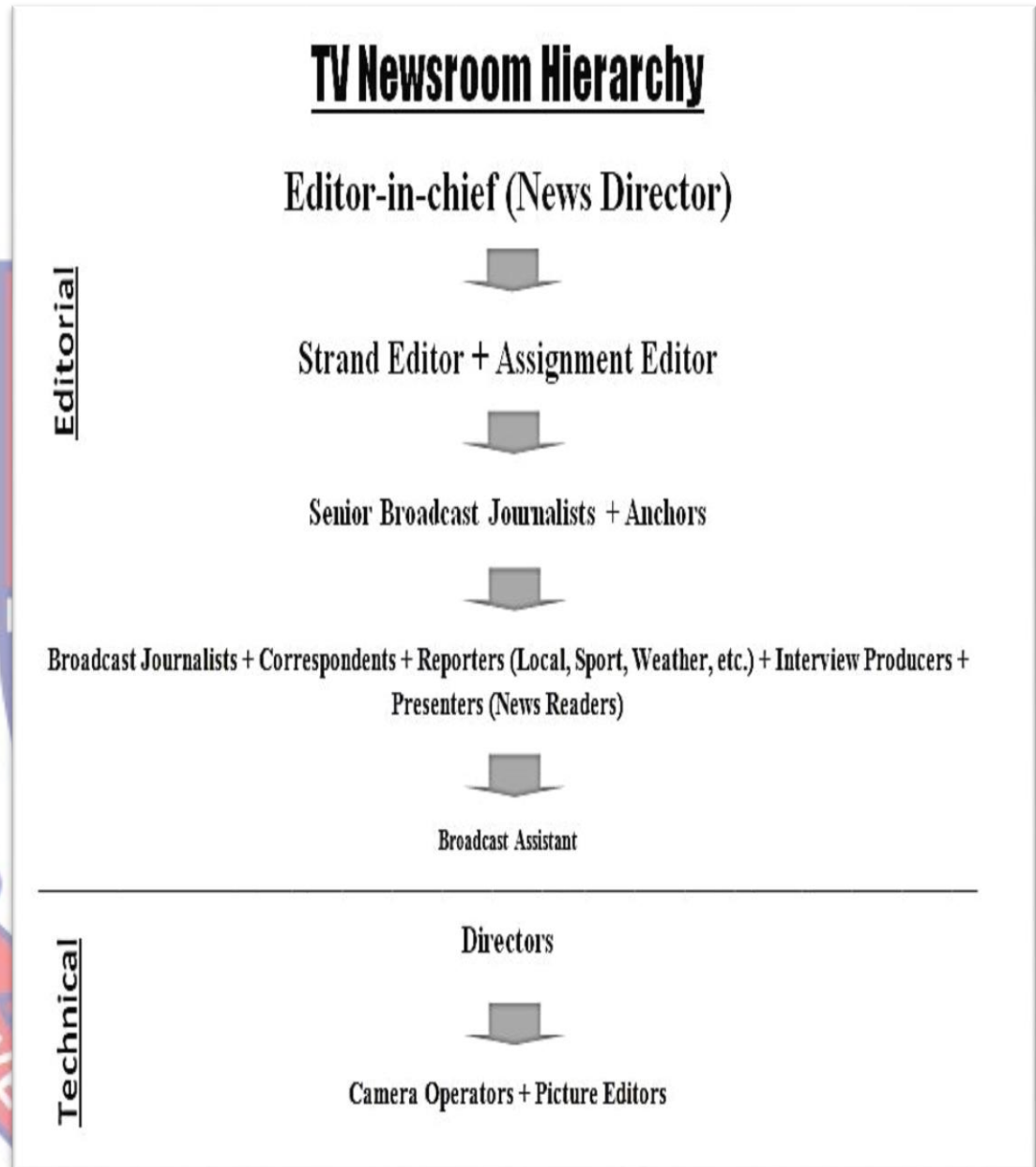
“culture of insults,” where members of the society could spill insults on anyone, including the president of the country, through the media, without any sense of remorse. This is what Atawura (2017, p.1) calls “hate speech” in the media. According to him, the Fourth Republic has had numerous media attacks and harassment of journalists even with the repeal of the libel law in 2001. Most of these violations against journalists and media persons were perpetrated by the state agencies and that of individuals who had influence in the various governments of the Fourth Republic. Currently, due to radio discussions, which allow listeners to call in and share their views on political issues, as well as comments from viewers on TV outlets and internet platforms, the hate speech has shifted to another unpleasant level. As a result of the culture of insults, which has not received proper attention after the 1992 Constitution, several attacks have been meted out on media practitioners, public servants, and other investigative journalists. In 2019, the Media Foundation for West Africa had recorded over 31 attacks on 40 journalists within a period of 18 months, and other public servants in the country (Asante, 2020). By implication, the media in Ghana after the 1992 Constitution have seen freedom of existence and speech. However, there are cases of reported harassment, hate speech and insults, and intimidation meted out on public personnel through the media (Asante, 2020). The rippling effect of this situation is that news outlets present news that will not get them into trouble. Thus, controversial news stories, according to Asante (2020), are sometimes not reported in news in order to avoid public insults and attacks from government officials.

One notes that it is a full and accurate reportage that allows informed citizens to be productive members of the world community (Schudson, 1995). News stories can be written or recorded pieces of information that are expected to inform the public about current events in the country. The idea of control of news items comes up whenever news presentation is mentioned. Generally, journalists structure each day's activities so that the public receive news items as sorted out and neatly packaged. Before stories become news for onward presentation as primetime news, there are individuals who control the selected the news items. Whereas some scholars believe that editors and reporters are the ones who control the selection of news items (Shabir & Safdar, 2015), others insist that news presenters have better control on news items' selection (Hyland & Diani, 2009). Explaining their stance, Shabir and Safdar (2015) propose, "gate keeping occurs at all levels of the media structure, from a reporter deciding which sources of information to choose to include in a story to editors deciding which stories are printed or covered and includes media outlet owners and even advertisers" (p. 591). In other words, reporters, and news editors, by virtue of their positions, disseminate to the public only those events they consider to be true and wholesome to the society. The role of news presenters is equally important, if not more significant. Stressing this view, Hyland and Diani (2009) explain that speakers or news presenters convey an attitude towards their address and the material (in this case, news items) they discuss. The views of Hyland and Diani's (2009) are buttressed by Toolan (2002) who proposes that news presenters "are the carriers of ideologies within contents of news" (p. 336). Thus, in the control of

the selection of news items, subjects of the news (editors, reporters, news presenters, among others) are equally important. Hence, news editors and their editorial team (also known as the editorial board), reporters, news presenters or news readers are the main subjects of the news, and as such, control the selection of news items on daily basis for news presentations. This idea of control of news items is illustrated in figure 1. In this figure, news subjects (who control the daily selection of news items) and how they are hierarchically organized for effective selection and presentation of daily news items are presented:







*Figure 1: Locating Subjects in Television News Presentation Practice in their Hierarchical Order (Adapted from Mahfouz, 2012)*

The figure (1) demonstrates in hierarchical order newsroom journalists who control the selection of news items for presentations as major news bulletins in the order of hierarchy. The editorial (comprising Editor-in-Chief, Strand and Assignment Editor, senior broadcast journalist and anchors) is the first and at the

apex of the control of the news items, followed by broadcast journalists, correspondents, news reporters, interview producers, news presenters or news readers and broadcast assistants. This figure further shows the processes that news items go through before their acceptance into the list of newsworthy stories for each night's primetime news presentation. The downward moving arrows exemplify control of news items and selection channel, from Editor-in-chief to Strand and Assignment Editor, then to broadcast journalists and anchors. From here the selected news items move to broadcast journalists, correspondents, reporters, producers, and to news presenters to present the finalized version of the news items to the viewing public with the help of a broadcast assistant. Figure 1 suggests that news editors (editorial) are very important when it comes to the control of news items. However, as indicated by scholars (e.g. Hyland & Diani, 2009; Shabir & Safdar, 2015) and the downward moving arrows in Figure 1, news presenters and other journalists are equally important and play significant roles in newsworthy stories for each news night's presentation. It is against this background that in this study, I refer to news editors, broadcast journalists, correspondents, news reporters, interview producers, news presenters and the broadcast assistants as "subjects of the news", since they all contribute immensely towards the drafting, selecting, controlling and presenting of news items.

### **Broadcast News in Context**

The dominance of research into written and broadcast news has been largely spearheaded by Martin and White (2005), Merminod and Burger (2019), Montgomery (2007), and Thompson and Hunston (2006). These studies have

made valuable contributions to the discourse of broadcast news (Montgomery, 2007), evaluation of language in written news (Martin & White, 2005; Thompson & Hunston, 2006) and linguistic narrative experience of the process of broadcast news (Merminod, 2018; Merminod & Burger, 2019). Unlike the pre - 20th century when studies of broadcast news focused on written news (Bell, 1994; Bell, 1991; Tuchman, 1973), researchers, such as Arackal (2015), Bednarek (2010) and Montgomery (2007) have explored spoken and broadcast news, specifically, radio and television discourses, in the European contexts (Merminod, 2018; Merminod & Burger, 2019). In the African context, scholars have investigated language use in both electronic and print media from their various societies. Nwaneri, Mann, Niekerk and Dieperinle (2014), for instance, studied the use of English language in electronic media and how it is used in accordance with South Africa's (SA) language policy. It was obvious in this study that like in many African countries, English language is preferred in presenting news and other information on radio and television broadcasting networks in South Africa, which is contrary to South Africa's language policy. In Nigeria (arguably, the most popular African country), Agu (2015) pays attention to one of the issues that, unfortunately, makes Nigeria popular – corruption. He explores linguistic features in three daily newspapers that make journalists in Nigeria nation builders. He investigates linguistic features in the reportage of a 300-million-Naira scandal that had to do with the daughter of Nigeria's former president, Obasanjo. Interestingly, while some journalists reported objectively by distancing themselves, others reported this same scandal story from an emotionally biased

point of view. Like Agu's (2015) study, the current study examines evaluative resources that subjects of news employ in Ghana's primetime news to make them report objectively, by distancing themselves. However, unlike Nigeria, as reported in Agu's (2015) study, instances of emotional biases are not used in Ghana's primetime news, which suggests a difference in linguistic choices in electronic and print media within different African countries. In Ghana, studies on language of the news have examined segments of the news. For example, Boamah (2016) analysed language use in Ghana's sports news segment while Amadu et al. (2018); Davor (2015); Nyarko (2016) and Sikanku (2011) paid attention to written news in Ghana's print media. Studies by Agu (2015); Amadu et al. (2018); Nwaneri et al. (2014) and Sikanku (2011), predominantly adopted a narrative ethnographic approach to the study of language of the news at the expense of appraisal, which reveals how the textual voice positions itself with respect to other voices and other positions in the discourse (Martin & White, 2005). In this light, the present study should be viewed as a contribution to studies on non-native spoken news, concentrating on significance and meaning. This study presents comprehensive evaluative resources, semiotic mediations, and ideological account of TV primetime news presentations in Ghana, dwelling on the typology of Appraisal Theory.

It is worth mentioning that ideological positioning in the media has gained centrality in political discourse in recent times (Cakmak, 2018; Merminod, 2018). Lylo (2016), for instance, has examined the communicative nature of ideology in the media and explains that "basic paradigms of communication are ideologically

marked.” Lylo (2016) has noted that human interactions, through language, have underlying ideologies and the goal of language analysis is to expose their implications. Ideologies underlying language of primetime news in the Ghanaian context have not been adequately explored yet. When research such as this study is conducted, media practitioners (especially, subjects of the news, who control the selection of news items), scholars and students of language of the media will obtain complete knowledge on ideology in spoken news contents. Thus, this study adds to the long-standing research on language of broadcast news by scholars such as Bell (1994; 1991); Martin and White (2005); Thompson and Hunston (2006); Montgomery (2007); Bednarek (2010); Agu (2015); Davor, (2015); Merminod (2018); and Merminod and Burger (2019).

### **Statement of the Problem**

As mentioned earlier, literature on language of the media and recent research has explored the discourse of broadcast news for both written and spoken news. One limitation of studies that have focused on evaluation (description) of language in news is that they do not provide us with information about semiotic and ideological meanings that accompany the language described. Most of the reviewed studies focus on isolated linguistic phenomenon in language of the media such as evaluative resources and news values rather than give an account on evaluation, semiotics and ideology as a correlated meaning-making potential. Moreover, the focus of such research has been on written news and segments of broadcast news bulletins to the neglect of the entire spoken news presentation.

The consequence is that the explanations provided for linguistic practices in the media are not complete since they ignore their semiotic environment and other linguistic features that interact with the news language. The present study is one of the steps taken towards this direction, though it does not claim to provide a perfect account without limitations. In view of this, the present study first presents evaluative resources that give news subjects opportunity to be objective or emotional by employing distancing, acknowledging or emotional resources in the news. Secondly, the study examines semiotic mediations and their relevance in primetime news. Finally, to have a correlated linguistic description of Ghanaian primetime news, the study further investigates the ideological positioning in the news.

### **Research Questions**

It is against this background that this study is conducted under the guidance of the following research questions:

1. What evaluative resources are present in TV primetime news presentations in Ghana?
2. Why are semiotic mediations in TV primetime news presentations relevant?
3. What ideological positionings do news subjects take in (the course of the) TV primetime news presentations?

### **Aims of the Study**

The aim of this study is to investigate the language of spoken news, specifically, language used in primetime news presentations. Thus, the description

is directed towards Appraisal and focuses on significance and meaning. It is Appraisal because it sees the linguistic constructions in spoken news through evaluation as a good resource for meaning making. Attention is paid to words, clauses and sentences though other units have been examined as much as possible. The description presented in this study generally considers evaluative, semiotic and ideological meaning underlying linguistic constructions in spoken news. Evaluative resources in primetime news are identified relying on the tenets of appraisal theory by Martin and White (2005) and other relevant scholarly works for this quest. How news stories are presented through the interlacing of semiotic mediations is investigated following the interpersonal metafunction under Systemic Functional Linguistic (Halliday & Matthiessen, 2014). The ideological positionings in the news are then described, following the Graduation and other relevant systems of Martin and White's (2005) Appraisal Theory. As McQuail (2010) explains, news presenters have what it takes to transfer or disseminate their ideologies and values to the people or viewers. The present study, specifically, provides an alternative path to comprehensive and structured descriptions of the semantic of the language of primetime news presentations in Ghana.

### **Research Objectives**

This study is structured to achieve the following research objectives:

1. To describe evaluative resources in TV primetime news
2. To explain semiotic mediations in TV primetime news
3. To explore ideological positioning in TV primetime news presentation

## Significance of the Study

The study is useful to scholars and students who are interested in language use in the media, appraisal meaning behind linguistic constructions and studies on primetime news presentations. It is also valuable to media practitioners working with transmitting of news and information to the public, including journalists, editors, broadcasters, and news presenters. The results will, hence, be useful to scholars in media language, linguistics, and others with interests in language and news value. Thus, implications of the findings of the study will better inform scholars, students, and media practitioners to maintain high quality linguistic choices.

Theoretically, the study has implication for research on ideological description of language under Graduation system. Admittedly, global scholars of ideology have explained ideology as power related, hence, the usual application of Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA). Nevertheless, it is important to theorize local spoken news language to establish public literacies and participation through news broadcast under a model like the Graduation subsystem of Appraisal theory. According to Martin and White (2005, p. 136), “the semantics of Graduation subsystem is central to the Appraisal system”. The two subcategories of Graduation system, Focus and Force, provide avenues to represent expressions as ideological by grading the semantics of the expressions as being more or less definite (Focus) or as meaning making from low to high intensity (Force) (Martin & White, 2005). Thus, under the Graduation system, the feelings, values, belief systems and opinions (which are what ideology represents) are given full



expressions, whether definite or intense (Martin & White, 2005). Hence, in my quest to establish the ideological positioning of news presenters in the language of the news, the Graduation system of the Appraisal theory was found to be useful. Unlike Pan's (2015) study into ideological positions in news translation, in which she blames translators for ideological imbalance in news translations, resulting in tensions in the Chinese and other Western societies, this study raises theoretical consciousness of recognizing the ideological norms that govern spoken news. Thus, the study puts appraisal into perspective as meaning emitting in context.

In connection with the above, the study contributes to the growing body of studies under Appraisal Theory. Appraisal Theory has increasingly been applied to media discourse, secondary school English critical writing, argumentative writing, narratives, among others. These studies, according to Wei, Wherrity and Zhang (2015), have both theoretical and practical significance. As noted by White (2000), research in this area is an on-going project which still needs to be extended to other discourse domains and developed through the exploration of many more linguistic domains. Hence, the findings of this study will first contribute to the identification and classification of Appraisal resources in English primetime news presentations in Ghana. Secondly, it will contribute to the existing knowledge on language of the media in their realizations.

### **Limitations**

There is one major limitation in this study that could be addressed in future research. The data used for the study had disparities in the number of sources of News items (NI) per station. News Items from some TV stations

outnumbered others. It was noticed after transcription of news segments that TV stations such as TV3 and City TV had more NI in their news segments than GTV and Joy News. This limitation could cause research bias, however, it was managed quite well to reduce the impact this could have had on the outcome of the study.

### **Scope of the Study**

The language of focus for this study is English language since it is the medium through which the primetime news from GTV, TV3, Joy News, and Citi TV are broadcast. It thus focuses on verbal or spoken language. Furthermore, this study employs all three systems of the Appraisal Theory. The attitude system reflects linguistic resources used to show the emotional state of writers, speakers or in this case, subjects in news presentations. The second and third systems under the Appraisal Theory are Engagement and Graduation. Under Engagement, speakers construe their own points of view and adopt stances towards the opinions of others. Graduation also explains the value placed on evaluation in terms of its intensity (Martin & White, 2005). This study adopts the Attitude, Engagement and Graduation systems for the analysis, since they provide the parameters needed to establish evaluative resources that news presenters use. The focus of this study, as indicated earlier, is on the evaluative resources, ideological positioning, and semiotic mediations they employ. Hence, key expressions, which distinctly construed Attitude, Engagement and Graduation were identified and studied for the discussions.

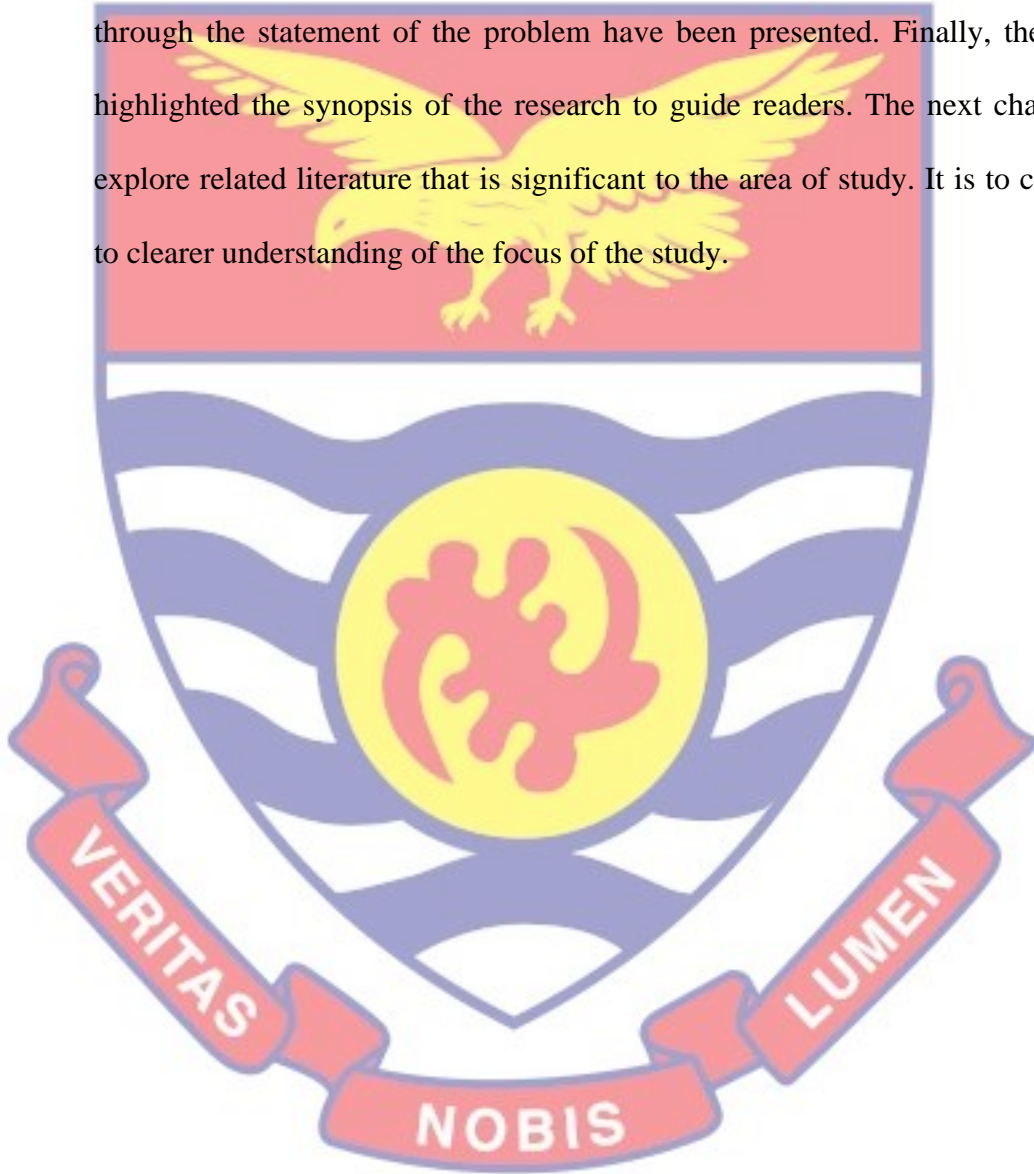
## Outline of the Thesis

The study is organized into seven chapters. The first chapter has generally presented the background to this study. It has also revealed the aims and objectives of the study, scope of the study, outline of the thesis, and the conclusion. Chapter Two will discuss the approaches adopted for this study. The chapter begins with a discussion of the theoretical and conceptual perspectives of the study. This chapter also provides empirical studies on the language of evaluation, ideology, semiotics and language use in the media. The review of the studies puts the current study in the right perspective. Chapter Three describes and justifies the methodology used in carrying out the study. In this chapter, the research design, the data collection procedure, sample and sampling techniques, the challenges encountered while gathering the data, and the data analysis procedure are discussed. Chapter Four presents the results and discusses the data in relation to the research question one stated in Chapter one. Chapter Five presents results and discussion on research question two, while Chapter Six responds to research question three, as stated in Chapter one. The aim of Chapter Six is to explain ideological positioning in primetime news and establish their relevance in TV news presentations in Ghana. The final chapter (Chapter Seven) summarizes the study by concluding and stating the implications drawn from the findings. It finally makes recommendations for further research.

## Chapter Conclusion

This chapter has introduced the study, giving a brief background which serves as the basis for the research. It presented three research questions which the

study intends to answer. The chapter points to the fact that despite the attention given to language of the media, language of TV primetime news presentations in the Ghanaian context has received less attention, making this study relevant and important. In this chapter, the reason and significance of the study developed through the statement of the problem have been presented. Finally, the chapter highlighted the synopsis of the research to guide readers. The next chapter will explore related literature that is significant to the area of study. It is to contribute to clearer understanding of the focus of the study.



## CHAPTER TWO

### THEORETICAL AND CONCEPTUAL APPROACH

#### Introduction

In the preceding chapter, it was mentioned that this study adopts appraisal theory, which emanated from Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL). In this chapter, the approaches are discussed to offer theoretical bases for the discussions in the subsequent chapters. The chapter first examines SFL as an umbrella linguistic framework. It then proceeds to situate language within the systems of appraisal under the Appraisal Theory and linguistic concepts relevant to this study. In the final part of the chapter, I present previous studies relevant for investigating the linguistic concepts in news presentations.

#### Theoretical Approach

##### Systemic Functional Linguistics

Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL), which was developed in the United Kingdom, and later in Australia during the 1960s (O'Donnell, 2012, p. 1), is “one of the most substantial theories that has attracted most attention and has been frequently employed in literature on linguistics and applied linguistics” (Almurashi, 2016, p. 71). The system is an effective linguistic resource for the study of relationship between language and its functions in social settings (Nordquist, 2019). The central concern of linguistics should be the study of the language and nothing else (Halliday & Matthiessen, 1997), making SFL important in linguistic research such as this. What systemicists do is to give account of the ways language is used in social interaction (Fries, 2002). Thus, under SFL, the

most relevant concern is language use and its impact on human interactions in the society. SFL models propose three types of metafunctions – *Ideational*, *Interpersonal* and *Textual*. The spectrum of metafunction represents different modes of meaning in language (Mattheissen, 2007a). It is presented as a spectrum in the theory because it permeates all language strata (Mwinlaaru, 2016). Figure 2 depicts the linguistic meanings undergirding the metafunction of language

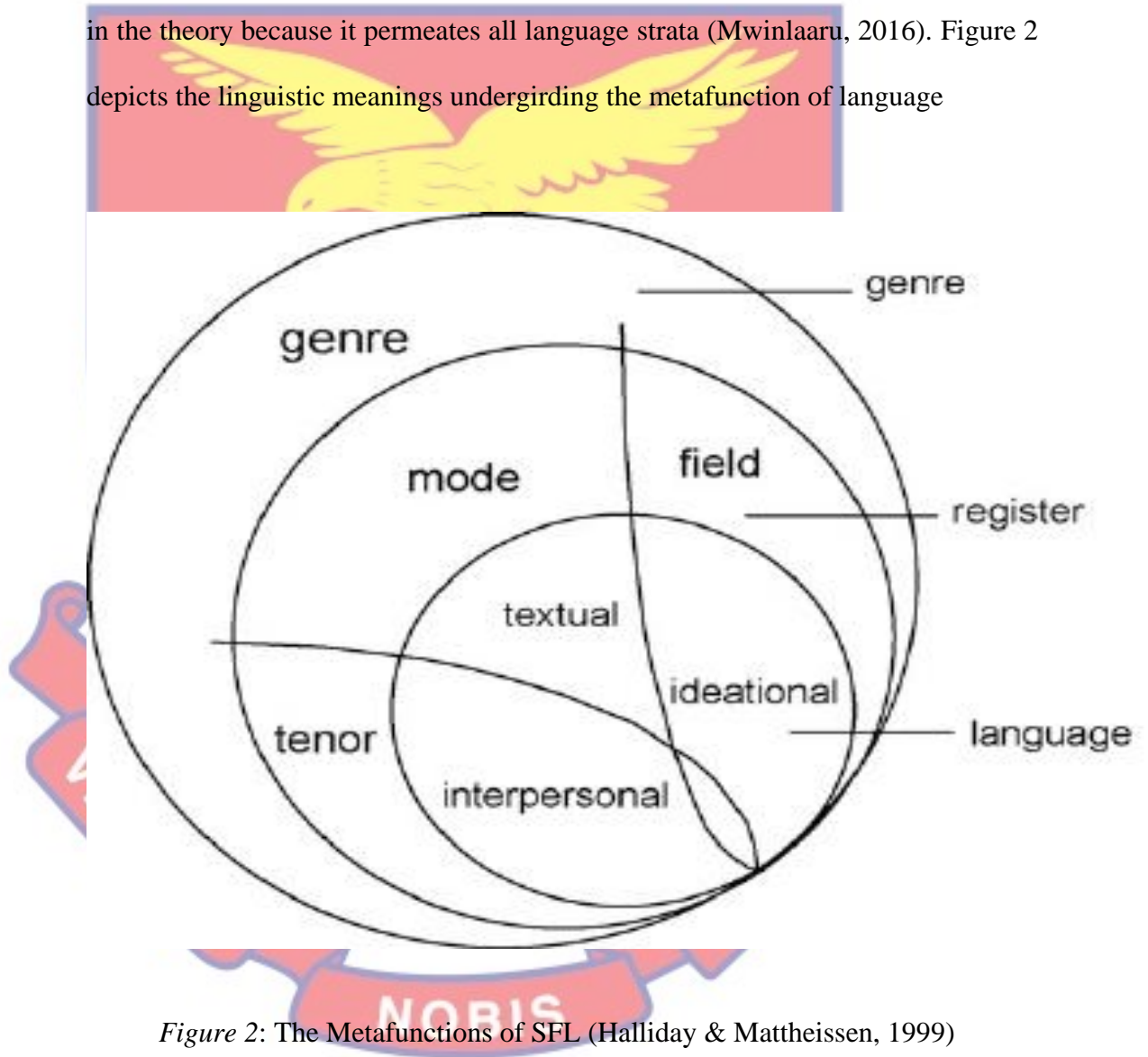


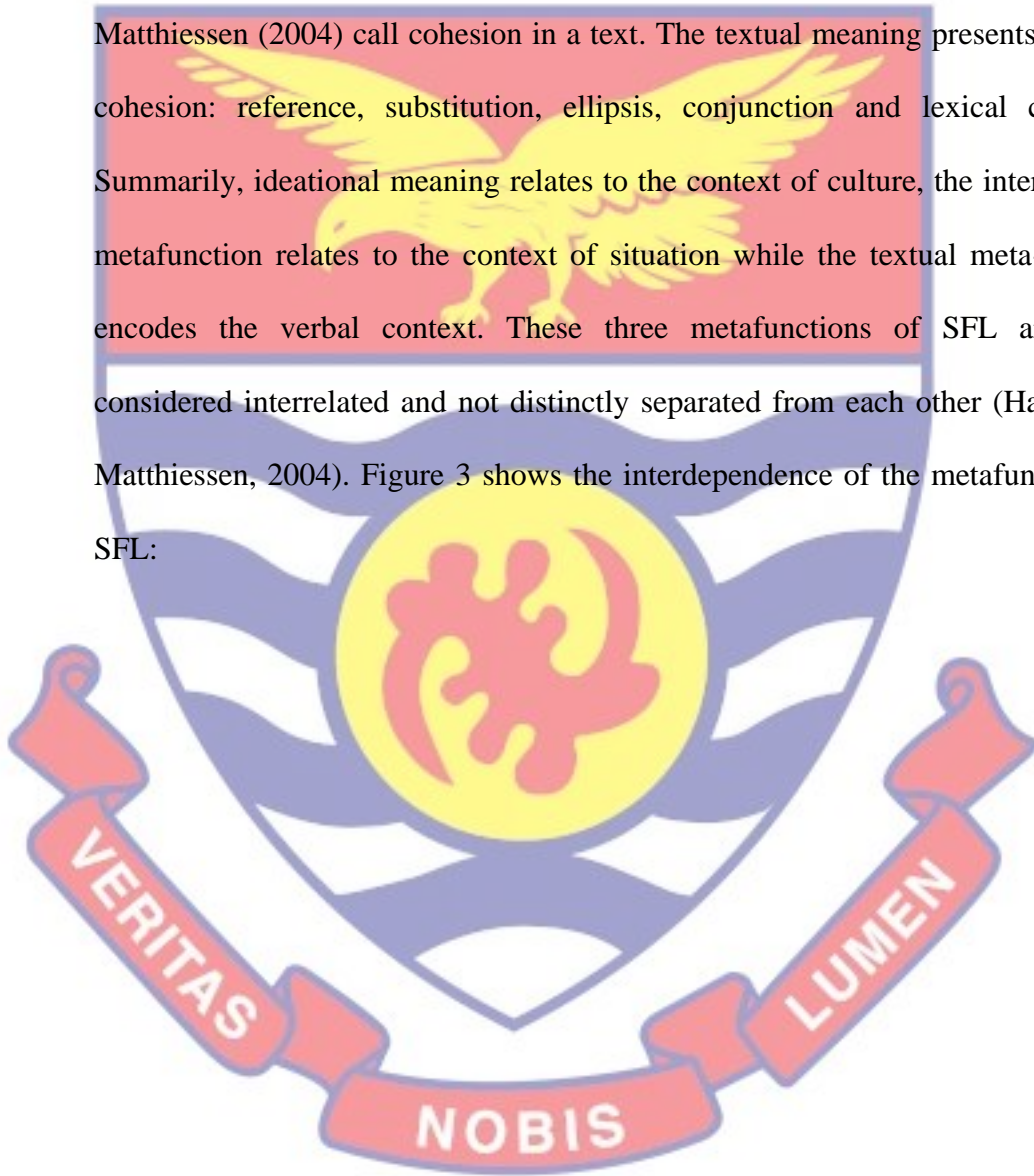
Figure 2: The Metafunctions of SFL (Halliday & Mattheissen, 1999)

Figure 2 shows the three main meta-functions (*Ideational*, *Interpersonal* and *Textual*), which serve as the bedrock for SFL. Under ideational, the speaker uses language to encode experiences and meanings. Ideational in the broadest sense,

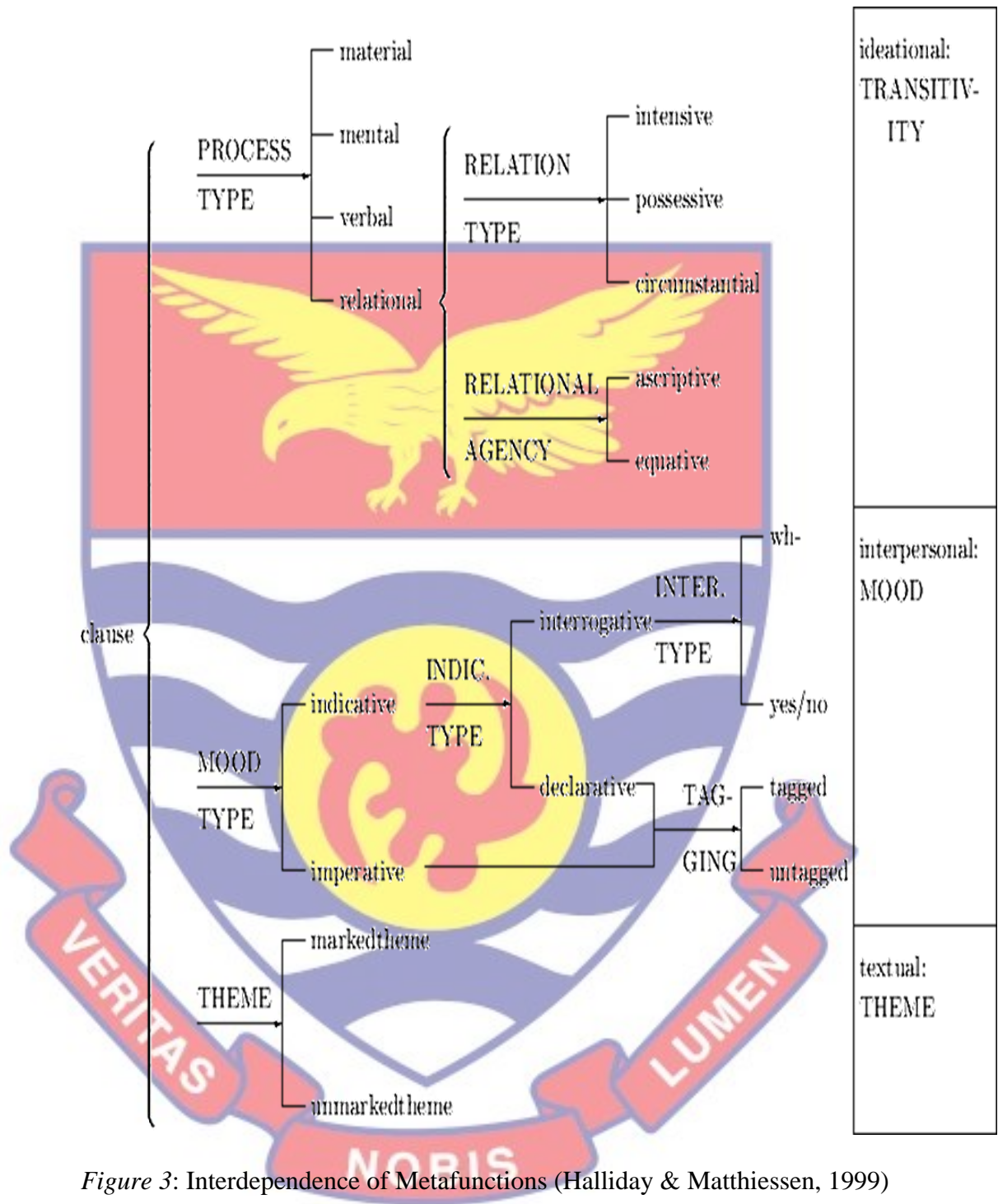
consists of our own consciousness, and is concerned with clauses as representations. It explains things existing in the world, such as actions, events and processes with participants in those processes. In other words, ideational meaning is the referential or representation function of language (Mwinlaaru, 2016)

Interpersonal resources, on the other hand, represents the use of language to establish relationship between the speaker and listener. Following his previous research on situation types, Halliday (1994) explained interpersonal metafunction as the degree of intimacy or distance and the type of relationship between the writer and reader in a text or the speaker and viewer as is the case for this study. The interpersonal function looks at grammatical choices that enable speakers to enact their complex and diverse interpersonal relations (Halliday, 1994). It has been noted that sentence or utterance is a piece of interaction between speaker and listener under interpersonal metafunction (Halliday & Hasan, 1985). It depicts interaction between participants in spoken, written text and signs. Interpersonal meaning encodes variables like social and interactional roles, identities, relationships, attitude, and stance in discourse (Mwinlaaru, 2016). When writers write, or speakers speak, they create an interpersonal link between them and their audience as we have in news presentations, where news presenters establish a connection with viewers. This concept is useful to this research since language used during TV news presentations indicates stance or position. Appraisal Theory is an extension of Halliday's SFL, which investigates the interpersonal function of language use with its associated meanings (Martin & White, 2005).

The textual metafunction allows the ideational and interpersonal metafunctions to operate and interpret the relation of language to its verbal and situational environment (Halliday, 1978). This meta-function deals with the construction of text and how it is held together. This is what Halliday and Matthiessen (2004) call cohesion in a text. The textual meaning presents types of cohesion: reference, substitution, ellipsis, conjunction and lexical cohesion. Summarily, ideational meaning relates to the context of culture, the interpersonal metafunction relates to the context of situation while the textual meta-function encodes the verbal context. These three metafunctions of SFL are, thus, considered interrelated and not distinctly separated from each other (Halliday & Matthiessen, 2004). Figure 3 shows the interdependence of the metafunctions of SFL:







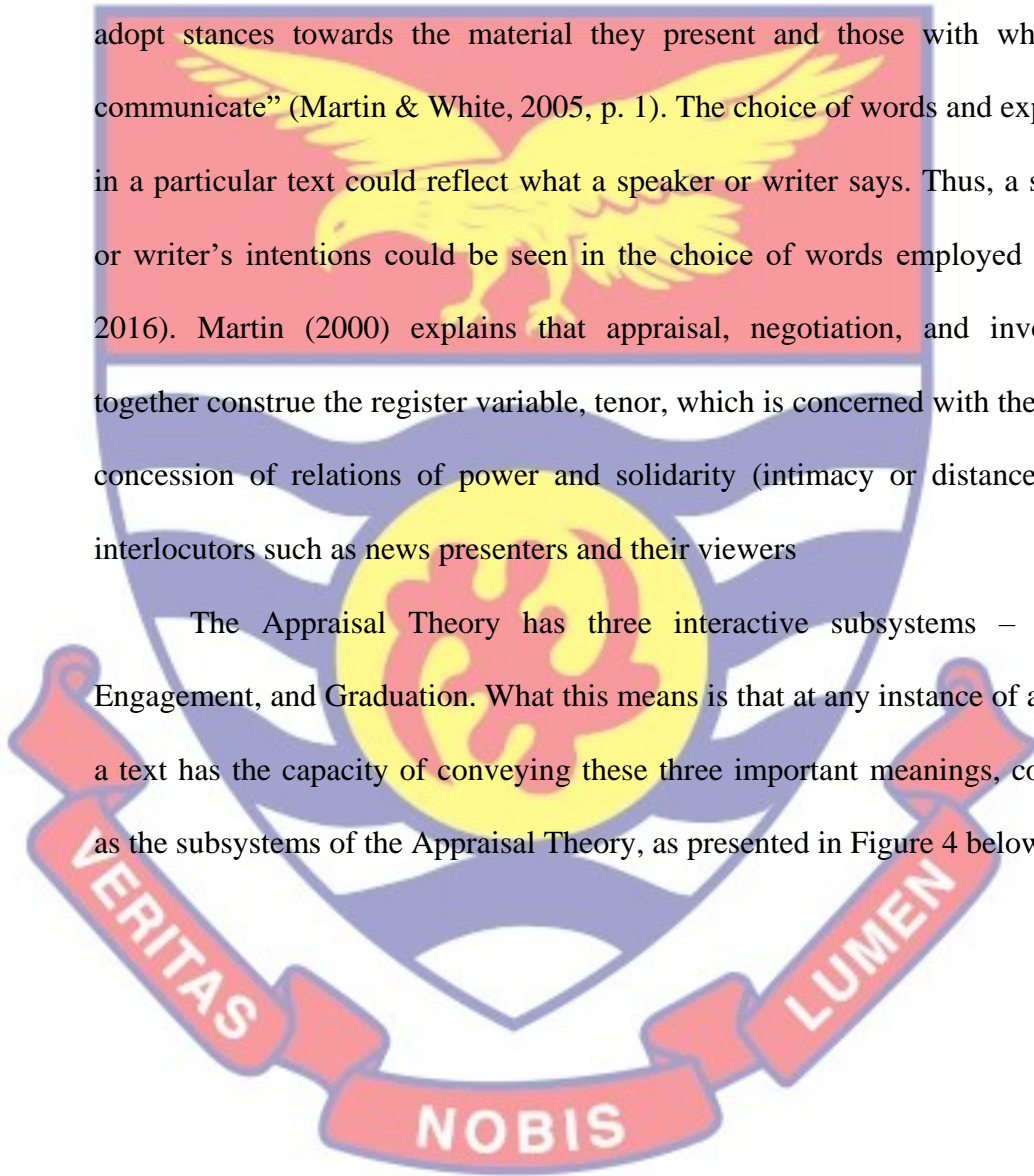
One could rightly call them stringed or bonded together at the level of their functions. Each metafunction has a role to play in the realization of the other. As explained by Halliday and Matthiessen (1999), the three metafunctions are

interdependent. According to the authors, no one could be developed except in the context of the other two. What this means is that each metafunction can enact its linguistic significance in the environment of the others, as illustrated in figure 3. The three dimensions of meaning (the three metafunctions) emanate from the clause. Hence, in a clause, there is an aspect that signifies experience, indicated in Figure 3 as ideation, starting as PROCESS. The second dimension of meaning from this same clause is interpersonal, which is concerned with interpersonal relations through language. The interpersonal metafunction begins as MOOD in the Figure and subsequently culminates into the interpersonal dimension of meaning of the clause. The third metafunction or dimension of meaning from the same clause is textual. The textual, according to Halliday and Matthiessen (1999), organizes ideational and interpersonal meaning as discourse. In effect, as depicted in Figure 3, the three metafunctions of SFL interdependently function better in each other's company.

Within the SFL framework is a well-established system: *The Appraisal Theory*, which deals with the resources of evaluative language (Afful, 2016). The Appraisal Theory describes a taxonomy of language employed in communicating evaluation, explaining how users of English language convey attitude, which has to do with emotion, judgement of people and appreciation of objects, engagement (assessment of the evaluations of other people) and how writers modify the strength of their attitude/engagement (Read, Hope & Carroll, 2007). Martin and White developed Appraisal Theory, as a model of evaluation in Australia (Martin, 2000). The theory is useful for tracking the choices speakers/writers (in our case,

subjects of the news) make or employ to encode attitudinal meanings, to adjust degrees of evaluations and to contract and expand dialogical space (Lancaster, 2011). Martin and White intimate that the expressions created in a text as a form of evaluation, bring out “the subjective presence of speakers in the text as they adopt stances towards the material they present and those with whom they communicate” (Martin & White, 2005, p. 1). The choice of words and expressions in a particular text could reflect what a speaker or writer says. Thus, a speaker’s or writer’s intentions could be seen in the choice of words employed (Sobeng, 2016). Martin (2000) explains that appraisal, negotiation, and involvement together construe the register variable, tenor, which is concerned with the ongoing concession of relations of power and solidarity (intimacy or distance) among interlocutors such as news presenters and their viewers

The Appraisal Theory has three interactive subsystems – Attitude, Engagement, and Graduation. What this means is that at any instance of appraisal, a text has the capacity of conveying these three important meanings, considered as the subsystems of the Appraisal Theory, as presented in Figure 4 below:



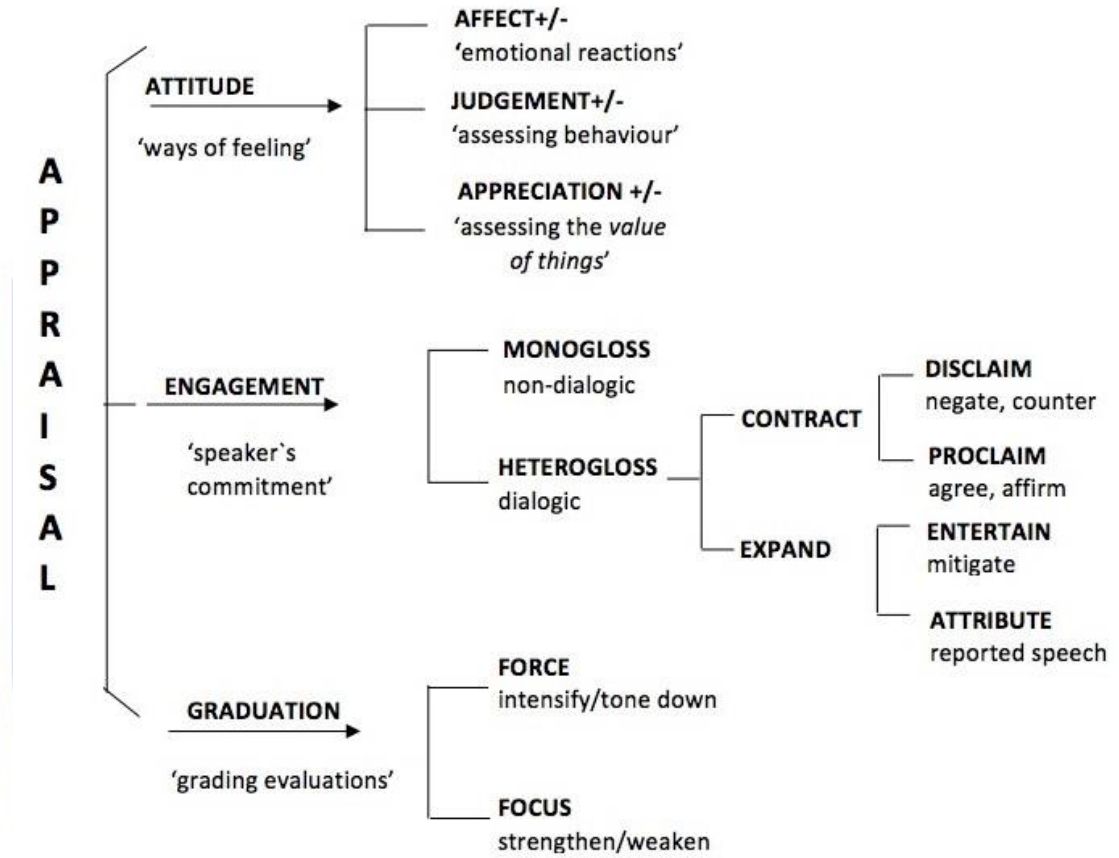


Figure 4: The Appraisal Theory (Adapted from Martin & White, 2005)

Martin and White (2005) present three categories of feelings under Attitude (the first subsystem of appraisal theory): *affect*, *judgement* and *appreciation*. The authors explain that any kind of symbolic meaning derived from a text, due to the source and target in the interaction, depends on the previous knowledge on the context by the audience. The Affect subsystem deals with resources for construing emotional reactions, which Martin and White further categorize into three forms: *un/happiness*, *in/security*, and *dis/satisfaction*. Judgement looks at meaning, clarifying our attitudes to people or entities and the different ways they behave. Under judgement, the emoter's attitude to other people and their behavior is what matters (Sobeng, 2016). Martin and White

(2005) consider two major sub-categories that give meaning from the behavior of interactants: *judgements of social esteem* and *judgements of social sanction*.

Judgements of social esteem is normality, which is capacity (implying how capable a person is), and tenacity (how brave and determined someone is).

Judgements of social sanction explain veracity (how truthful someone is) and propriety (how responsible or ethical someone is). Appreciation, the third category under Attitude subsystem, involves evaluation of objects, process and natural phenomena and state of affairs like abstract ‘things.’ Martin and White (2005) stress that unlike judgement, appreciation does not have any link with the evaluation of human behavior, but meanings construed that involves “the evaluation of ‘things’, especially things we make and performances we give, including natural phenomena” (Martin & White, 2005, p. 56). Appreciation, therefore, is for the “appraised” and not the “appraiser”.

Engagement connotes linguistic resources such as projection, modality, polarity, concession, and comment of adverbials that positions the speaker or writer to the value position. This position becomes what the speaker advances, concerning potential responses to that value position, by quoting or reporting, acknowledging a possibility, denying, countering, and affirming (Martin & White, 2005). Additionally, Engagement deals with the linguistic constructions by which authors construe their points of view and the resources used to adopt stances towards the opinions of others. This resource considers how speakers acknowledge alternative positions to their own. Engagement has expansive resources that are heteroglossic in nature. By this, they allow for utterances from

the audience and assume that the reader may resist the position. The Engagement subsystem involves those meanings which in various ways explain the text as heteroglossic in nature concerning prior utterances, alternative viewpoints, and anticipated responses (Martin & White, 2005, p.97). The authors argue that the taxonomy located in the various engagement meaning is towards identifying a particular dialogic positioning associated with given meanings and describing what is at stake when a particular meaning is applied instead of another. Admittedly, Engagement makes use of contractive resources, as these linguistic details limit the range at which the viewpoints presented are construed. The contractive resources either disclaim or proclaim a specific proposition. Thus, a listener (in this case, the viewer) compromises with the views presented in the news. Viewers are, thus, likely to understand the content of the news based on the linguistic resources specifically employed during news presentation. The expansive resources, accordingly, could be realized as those, which entertain several viewpoints, and those that attribute the dialogic resources to the external sources. This study, as indicated earlier, will find the Engagement subsystem of the Appraisal Theory useful in the sense that, during primetime news presentation, news presenters present the views of others and not theirs. The Engagement subsystem acknowledges that readers of a text could get used to a listening or viewing position either hesitantly or passively. Thus, Engagement can be both retrospective (acknowledging and agreeing or disagreeing with the stances of others in the news), and prospective (anticipation of the responses of an intended audience or viewer and includes counter-response in the news). As a

result, if a speaker or subjects of the news explore ways in which a text either expands or contracts the dialogic space, possibilities are created for the reader to comply or resist the position created by the authorial voice in the given text or news (Bock, 2007). Figure 5 presents the Engagement subsystem with its accompanying tenets below:

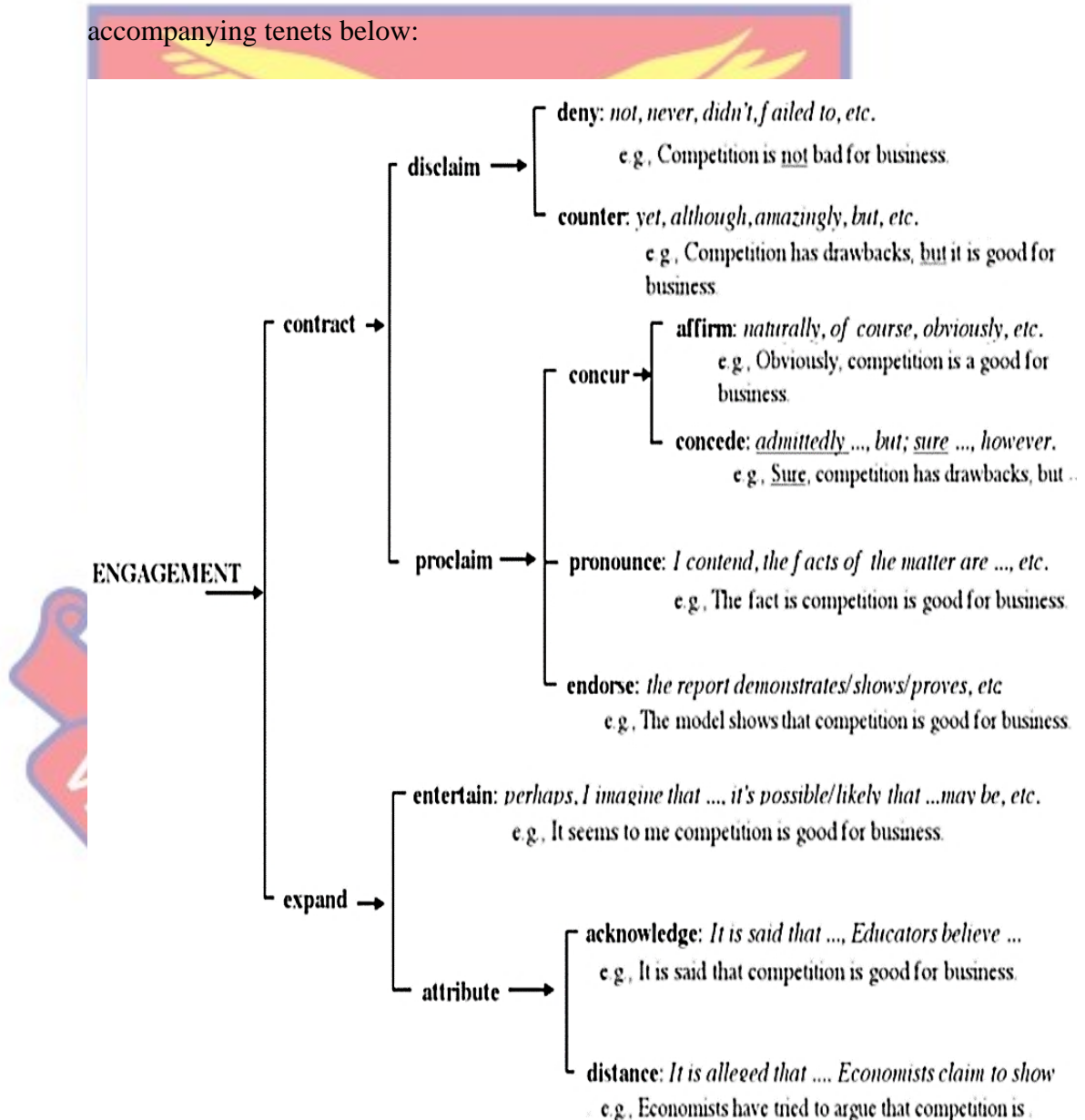


Figure 5: The Engagement Sub-System of Appraisal Theory (Adapted from Martin & White, 2005)

The final sub-system of the Appraisal Framework, Graduation, plays a dialogic role by ensuring that speakers present themselves as strongly associated with the position communicated by the text or news. Graduation therefore shows the extent to which any evaluation is valued along a range of intensity. Graduation is a general property of both *Attitude* and *Engagement*. With attitude, authors can convey greater or lesser degrees of positivity or negativity. Graduation, thus, explains how Engagement scales authors' conviction in their utterance (Read, Hope & Carroll, 2007). The position of authors in utterances is measured under Graduation. Under the Graduation subsystem, the degree of an evaluation, when focused on gradability is adjusted (that is, how strong or weak a feeling is). Martin and White (2005) call this kind of graduation, *force*, which refers to realizations including intensification, comparative and superlative morphology, repetition and various graphological and phonological features alongside the use of intensified lexis. It is the grading of making meaning from low to high intensity. The resources used to realize this subsystem, represent the assessment of meanings as degrees of intensity, quantity, and extent. These resources have implications for ideological positions in the media (Pan, 2015). The grading of making meaning from low to high intensity, in general, are resources for turning the volume up than for turning it down. Thus, "raise so touchy, infinitely more naked, quite clinical, most dangerous, a little upset, somewhat upset, the least information" depict Graduation (Martin & White, 2005, p. 139). In the context of non-gradable resources, graduation has the effect of adjusting the strength of boundaries between categories, constructing core and peripheral types of things;



this system is called focus (Martin & White, 2005; Pan, 2015). Focus refers to the grading of meanings as being more or less definite, indicating more or less authoritativeness. It is important to note that the resources in focus do not rate meanings and are not gradable.

The concepts of appraisal (attitude, engagement, and graduation) have emotional, stance taking and grading value capacity, which when enacted in news texts, directly influence news language positively or otherwise. In this study, primetime news texts enacted attitude, engagement, and graduation resources in proportions that reflect objectivity and seriousness on the part of news subjects (editors, reporters, and news presenters). By attitude resources, affected news lines are projected as emotional though attributed to named personalities in those news lines. Engagement resources, which were frequently used in news, gave presenters the opportunity to take a stance either in favor of the news line or otherwise. While the graduation resources expose the grading systems associated with news language, such that the subject of the news could indicate the level of seriousness, formality, certainty, or deadliness of situations surrounding the news bulletin being presented.

The unfolding of these important linguistic resources, in line with the systems of appraisal resolves the limitation of attention for segments of the news at the expense of language of the entire news session. In the process, the semiotic and ideological positioning in primetime news is explained. Thus, as the limitation of ignored evaluative and ideological positioning environment of news

language are resolved, the images that accompany these resources are explored under the tenets of Appraisal Theory.

I weave these three unique, though interrelated, subsystems of Appraisal Theory together to explore the distinctness of linguistic practices in primetime news presentations. Key issues for discussions in this thesis, as indicated earlier, include evaluation, semiotic mediations, in news presentations and ideological meanings.

### **Underlying Concepts**

This section examines the basic concepts underlying this study. It begins with the concept of news and the debate on hard and soft news. It then proceeds to the concept of evaluation, semiotics and then ideology.

### **News**

News has long received outstanding attention from intellectuals around the world, due to its relevance to our daily lives. Asolahere, Behr and Iyengar (1993) explain that news is what gets reported. The authors intimated, “the feasibility and cost of covering particular events and issues” is a determining factor of news (Asolahere, Behr & Iyengar, 1993, p. 51). For Shudson (1995), news is a full and accurate reporting that allows “informed” citizens to be productive members of the world community. This is to say that most of what has been branded as news, do not necessarily qualify to be news. Schudson (1995), however, acknowledges the need for a variety to be noticed in the television news programming. Bell (1991) holds that news ought to be regarded as “the product of organisational

structures and professional practice” (p. 38). My understanding of news is shaped by Schram’s (1949) proposition:

The first news report of an event is put together from a gestalt of eyewitness accounts, second hand accounts, tertiary comments and explanations, and the reporter’s own knowledge and predispositions. The report is then coded for transmission, usually by persons who have had no connection with the actual event. It is coded by modifying its length, form, emphasis, and interpretation, to meet the mechanical demands of transmission and presentation, the anticipated needs and preferences of the audience, and the somewhat better known wishes and demands of the buyers of the news. Then the news is trusted to ink or sound waves or light waves, and ultimately comes to an audience, where it competes with the rest of the environment for favor (Lloyd, 2004, p. 10).

To operationalize the proposition above in detail, I have organized this dissertation to account for the linguistic practices of subjects of primetime news. I contend that it is important for scholars to pay particular attention to primetime news presentations due to its significant role in the daily lives of most Ghanaians. I argue that evaluation, semiotics, and ideology in language of the news should instead be viewed as mutually related. This can be done by paying attention to Martin and White’s (2005) Appraisal Theory. Regarding news, there has been debate on soft and hard news, which I pay attention to here:

### **Debate on Hard and Soft News**

The classification of types of news has triggered almost a decade of unresolved debate (Wilzig & Seletzky, 2010). Wilzig and Seletzky (2010); Tuchman, (1973), the brains behind the Hard and Soft news classifications,

initially focused on the substance of news, which led to the news classifications as either Hard or Soft. This quest began an unresolved debate on Hard and Soft news types. Tuchman (1973) proposes that while Hard news is commentary and analyses, Soft news involves gossip, local scandal, and human-interest stories.

Limor and Mann (1997) support Tuchman's (1973) claim by observing that Hard news demands immediate reporting due to its importance and short lifespan, while Soft news in their view, has little or no intrinsic social or personal importance, so that can be reported on at any time. Hard news is the kind of fast-paced news that usually appears on the front page of newspapers (Deahl, 2019). Stories that fall under Hard news as Deahl (2019) notes, often deal with topics like business, politics, and international news. Soft news, however, represents the arts, entertainment, and lifestyle stories. Deducing from what scholars are proposing, Hard news commands attention due to its supposed time bound importance and relevance, such that if it is not broadcast on "time" it loses its significance. Soft news, on the other hand, looks flimsy, because, as Tuchman (1973), Limor & Mann (1997) and Deahl (2019) observe, soft news is not as urgent as Hard news. Thus, Soft news could be shelved and broadcast anytime at the discretion of the subjects of news. It is easy to be tempted to assume that whereas Hard news is accorded importance, soft news is not. As valid as this conclusion may sound, Deahl (2019) thinks otherwise. He agrees to the type of news classifications (Hard and Soft news) and argues with the criticality of the concepts. Deahl's (2019) argument about the criticality of Hard news and Soft news is relevant:

What defines hard news isn't always about the subject matter. Some might call a news story hard news because it is heavily

reported—even though it is a subject matter considered softer (like entertainment). It is possible to see news features that may be considered both hard and soft. Such as a story about the business dealings and private life of a successful media mogul, leaving some to wonder if it is a business or a lifestyle story. Or possibly a story on major style or renovation trends affecting the sale and cost of homes in a booming housing market which again, is a blend of lifestyle and business (p. 1).

A clear distinction that exists between Soft news and Hard news, in my view, is that the former grabs the attention of viewers or listeners, while the latter is presented when viewers' attention is already secured. In other words, since Hard news is serious, urgent, and significant (Nwabueze, 2020), listeners, or in our case, viewers get hooked up to it quickly. Soft news, which according to Nwabueze (2020) is human interest related stories, is then presented to thrive on viewers' attention already secured by Hard news. Thus, in major news bulletins (such as the primetime news), both Hard and Soft news are featured for the purpose of versatility and creativity. If Hard news and Soft news are seen from this angle of one supplementing the other, it then becomes easy to agree with Deahl's (2019) argument. The debate on Hard and Soft news gets interesting when some scholars suggest that Hard and Soft news can be related to factual and entertainment news respectively (Tuchman, 1973; Limor & Mann, 1997; Deahl, 2019). Others relate Hard and Soft news to gender (Cann & Mohr, 2001; Kranich, 1991; Lumby, 1994). The Australian scholar Lumby (1994) has argued that "facts, objectivity, and the public sphere belong to men. Women, on the other hand, line up with feature writing, subjectivity, and social or domestic issues" (p.

50). Lumby's view is advanced by Kranich (1991), who states that "hard news is defined categorically as being serious, important and male, whereas soft news is identified as human interest, lifestyle, the purview of women reporters and readers" (p. 11). Admittedly, Hard and Soft news project serious and less serious news lines. However, to think that serious or Hard news is presented by the male gender, while the less serious or Soft news is reported by the female gender is unacceptable. The reason is, there are instances where Soft news stories are presented by the male gender and vice versa. Such instances were sighted in the data for this study, where urgent and important news items, labelled as Hard news were herald by female journalist, while some entertainment and gossip news lines were reported by the male gender. Hence, when it comes to Hard and Soft news being associated with gender, I bet to differ. The debates surrounding Hard and Soft news, in my view, come to a bridging point where they overlap as Deahl (2019) mentioned. In this thesis, I pay attention to both types of news, (as far as it is part of the primetime news).

### **Evaluation**

The concept of evaluation has attracted interesting views from a number of scholars. Bednarek (2010), Thompson and Hunson (2006), and Wu (2013) describe evaluation as speaker or writer's view, feelings, opinions or stance in context expressed through language. This view is held by scholars who have extensively studied the language of evaluation, such as Bednarek (2010, p. 15), who defines evaluation as the "expression of any speaker/writer's opinions through language." Thompson and Hunston (2006, p. 5) note that evaluation is

“the broad cover term for the expression of speaker or writer’s attitude or stance towards, viewpoint on, or feelings about the entities or propositions that he or she is talking about.” Evaluation is, thus, positive, or negative view, a writer, or speaker takes concerning participants, actions, happenings and state of affairs (Wu, 2013). Evaluation has a major role to play in valuing and taking a position in relation to both entities and propositions (Hood, 2010). The American Evaluation Association (2014) asserts that all of us have conducted some sort of evaluation, whether formally or informally. This association argues that individuals undertake evaluation almost every day when decision is made on what to wear, or how to prioritize the various pending tasks. Evaluative resources in language of news are when through language, news presenters show the attitude, viewpoint, or feelings (Thompson & Hunston, 2006) embedded in the content of the news they present.

Subjects of news contents (editors, news presenters, among others) depict specific attitudes by the linguistic resources they employ, conveyed to viewers by news presenters. Hyland and Diani (2009) believe that evaluation operates both as statements, which display assessments of value corresponding to opinions along a good–bad axis and those concerning the likely accuracy of claims, resembling the linguistic choices in news content. Scholars prefer to use terminologies such as stance (Thompson & Hunston, 2006), appraisal (Martin & White, 2005), attitude and metadiscourse (Halliday, 1978) to define the concept of evaluation. Stubbs’ (1996) view on what evaluation is, captures what the concept of evaluation represents, thus “whenever speakers (or writers) say anything or write, they

encode their attitudes towards it” (p. 197). This study investigates linguistic resources in news content that suggest encoded attitudes in primetime news presentations. Researchers of language of evaluation explain how people take a position on something (in this case, the content of primetime news) and work at positioning others or viewers to do same. Taking a particular position on an issue indicates a person’s “stance”. News presenters who present primetime news on TV stations express attitudes, views, or feelings as they present the news. This research, firstly, identifies the evaluative resources used in the language of primetime news. Using the Appraisal Theory by Martin and White (2005), I investigate the presence or absence of evaluative resources, semiotic mediations and ideological positioning based on linguistic expressions in spoken news contents.

Evaluation is considered as one of the most important functions of language. Thompson and Hunston (2005, p. 5), who define evaluation as “the broad cover term for the expression of the speaker or writer’s attitude or stance towards, viewpoint on, or feelings about the entities or propositions that he or she is talking about,” maintain that language of evaluation in academia performs three functions:

- i. It expresses the speaker’s or writer’s opinion, and in doing so it reflects the value system of that person and their community;
- ii. It constructs and maintains relations between the speaker or writer and listener or reader; and
- iii. It organizes the discourse.



These functions bring to mind textual, tenor and ideational metafunctions as is presented by Halliday (1985). Thompson (1996) explains evaluation as the indication of whether a speaker thinks that something (a person, thing, action, event, situation, or idea) is good or bad. Evaluation, therefore, represents the positive or negative views a writer or speaker takes concerning participants, actions, happenings, and state of affairs (Wu, 2013). In Hood's (2010) view, evaluation concerns itself with valuing and taking a position in relation to both entities and propositions. This study focuses on evaluation and its interaction with inter-personality. Broadly, the review focuses on evaluation, inter-personality and overlap between evaluation, stance, and inter-personality.

The diverse terminological referents associated with evaluation are obvious in the literature. Hyland and Diani (2009, p. 5) claim that evaluation operates on two levels: 1) statements: they display assessments of value, roughly corresponding to opinions along a good–bad axis, and 2) accuracy of claims: relates to judgements of probability. The different terms scholars have given to evaluation include stance, appraisal, attitude, meta-discourse, among others. However, the common aim that runs through the definitions, aligns with Stubbs' (1996, p. 197) view of evaluation: “whenever speakers or writers say or write anything, they encode their attitude towards it”. This means under evaluation; researchers explore how speakers and writers take positions on something and work at positioning others to do the same. Thompson (1996) explains evaluation as the indication of whether a speaker thinks that something (a person, thing, action, event, situation, or idea) is good or bad. Evaluation represents the positive

or negative views a writer or speaker takes concerning participants, actions, happenings, and state of affairs (Wu, 2013). Hood (2010) suggests that evaluation deals with valuing and taking a position in relation to both entities and propositions. Bednarek (2010), a leading researcher on language of evaluation (besides scholars like Bell, (1991); Thompson & Hunston, (2000); Martin and White, (2005), among others) posits that language, which is evaluative in nature with its concomitant parameters, has different terms by which the same meaning can be understood. Clearly, the different terminologies (evaluation, appraisal, stance, and evaluative parameters) used by scholars to explain language that is evaluative in nature, convey similar if not the same meaning. Thus, researchers, under evaluation, explore how speakers and writers take positions on something and work at positioning others to do the same.

Another important issue worth considering is the concept of bonding, associated with evaluation known as interpersonality. It is the interaction between individuals and groups or the ability to interact with others through language. As discussed earlier under SFL, the “tenor” (the third semantic feature, as suggested by Halliday, 1978) of a discourse represents social relations between interactants within a particular discourse. In this dissertation, the focus is on the tenor because it corresponds directly with interpersonal metafunction. Halliday and Hasan (1985) suggested that news presenters (or in this case, subjects of the news) enact personal relationships through modes such as language and signs or semiotics (to be discussed in the next section), which usually cause most viewers to have lasting interpersonal relationships with news presenters at the expense of the rest

of the news team (subjects of the news). On the issue of subjectivity, Hyland and Diani (2009) maintain that under interpersonality, the subjective presence of a writer or speaker intrudes communication to convey an attitude towards those they address and the material they discuss (Hyland & Diani, 2009).

### **Semiotics**

Scholars like Merminod and Burger (2019); Montgomery (2007); Machin and Polzer (2015) suggest that the complexities associated with semiotics of television news call for a multimodal analysis. Torop (2012) refers to “semiotics” as nonverbal systems that aid communication process. Emphasizing this stance, Bodker and Anderson (2005) think that semiotics is the study of signs and their functions and its use in society. A sign is “anything used to represent something else” (Bodker & Anderson, 2005, p. 356). In as much as some scholars see semiotics as the study of signs and nonverbal systems (Bodker & Anderson, 2005; Torop, 2012). Halliday and Hasan (1989) alert that semiotics is “the study of sign systems – in other words, the study of meaning in its most general sense” (p. 4). Semiotic mediation represents the basis for most human processes (Torop, 2012), and depicts an important concept for human interactions (Bodker & Anderson, 2005). In mediations, there are interactions between entities. Thus, as meaningful as language is, it becomes even more meaningful, when accompanied by relevant semiotics, especially in the media. This study describes the meanings that the images used during news presentations bring. Arackal’s (2015) concern is that today’s media is giving rise to a particular culture – media culture or youth culture. Under this culture, the youth readily accept the semiotic dimensions in the

media. Arackal acknowledges that the media is a semiotic system involving a variety of signs (especially, sound and visuals) acting among themselves to produce meaningful information.

The field of semiotics is a huge one, which makes it difficult for scholars to claim a comprehensive treatment of the field. Initial brains behind the concept of semiotics were Saussure and Charles Peirce. Saussure, a linguist, sees semiology as a science that studies the role of signs as part of social life. He emphasized this by observing;

It is possible to conceive of a science, which studies the role of signs as part of social life. It would form part of social psychology, and hence of general psychology. We shall call it semiology. It would investigate the nature of signs and the laws governing them. Since it does not yet exist, one cannot say for certain that it will exist. But it has a right to exist, a place ready for it in advance. Linguistics is only one branch of this general science. The laws which semiology will discover will be laws applicable in linguistics, and linguistics will thus be assigned to a clearly defined place in the field of human knowledge (Saussure, 1916, pp. 15–16).

For Peirce, who was a philosopher, the field of study called ‘semeiotic’ (or ‘semiotic’) was the ‘formal doctrine of signs’, which was closely related to logic (Peirce, 1982, p. 227). Peirce and Saussure are widely regarded as the co-founders of what is now more generally known as semiotics (Chandler, 2007, p. 3). Eco (1976) observed that “semiotics is concerned with everything that can be taken as a sign” (p. 7). Chandler (2007) has shown that the field of semiotics can be simplified yet can maintain its broad characteristic in terms of what it stands for.

Chandler insists that the simplest definition of semiotics is the study of signs. This explanation, Chandler noted, does not leave enquirers much wiser, since people usually ask next “what do you mean by a sign” (p.1). To Chandler, semiotics involves the study not only of what we refer to as ‘signs’ in everyday speech, but of anything which ‘stands for’ something else. He argues that in a semiotic sense, signs take the form of words, images, sounds, gestures, and objects. In this dissertation, I examine the images that accompany primetime news presentations in Ghana, and their contributions towards ideological positioning and meaning making in news presentations.

### **Ideology**

Apart from evaluation and semiotics, another important yet controversial concept “present in any utterance” is ideology (Fowler & Marshall, 1985, p. 21). In linguistic anthropology, ideology, when explored, exposes how a speaker’s linguistic beliefs are linked to social systems, which the speaker belongs, illustrating how such systems reinforce those beliefs. Ideology, as important as it sounds, has not received universally agreed-upon definition from scholars (Cassels, 1996, p. 1). Some scholars propose that ideology should be associated with “ideas and beliefs which help to legitimate the interest of a ruling group or class by distortion or dissimulation” (Eagleton, 1991, p. 30, as cited in Perez, 2003, p. 4). These scholars also think that ideology is a set of “attitudes shared by members of a particular social group” (Bloor & Bloor 2007, p. 10). It is not only ideas, beliefs and attitudes, but also “speech and cultural practices that operate to

the advantage of a particular social group” (Mesthrie, 2010, p. 320) can be categorized as ideology.

The media have widely been seen as a tool, although the liberalists believe that it is a neutral entity with free content for public consumption (Cakmak, 2018). The Marxists, however, insist that the media is the transmitter of ideologies produced entirely under the power of the government (Cakmak, 2018, p. 817) to control the masses with their ideologies. Under this system, the Marxists propose that ideologies held by the masses are false consciousness; because, what the people hold as their worldview, serves the interest of the ruling class. In the literature, whereas some researchers regard the media as a major tool for transferring ideologies of the dominant group (Cakmak, 2018; Lu & Chu, 2016); others insist that ideology is an apparatus in the media that binds the society to sovereign power (McQuail, 2010; Yilmaz & Kirazolugu, 2014). Media, in this study, is a sophisticated platform through which news presenters convey information and their ideological positions, which is usually political in nature to viewers (Cakmak, 2018; Lu & Chu, 2016; Pan, 2015; Yilmaz & Kirazolugu, 2014). The meanings associated with ideology and media in the literature position the media as the main mode of transferring ideologies to the society. By this, the media contents, released on daily basis, ideologically influence the people.

Sam (2016) believes that the main communication tool for ideology is language embedded in utterances we mostly do not realize they are there. It is against this background that this study, drawing from the evaluative and semiotic meanings, describes the ideology in television news presentations with the

intention of revealing their positioning in Ghana's TV primetime news content. A French philosopher, Antoine Destutt de Tracy, introduced the concept of ideology and initially explained it as "the science of ideas that aims to establish the source of our beliefs, perceptions, and opinions so that we could overcome some of our prejudices and illusions that cause mutual misunderstandings and conflicts between people" (Lylo, 2016, p. 13). From sociological point of view, Van Dijk (2004) suggests that ideology is the basis for representing a group, and the beliefs they form in social memory as a kind of group scheme that expresses the identity of a group. Again, Croteau, Hoynes and Milan (2012) agree with McQuail (2010) and note that ideology is an "organized belief system or set of values that is disseminated or reinforced by communication" (p. 466). Toolan (2002), when advancing Fowler and Marshall's (1985) view on ideology, observes that writers and readers, speakers and hearers, are equally vehicles for the transport of ideological themes, their production and consumption of texts, the means whereby those themes are kept potent in culture. Thus, subjects in the content and presentation of primetime news are ideological transport vehicles whenever news is presented. Part of what this study investigates is the specific ideologies inherent in Ghana's news deducing from the evaluative and semiotic meanings, and most importantly, their implications.

There are other scholars who hold the view that every utterance is ideologically marked and the concern of linguists should be to expose these hidden ideologies for the purpose of meaning making. Fowler and Marshall (1985) have argued that "ideology is invisibly present in any utterance and one

main purpose of the analysis of language is to reveal this fact and its implications” (p. 21). Clearly, unveiling ideological positioning in utterances is a viable way of making present, but concealed, meaning visible. The proposition on ideology made by Fowler and Marshall (1985) Toolan (2002) will shape my understanding of ideological positioning in news presentations in this thesis, though I will draw on relevant views on ideologies as discussions progress. It is important to note, however, that Van Dijk (2006) has organized the divergent yet converging views of scholars into four aspects of the concept of ideology, thus:

- A. Ideology as a system of belief
- B. Ideology as a constituent of the identity of a group
- C. Ideology as a dominating force and
- D. Ideology as a resource for stability.

Van Dijk’s (2006) observation puts the different scholarly views on ideology into proper perspective. In this study, I align with the definition and concepts of ideology as proposed by scholars such as McQuail (2010), Fowler and Marshall (1985) and Van Dijk (2006) focusing on semiotics, personal pronouns and how news texts reveal the way social power, dominance and inequality are enacted in the social context through language. In this study therefore, I see ideological positioning in news as the set of values and beliefs of subjects of news, especially, news presenters enacted in the news stories that reveal the stance (as either authorially endorsing or distancing) of news presenters as far as the news contents are concerned. In the next section of this chapter, I present works by writers of



media discourse, which can help shape our understanding on language of the news and help put this study in a proper context.

### **Prior Research**

In this section, scholarly works on language use in the media are discussed. The section opens with a discussion on language use in online and social media, followed by a review on news presentations. It finally presents a review on the Ghanaian media.

#### **Language Use in Online and Social Media**

An investigation into language of the media must be preceded by a look at the nature of language use in mass media around the world. Research on language of the media around the world has generally focused on online written news – *newspapers* (Almutairi, 2004; Ghavamnia & Dastjerdi, 2012; Sikanku, 2011) and *texts* (Benamara, Inkpen & Taboada, 2018) or users' *comments* (Drasovean & Tagg, 2015). Regarding online news, scholars agree that different newspapers present reported events differently, though they could be reporting on the same news. In a study by Ghavamnia and Dastjerdi (2012), for example, two online newspapers' reports on the news coverage of airplane crash in Iran on 11th January 2011, were compared, dwelling on models by Bell (1991) and Badnarek (2006). Their study explained how the two online newspapers reported the same news differently. The online media houses resorted to direct reportage by quoting and elaboration respectively. They suggest a holistic approach in media reportage. Similarly, Almutairi (2004) stressed the complexities of discourse semantic meanings in online news reportage. He mapped online editorials on the killing of

Bin Laden and explored reports of those editorials, following Systemic Functional Linguistic (SFL) and corpus as a methodological tool. Almutairi observed the complex use of language in online editorial news reports. He suggests that the complexity associated with online editorials can be resolved through *linguistic visualization*. Chen's (2004) focus was on online texts from *Times* (British) and *China Daily* (Chinese) newspapers using Labov's (1972) evaluation tool. Chen (2004) did a comparative study between the British and Chinese media texts and established evaluative elements like negative evaluators used in online news reports. Chen's (2004) investigations proved that British media texts used more negative evaluators than Chinese media texts. According to Chen (2004), "negative evaluators serve to place the narrative action against a background of events that did not, in fact, happen, but that could have happened" (p. 684). Chen's (2004) study provides valuable reference point for the discussions on evaluative elements used in primetime news presentations in the present study. Just like scholars such as Almutairi (2004), Ghavamnia and Dastjerdi (2012), and others have established, Chen notes that language use in online news reportage is quite complex and comes with variations, despite the fact that they may all be reporting on the same news story. Here, mention must be made of the works of Szurawitzki (2010; 2012) and his linguistic model of analysis for online and social media platforms' language use. Szurawitzki's (2010; 2012) two works, *Analyzing the language used in Facebook and other online portals* and *Analyzing the language of social networking sites* show that language use in online and social media portals are not static and usually skewed towards the discourse

norms between interactants. In his study, analyzing the language of social networking sites, for instance, Szurawitzki (2012) makes a clear distinction between utterances that are highly characterized by orality and those clearly characterized as highly resembling standard written German. Using an analysis model, he developed out of his study in 2010, a short set of utterances from his Facebook account (extracted between March 17 to March 19, 2011) were examined. Here is the analysis model developed by Szurawitzki (2010) for a linguistic analysis of language use in online and other social media portals:

- a. Determining the amount of text (number of posts, posts' length, average length; words/characters),
- b. determining which language(s) is/are used; possibly focus on one language only (English?),
- c. grapheme analysis: are any capital letters used (especially according to the conventions of languages such as German),
- d. analysis of semiotic elements such as emoticons, abbreviations/'internet slang' and embedded links; analyzing the functional pragmatics,
- e. syntax analysis (with special regard to the subject),
- f. lexical analysis with special emphasis on word formation processes and loan words (the latter especially in languages other than English; anglicisms),
- g. analyzing the orthography
- h. analyzing the punctuation (are full stops at the end of the sentence left out and others),
- i. analyzing the relation of oral versus written elements and
- j. with discourses of a length of more than one post: discourse analysis

(Szurawitzki, 2012, pp. 357-358)

Szurawitzki's (2010; 2012) model of analysis for language used in online and other social media portals, as presented here, is useful for the analysis of ideological positioning in language used on social media platforms like primetime news presentations, as is the case in this study. This analysis model points out various linguistic features from a text, which will make it simple for a researcher

to establish ideological and other linguistic phenomena in online and social media data. Szurawitzki's (2010; 2012) study, however, do not make provision for evaluative discussions in media texts like Appraisal Theory does, for which reason in the current study, Appraisal Theory is chosen.

The social media is a collective term for websites and applications which focus on communication, community-based input, interaction, content-sharing and collaboration (Rouse, 2012). According to Welbers and Opgenhaffen (2018), there is a rising popularity of social media as news sources (for news producers and readers), leading to the emergence of a new common format element for presenting news. A study conducted by the *Pew Research Center* showed that in 2015, about 63 per cent of consumers used social media platform for news, especially, Facebook (Gottfried & Shearer, 2016). Discussions on language used in online and social media platform texts will be incomplete without mentioning scholars such as Benamara, Inkpen and Taboada (2018). They paid attention to social media research, focusing on text messages. Resorting to computational linguistics, they explored most recent context-based approaches to natural language process (NLP) in the social media. The authors argued that social media texts have future concerning language use research in the media. They, however, proposed a regularization of effective language use on social media. In Drasovean and Tagg's (2015) study, users' comments in the social media, which give users the opportunity to create some fraternities online were investigated. In their study, Drasovean and Tagg (2015) examined language choices of TED.com, an educational video hosting platform and explored the role language played in an

online platform where users comment to show their affiliations. Interestingly, Drasovean and Tagg (2015) explored users' comments on TED.com, using Appraisal Theory by

Martin and White (2005). After examining users' language choices on TED.com

(an educational video hosting platform where users give their comments right after each video), they observed that users employ resources that enact affiliations and association to foster the TED.com virtual community, enhancing interpersonal relationships among users of that social media platform. They also note the distinct features that characterize online use of language. Based on the observation that language used in online and social media platforms are distinct, and that they reflect the basic needs of users, as discussed here, one can understand why Schudson (2001) argues that there is a moving away from objective journalism to subjective journalism due to current patterns of social media news reportage. This principle, however, is difficult to maintain in practice since objectivity for journalists is rather a question than an answer and is mainly used as a point of debate instead of a dogma (Mindich, 2000). In this dissertation, I pay close attention to evaluation, semiotics and ideology in news presentations on TV stations in Ghana.

### **News Presentations**

In the previous section, it was mentioned that language use in online and social media news reports happens to be complementary, despite recognizable variations. The presentation of news follows specific format and linguistic adherence. Scholars around the world have studied news presentations in their

specific cultural settings. Jurkowitz, Hitlin, Mitchell, Santhanam, Adams, Anderson and Vogt (2013), for example, studied the changing TV news presentation patterns within the American context, using popular TV stations like BBC and CNN. Jurkowitz et al. (2013) stress the changing patterns in *News Hour* broadcasting. According to the authors, previously, *News Hour* broadcast in America on most TV stations was within 30 minutes. However, between the year 2007 and 2012, the stories and length of stories changed. They posit that news content in *News Hour* agenda has changed (from government coverage to business and economics) overtime due to raging debate over U.S. policy in Iraq and especially President George W. Bush's surge decision, which was a major continuing story in the year 2007 (Jurkowitz et al., 2013, p. 26). Similarly, Lloyd (2004) touched on the uses of television news and gratifications among the aged in US. Inspired by the expansion of television news program and the growth of US senior citizens, he studied the range of gratifications and uses senior citizens of US get when they choose to watch news. He noted that while some cared less about news, most senior citizens would do everything to watch news.

Besides the US, the Arabian Peninsula is another cultural setting where a great deal of research on news presentation has already been carried out. Abdulla (2014), for instance, explored terrorism reporting in two pan-Arab television news channels (*Al-Jazeera* and *Al-Arabiya*). Employing media framing and discourse analysis as frameworks, Abdulla compared language use in the two selected TV stations, taking into consideration different contextual factors that contributed to the production and consumption of news discourse about terrorism, and confirms

the widely held perception that the terrorist is a Muslim. He observes a level of consistency in news on terrorism from both TV stations. He, however, cautions researchers on terrorism humanitarian reportage bias on the part of both stations because of what he believes could be ideological. He, thus, notes that in news presentations in an Arabic setting, delicate issues are mostly left unreported. For Bazzi (2009), the Arab-Israeli struggle in Arab news needed to be addressed. He questioned the way journalists are trained in Arab and blames journalists' inability to passionately report the fuss between Arab and Israel on how they are trained. Bazzi (2009) claims that if journalists are trained with their gifts untampered, Arab news could be passionately presented regardless of the height of the conflict. In other words, most news presentations lack passion or any form of sensation from news presenters (Bazzi, 2009). Bazzi's (2009) observation notwithstanding, Molek-Kozakowska (2013) makes a case for news sensationalism by exploring news headlines in the British daily (an online version of newspaper). In his quest to establish the level of sensation attached to news outlets in the British society through news headlines, Molek-Kozakowska (2013) used surveys and focus group discussions to quantitatively and qualitatively identify instances of sensationalism in news headlines. To achieve this, he employed 120 headlines, subheadings and lead-ins from the British daily. With a five-point Likert scale as a measuring guide, the study showed that there are evaluative parameters in news headlines that signal suspense and an attempt to unravel the suspense in the main news. Like the current study, evaluative parameters (in our case, evaluative resources) characterize news outlets, such that

negative expressions evoke rather than inscribe meaning in news headlines (Martin & White, 2005). Unlike the current study (which looks at the entire primetime news presentation), Molek-Kozakowska's (2013) study concentrated only on the news headlines. The study projects strategies of sensationalism, such as suspense. The current study goes beyond evaluation to examine semiotic mediations and ideological positioning in Ghana's primetime TV news presentations.

News presentation scholars around the world (Abdulla, 2014; Bazzi, 2009; Lloyd, 2004; Molek-Kozakowska, 2013; Sikanku, 2011; Jurkowitz, et al., 2013) have observed how meanings in news are produced, shared and consumed by various societies through their media apparatus. News presentations have survived years of transitions from analogue to free to air terrestrial TV, online and social media platforms. The Western views I have discussed above have implications for conducting research in language of the media as is the case in this study. These non-African scholars have stressed terrorism (Abdulla, 2014), gratifications in TV news to the aged in US (Lloyd, 2004), Arab-Israeli conflict (Bazzi, 2009), the current face of news presentation (Kim & Dennis, 2018; Jurkowitz, et al., 2013) and news headlines sensationalism (Molek-Kozakowska, 2013). In the current study, I build on the knowledge provided in these studies to investigate linguistic practices in Ghanaian TV primetime news presentations. That said, I turn my attention to research on Ghanaian media in the next section.



## The Ghanaian Media

The media in Ghana has seen significant transformation since media independence in 1992 under the 1992 constitution. It is a major anchor for Ghana's democratic credentials over the years (Nyarko, 2016). Ghanaian scholars have for over a decade now raised concerns over unethical attitudes exhibited by some journalists (Owusu, 2010), breach of copyright issues (Nyarko, 2016), rebranding the print media (Amadu et al. 2018), children's programming (Gerning, 2013), cybercrime in Ghana's media (Dugle, 2013), among others. Owusu (2010) for example, studied unethical practices among some journalists that undermined progress in the media. Owusu maintains that the unethical conducts of some journalists have the capacity of undermining the Ghanaian credential as a democratic nation. Newspapers in Ghana, in his view, take entrenched positions when it comes to political reportage. Again, he observed that partisan politics have come to dominate virtually every aspect of Ghana's public life, particularly in election years. He cautioned Ghanaians, particularly, news presenters that Ghana's credential as a beacon of democracy in Africa is under threat due to unethical practices in their reports. Nyarko (2016) spoke about the unsolicited impact, which morning newspaper reviews are having on the Ghanaian print media. Nyarko observed the impacts (both positive and negative) and noted that positively, print media, in his view, enjoyed publicity through the review shows. Nevertheless, while some news items were reviewed, others were ignored. Nyarko attributes low patronage of printed newspapers in Ghana to the morning review shows on TV stations. Amadu, Mohammed, Alhassan and

Mohammed (2018) also explored newspaper circulation and readership in the Northern part of Ghana, specifically Tamale (the capital town of the Northern region of Ghana). Using exploratory research design, the authors meticulously studied four major Ghanaian newspapers and four newspaper vendors in the Tamale metropolis. Just like Nyarko's observation, Amadu et al. (2018) noticed a sharp decline in newspaper circulation and readership in the metropolis. Nyarko (2016) and Amadu et al.'s (2018) observation is a clear picture of lack of interest in the print media due to review shows on TV (Nyarko, 2016) and the emergence of internet (Amadu et al., 2018). For Amadu et al. (2018), Ghana's print media needs urgent rebranding to meet the current internet needs of their readers by providing internet platforms where their readers could easily access and read the newspapers at their convenience.

Other related issues that Ghanaian intellectuals have focused on include attention paid to TV English shows meant for children as Gerning did. Gerning's (2013) work explored the state of local content programs for Ghanaian children on TV. Situated within cultivation theory and social theory, he observed a consistent decline in children's English TV shows. He raises concerns about unavailability of sponsorship, high cost of production, inadequate support from the government and managerial influence as major factors for the decline of children's English TV shows in Ghana. Because cybercrime issues were gradually eating into the fabric of the media in Ghana, Dugle (2013) chose to research into it. Dugle intimated low coverage given to cybercrime issues in the two Ghanaian newspapers (*Daily Graphic* and *Daily Guide*) as the source of its gradual increase.

He argued that in order to reduce cybercrime issues in the Ghanaian media, subjects of the news and TV presenters should report on it regularly. Dugle's observations did not support the widely held claim that content of news usually reflected the views of owners or financiers of media stations. Kpelle's (2017) study examined technology and news production in Ghana. Focusing on two TV stations (Ghana Television and TV3 Ghana Limited), Kpelle explained how technologies (internet, satellite cable systems and fiber optics) in broadcasting are employed in newsrooms to advance news footage in Ghana. The outcome of his interviews and participatory observation was that while TV3 adopted some of the new media technologies to ensure fast newsroom footage, GTV even though used some of the new technologies, experienced delays in their news delivery, due to human factors. Other factors included inadequate funds, lack of infrastructure, unstable internet connectivity, inconsistent training and inability to manage large-sized data. It is worth noting that most television stations in Ghana are limited in their effectiveness and efficiency regarding the use of new technology though there are exceptional cases.

Related to Kpelle's (2017) study on new technology in the media is Sikanku's (2011) work on intermedia influences among Ghanaian online and print media. The author examined the extent to which Ghanaian online newspapers are leading in the competition for intermedia agenda setting on daily basis. He argues that privately owned newspapers have the potential of originating their own stories unlike the state-owned newspapers which they follow orders from the government. Thus, privately owned media houses in Ghana are more creative

compared to the state-owned media houses. Davor (2015) studied the role of Christian newspapers in Ghana, using the *Catholic Standard newspaper* as a point of reference. He diachronically studied the newspaper between the periods of 72 years and reported the changing role of the Christian newspaper in Ghana. Davor encouraged Christian media houses in Ghana to stay away from political issues and focus on their original objective (to preach Christ).

In an attempt to enhance the discourse on language in the Ghanaian print media, Koufie (2018) conducted a linguistic-stylistic analysis of newspaper stories from three print media houses, *The Mirror*, *The Spectator* and *The Ghanaian Times*. To establish the uniqueness of the linguistic style of newspaper stories in Ghana, Koufie (2018) purposely selected newspapers published in 2017 from the three (3) media houses. After subjecting the news stories through the lens of lexis, parts of speech, sentence structure, grammar, and dangling modifiers, Koufie (2018) observed that journalists have peculiar ways of writing depending on the target audience for each media house. By this, he suggests that language of the print media is subjective though journalists are expected to be objective in their reportage. Koufie's (2018) study is one of many other studies that explored linguistic features in news stories. The current study is a contribution to the ongoing discussion of language of broadcast news in Ghana. It is however worth noting that unlike studies in the Ghanaian media that have paid attention to socially affecting issues (Amadu, et al., 2018; Dugle, 2013; Gerning, 2013; Nyarko, 2016; Owusu, 2010) and some linguistic features in broadcast news (Anyidoho, 2016; Boamah, 2016; Koufie, 2018), the present study presents

in-depth analysis of evaluation, semiotic mediations and ideological positioning in TV primetime news presentations through the lens of Appraisal theory by Martin and White (2005).

Clearly, research on the media in Ghana has picked on important social issues affecting the media, such as rebranding the print media (Amadu, et al., 2018); impact (positive and negative) of technology on Ghana's media (Dugle, 2013); attitudinal challenges of some journalists (Owusu, 2010); changing roles of Christian print media and lack of attention for children's English shows (Gerning, 2013). A critical linguistic view of the media must, therefore, clarify how linguistic practices for example, in news presentation, impact the positioning and interpersonal relations of subjects of the news.

### **Chapter Conclusion**

In this chapter, I have discussed the theoretical frameworks, relevant concepts and prior research related to this study. I first examined the nature of SFL and Appraisal Theory and the relationship between them. The chapter further described related concepts to this thesis and showed how they are relevant to news presentation research, highlighting on news, evaluation, semiotics and ideology. The chapter ended with some prior research on news presentations around the world and Ghanaian media.

## CHAPTER THREE

### METHODOLOGY

#### Introduction

This chapter discusses the design for the study, data gathering and description, sampling, and analytical procedures. The chapter rounds up with theoretical issues undergirding my approach – validity, reliability, ethical issues, treatment of data and challenges.

#### Research Design

This study is rooted in qualitative research paradigm. The design is suitable for exploring meaning and giving interpretations to social or human problems (Creswell, 2009; Denzin & Lincoln, 2005; Merriam, 2009). Under qualitative research design, a researcher could describe and explain linguistic resources in a text. I investigate evaluative resources in primetime news presentations from four selected TV stations in Ghana. This is in line with Denzin and Lincoln's (2005) thought on what qualitative researchers do: "qualitative researchers study things in their natural settings, attempting to make sense of, or interpret phenomena in terms of the meanings people bring to them" (p. 3). I specifically found qualitative content analysis useful, since it deals with techniques for systematic texts analysis (Mayring, 2000). Moreover, Babbie (2001) sees content analysis as "the study of recorded human communication" (p. 304). Major features of content analysis are recording, downloading, and coding, which prominently featured in my data gathering process.

Qualitative content analysis, according to Schreier (2012), is one of the several qualitative methods currently available for analyzing data and interpreting its meaning. As a research method, it represents a systematic and objective means of describing and quantifying phenomena (Downe-Wamboldt, 1992; Schreier, 2012). One important requirement for successful content analysis is that data can be reduced to concepts that describe the research phenomenon (Cavanagh, 1997; Elo & Kyngas, 2008; Hsieh & Shannon, 2005) by creating categories, concepts, model, conceptual system, or conceptual map (Elo & Kyngas, 2008; Morgan, 1993; Weber, 1990). The processes involved in qualitative content analysis are in three phases: preparation, organization, and reporting of results (Elo et al. 2014). The preparation phase of qualitative content analysis consists of “collecting suitable data for content analysis, making sense of the data, and selecting the unit of analysis” (Elo & Kyngas, 2008, p. 3). In other words, it is at the preparation phase that all the thinking work is done before one proceeds to the organization phase. The organization phase involves categorization matrix development, whereby all the data are reviewed for content and coded for correspondence to or exemplification of the identified categories (Polit & Beck, 2012). In Schreier’s (2012) view, the categorization phase can be regarded as valid if the categories adequately represent the concepts, and from the viewpoint of validity, the categorization phase accurately captures what was intended. In the reporting phase, results are described by the content of the categories describing the phenomenon using a selected approach (Elo et al., 2014). Thus, the specific processes involved in qualitative content analysis include the thinking stage

(preparation phase), the documentation stage (organization phase) and the telling stage (reporting phase). These processes were rigidly followed in this study.

### Data Gathering and Descriptions

The data for this study are primetime news presentations from four TV stations in Ghana. The primetime news, constituting the data for this research were selected from Ghana Television (GTV), TV3 Ghana Limited (TV3), JOY NEWS (Joy News) and Citi Newsroom (Citi TV). The stations broadcast their national primetime news bulletins each night. Having gained understanding on the software for downloading the news items, I downloaded the data from *Facebook* and *YouTube* platforms of the selected stations using *SaveFrom.net*. I then coded the news to make it standard for further and focused investigations. Babbie (1992) explains coding as “the process of transforming raw data into a standardized form” (p. 309). Each transcribed news text was allocated a code, using the names of the TV stations, initials for news presenters, news segments as well as numbers. Hence, for instance, codes such as GTV PR1, PR2 (GTV Presenter One, Two); TV3 PR1, PR2 (TV3 Presenter One, Two); Joy News PR1, PR2 (Joy News Presenter One, Two); Citi PR1, PR2 (Citi Presenter One, Two); MN1 (main news bulletin one), BN (business news segment), among others were used for easy referencing and effective discussions of observations from the data.

The volume of data I used for this study was in line with the concept of saturation point. Data saturation is reached when there is enough information to replicate the study (O’Reilly & Parker, 2012; Walker, 2012), when the ability to obtain additional new information has been attained (Guest et al., 2006), and



when further coding is no longer feasible (Guest et al., 2006). Bearing this in mind, I studied the data intensely to saturation point where at a point, I kept getting the same information I had already attained. It was at this saturated point that I stopped transcribing and focused on interpreting the observations and findings in the news.

### **Sources of Data**

The data for this study is TV primetime news presentation downloaded from four TV stations and broadcast each night from 7pm to 8pm, except on Citi TV where primetime news is telecast from 8pm to 9pm. Primetime news in Ghana is broadcast both in Ghanaian languages and English language. The TV stations selected for this study broadcast their primetime news in English language. The choice for primetime news for this study was based on two main reasons. Firstly, this research is a study into the use of English language: hence, English primetime news. Secondly, in Ghana, it is only during primetime news sessions that news is continuously presented for one hour. This makes it possible for subjects of news to compile a long list of major events making story lines for presentations during primetime news. In view of this, news texts for one primetime news night are lengthy, which means data will be adequate for discussions. The sources of the data for this study are presented in the subsequent sessions.

### **TV3**

The TV3 Network Company Limited, affectionately called TV3 Ghana, was selected for this thesis because according to GeoPoll Research Services (see Figure 3.1), it is one of the TV stations in Ghana that is quite influential. It is a

private free-to-air television broadcaster, which began its transmission on October 1, 1997, and produces a variety of television programs including news, drama, reality and entertainment shows (retrieved from [www.tv3network.com](http://www.tv3network.com)).

According to the management of the station, TV3 Ghana established itself as a free-to-air television station in Ghana at the end of 2006. The station occupied the premises of the then Ghana Film Industry Corporation (GFIC), after an initial agreement between the government and the Malaysian company for government of Ghana to have the majority shares of the film corporation (Kpelle, 2017). In September 2011, TV3 was acquired, and its management taken over by Media General Ghana Limited (retrieved from [www.tv3network.com](http://www.tv3network.com)). TV3's motto is "First in News, Best in Entertainment".

### **GTV**

The Ghana Television (GTV), a public service television station, was the first station to be established in Ghana under Ghana Broadcasting Corporation (GBC) in 1965 (Kpelle, 2017). The management of GBC, according to Kpelle (2017), captured Kwame Nkrumah, Ghana's first president's vision for the station in their 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary written document as a medium to educate people. This proposition is captured, thus:

Ghana's Television will be used to supplement our educational programme and to foster a lively interest in the world around us. It will not cater for cheap entertainment nor commercialism. Its paramount objective will be education in the broadest and purest sense. Television must assist in the socialist transformation of Ghana (GBC, 1985, p. 39).

GTV, by this mandate, became the premier television in Ghana through which Ghanaians could hear what was happening around them and the world. TV news was one of the means by which Ghana could disseminate issues of international interest (Kpelle, 2017). The station has the motto: “The Pulse of the Nation”

([www.gbcbghana.com](http://www.gbcbghana.com)).

### **Joy News**

The third TV station for this research is Joy News, which is one of the top TV stations in Ghana currently (see Figure 3.1). Joy News is one of the Multi TV satellite channels that broadcast on digital television. Joy News is owned by the Multimedia Broadcasting Company Limited, for which Mr. Kwasi Twum is the majority shareholder (92.5%) while the Ghana Broadcasting Corporation (GBC) owns the remaining shares of 7.5%. Joy News is a dedicated 24-hour news and current affairs television channel. The channel provides factual, transforming, informative, educative, entertaining content through various genres and forms such as local and foreign news bulletins, current affairs, talk shows, documentaries, and magazine shows (retrieved from <https://multimediaghana.com/about.php>).

### **Citi TV**

The final TV station I downloaded news for this study from is Citi TV. Among the four (4) selected TV stations chosen for this thesis, Citi TV is the youngest station. Initially a radio station, Citi 97.3 FM, the station recently extended its operations by adding this TV station. It is a licensed digital terrestrial free-to-air television channel with nationwide coverage (retrieved from

www.citinewsroom.com). Citi TV started airing officially on June 1, 2018, and became the fastest-growing TV channel in Ghana in 2019, according to GeoPoll ratings. The privately owned Citi TV is situated in Adabraka, Accra, Ghana. Their motto is “It’s Your World”.

### **Sampling of News Presentations**

The aim of sampling is to achieve representativeness. I purposely sampled the TV stations and news bulletins to appropriately reflect the Ghanaian TV community and the goals of this thesis. Purposive sampling technique is also known as judgmental, selective, or subjective sampling (Crossman, 2019). As a non-probability sampling technique, which is a technique that helps researchers to select units from a population that they are interested in studying, researchers using a purposive sampling direct their survey with the goal of ultimately achieving a representation of at least the extremes of variables under consideration (Galloway, 2005). Under purposive sampling, Crossman (2020) thinks that data selection is based on characteristics of a population and the objective of the study. It is against this background that, in this study, I used purposive sampling as the first sampling technique. Thus, as suggested by Crossman (2019, 2020), purposive sampling was selected to reflect the objective for this study, which is to investigate TV English primetime news presentations in Ghana. To achieve this, I downloaded Ghanaian primetime news presentations aired in the English language, since my focus is on linguistic resources in major news presentations. Hence, news presented by non-Ghanaian TV stations were excluded from the study. Apart from the fact that purposive sampling is generally

cost effective and a useful technique to reach targeted sample quickly in research (Crossman, 2020), Palys (2008) explains that it ties researchers' samples to their objectives. Hence, by purposive sampling, researchers are objective oriented right from the sampling stage. This technique was again employed to ensure that selected news were primetime news bulletins. The purposive sampling technique helped me to stay focused on this thesis' objective.

The next sampling procedure was simple random sampling for the consideration of representative news sessions, given that there is a huge stock of primetime news stories. Random sampling, also known as probability sampling or chance sampling is a sampling technique under which every item (or in this case, every primetime news text) has an equal chance of inclusion in the sample (Rai & Thapa, 2015). Rai and Thapa (2015) explain four types of random sampling: simple random sampling, systematic sampling, stratified random sampling and cluster sampling. In simple random sampling, each member of the population has an exactly equal chance of being selected. Systematic sampling, on the other hand, involves choosing a sample based on a regular interval, rather than a fully random selection. The stratified random sampling is used by a researcher who wants to ensure that specific characteristics are proportionally represented in the sample. Thus, under such circumstances, the researcher splits his or her population into strata (it could be race or gender), and then randomly selects from each of these subgroups. With cluster sampling, a researcher divides the sample into clusters that approximately reflect the whole population, and then chooses his or her sample from a random selection of these clusters (Rai & Thapa, 2015). In

the current study, I resorted to simple random sampling to arrive at current primetime news from the TV stations. Simple random sampling reduces bias in research, making the outcome of data analysis quite trustworthy.

Apart from purposive and random sampling, I also employed convenience sampling in settling on the available news on the stations' online platforms. Crossman (2019) sees convenience sampling as a non-probability sampling technique in which the researcher uses the subjects that are nearest and available to participate in the research study. When research, such as this study is time bound, one of the sampling techniques that Crossman (2019) suggests can be used is convenience sampling. Thus, with convenience sampling, data can be collected quickly. It is for this reason that I used convenience sampling when settling on the available primetime news. It must be emphasized that primetime news in languages other than English were disqualified in this study. News presented in Ghanaian languages such as Asante Twi, Fante, Ga, Nzema, Ewe, and Hausa were excluded because they did not serve the purpose of this study, which is exploring linguistic items used in primetime news presentations.

In research, one important concept that helps researchers address the issue of validity and reliability is triangulation. Patton (1999) defines triangulation as the use of multiple methods or data sources in qualitative research to develop a comprehensive understanding of phenomena. It has also been viewed as a qualitative research strategy to test validity through the convergence of information from different sources (Carter, Bryant-Lukosius, Dicenso, Blythe & Neville, 2014). In research, different theories, methods, participants, and

fundamental biases arising from the use of a single method or a single observer are overcome by triangulation. Denzin (1978) and Patton (1999) identified four types of triangulation: method triangulation, investigator triangulation, theory triangulation, and data source triangulation. According to Denzin (1978), the methodological triangulation promotes the use of several data collection methods such as interviews and observations, the investigator triangulation has to do with the use of several researchers in a study, the theory triangulation encourages several theoretical schemes to enable interpretation of a phenomenon while data triangulation deals with matters such as using different data sources to explain the same phenomena. In the present study, besides the different sampling techniques that are employed (purposive, random and convenience sampling), data from different sources, though on the same phenomenon, is used. Hence, this study is tilted towards data triangulation since primetime news texts from four different TV broadcasting networks are used.

The factor I considered in selecting the primetime news for this thesis was the issue of influence. Thus, I selected the TV stations on the grounds of their influence in the Ghanaian society according to research conducted on the most influential TV stations in Ghana by GeoPoll. The GeoPoll research service is a full-service research provider that consists of both a robust, multi-modal mobile surveying platform and a panel of respondents around the globe. The experienced GeoPoll team assists clients in every step of a project, from mode selection to audience targeting, survey design, and data analysis (retrieved from <https://www.>

[geopoll.com/about/](http://geopoll.com/about/)). Figure 6 below shows the most influential TV stations in Ghana as of 2019 by GeoPoll research services.

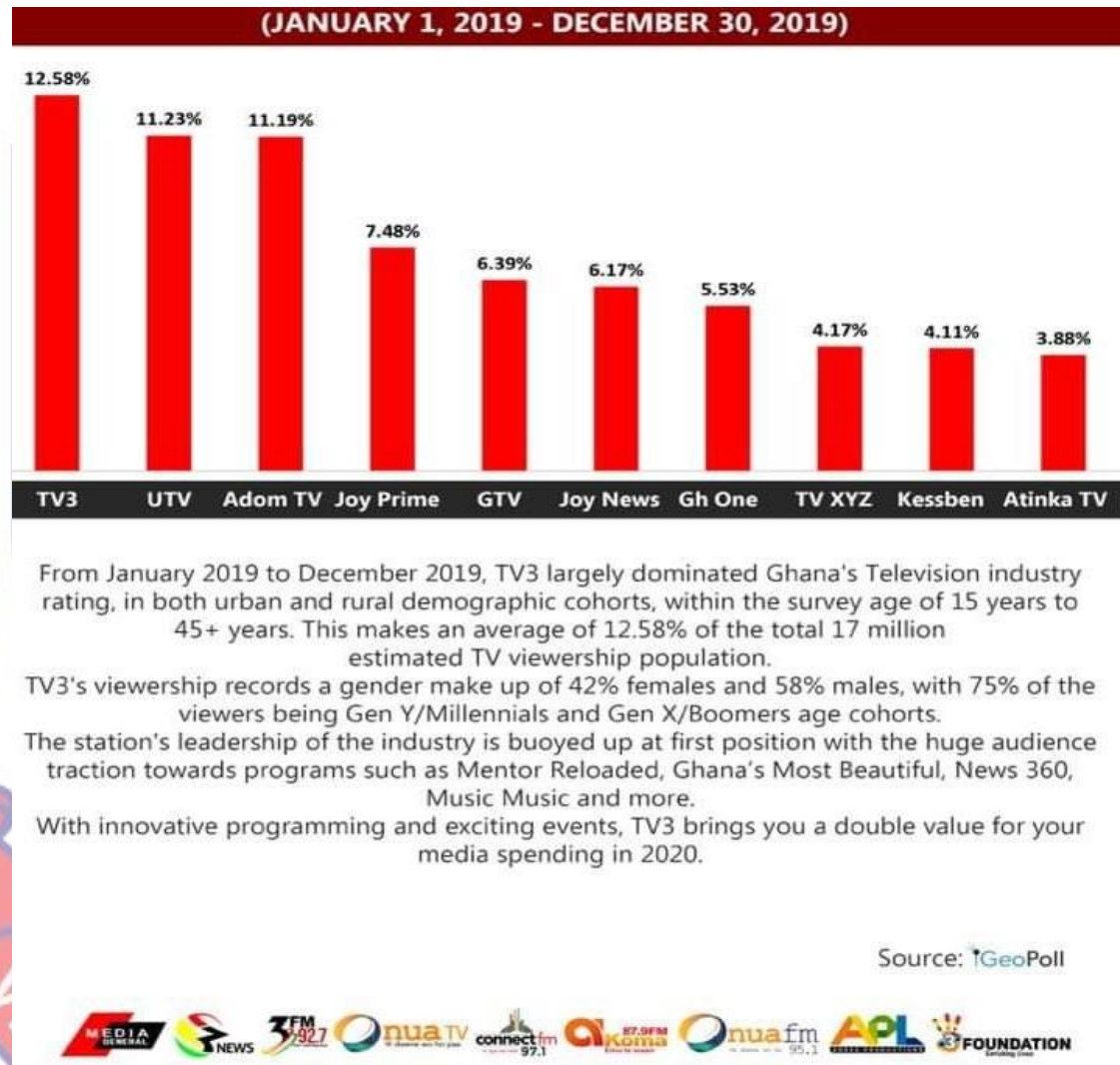


Figure 6: Top TV Stations in Ghana in 2019 (Source: GeoPoll)

The TV stations I have selected for this thesis (TV3, GTV, and Joy News) are among the top six TV stations in Ghana. The fourth station I considered for this research (Citi TV) has prominently existed on the Ghanaian airwaves as Citi FM, until about two years ago when the TV version was established. Figure 7 below shows their performance on the Ghanaian airwaves as an FM station.





## CITI FM IS NO.1 ENGLISH RADIO STATION IN GHANA 2018

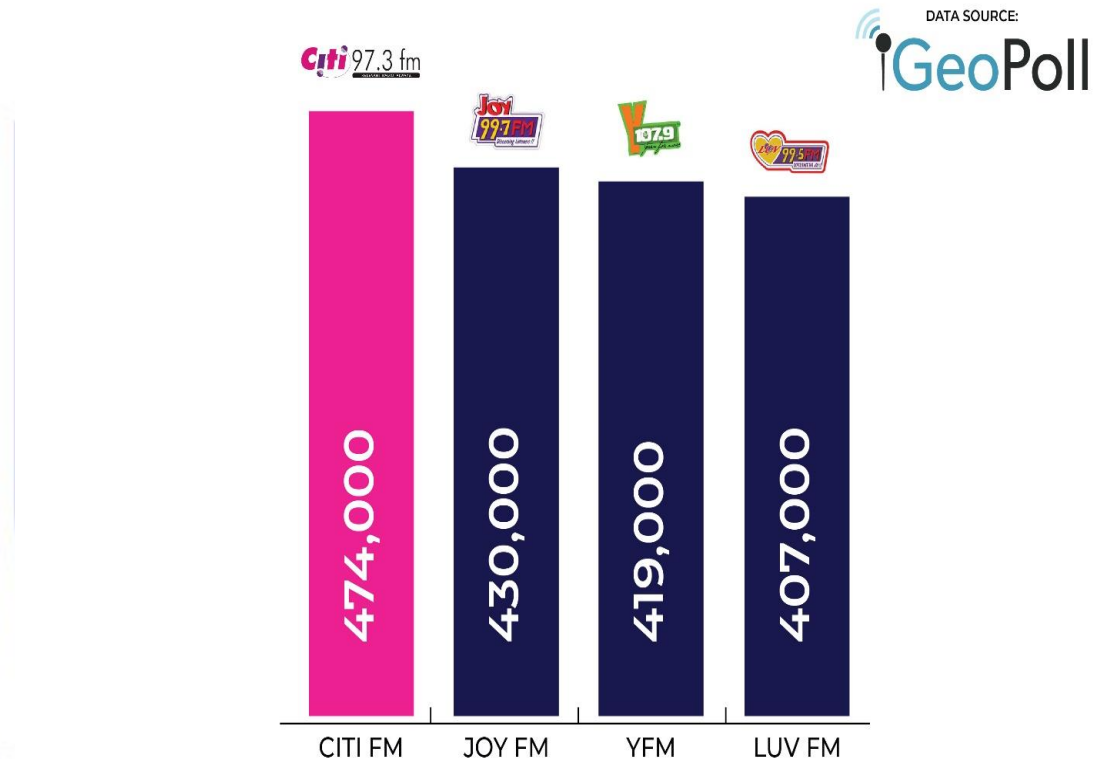


Figure 7: Number One English Radio Station in Ghana – 2018 (Retrieved from GeoPoll Research Services)

While downloading the news presentations, I closely observed that in Citi TV's news presentation, patterns which were slightly different from that of the other TV stations in Ghana characterize their primetime news. Such patterns include time, level of creativity and eloquence. When it comes to time, Citi TV is the only TV broadcasting network in Ghana that begins its primetime news airing at 8pm. All other TV stations start at 7pm each night. This gives room for people to have time to watch their news even when they miss other news. Their level of creativity during primetime news presentation is another pattern that characterizes

Citi TV's primetime news. They usually have one presenter in the studio while the other one will be on site at the spot where the news stories are happening. This however does not interrupt their flow of presentation for the one-hour session. It is different from the traditional way of primetime news presentation in Ghana, where both or all presenters will be in the studio. Besides the time and creativity, Citi TV also presents very eloquent presenters. They have studied the TV news presentations in Ghana and seem to offer a new dimension of primetime news, which has created attention for the station. Personnel at Citi TV have studied the TV news presentations in Ghana and offer a new dimension of primetime news, which has created attention for the station right from the word go. Meanwhile, I overlooked other factors, mainly political and socio-cultural, since they were outside the scope of this study. I also did not consider gender, ethnographic background, and religion of subjects of the news (editors, reporters, anchors, newsreaders) since they were not part of the focus of this research. I rigorously paid attention to all segments of the news (weather, business, sports, entertainment, health, international news, headline stories) as presented by news presenters in the studio except for the reporters' feedback and commercial breaks, for the purpose of consistency.

As part of the data description for this study, I present the focus of the individual news items (NI) from the four TV stations as was presented in the primetime news from 2019 to 2020. Besides giving as a clearer picture of the news items, the intent of Table 1 is to have a basis for the ideological positioning discussions, which will be presented in Chapter Six of this study:

**Table 2: What News Items (NI) Presented by the TV Stations Focus on**

TV Stations	GTV	TV3	JOY NEWS	CITI TV
Year	2019	2019	2019	2019
Focus of News Items	NI, 1: Politics NI,2: Social issue on closure of a witch camp NI,3: Chieftaincy NI, 4: News on religious activity NI,5: Education NI,6: Law NI,7: Business NI,8: Business NI,9: Business NI, 10: Health	NI,1: Social issue NI,2: Politics NI,3: Politics NI,4: Education NI,5: Education NI, 6: Health	NI, 1: Politics NI,2: Law NI, 3: Politics NI,4: Media NI,5: Elections NI,6: Parliament NI, 7: Business NI,8: Parliament NI,9: Elections NI,10: Sanitation	NI,1: Politics NI,2: Politics NI,3: Industrial strikes- GRIDCO NI,4: - Teacher unions’ strike NI,5: Law NI,6: Elections NI,7: Politics NI,8: Politics NI,9: Law
Source	Facebook	YouTube	YouTube	Facebook
Year	2020	2020	2020	2020
News focus	NI,1: Education NI,2: Education NI,3: Sanitation NI,4: Politics NI,5: Education NI,6: Education NI,7: Humanitarian NI,8: Health NI,9: Business NI,10: Health	NI,1: Politics NI,2: Politics NI,3: Law NI,4: Law NI,5: Education NI,6: Health NI,7: Business NI,8: Business NI,9: Business NI,10: Business	NI,1: Politics NI,2: Politics NI,3: Education NI,4: Business NI,5: Business NI,6: Entertainment NI,7: Health NI,8: Health NI,9: Health NI,10: Politics	NI,1: Politics NI,2: Business NI,3: Politics NI,4: Law NI,5: Elections NI,6: Elections NI,7: Politics NI,8: Politics NI,9: Politics NI,10: Politics NI,11: social issue
Source	Facebook	YouTube	YouTube	YouTube

From Table 1, we notice that in both 2019 and 2020, GTV employed twenty themes (ten themes in 2019 and ten themes in 2020). TV3 employed sixteen themes (six in 2019 and ten in 2020). Just like GTV, Joy News employed twenty themes (ten in 2019 and ten in 2020). Finally, Citi TV used twenty-one themes (ten in 2019 and eleven in 2020) in their primetime news presentations. The ideological relevance of the themes in Table 1 will be discussed in Chapter Six.

### **Data Coding**

I coded the transcribed texts for analysis using alphabets and numbers. Punch (2013) explains coding as a process of writing down or putting tags, names, or labels against pieces of data where the pieces may be individual words, or small or large chunks of data. I assigned each transcribed news bulletin a specific code, using the name of the station, segments of the news and presenters. I did this for easy referencing, and effective and focused discussions. Gaining the standard form of the news gave me the opportunity to carefully examine the text as a resource for evaluative, semiotic and ideological meaning making. I coded each entry to reflect each presenter's turn during presentation of news.

### **Procedures for Analysis**

First, I prepared a list of evaluative resources guided by Martin and White's (2005) Appraisal Theory. I represented words, clauses, and statements that construe Attitude, Engagement, and Graduation, as evaluative resources, as stipulated in the Appraisal Theory. Based on the list, content analysis was conducted to establish the use of these linguistic resources in the news language. I used simple counting and frequency of occurrence of key evaluative resources

from the news to explain the significance of absence and presence of evaluation, semiotics, and ideological positioning in primetime news presentations in Ghana. Furthermore, I considered all instances of happiness/unhappiness, satisfaction/dissatisfaction, security/ insecurity, inclination/disinclination as “affect” of the Attitude subsystem. Language in news presentations that construe “assessing behavior” was categorized under “judgement” of the Attitude subsystem. However, linguistic resources in news presentations that showed assessing the value of things (where language used placed value on portions of the news), I classified under “appreciation”. These resources express feelings and are termed Attitude (Martin & White, 2005).

I grouped instances of linguistic resources in news presentations that expressed disclaim, proclaim, entertain, and attribute under Engagement and discussed their relevance in primetime news presentations. Having gathered the pictures or images used in the course of news presentations from the downloaded news sessions, I explored semiotic mediations and their relevance in major news bulletins as meaning making resources. I finally searched for key words, clauses, and statements in news presentations that portrayed quantification, intensification (Force), upscaling and downscaling (Focus) and placed such linguistic resources under Graduation. Following the provisions of the Graduation subsystem, I identified and explored ideological positioning as the end point of evaluation and semiotic use in primetime news presentations in Ghana.

## Reliability and Validity

To ensure reliability and validity in this thesis, frequency of the inter-rater agreement yields a score of 80 to 95%. The units of analysis were words, clauses, and statements. Additionally, I calculated the frequency of the absence or presence of evaluative resources, semiotic use and ideological positioning by observing key words, clauses, pictures or images in the data. I have ensured that my participants (subjects of the news) were protected in this study. I gave newsreaders codes to avoid mentioning their names in the discussions.

## Ethical Issues

This section briefly discusses ethical issues related to this study. As indicated earlier, the University of Cape Coast (UCC) has ethical guidance that postgraduate students are mandated to follow strictly. This guidance is supposed to ensure that students comply with laid down procedures meant to protect research participants. It is in line with this I ensured that the identities of my participants are protected. In this study, my participants are subjects of primetime news. I gave my research participants codes (GTV PR. 1, 2...; TV3 PR. 1, 2...; Joy News PR. 1, 2... and Citi TV PR. 1, 2...) which are a reflection of the TV stations they represent and their number (based on whether they presented the first news story or subsequent ones) to protect their identities. By this, the true identities of news presenters were concealed. It is important to note that since the data for this study is already in the public domain, ethical clearance was not needed.

## Treatment of Data

Jeffersonian Transcription or the Jefferson Transcription System is a conversational analysis code used by academics looking at speech patterns. Pioneered by Gail Jefferson (hence the name Jefferson transcription), Jefferson Transcription provides a method for annotating speech with details of performance, acts, texts, movement, interaction between actors, content and context (retrieved from <https://www.universitytranscriptions.com>). It is worth noting that elements of the Jefferson transcription model can assist in a range of settings in a text. For instance, if you are looking for an indication of when a participant's voice has got higher or lower, provisions are made for such to be indicated by “↑” and “↓” respectively. This usage has implications for phonological analysis of texts being studied such as news presentations. Jeffersonian Transcription Notation, as illustrated in Figure 8, includes the following symbols:

Symbol	Name	Use
[ text]	Brackets	Indicates the start and end points of overlapping speech.
=	Equal Sign	Indicates the break and subsequent continuation of a single interrupted utterance.
(#of seconds)	Timed Pause	A number in parentheses indicates the time, in seconds, of a pause in speech.
(.)	Micropause	A brief pause, usually less than 0.2 seconds.
. or ↓ Arrow	Period or Down Arrow	Indicates falling pitch.
? or ↑	Question Mark or Up Arrow	Indicates rising pitch.
,	Comma	Indicates a temporary rise or fall in intonation.
-	Hyphen	Indicates an abrupt halt or interruption in

		utterance.
>text<	Greater than / Less than symbols	Indicates that the enclosed speech was delivered more rapidly than usual for the speaker.
<text>	Less than/ Greater than Symbols	Indicates that the enclosed speech was delivered more slowly than usual for the speaker.
°	Degree Symbol	Indicates whisper or reduced volume speech.
ALL CAPS	Capitalized Text	Indicates shouted or increased volume speech.
Underline	Underlined Text	Indicates the speaker is emphasizing or stressing the speech.
:::	Colon(s)	Indicates prolongation of an utterance.
(hhh)		Audible exhalation
? or (.hhh)	High Dot	Audible inhalation
(text)	Parentheses	Speech which is unclear or in doubt in the transcript.
((italic text ))	Double Parentheses	Annotation of non-verbal activity.

*Figure 8: Jeffersonian Transcription Notation*

The transcription notation symbols in Figure 8 were used for the transcription of news texts for this study. Though time consuming and stressful, the model was useful in getting the primetime news texts into a standard form for effective analysis. I could have employed qualified personnel to assist me with the transcription. However, to get familiar with the data for confident discussions, I decided to immerse myself with the data and transcribe, with stress and tiredness being the major challenge.



## Chapter Conclusion

In this chapter, I have spelt out the methodological procedures used in this thesis. It first examined the research design, data and sampling gathering procedures and analytical procedures. The chapter ended with theoretical issues such as validity, reliability, ethics and challenges I encountered. In the next chapter, I discuss evaluation, focusing on attitude, engagement, and graduation.



## CHAPTER FOUR

### EVALUATION IN PRIMETIME TV NEWS PRESENTATIONS

#### Introduction

The preceding chapter outlined the methodological approaches to this study. The present chapter, which is the first of the three analysis chapters, explores evaluation in news presentations. It explains evaluative resources in primetime news in Ghana and linguistically sheds light on professional practices in news presentations for the purpose of meaning making. An inquiry into evaluative resources in news presentations is useful for understanding how subjects of primetime news bulletins create, manage, and send reports on local and international happenings using evaluative resources. The discussion in this chapter is focused on the linguistic resources that are evaluative in nature. In doing this, I situate the analysis within the sub-systems of Appraisal theory as outlined in this thesis. This chapter first discusses the presence of attitudinal resources and their implications in TV news presentations. It then proceeds to examine the engagement resources used in news presentations. This is followed by an analysis of graduation resources employed in the news. The Chapter concludes with a discussion on the impact of the presence of evaluative resources in news presentations in Ghana.

#### Evaluative Resources in Primetime News Presentations

In the primetime news presentations used for this study, evaluative resources were identified. Evaluative resources such as Attitude (comprising linguistic resources that construe happiness/unhappiness, satisfaction/

dissatisfaction, and security/ insecurity), Engagement and Graduation (comprising linguistic resources that indicate the degree of positivity or negativity associated with a proposition) were used. The next section will present Attitude resources identified in the data.

### **Attitudinal Resources in Primetime TV News Presentations**

Attitude has been explained in line with the values by which speakers associate emotional responses with participants and processes (White, 2001). It again construes feelings in texts (Martin & White, 2005). Hence, words which depict or portray feelings of speaker (s) are attitudinal resources in that text. As discussed earlier in this dissertation, the Attitude sub-system of the Appraisal theory consists of three strands: Affect, Judgement, and Appreciation (Marin & White, 2005). Affect resources represent emotional reaction; Judgement resources are for assessing behaviour; while Appreciation reflects assessment of the value of things. Linguistic resources in the data that construe Affect are presented below.

### **Affect Realizations in Primetime TV News Presentations**

The data for this study unsurprisingly exhibited few instances of affect, suggesting that in news presentations, circumstances that require the use of affect are not often given space. Thus, in news, resources that construe emotions, which are termed as affect are not usually employed because, news presenters are to present news contents given to them devoid of their personal feelings. Affect, according to Ngo and Unsworth (2015), refers to the language resources for expressing emotions. Wu (2013) believes that Affect resources are negative and

positive feelings. It is not surprising that in Sobeng (2016), Affect resources for assessing contestants of Ghana's Most Beautiful (GMB) performances were numerous since judges employed linguistic resources such as "well done, I like...that, thank you" and "what I was expecting was...; Did I hear you say mobbing? It is mop, mop, so take note of that". In the current study, circumstances such as the one just described that offered the judges of GMB show the platform to employ affect resources do not necessarily exist in primetime news presentation, except for a particular news item in which a number of affect praise resources are employed by the head of a committee to validate the choice the committee made. The news item that exhibited this praise resource is presented below:

"Mr. Owusu said the committee observed that given his **high standard of competence and integrity** (.) **forthrightness** (.) **astuteness and indebt appreciation** of the law he exhibited before the committee and **independence of thought** (.) the nominee qualifies to serve as Chief Justice of the Republic of Ghana..."

(GTV, 24<sup>th</sup> December, 2019)

In this example, we observe the use of about seven praise resources in describing the selected Chief Justice. The Chief Justice in question is said to be of "high standard" "competent", possessing "integrity", exhibits "forthrightness", "astuteness", "indebt appreciation of the law" has "independence of thought" and then "qualifies to serve as Chief Justice". These are resources for admiration and character validation, explained as praise and admiration by Martin and White

(2005) and Martin and Rose (2007). The praise resources employed in this news item places some level of value on the chosen Chief Justice, which makes him the preferred person instead of his competitors. Interestingly, unlike my observation with the comments of Ghana Most Beautiful (GMB) judges, the praise resources used in the news item are attributed, in that, members of the committee are the ones showering the praises on their preferred Chief Justice to justify their choice of selection. The news presenters, in this case, are only reporting the emotions of the committee members and not theirs. According to Song (2019), by using affect resources in a text, speakers are practically speaking from an emotional point of view. This observation aligns with Martin and White's (2005) view that all affect resources are mainly emotional. In the news presentations used for this study, news presenters employed attributed Affect resources to avoid personal emotions. The following are a few of the instances of news stories from the data that illustrate how affect resources are realized in clauses, phrases and words. The highlighted portions are Affect resources.

#### **Extract 4.1**

However (,) after the performance of the two late chiefs of Dagbon and the subsequent installation of a new Yaa Naa (0.1) Abdul Yahil Moomen reports that the people of Dagbon are beginning to **enjoy** the dividends of peace (GTV, 24th December, 2019)

It is important to note that the Dagbon community (in the Northern part of Ghana) had been characterized by series of conflicts, which prevented the inhabitants from experiencing peace. The main cause of the conflicts in the Dagbon area had

been issues related to the death of the late Yaa Naa (their previous paramount chief) and the installation of a new one. In this news line, however, we see a change of events. The change of events in this news line is highlighted by the use of the Affect resource “enjoy”, which shows that the people of Dagbon are beginning to experience fulfilment regarding the new conflict-free atmosphere in the area. The Affect resource used in this manner is what scholars like Bednarek (2010) and Martin and White (2005) call satisfaction. The semantic implication of the use of “enjoy” in this news line is a sense of fulfilment, showing that the people of Dagbon are pleased with their current atmosphere and as such are Satisfied (Martin & White, 2005).

In this instance, the Affect resource, “enjoy”, shows the emotional state of the people of Dagbon, as indicated in the news content here (Extract 4.1). Scholars such as Bednarek (2010), Hood (2010) and Martin and White (2005) have indicated that satisfaction and other resources under Attitude bring out the emotional position of the speaker concerning what is being described. Contrary to this view, the data for this study showed that the use of Affect resource (in the case of this news line, satisfaction) could project the emotional state of another personality or group of people, depending on the text in question, as seen in Extract 4.1. It is worth noting that the affect resources (satisfaction, dissatisfaction, and insecurity) in the data for this study do not reflect the emotions and feelings of news presenters, who are the direct speakers in primetime news presentations, as suggested by Martin and White (2005). Similar observations can be made in news Extracts 4.2 to 4.5 below:

#### Extract 4.2

Brigadier C. K. Aweti has also been promoted to the rank of a Major General (.). The statement said president Akuffo Addo **expressed gratitude** to Generals Ayando and Omame Agyekum for their dedicated service to the armed forces and the nation (TV3, 12th November, 2020. MN1, PR1)

In this instance, the Affect resource employed is *expressed gratitude*, as seen in the news line here, which represents another instance of satisfaction, as suggested by Martin and White (2005). This resource used in the news text illustrates the emotional state of President Akuffo Addo, in relation to the Army Generals Ayando and Omame Agyekum's dedication to their assigned duties in the Ghana Army.

#### Extract 4.3

We are still watching Citi newsroom on Citi TV (,) we are still staying on the nomination of Justice Anim Yeboah hhh now the ranking member on parliament's constitutional legal and parliamentary affairs committee Inusah Fuseini has **expressed disappointment** with his nomination (TV3, 2019 MN1, PR. 2)

Another Affect resource used in Extract 4.3 is *expressed disappointment*. This type of Affect is what scholars such as Bednarek (2010), Martin and White (2005), and White (2016) call dissatisfaction. It is an Affect resource used to project a situation in a text where the speaker is not pleased with a proposition (Martin & White, 2005). In this news line, we notice that the dissatisfaction,

*expressed disappointment*, illustrates a displeasure being expressed by Inusah Fuseini. *Expressed disappointment* is the only Affect dissatisfaction resource observed in the data. Instances presented in Extracts 4.4 and 4.5 below illustrate other instances of the use of Affect satisfaction in news texts, as suggested by Martin and White (2005).

**Extract 4.4**

Now as the police have identified 20 hot spots in Ejisu constituency (,) the leading candidates in the race John Kumah and George Kwanozey have **expressed their willingness** to commit to peace ahead of the 2020 general elections (.) hh Citi news' Edward Oppong Marfo has more on the following report (Citi TV, 30th November, 2020. MN3, PR2).

**Extract 4.5**

Now going into the polls on December 7 the Ghana Police Service has tasked some areas and all 16 regions of the country as flash points and will be monitoring them carefully to forestall any chaos (.) Now in the Bono East Region however constituents in some of these hot spots are **convinced** there will be no ↑violence in their localities (.) hhh Michael Tsatsu Aholu has more in this report (Citi TV, 30th November, 2020 MN3, PR1).

As indicated earlier, instances of Affect resources employed in the data are few and can be seen in few news stories. This observation is partially in line with the observations made by Bednarek (2010), Martin and White (2005), and White (2016) in that speakers employ Affect resources to exhibit their emotional



position on a particular proposition. However, in the data, it is observed that instead of news presenters, who are the direct speakers in this context, there are different personalities in the news stories whose emotional states are portrayed using these Affect resources, as explained earlier, which is why the Affect resources used in the data for this study are attributed.

Another Affect resource, which occurred only once in the data, just like dis/satisfaction resource is in/security. The instance of insecurity, which is found as the expression, *felt unsafe*, was noticed in Joy News' COVID-19 news story presented on 15th July, 2020. The news story that exhibited this insecurity resource is presented in Extract 4.6 below:

#### **Extract 4.6**

And here at the Greater Accra hospital a clinical pharmacist has revealed some of her colleagues for fear of contracting COVID-19 withdrew their services over lack of personal protective equipment (.) According to Maame Ewurabena Ansah (.) health workers there **felt unsafe** and had to abandon some wards at the hospital (Joy News, 15th July, 2020. MN, PR1).

In Extract 4.6, the news story presents health workers' grievances concerning their personal safety in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic. These health workers were expressing how unsafe they felt working in the hospital on COVID-19 patients without personal protective equipment (PPEs). The clinical pharmacist, whose concern is captured in Extract 4.6 resorted to the words, *fear* and *felt unsafe*, to express the influence of the COVID-19 situation on their

emotions. Due to this, speakers have evaluated the circumstance around them from an emotional perspective (Song, 2019). The use of linguistic resources such as *fear* and *felt unsafe*, according to Martin and White (2005), depict a sense of insecurity, showing that the situation being described in this news story is one that is life threatening, such that health workers, as presented in the news, had abandoned some wards at the hospital to feel secure. The insecurity resources observed in the data corroborate Thompson and Hunston's (2005) observation; thus, language expresses the value system of the writer (in this case, the speaker). The speaker in this news content is the news presenter, who presented the health workers' grievances, indicating what they valued most and how they felt (insecurity) about the way they were being treated in the COVID-19 pandemic situation. Due to how unsafe these health workers felt, they left wards in the hospital to take care of themselves. In other words, as suggested by Thompson and Hunston (2005), by their insecure expressions, the health workers indicated that they valued their lives more than their work.

Affect resources in the news lines demonstrated in the extracts above illustrate context specific use of Affect in the data. Depending on the context of the use of Affect, the news line could be depicting happiness, satisfaction, dissatisfaction, or insecurity, as realized in the data. When based on the context of the news story, the affect resource used depicts satisfaction, dissatisfaction, or insecurity, then we are looking at context specific use of affect. These resources do not necessarily reflect how subjects of the news feel, as proposed by Martin and White (2005) but how other personalities mentioned in the news stories feel

about the event being reported on. Hence, the Affect resources expressed in the data are not those of news subjects or presenters, as earlier mentioned. The semantic relevance of the use of Affect as realized in this data could be seen as attributed affect. In the data, Affect resources, *enjoy*, *expressed gratitude*, *convinced* and *willingness* indicate what Martin and White (2005) explain as Satisfaction, as earlier mentioned. In the news story on the use of the satisfaction resource, *enjoy*, as used in the news line:

...the people of Dagbon are beginning to *enjoy* the dividends of peace

(GTV, 24<sup>th</sup> December, 2019)

In the instance of the Affect dissatisfaction described above, Inusah Fuseini is seen not to be excited about someone's nomination in that news story. The semantic relevance of the use of *expressed disappointment* in this context is that of an unfulfilled expectation, which seems to have led to Inusah Fuseini's disappointment in the nomination procedure, leading to what Bednarek (2010), Hood (2010) and Martin and White (2005) will call dis/satisfaction. The observations made here corroborate what Biber (2006) and Martin and White (2005) explain as Affect resources, where a speaker or in this case, named personalities express emotions concerning reported events or situations by using these linguistic resources known as Affect to express the emotional states of the named personalities in the news. Since the feelings expressed in the news are not those of the news presenters but a named group of people (such as *health workers*, *Inusah Fuseini*, *President Akuffo Addo*) the Affect resources in this data are mainly Attributed. Linguistic resources are attributed when the Affect presence in

the text is not revealing how the subjects of the news or news presenters feel about an event but how other individual (s) mentioned in the text feel. This is rightly so, because journalists, as part of their professional code of conduct, are not supposed to present their views or feelings (Affect) in news presentations, but the events scripted for them to report on during the news presentation. Figure 9 below illustrates Affect resources used in the data and the individuals in the news who the Affect resources are attributed to.

TV STATIONS	AFFECT RESOURCES	PERSONALITIES WHO AFFECT HAS BEEN ATTRIBUTED
GTV	Satisfaction – <i>Enjoy</i>	The people of Dagbon
TV3	Satisfaction– <i>Expressed gratitude</i> Dissatisfaction– <i>Expressed disappointment</i>	President Akufo Addo Inusah Fuseini
JOY NEWS	Insecurity - <i>Felt unsafe</i>	Health workers
CITI TV	Satisfaction – <i>Convinced</i>	Constituents in Bono-East region

Figure 9: Attributed Affect in Primetime TV News Presentations

An Affect in a text, whether written or spoken, portrays feelings such as happiness or un/happiness, satisfaction or dis/satisfaction, and security or in/security (Martin and White, 2005). Affective positions often include positive or negative feelings (Wu, 2013). Moreover, Affect, as mentioned earlier in Chapter Two, interprets emotional reactions in texts like news stories, as is the case for this study. Linguistic resources that are Affect include processes of showing affection, which are usually attitudinal adjectives (Martin & White, 2005). Besides Affect, another dimension of the Attitude sub-system, according to

Martin and White (2005), is Judgement. I pay a brief attention to the judgement category of the Attitude system and its presence in the data in the next section.

### Judgement Realizations in Primetime TV News Presentations

Judgement enacts attitudes towards behaviour or news texts. Under judgement, a speaker *admires, criticizes, praises, or condemns* (Bednarek, 2010; Martin & White, 2005). Works on judgment in media texts have revealed that judgement resources are present in most texts, especially written ones (Bednarek, 2010; Fernandez & Jung, 2006; Hyland, 2010; Martin and White, 2005). The data for this study, however, reveal that in spoken news, rarely do news subjects employ judgement resources in news contents. In this study, the few instances of judgement were observed from two main news contents in the entire data of about 9, 875 words from GTV and TV3. The news story from TV3 that carried judgement resource is presented below:

#### Extract 4.7

And↑ now child rights international said the decision to expel seven female students from the boarding house of Ejusuman Senior High School is **inappropriate** hhh (.) Executive Director Bright Appiah is asking the Ghana Education Service to reinstate them and help them with counselling (.) The students were expelled after a viral video of them in explicit sex language which caused public uproar

(TV3, 12<sup>th</sup> February, 2020)

In this news story, we are informed of some senior high school (SHS) girls from Ejusuman Senior High School, a Ghanaian SHS in, talking about sex with

impunity having no sense of remorse or whatsoever. The different cultures in Ghana have a high sense of decency, reflecting what is said publicly. The conduct of these students was seen by most Ghanaians as indecent, contradicting the moral norms guiding most of the institutions in Ghana, including schools. This conduct

led to the dismissal of these students from the school. This act of dismissal of the students attracted criticism from a child rights organization known as *Child Rights International*, who condemned in the sanction imposed on these girls by saying:

*...and now, the child rights international said the decision to expel seven female students from the boarding house of Ejusuman Senior High School is inappropriate...*

(TV3, 12<sup>th</sup> February, 2020)

The word *inappropriate* used in the news extract falls under criticism, a sub-category of judgement, as an aspect of attitude known as negative judgement. The judgement resource in this context is employed to provide an assessment of the act of dismissal of the Ejusuman SHS students. The judgement resources assess behaviour as moral or immoral, legal or illegal, as socially acceptable or unacceptable, as laudable or deplorable, as normal or abnormal.

In this news context, the judgement resource, *inappropriate*, renders the act of dismissal of those students unacceptable even though the students' behaviour is considered immoral and socially unacceptable. The attitudinal subsystem of judgement, just like I observed with affect, is an attributed one. This judgement resource does not reflect the judgement of news presenters; instead, it reflects the judgement of the "*Child Rights International*". The final judgement

resource I noticed in the data was the news from GTV presented on the 24<sup>th</sup> December, 2019. This judgement resource, unlike the attributed negative judgement from TV3, is a positive judgement. The positive judgement resources, as can be seen in Extract 4.8 below, are all attributed

**Extract 4.8**

Mr. Justice Yeboah (0.3) took part in the 2020 presidential election petition as chairman of the ethics committee of FIFA proposal for review of the constitution several areas (.) Mr. Osei Owusu said the committee observed that given **his high standard of competence and integrity (.) forthrightness (.) astuteness and indebt appreciation of the law he exhibited before the committee and independence of thought (.)** the nominee qualifies to serve as Chief Justice of the republic of Ghana↓ (GTV, 24<sup>th</sup> December, 2029).

In this Extract (4.8), the personality being positively judged is Mr. Justice Yeboah, who happens to be the president's Chief Justice nominee. In the data, one can observe about five different positive judgement resources, which according to Mr. Osei Owusu, a committee member, was used to describe the president's nominee. These positive judgements used in the data are *...high standard of competence and integrity, forthrightness, astuteness and indebt appreciation of the law... and independence of thought*. White (2012) and Martin and White (2005) call such positive judgements admiration and praise. The semantic relevance of such positive judgement is to give committee members enough reasons why the president's nominee is the right person for the seat of Ghana's

Chief Justice. It is worth mentioning that the positive judgement linguistic resources, just like affect and negative judgement resources examined above, are also attributed. Thus, in the data, judgement resources are linguistic resources (whether positive or negative) for evaluating people's behaviors as suggested by scholars such as Bednarek (2006), Hood (2010), Martin (2012) and Martin and White (2005). Judgement resources, though rarely employed, are attributed just like the Affect resources.

### Appreciations in Primetime TV News Presentations

Being the last sub-system of the attitude system of the appraisal theory, appreciation emphasizes assessing performances, products, and processes. While judgement resources evaluate human behaviors, appreciations typically add value to individuals' performances, texts, such as content of news, humans, among others. In the data, words of appreciation employed are *qualifies* and *quality* from GTV and TV3. The examples below illustrate how appreciation is used in news stories. The highlighted portions are the focus for the discussion.

#### Extract 4.9

Mr. Osei Owusu said the committee observed that given his *high standard of competence* and *integrity* (.) *forthrightness* (.) *astuteness* and *indebt appreciation of the law* he exhibited before the committee and *independence of thought* (.) the nominee **qualifies** to serve as Chief Justice of the Republic of Ghana↓ (GTV, 24th December, 2019).

As discussed earlier under affect resources, “high standard of competence and integrity, forthrightness, astuteness, and indebt appreciation of the law as well as



independence of thought” are praise resources in extract 4.9 used to validate the selection of the Chief Justice. Besides playing the role of praising the character of the chosen Chief Justice, these affect praise resources complement and enhance the appreciation resource, “qualifies” in this news item.

**Extract 4.10**

And talking about more pump stations (,) TOTAL Ghana has also opened its renovated service station at pig farm junction here in Accra (.) The retail outlet powered by solar energy is to render **quality** petroleum and other services to its clients (.) Well that’s it for business tonight remember you can get... (TV3, 12th February, 2020).

The instances of the use of appreciation resources in the data, as seen in Extracts 4.9 and 4.10 above enact a sense of value for what is being appreciated. In extract 4.9 for instance, GTV news attributes the appreciation resources, *high standard* and *qualifies*, to a named individual “Mr. Osei Owusu”, as seen in the news line.

Extract 4.9 demonstrates an instance where linguistic resources are employed in the data for the purpose of appreciation. The semantic implication of the use of appreciation lexis in this extract is to place value on the nominee who is said to be in a good position *to serve as Chief Justice of the Republic of Ghana* in terms of qualification and character. The appreciation resources, *high standard* and *qualifies*, give the nominee an added advantage and value above any other personality who contested that same position with him. Moreover, by the use of these appreciation resources, the members of the committee that sat to select the nominee are justifying the reasons why he was the one they selected. It is

important to state that the appreciation resource was employed right after positive judgment resources were used to give the candidate credibility as discussed above. As seen in the extracts 4.9 and 4.10, appreciation resources used in the data are only two, besides, they are not employed by subjects of the news per say but are attributed. The resources are used by a named person in the news story (*Mr. Osei Owusu*) to put value on the personality and character of another personality (*nominee*) in the news as illustrated in this news extract. Appreciation resources in the data for this study are also attributed.

Unlike the situation with judgement resources discussed above, where both negative and positive judgement resources were employed in the data, the two appreciation resources used are positive, even though they are attributed. The use of positive appreciation resources, in Thompson and Hunston's (2005) view, construct and maintain relations, in this case, between the individual who the appreciation resources have been attributed to as well as committee members and viewers of the news. Moreover, by positive appreciation, the position and stance of the committee on Mr. Yeboah's selection has clearly been stated as suggested by Stubbs (1996). In Martin and White's (2005) view, Appreciation resources are employed to place value on the person or entity being appreciated. In the next section, I pay attention to engagement resources in the data.

### **Engagement Resources in Primetime TV News Presentations**

In this section, I present Engagement resources employed in primetime news presentations. As mentioned earlier in Chapter 2 of this thesis, engagement expressions are for positioning the speaker or author's voice with respect to the

various propositions conveyed by a text, in this case, primetime news. According to Martin and White (2005), the purpose of disclaim resources in a text is to contradict an earlier proposition. In the data for the current study, instances of disclaim were observed from all four TV stations. Extracts 4.11 and 4.12 below illustrate the use of Disclaim in the data. Disclaim resources are highlighted in the news extracts below:

**Extract 4.11**

Right↑ so talking about inflation definitely the cedi comes to play and the cedi has remained stable against its major trading currencies for today (.)↑ Well↑ it remains stable or recorded some gains against the dollar and the Euro **but** depreciated slightly against the pounds by 0.15% there let's see what am talking about as the figures play out by itself

(TV3, 12th November, 2020)

In this news line, an Appreciation is given to the cedi on its trading performance as *stable*, and one that *has recorded some gains*. This positive comment is sharply contradicted in the news by stating that this same cedi, despite its appreciable performance, has ...*slightly depreciated against the pounds by 0.15%*... as seen in the news. The contradiction was introduced into the news line using a disclaim expression, *but*.

**Extract 4.12**

We take the Dagbon story again↓ (0.1) ↑it was a peace process that lasted for 17years and as the case with many disputes (0.1) the Dagbon chieftaincy conflict brought with its wake many negative repercussions

(0.1) For a long period of time economy of the area was virtually at a snail pace while an easy calm greeted potential investors (0.1) ↑ **However** after the performance of the funerals of the two late chiefs of Dagbon and the subsequent installation of a new Yaa Naa (0.1) Abdul Moomen reports that the people of Dagbon are beginning to enjoy the dividends of peace (GTV, 24th December, 2019).

In this news, we are told that the Dagbon dispute, which was bringing many negative repercussions to the people lasted 17 years. Right after this information, viewers are told that the situation has changed due to *the performance of their late chiefs' funerals and the subsequent installation of a new Yaa Naa*. The contradictory information to the earlier one given was introduced by the disclaim resource, *however*. A similar situation of the use of the disclaim resource, *but* is illustrated in Extract 4.13 below, where a minority member of parliament's (MP) assertion that the Communication's Minister's instruction for the closure of six of GBC's outlets is a *move to interfere in the work of the state broadcaster*. This news is quickly countered with the Minister's side of the story, thus, *But the communication's minister said the directive is in the national interest*. The counter information is introduced by the disclaim resource, *but* as seen below.

**Extract 4.13**

...Minority MP on the communications committee Samuel George and also MP for Ningo Prampram says the move is an interference in the work of the state broadcaster and is asking the national media commission to

step in (.) **But** the communication's minister said the directive is in the national interest (Joy News, 15th July, 2020)

In the data, frequently used disclaim resources are *but* and *however* as can be seen in Extracts 4.11, 4.12 and 4.13 above. The Disclaim words, as already indicated, introduce another view contrary to what has already been presented. In other words, anytime subjects of the news require a contradiction of what has already been reported on, they resort to engagement disclaim words, *but* and *however*. Martin and White (2005) put it this way: disclaim words are employed in a text to counter earlier propositions. Disclaim resources in a text render earlier expression in news contents either negated or countered by subsequent expressions using either *But* or *However*. In the data, the use of "but", for instance, shows a counter of an earlier submission by the Member of Parliament (MP) of Ningo Prampram on the move by the Communications Minister to close portions of Ghana Broadcasting Corporation (GBC). The Minister's counter statement, as mentioned earlier, was introduced by the disclaim *but*.

Another resource under engagement that was noticed in the data was proclaim. Proclaim resources, in Martin and White's (2005) view, express speakers' pronouncement or endorsement. A speaker endorses when he or she uses linguistic expressions to indicate his/her approval of an earlier submission. By implication, the role proclaim resources play in a text is opposite what disclaim resources depict in a text – proclaim approves, while disclaim contradicts. In the data, proclaim resources were found in GTV and TV3 news stories. When employed in the news, proclaim resources illustrated endorsement

of an earlier expression made by a colleague presenter, as could be observed in the instances below:

**Extract 4.14**

My name is Emmanuel Amegashie (0.1) the local news content of the news is brought to you by Delux paint (0.1) paint mu champion and Robert Frimpong Manso will do our sign language interpreter for the news this evening↓

**Right** ↑Parliament has unanimously approved the President's Chief Justice nominee Justice Anim Yeboah

**Extract 4.15**

We've got the details of these stories (.) for you here on ↑News 360 including news from the world of sports (.) the entertainment (.) streaming live all across the world on 3news.com (0.1) you can also watch us on DSTV channel 279 (PR2)

↑**Absolutely** and to our first story tonight (PR1)

(TV3, 13th April, 2018)

The proclaim resources *right* and *absolutely* employed in the news content in Extracts 4.14 and 4.15 respectively can be traced to the news presenters. In all instances of the use of engagement proclaim in the news, they act as endorsement signals by a presenter serving as a confirmation of an earlier expression by a co-news presenter. The semantic implication of the use of proclaim resources in the data is the creation of a friendly link between news presenters for cordial flow of information, as they endorse each other's statements while presenting the

primetime news. It is a way of assuring viewers that what each of the co-presenters just said is true and can be trusted. Hence, news presenters' resort to expressions such as *absolutely* and *right*, confirming Martin and White's (2005) finding that Engagement Proclaim resources express a speaker's endorsement of another speaker's earlier statement. It has been observed here that the proclaim resource is used to establish a rapport between news presenters.

Entertain, another category under the engagement sub-system, was identified from TV3 and Citi TV. Entertain resources are words or expressions used in a text for mitigations. These expressions offer a speaker the opportunity to present one of a range of possible positions (Martin & White, 2005). Instances of the use of entertain in the data are presented below:

**Extract 4.16**

↑NLC to suspend salaries of worker groups flouting Labour Act (0.5)  
↑Chief Justice says alternatively ADR **could** become mandatory (.) for all civil disputes before trial (0.4) ↑also ahead this evening (.) banking consultant Dr. Richmond Atuahene fears forced mergers within the banking industries **could** be disastrous (TV3, 13th April, 2018)

**Extract 4.17**

A Ho high court has denied ten members of the separatist group homeland study foundation bail hhh on grounds that they **may** interfere with police investigations and also commit further offenses (0.1) hhh counsel for the accused persons Emal Atsu Agbepke in his plea for bail argued that his clients are innocent and should be granted bail (Citi TV, 2019)

The two engagement entertain resources used in the data, *could* and *may*, are modal auxiliaries used mainly to express possibilities in the context within which they are employed. In the news context, it radiates the possibility of other propositions occurring other than what has been presented in that news text.

Under such circumstances, Martin and White (2005) and Bednarek (2010) believe that the Entertain resources create the avenue for other opinions using words such as *could* and *may*, as observed in this study.

The final Engagement category that was frequently employed in news contents from all four (4) TV stations and was identified throughout the news stories is attribute. They are words or expressions that relate fact or propositions (in this case, facts in each news report) to specific sources stated in the news. A speaker or an author attributes when he/she uses linguistic resources that acknowledge and reference the source of the information he/she is relaying to the public. The following are a few of the numerous instances of the use of attribute resources in primetime news presentations. I present two instances of the use of attribute from each station.

**Extract 4.18**

Mr. Justice Yeboah (0.3) took part in the 2020 presidential election petition as Chairman of the ethics committee of FIFA proposal for review of the constitution several areas (.) Mr. Osei Owusu **said** the committee observed that given his high standard of competence and integrity (.) forthrightness (.) astuteness and indebt appreciation of the law he exhibited before the committee and independence of thought ...



At a ceremony to officially close down the camp (.) the Commissioner of Human Rights and Administrative Justice Mr. Joseph Whittal **warned** that the commission would ruthlessly deal with anyone who subjects another person to inhumane treatment over witchcraft accusation↓ (GTV, 24th December, 2019).

Instances of the use of Engagement Attribute in Extract 4.18 are *said* and *warned*. They are used as reporting expressions (Bednarek, 2006) in the news to indicate the source of the information in the news line. In both instances of the use of the Attribute, *said* and *warned*, the sources are persons mentioned in the news. Thus, it was *Mr. Osei Owusu* who said, while *Mr. Joseph Whittal* was the one who warned in the second news under Extract 4.18 from GTV. By implication, these resources attribute the news content to where that information came from.

#### **Extract 4.19**

And still in the Asante region↓ pediatric surgeons at the Okomfo Anokye teaching hospital are **calling** for immediate steps to be taken to regulate access and sale of caustic soda on the open market (.) The pediatric surgeons **said** the alkaline substance is causing damage to a number of kids↓ and it was high time its access was regulated (TV3 PR1, 2019) hhh well↑ the minority in parliament has **threatened** to boycott the president's state of the nation's address next week if government fails to settle MP's common fund hhh (.) A crunch caucus meeting of the minority group on Wednesday considered the action stating Friday February 14 is

the deadline for this (.) MP for Bole Sampson Arhin spoke to Komla Klutse↓

(TV3 PR. 2, 12th February, 2020)

In Extract 4.19, we see attribute resources *calling* and *threatened* employed in the news lines from TV3. They are employed as sources or reference indicators in the news stories in which they are used, pointing viewers to the origin of those news reports. In the case of the use of the attribute *calling*, the ones *calling for immediate steps to be taken to regulate access and sale of caustic soda on the open market* are the *pediatric surgeons at the Okomfo Anokye teaching hospital*. In this instance, the news line is attributed to the pediatric surgeons of the Okomfo Anokye teaching hospital; however, the resource *calling*, is the Attribute indicator or signal that points us to the source of the news line as suggested by Martin and White (2005). Again, *threatened*, as used in the news is an attribute resource indicating that the threat is coming from the *minority in parliament*.

#### Extract 4.20

And also (.) in this bulletin (.) Communications minister Ursula Owusu-Akuful **rejects** claims by the minority in parliament to close down three of its terrestrial channels (.) But the minority **insist** the move is an interference in the work of the state broadcaster (.) and is asking the national media commission to step in (.) And in business...

Joy News' checks in some schools **reveal** that basic schools continue to grapple with insufficient PPEs 3 weeks after schools have reopened for academic work... (Joy News, 15th July, 2020).

In the news Extracts from Joy News, instances of the use of attribute, as presented in Extract 4.20 are *rejects*, *insist*, and *reveal*. In all instances of the use of the attribute resources, viewers are made to know the sources of the facts presented in the contents of the news by employing *rejects*, *insist*, and *reveal* in the news. In the data, it was Ursula Owusu-Akufo, the Communications Minister, who is said to have *rejected* claims by the minority in parliament that she had ordered for the closure of three of GBC's terrestrial channels. Subjects of the news employ attribute resources to inform viewers that they are only reporting what an authority figure has said as seen in the data. Martin and White (2005) and Bednarek (2010) agree that attribute resources or reporting expressions refer to the act of saying what has happened following direct or indirect quotes. In the data, both direct and indirect quotes are employed by subjects of the news when they use engagement attribute resources such as *rejects*, *insist*, and *reveal*. When you consider the use of the attribute resource *reveal*, used in Extract 4.20 above, it can be observed that *reveal* is employed to acknowledge those who revealed that information. It was Joy News who *revealed* the issue of *insufficient PPEs 3 weeks after schools reopened for academic work*, during the COVID-19 season. The word *reveal*, hence, becomes a resource used to show where that information originated from – Joy News.

**Extract 4.21**

We are still watching Citi newsroom on Citi TV (,) we are still staying on the nomination of justice Anim Yeboah hhh now the ranking member on parliament's constitutional legal and parliamentary affairs committee

Inusah Fuseini has expressed disappointment with his nomination (.)

**According to him** hhh the most senior justice at the apex court justice

Doste should have been given the nod hhh (Citi TV, 2019)

hhh Now speaking at a special hearing of the electoral commission in

parliament on Saturday (.) Jean Mensah also **dispelled** the notion that she

does not have respect for the house (.) There is more in the following

report by Duke Mensah Opoku (Citi TV PR2, 30th November. 2020).

The illustrations of the use of attribute in news presentations in the data, enact a sense of recognition of sources of information they present. These resources, as discussed earlier, signal the sources of the facts in the news contents. Attributive words such as *said, reveal, according to, expressed, told, announced, held, tasked, insist*, among many others were employed in the news to show acknowledgement of news sources. In all, attribute resources employed in the data were fifty-two (52). It was also observed that both positive and negative attribute expressions were used while acknowledging sources of news contents. Positive and negative attributes observed in the news include:

Positive attributes: *said, calling, according to him, expressed, held, announced, told, and others*

Negative attributes: *warned, threatened, rejects, dispelled, and others.*

Martin and White (2005) explain that positive and negative attributes “invoke two dialogic stances; acknowledgement and distance” (Martin & White, 2005, p.98).

Thus, the use of positive attributes, such as *said, reveal, calling* and *according to*, indicate acknowledgement. However, when negative attributes such as *warned*,

*threatened, rejects, dispelled* are employed in a text, then the speaker is taking a distancing position as far as that content in the news is concerned. By implication, negative attributes allow speakers, in this case, news presenters distance themselves from that part of the news content. Ultimately, attribute resources allow speakers or in the case, news presenters to disassociate themselves from the news content. This concept of attribute is seen as evidentials by Hyland (2005). In Hyland's (2005) interpersonal model of metadiscourse, attributes such as "according to", "states or says" are all evidentials, which basically make reference to the source of information.

#### **Graduation Resources in Primetime TV News Presentations**

The Appraisal category of graduation is concerned with values by which a speaker raises or lowers the interpersonal impact, force, or volume of his/her utterance, as discussed in Chapter Two of this thesis. In some contexts of the news data, the use of graduation resources, either blurs or sharpens the focus of their semantic implications (Martin & White, 2005). Graduation resources indicate the degree of positivity or negativity associated with a proposition. In the following extracts, I present graduation resources, as used in the data:

##### **Extract 4.22**

The National Council meeting at a national delegates' congress of the new patriotic party (NPP) has **formally** endorsed the ticket of president Akufo Addo and vice president Dr. M. Bawumia as the party flagbearer and running mate (.)

At a ceremony to officially close down the camp (.) the commissioner of human rights and administrative justice Mr. Joseph Whittal warned that the commission would **ruthlessly deal** with anyone who subjects another person to inhumane treatment over witchcraft accusation↓ (GTV, 24th December, 2019).

In this extract (4.22), the graduation resources used are *formally* and *ruthlessly deal*. The use of *formally* indicate the level of positivity associated with the endorsement of *the ticket of president Akufo Addo and his Vice Dr. Bawumia as the party's flagbearer and running mate*. The graduation resource *formally* makes the endorsement of the president's ticket sharply defined as suggested by Hood (2010). In Hood's (2010) view, such a graduation resource amplifies a core value in the text under consideration.

Concerning *ruthlessly deal with*, used in extract 4.22 from GTV, what Martin and White (2005) call degree of intensity associated with the said action supposed to take place if *anyone subjects another person to inhumane treatment over witchcraft accusation* is highlighted. The graduation expression *ruthlessly deal with* intensifies the action to be taken when one flouts the human rights rule.

### Extract 2.23

Ok↑ we will be counting the days and **definitely** (.) So that's Matthew Nyindam deputy majority chief whip member of parliament for Pandai constituency there↓ so next week is what he is talking about (,) we (ideological) will count the days to see if the MP's common fund is indeed↑ paid by next week↓

This is the rate at which the banks trade amongst each other and I always say that it will be **slightly higher** when you visit the forest market↓

(TV3, 12th February, 2020)

In TV3's instances of the use of graduation resources, *definitely* and *slightly higher*, there is a display of a degree of certainty *definitely* and degree of intensity *slightly higher* of the actions to be performed in the news contents. When we take a closer look at the graduation resource, *slightly higher*, we notice that it is used to blur the level of intensity of the rise in the rate at which banks trade in the forex market. In this instance, it was the news presenter who employed it to send a message of caution to viewers who would want to visit the forex market to exchange their foreign currencies. Graduation resources are said to be either “up-scale or down-scale, making them construe greater or lesser degrees of positivity or negativity” (Martin & White, 2005, p. 315). The use of graduation resource *slightly* has a down-scaling effect on the degree of intensity of the forest market rates in the news.

#### **Extract 4.24**

The national council of PTA and the Catholic Bishops Conference have called for suspension of WASSCE and BECE following the spike in COVID-19 cases in SHS (.). In a statement issued it read the situation is **really grim and deadly** (.). The health minister Kweku Agyeman Mensah says these cases are as a result of congestion in some SHS (.).

The world is changing ↑very fast and physical contact is becoming a thing of the past **particularly** due to the COVID-19 pandemic (.). Now joining me in the studio for more on this is Hans Siaw (.). He is head of digital banking support from UBA (()) (Joy News, 15th July, 2020).

#### Extract 4.25

In the Bono region more women are contesting in this year's district assembly elections specifically in the Sunyani municipality hhh (.) Now the number has increased **slightly** from three in 2015 to eight in 2019 hhh

(.)

Now the parliamentary candidate for NPP and the NDC in the Ejisu constituency have called on security agencies to ↑**seriously** pay attention to some hot spot identified in the area to avert possible instance of violence in the December polls (Citi TV, 30th November, 2020).

In each of these cases, the graduation expressions illustrate the degree of intensity of the actions reported over processes and qualities in their individual contexts of the news. This observation confirms the assertion that graduation covers assessment as to the degree of intensity over qualities and processes or verbal modalities of likelihood and infuses lexical choice that amplifies the core values in a text (Hood, 2010; and Martin & White, 2005). The graduation resources noticed in the data include:

*formally, ruthlessly deal, definitely, slightly higher, really grim and deadly, particularly, and seriously.*

When we take the graduation expression, *grim and deadly* used in Joy News' news content on the 15<sup>th</sup> of July 2020 in Extract 4.24 above, we notice that it is used to enact the degree of intensity of the COVID-19 situation in Ghana's Senior High Schools when they were asked to go back to school. In the news (extract 4.24), a call is being made by the *national council of PTA and Catholic*



*Bishops Conference... for suspension of WASSCE and BECE following the spike in COVID-19 cases in SHS.* In order to indicate the degree of seriousness associated with the situation, the council of PTA and the Catholic Bishops Conference in Ghana resorted to the Graduation resource, *grim and deadly* as in

“...in a statement issued it read the situation is really *grim and deadly*...”. It is worth noting that while positive graduation (*definitely, higher, formally*) sharpen the events being reported about in the news texts, negative graduation (*grim and deadly, slightly higher, ruthlessly deal*) rather blurs the context within which such resources are featured. It was again observed that in some cases, news content could possess two or sometimes all three evaluative parameters (Bednarek, 2010). Thus, there were some news stories that possessed almost all the parameters (Attitude, Engagement and Graduation) of Appraisal as proposed by Martin and White (2005). The extracts below illustrate instances in the data where two or all three of the evaluative systems were employed:

**Extract 4.26**

**Right** (.) ↑parliament has **unanimously approved** the president’s Chief Justice nominee Justice Anim Yeboah (.) The approval by the house was unanimously approved (.) Mr. Justice Yeboah **underwent** almost a five hour vetting from members of the appointment committee (.) answering questions pertaining to his career as a judge (.) (GTV, 24th December, 2019).

In Extract 4.25, the news from GTV begins with an engagement resource, *right*. It then proceeds with the graduation resource, *unanimously approved*. These

evaluative resources make the news quite meaningful and expressive, because *right* shows an endorsement of what the previous speaker just said while *unanimously approved* illustrate how the approval was done, construing the degree of positivity associated with that approval.

**Extract 4.27**

**According to** Maame Ewurabena Ansah health workers there **felt unsafe** and had to abandon some wards at the hospital (.). On hashtag save the health worker campaign championed by Joy News (,) Henry Kwesi Baidoo spoke to the pharmacist who **blamed** the situation on lack of PPEs (.). Join the hashtag save the health worker now↓ (.). And eh don't forget **this is being championed by Joy News (.) and the multimedia group (.)**

(Joy News, 15th July, 2020)

In this Extract, we observe the use of engagement resources, *according to* and *blamed*, as well as affect insecurity, *felt unsafe*. The engagement resources show or acknowledge the source of the information in the news while the Affect in/security resource illustrates the emotional stance of the health workers as depicted by the insecurity feeling resource, *felt unsafe*. The news line concludes with another attribute expression that acknowledges the source of this news report; thus, *...this is being championed by Joy News (.) and the multimedia group*. In this news, evaluative resources employed here are engagement (*according to*, *blamed*, *this is being championed by Joy News...*) and attitude affect (*felt unsafe*). Other instances of the multiple use of evaluative resources in the data are presented below:

#### Extract 4.28

Now the parliamentary candidate for NPP and the NDC in the Ejisu constituency have **called on** security agencies to **↑seriously** pay attention to some hot spot identified in the area to avert possible instance of violence in the December polls (.) hh Now as the police have identified 20 hot spot in Ejisu constituency (,) the leading candidates in the race John Kumah and George Kwanozey have **expressed their willingness** to commit to peace ahead of the 2020 general elections (.) hh Citi news' Edward Oppong Marfo has more on the following report (( )) (Citi TV, 30th November, 2020).

In Extract 4.28 from Citi TV, we observe the illustration of all three evaluative resources being used in one news text. First, engagement resource, *called on*, points viewers to the source of that news. Secondly, graduation resource, *seriously*, shows the degree of intensity associated with the attention the police are supposed to give to some identified hot spot areas in the Ejisu constituency, as presented in the news. Finally, Attitude Affect resource, *expressed their willingness*, is employed to indicate a feeling of satisfaction of measures put in place to handle hot-spot areas and the desire to commit to peace by all parties involved.

When resources of Appraisal function in this manner, they illustrate the evaluative nature of news texts, as seen in the data. In some cases, there is the combination of engagement and attitude resources as we have in Extract 4.26. There were other instances where engagement and graduation resources featured

together in the news stories, as noticed in Extract 4.27, while in Extract 4.28, Citi TV presented a news story in which all three Appraisal resources (Attitude, Engagement, and Graduation) were employed. The situation in a text where the evaluative resources interact, as seen here to bring out the meaning in the text is what Martin and White (2005) call “intersubjective positioning”. According to the authors, intersubjective positioning involves how evaluative meanings interact with each other and with values of attitude as evaluative orientations are built across the unfolding text. By implication, when the evaluative resources are employed in an unfolding text, they interact to enrich evaluative meanings in that text, as observed in the data. Interestingly, Hyland (2005) sees this as interpersonal metadiscourse where different evaluative resources interact in a text for the purpose of interpersonal stance and engagement.

In Extract 4.28, the news was on the call by the NPP and NDC parliamentary candidates for Ejisu constituency on the security agencies to pay attention to some hot-spot areas in that constituency to avoid any possible violence. In this news content, Engagement resource, *called on* signals attribute because the *called on* acknowledges the source of that news story, which is “...the NPP and NDC parliamentary candidates of Ejisu constituency” (Citi TV, 30<sup>th</sup> November, 2010).

Furthermore, the graduation resource, *seriously*, evokes the degree of intensity of attention expected from the security agencies in the identified hot-spot areas in the Ejisu constituency. The affect expression *willingness*, an attitude resource, is also employed in the closing report of this news story to construe a

feeling of satisfaction of the leading candidate towards commitment to peace ahead of the 2020 general elections.

Evaluation in news contents, as described in this chapter, brings out the intended meaning and exposes viewers to emotional (Attitude), Engaging and Graduating semantic implications associated with each news story, as suggested by Bednarek (2010) and Martin and White (2005). The semantic relevance of Attitude, Engagement and Graduation interacting in the data is to position viewers to comprehend the import of the news stories presented. In the data, we see a level of interaction between the evaluative resources from the news stories in each TV station. The display of the evaluative resources such as *approved, noted, added their voice, threatened, says, claims, said, according to, expressed, reports*, enables journalists to supply viewers with the sources of their news reportage as a major means of evidence; hence, its outstanding presence in the data. In all, fifty-four (54) attribute resources were employed in the data. In the view of Martin and White (2005), such attributes have the semantics of whether the purported source of the proposition is external or internal to the text. Similarly, the attribute resources are mainly external while others are internal, which grant subjects of news the opportunity to distance themselves from events being reported on by employing positive or negative attributes. Positive attributes such as *added their voice, called, said, reports, hinted, according to, believes, and secures* were used in the data, as can be seen in these news lines:

*...According to the IGP intelligence gathered indicates that the group has lined up a number of activities from 20th to 27th December to create problems for the country (GTV, 24<sup>th</sup> December, 2019)*

*Still in parliament (,) parliamentarians have added their voice to calls for interior minister to assure the house and Ghanaians of security for nurses and essential service workers... (TV3, 12<sup>th</sup> February, 2020)*

*At a virtual annual general meeting of the chairman of the board Albert Essien said the cleanup exercise by the securities and exchange commission played a key role (.) There's more in this report... (Joy News, 15<sup>th</sup> July, 2020)*

*...Diana Nguan reports that out of the 42 electoral areas only three women are contesting the elections... (Citi TV, 2019)*

Positive attributes, as used in the data, illustrated in the instances above, are reporting verbs that make subjects of news acknowledge the source (White, 2000) of the information they are presenting in the news. The semantic implication is that the subjects of the news are positioned as neutral, in terms of authorial voice. As suggested by Martin and White (2005), when speakers opt for acknowledging attributes such as “says, report, believe, according to” (p. 113), the rhetorical effect is that of neutrality in authorial voice, depending on the semantics of the text.

Under Hyland's (2005) interpersonal model of metadiscourse, such attributes are evidentials, whose presence enables writers or, in this case, speakers to mainly refer to sources of information. In the data, news subjects are positioned

in an authorial neutral voice as they present the news because the use of positive attributes (said, reports, according to) does not indicate where a speaker or author stands concerning the news stories being presented. Authorial voice is the stance an author or, in this case, a speaker takes regarding an issue the author or speaker is advancing (Martin & White, 2005). News subjects do not necessarily advance their personal views but those of the broadcasting institution and the viewers, hence, the frequent use of positive attribute for acknowledgement of news source.

Besides positive attributes, few negative attributes were spotted in the news from all four stations. They include *cautioned, rejects, blamed, rejected, dispelled, and threatened*. Such attributes, according to White (2000) and Martin and White (2005), are distancing indicators, such that news bulletins marked by such negative attribute allow news subjects to clearly disassociate or detach themselves from such news stories. Distancing indicators are linguistic resources employed in a text to disassociate speakers from the content of the text. Primetime news is expected to be conveyed to the public without interferences in the flow of facts in the news from subjects of the news, or the broadcasting institutions. In this study, instances of the use of negative attributes corroborate Martin and White's (2005) view that speakers or news presenters employ negative Attributes to stay away or disassociate themselves from some news contents. Some instances of the use of negative Attributes in the data for the purpose of speaker or authorial distancing or disassociation are illustrated in the news lines:

*...a banking consultant Dr. Richmond Atuaahene has cautioned the bank of Ghana not to force banks into mergers simply because they cannot raise*

*the new minimum capital requirement of 400million cedis by (.) December 31... (TV3, 18<sup>th</sup> April, 2018)*

*...in this package (.) company contracted by government to implement Accra intelligent traffic management project hhh Beijing Everyway traffic and technology ↑threatens to drag Ghana to the London courts of international arbitration following the abrogation of its contract...*

(Citi TV, 30<sup>th</sup> November, 2020)

*The alleged witches' camp at Nabuli in the Northern region has been closed down (0.1) and the 45 inmates reintegrated into society*

(GTV, 24<sup>th</sup> December, 2019)

*...At a ceremony to officially close down the camp (.) the commissioner of human rights and administrative justice Mr. Joseph Whittal warned that the commission would ruthlessly deal with anyone who subjects another person to inhumane treatment over witchcraft accusation↓...*

(GTV, 24<sup>th</sup> December, 2019)

In each instance of the use of negative Attribute in the news lines above, there is a clear distancing of the speaker from the news stories. This is in line with the view that under distancing resources of Attribute, “there is an explicit distancing of the authorial voice from the attributed material” (Martin & White, 2005. p. 113). The negative attributes are typically reported verbs: *cautioned*, *threatens*, *alleged*, and *warned*, which position speakers away from the content of the news. The use of these attributes detaches subjects of the news or speakers from the responsibility of what is being reported (Caldas-Coulthard, 1994). A close look at the news



content from GTV with the use of an attribute *warned*, will give an impression of both positive and negative implication of the attribute. This is because *warned* as a word has a negative connotation. However, its usage in the context of the news changes its sharp negativity connotation to a positive one. Hence, in the news, Mr.

Whittal is said to have *warned that the commission would ruthlessly deal with anyone who subjects another person to inhumane treatment over witchcraft*. This is a good call to stop all inhumane treatments against aged women in the name of witchcraft. In other words, unlike Martin and White's (2005) suggestions, some evaluative resources with specific effect in the text may have different contextual meanings which could affect their evaluative roles in the data.

In the data, both positive and negative attributes are used for the purpose of acknowledging source of news. However, while positive attributes depict neutrality of speaker or authorial voice concerning the news being presented, negative attributes explicitly detach speaker or subjects of the news from the responsibility of the content of the news.

Furthermore, as demonstrated earlier, Graduation resources featured quite well in the news from all the four TV stations, suggesting that in the data, besides attributing news content to named sources, there is also the use of gradable lexis to depict the degree of intensity of reported events, as suggested by Martin and White (2005) when they studied graduation resources in the "Haffer text" (p. 158). Graduation resources such as *unanimously*, *formally*, *definitely*, *particularly* and *subsequently* condition the meanings conveyed by the texts in which they are

used as increasing degrees of the events they are describing as used in the following news lines:

...The national council meeting at a national delegates congress of the new patriotic party (NPP) has **formally** endorsed the ticket of president Akufo Addo and vice president Dr. M. Bawumia as the party flagbearer and running mate... (GTV, 2020)

Ok↑ we will be counting the days and **definitely** get back to you for some answers if that is not done (.) So that's Matthew Nyindam deputy majority chief whip member of parliament for Pandai constituency there↓ so next week is what he is talking about (,) we will count the days to see if the MP's common fund is indeed↑ paid by next week (TV3, 12<sup>th</sup> February, 2020)

These Graduation resources show degree of intensity in the various contexts in which they are used. As proposed by Martin and White (2005), these Graduation resources construe greater degrees of positivity in the data. On the other hand, there were graduation resources that exhibited a rather lowering or decreasing degree of quality in the events reported on in the news. Such decreasing gradable (Graduation) resources in the news include *ruthlessly deal*, *slightly*, *really grim and deadly*. Graduation resources such as *slightly*, *ruthlessly deal* and *really grim and deadly*, as illustrated in the news lines above, are resources that construe greater degrees of negativity in the data. Once a Graduation resource such as *really grim and deadly*, for instance, is employed, the situation being described in the news receives a scale of negativity. Thus, Graduation resources in the data

construe either greater degree of positivity (*formally, particularly, subsequently*) or greater degree of negativity (*really grim and deadly, ruthlessly deal*).

Other evaluative resources like that of Attitude were sparingly employed, depicting where the interest of news subjects lies when it comes to evaluative use of language in news texts. This observation contradicts Sobeng's (2016) findings in a study she conducted on judges' comments in Ghana's Most Beautiful show. In that study, she observed the outstanding use of the Attitudinal resources in judges' comments after each contestant's performance. Thus, as judges used Affect to indicate their feelings (satisfaction/dissatisfaction, happiness/unhappiness, security/insecurity) about contestants' performances, they employed criticism under Judgement to correct contestants' errors while Appreciation resources were used to congratulate contestants whose performances judges rated as faultless. The opposite is the case in this study, since in news presentations, journalists, per their professional code of conducts are to refrain from presenting their feelings. Subjects of news are rather interested in reporting on factual issues supported by clear evidence; hence, their frequent resort to Attribute expressions under the Engagement resource as well as semiotic mediations (to be discussed in the next chapter).

It was observed in the data that Joy News employed the highest number of Attribute expressions in their news contents, followed by TV3, Citi TV, and GTV respectively. Interestingly, GTV news contents resorted more to Graduation expressions, suggesting that in their news content, events reported are usually graded using degree of intensity expressions like *higher* and *ruthlessly*, as

discussed here. TV3 and Joy News employed only two Graduation expressions in their entire news contents between 2019 to 2020, which suggests that subjects of TV3 and Joy News’ news presentations are not interested in grading the events they report as high or low, rather they prefer to supply viewers with the sources of their news stories as illustrated in their frequent use of Attribute resources, as can be seen in Table 2. The Table again affirms the observation that, in the data, for the purpose of objectivity, news texts do not employ attitude (emotional) expressions. Table 2 below summarizes the number of evaluative resources used in the news texts.

**Table 3: Frequency of Evaluative Resources in Primetime TV News Presentations**

TV STATIONS	Evaluative Resources			Total
	Attitude	Engagement	Graduation	
GTV	10	21	7	38
TV3	3	22	2	27
JOY NEWS	1	21	2	24
CITI TV	3	26	5	34

Table 2 above gives us an idea of the use of evaluation in news presentations from the four TV stations. It is worth mentioning that GTV appears to be generally more evaluative in their news items' reportage, followed by Citi TV, TV3, and Joy News respectively. Evaluative resources employed in the data allow for objectivity, as news presenters avoid emotional resources and *go for* engagement and graduation resources (Martin & Rose, 2007; Pan, 2015; Thompson & Hunston, 2006). When we look at GTV for instance, it can be deduced that they pay attention to meaning making through evaluative linguistic expressions. As a state-owned TV station, GTV has over the years been seen as not interesting when it comes to news presentations (Davor, 2015; Kpelle, 2017), especially in our current technology driven society. Kpelle (2017), for instance, found that between TV3 and GTV, TV3 aided their news presentations with current technological devices compared to GTV due to several challenges the station faces as a state-owned media house. In this study, however, GTV's news items displayed a frequent use of evaluative resources in their news stories proving their commitment to presenting viewers with the best, linguistically, as presented in Table 2 above. Surprisingly, TV3 and Joy News, perceived to offer their viewers the best, linguistically (Boamah, 2006; Kpelle, 2017), took the last but one and last places respectively when it comes to evaluation in their news texts. This observation suggests that under the spectacle of Appraisal theory, Citi TV and GTV primetime news presentations have what it takes to make evaluative relevance by using engagement and graduation expressions, which are very important to comprehending the content and context of news stories in an

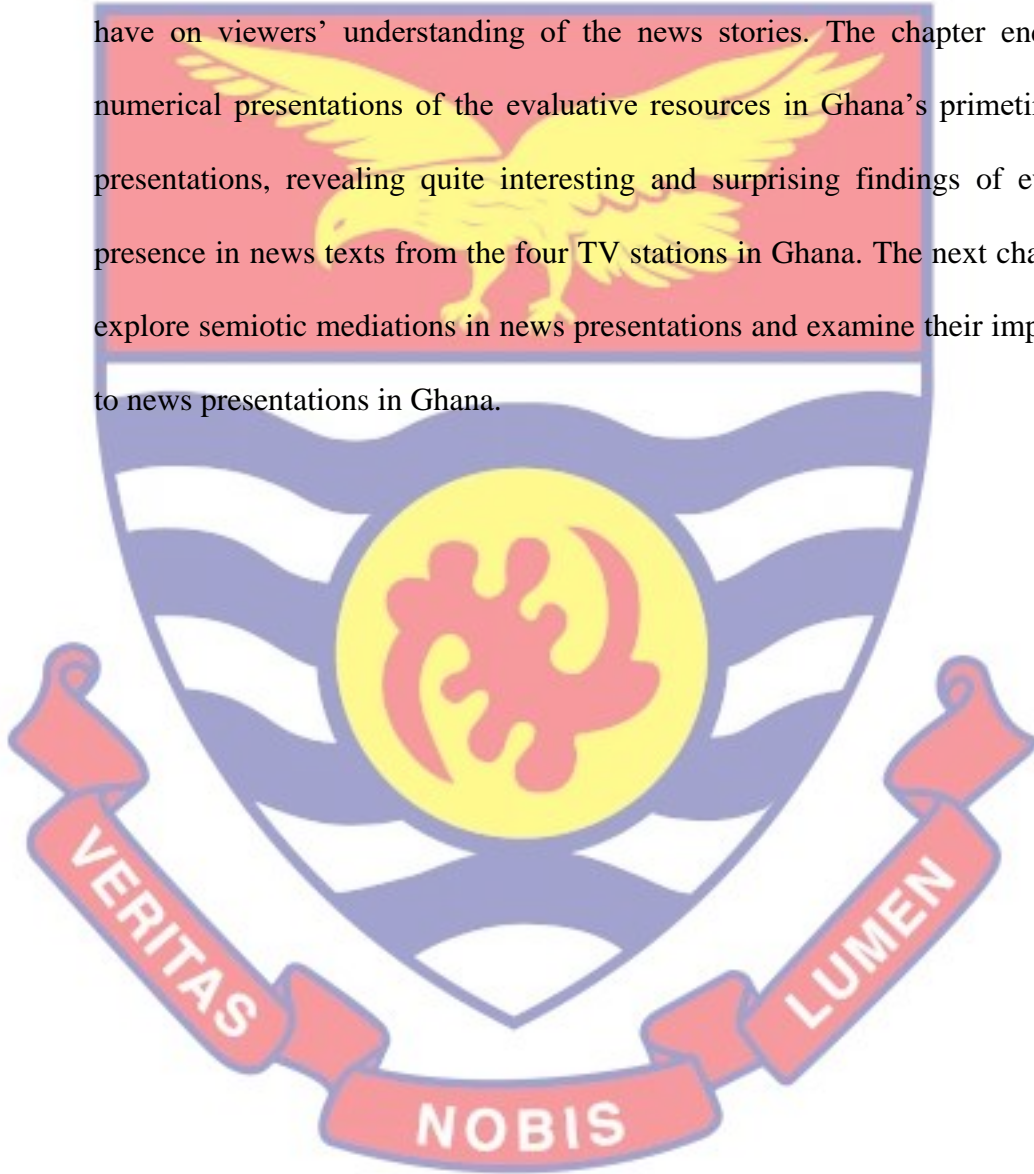
objective manner. Under the lens of Hyland's (2005) interpersonal model of metadiscourse, the outcome of the evaluative resources in this study shows that there are enough evidential resources (engagement attribute resources) in the news content from all four TV stations to conclude that news presenters focus on interpersonal stance and engagement with their viewers (Hyland, 2005).

The realization of attributed evaluative resources in this study (contrary to what Martin & White proposed in their theory) is a confirmation of the view of some scholars that Appraisal theory is an ongoing project that has specific contextual issues to be resolved (Bednarek, 2008; Hood, 2010; Ngo & Unsworth, 2015; and Martin & White, 2005). In Bednarek's (2008) study, using her corpus data on conversation, academic writing, and news reportage, she observed the possibility of a refined theorization of the affect category. Hood (2010) also extended the graduation system based on her analysis of research articles, while White (2012) extended the judgement category based on his work on a French and English cartoon translation. This study is suggesting that there should be the extension of the evaluative resources to cater for attributed versions of each evaluative resource since there are possibilities of attributed attitude, attributed engagement, and attributed graduation.

### **Chapter Conclusion**

This chapter sought to examine evaluative resources employed in Ghana's primetime news presentations and presents the meanings associated with frequently employed evaluative resources under the auspices of Martin and White's (2005) Appraisal framework. I first presented how evaluative resources

under each Appraisal sub-system were employed in the news, starting from Attitudinal resources, Engagement, and finally Graduation resources. The chapter further described instances where all or almost all evaluative resources received a feature in the same news texts highlighting the impact such news stories could have on viewers' understanding of the news stories. The chapter ended with numerical presentations of the evaluative resources in Ghana's primetime news presentations, revealing quite interesting and surprising findings of evaluative presence in news texts from the four TV stations in Ghana. The next chapter will explore semiotic mediations in news presentations and examine their implications to news presentations in Ghana.



**CHAPTER FIVE**  
**SEMIOTIC MEDIATIONS IN PRIMETIME TV NEWS**  
**PRESENTATIONS**

**Introduction**

The preceding chapter explored evaluation in news presentations from GTV, TV3, Joy News and Citi TV, and examined the import of Attitudinal, Engagement and Graduation lexis in news presentations in the news items from GTV, TV3, Joy News and Citi TV. In this chapter, I pay attention to semiotic use in primetime news presentations. The chapter describes how semiotics is employed as tools for meaning making and attention grabbing in news presentations. The chapter first explains semiotic mediations, as it applies to this study. It then proceeds to discuss Signs and Evidence and how this concept plays out in the four TV stations' news presentations. The chapter concludes with the relevance of semiotic mediation in primetime news presentations and observations from the data for this study.

**Semiotic Mediations in Primetime TV News Presentations**

Scholars who have explored semiotics explain that the focus of semiotics remains the study of signs, sign systems and nonverbal systems that aid communication process (Arackal, 2015; Bodker & Anderson, 2005; Halliday & Hasan, 1989; and Torop, 2012). The goal of semiotics in news, as indicated by these scholars, is when news content and images act side by side to offer meaning to the news. Thus, images used alongside content of primetime news have the capacity of making the news meaningful. Semiotic mediations, in this study,



represent co-construction of meaning between news text and images displayed on the screens during news presentations as contents of news are read. Instances of semiotic mediations in the data are presented below:

### Semiotic Mediations from GTV

Extract 5.1 (24<sup>th</sup> December, 2019)



In this image, we see three barrels, supposed to be barrels of oil. Out of the three barrels, two are standing and one is on the floor. The barrel on the floor has a hole at its bottom, representing emptiness or a half - filled barrel. This image, coupled with the prices of oil displayed on top of the barrels, has implications for the news content associated with this image. The verbal news line that accompanies this visual in Extract 5.1 is presented below:

**...on the commodity market light crude is selling at 60dollars per barrel...**

(GTV, 24<sup>th</sup> December, 2019)

As can be observed, both the visual or image and the verbal news text co-construct meaning by reiterating one another in the sense that, in the image, there are visible barrels, represented in its verbal form in the news text as “barrel”. We are made to know that the barrels have a particular oil, explained in the news text as “light crude oil”, which is meant to sell at 60 dollars, explaining the \$60.55 visual on the image in excerpt 5.1. Thus, we notice a level of reiteration of the meanings associated with the news item between the image and the news text (Hemais, 2014). This is what Royce (2002) calls inter-semiotic, where both image and verbal text co-contribute to the overall meaning of the news text.

Extract 5.2 (24<sup>th</sup> December, 2019)



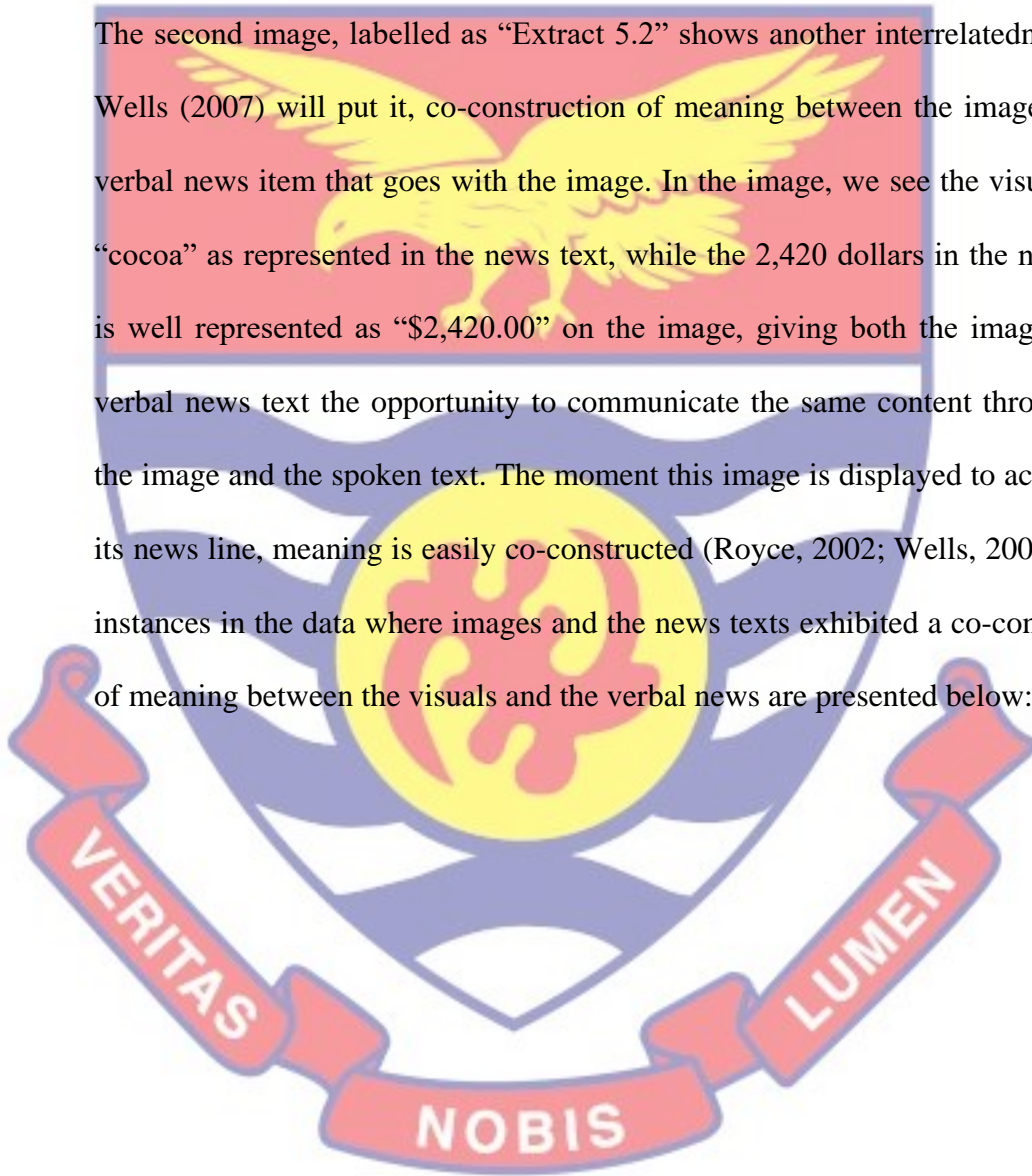
This image displays about five ripe cocoa pods with two of the five cocoa pods cut to reveal the fresh cocoa fruits inside them. These cocoa pods are placed on top of dried cocoa beans and price changes of the cocoa on the commodity market displayed on the cocoa image. The fresh cocoa pods and beans change to dried

cocoa beans when they are opened and dried. The news line that this image accompanied is:

**...and price of cocoa is now at 2,420 dollars a ton...**

(GTV, 24<sup>th</sup> December, 2019)

The second image, labelled as “Extract 5.2” shows another interrelatedness or as Wells (2007) will put it, co-construction of meaning between the image and the verbal news item that goes with the image. In the image, we see the visual of the “cocoa” as represented in the news text, while the 2,420 dollars in the news text, is well represented as “\$2,420.00” on the image, giving both the image and its verbal news text the opportunity to communicate the same content through both the image and the spoken text. The moment this image is displayed to accompany its news line, meaning is easily co-constructed (Royce, 2002; Wells, 2007). Other instances in the data where images and the news texts exhibited a co-construction of meaning between the visuals and the verbal news are presented below:



Extract 5.3 (15th June, 2020)



In this image, three men dressed in police uniforms are seen standing in front of a well painted building. The name of the one in the middle and his position are displayed on the screen. There is a microphone positioned towards his mouth, which shows that he is saying something. Besides the image of the three uniformed men, there is a written text on the image which says: **DCOP Ampofo Duku, Upper East regional police commander**. This text further explains the personality in the middle, who seems to have the microphone pointed towards him to speak. In other words, this news content is about what the police commander in the middle said. Another thing to note in this image is the insert of a sign language interpreter, who is well placed at the left-hand side bottom of the image to permit viewers who have hearing impairment to be part of the news session. I observed that only GTV gave room for sign language interpreters

during their primetime news presentations. This sign or image will make complete sense when the news that it is accompanying is known as presented below:

Extract 5.3 (News line)

An office complex has been completed and handed over to the Bolgatanga municipal divisional police command in the Upper East region (.). The Upper East regional police commander **DCOP Ampofo Duku called for concerted effort by government and non-governmental organizations to help create more divisional command offices to increase police visibility in the region (.)**

(GTV, 15th June, 2020)

This news line has made the image in Extract 5.3 meaningful, in that viewers are presented with the verbal version of what is present in the image, such that, DCOP Ampofo Duku, whose name is in the news text is visible both in the image and the news text. Furthermore, the personalities in the image are all police personnel, corroborating the news text, "...increase in police visibility", highlighting the views of Unsworth and Cleirigh (2011) that a situation such as this where the image and spoken text explain one another is known as image-language synergy.

Moreover, it is now easy to know why DCOP Ampofo Duku had a microphone.

What he said is captured in the news:

**Extract 5.3 (News line)**

**DCOP Ampofo Duku called for concerted effort by government and non-governmental organizations to help create more divisional command offices...**

It is clear that both the news and the images bring out the meanings in the news stories for viewers to understand what they are watching, leading to a clear instance of inter semiotic (Royce, 2002) in the news presentation.

**Semiotic Mediations from TV3 Primetime News**

**Extract 5.4 (TV3, 13<sup>th</sup> April, 2020)**



In Extract 5.4, the image of the school crest for Ejisuman Senior High School is displayed. On this crest is what the school stands for, **Knowledge and valour**. Beneath the logo is a hint on what the image is all about as far as the news is concerned. The text beneath the school's logo says, **Fallout from**

**Ejisuman SHS viral video**, with an instruction under the text that says “Reinstate 7 expelled students – Child Rights International. One gets the impression that there is a video of 7 Ejisuman Senior High School students. Again, there is a call from child rights international for the reinstating of the students. This image cannot be understood if the news text below does not accompany it:

Extract 5.4 (News line)

And↑ now child rights international said **the decision to expel seven female students** from the boarding house of Ejusuman Senior High School is inappropriate↑ hhh Executive director Bright Appiah is asking the Ghana Education Service to reinstate them and help them with counselling (.) The students were expelled after a viral video of them in explicit sex language which caused public uproar (TV3, 12<sup>th</sup> February, 2020)

In Extract 5.4 the verbal news text is about Ejusuman SHS. This fact is projected in the image. The image is not presenting another school’s crest but that of Ejusuman SHS as presented in the news line. Secondly, the major content of this news item is the reinstatement of seven expelled students by child rights international. In both the image and the news text, as can be seen in Extract 5.4, this content is presented. Thus, the image gives a visual representation of the spoken text (Royce, 2002; Unsworth & Cleirigh, 2011), leading to a firm interrelatedness of meanings in the news content (Wells, 2007).

It is worth noting that even though the news line here makes the import of the image in Extract 5.4 relevant, there is a contradiction because this is a school that stands for knowledge and valour. Yet, girls from this same school have displayed a character that is totally different from the motto of the school. The image and the news content are co-constructing meaning in the text (Wells, 2007) or news story. However, in this particular image, the behaviour exhibited by the students, as reported in the news line, does not properly project the motto of the school, which is boldly displayed on the school's crest in the image labelled as "Extract 5.4". This indicates that sometimes, there could be some contradictions between the image displayed on the TV screens and the news contents being presented. In such instance, images and news contents do not necessarily co-construct meaning but contradict aspect of the meaning in the news content.

**Extract 5.5 (12th February, 2020)**



The image in Extract 5.5 shows a gentleman dressed in the Ghana Armed Forces' uniform, having a smiling face. The text beneath the image says, "Ghana Armed



Forces appointment; Maj. Gen. Thomas Oppong Peprah now Chief of Army Staff". The image and the text on the picture give viewers the impression that this man in the picture is an Army officer in the Ghana Armed Forces and that his name is Thomas Oppong Peprah. Moreover, his position in the Army, as indicated in the text on his picture, is Major General. That notwithstanding, one would still wonder what his picture is doing on the screen during the news presentation if not for the accompanying news below:

Extract 5.5 (News line)

Let's move on to our first story this evening (.) and president Akufo Addo in consultation with the council of state has appointed **Major General Thomas Oppong Peprah who is currently chief of staff of the general headquarters as the new chief of army staff effective February 19(.)**A statement signed by the director of communications Eugene Arhin said this follows the completion of duty tour and retirement from the Ghana armed forces hhh of major general William Ayamdom (TV3, 12th February, 2020)

The news text mediates viewers' understanding of the sign presented in Extract 5.5 above. Thus, the pictorial representation of news contents in the data has the capacity of providing viewers with the opportunity to relate better with news stories. The image in Extract 5.5 and its verbal news line, exhibit what Hemais (2014) calls congruence between what is being portrayed in the visuals and their corresponding verbal news texts. In the case of Extract 5.5, a viewer gets to know who Major General Thomas Oppong Peprah is through his image displayed on the

TV screens as the news concerning him is read. This suggests that semiotics serves as an avenue for proof of what is being read (Miller, 1998).

**Extract 5.6 (12th February, 2020)**



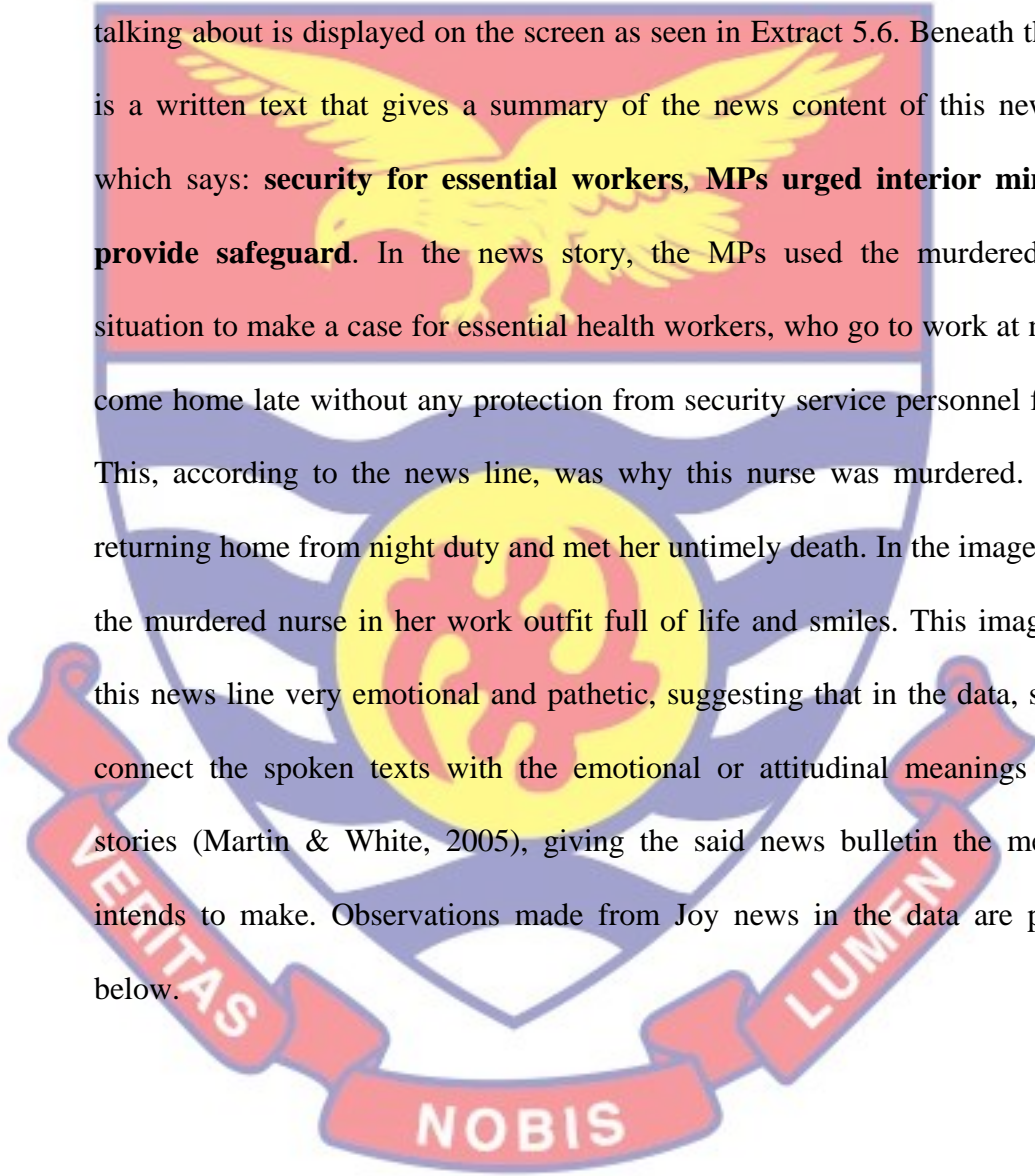
Still in parliament (,) parliamentarians have added their voice to calls for interior minister to assure the house and Ghanaians of security for nurses and essential service workers (.) **The call comes from the back of the murder of a 34-year-old nurse and mother of three after she was returning from work in the Asante region**

(TV3, 12th February, 2020)

In Extract 5.6, the incident of the murder of a 34-year-old nurse and mother of three is dead as could be seen in the news line:

“... The call comes from the back of the murder of a 34-year-old nurse and mother of three after she was returning from work in the Asante region”.

For viewers to relate to this story very well, the picture of the nurse they are talking about is displayed on the screen as seen in Extract 5.6. Beneath the image is a written text that gives a summary of the news content of this news story, which says: **security for essential workers, MPs urged interior minister to provide safeguard.** In the news story, the MPs used the murdered nurse’s situation to make a case for essential health workers, who go to work at night and come home late without any protection from security service personnel for them. This, according to the news line, was why this nurse was murdered. She was returning home from night duty and met her untimely death. In the image, you see the murdered nurse in her work outfit full of life and smiles. This image makes this news line very emotional and pathetic, suggesting that in the data, semiotics connect the spoken texts with the emotional or attitudinal meanings in news stories (Martin & White, 2005), giving the said news bulletin the meaning it intends to make. Observations made from Joy news in the data are presented below.



## Semiotic Mediations from Joy News

Extract 5.7 (15th July, 2020)



The image here depicts a group of young men pushing one another while others are watching on. It could easily be described as a fighting scene due to the rioting nature of the image being depicted here. Besides, we see those watching on in their nose masks, while the ones whose hands seem to be pushing others are disregarding the COVID-19 protocols of wearing nose masks and observing social distancing. Further, whereas some onlookers seem to be in the motion of attempting to stop those fighting, others are not showing any sign of getting involved in the situation at all. This image says a lot about the Ghanaian society generally; while some are busily disregarding the rules governing us as a country, a few are trying to stop and hinder them from destroying the very fabric of our make, but others appear unmoved by what the majority are doing to tamper with

the beauty of our societal structure. The image under Extract 5.7, depicts what happens in most Ghanaian public places, where some are fully participating positively or negatively, while others just look on and do nothing. Due to this, those fighting seem to have a larger space compared to the rest, as depicted in the image.

The text beneath the picture, which says: **voter registration blues, health protocols disregarded as scuffle breaks out in Krowo constituency** is a true reflection of the scene depicted in the image. The written text beneath the image serves as a summary of what this news story is all about. When we look at the first caption: **voter registration blues**, which literally means challenges associated with the voter registration process, it is clear that the news line is about the difficulties associated with the voter registration procedures in the Krowo constituency. This caption leads viewers away from any form of doubt as to what the image may be trying to portray. Instead, viewers are supplied with semiotics, both visuals and texts (written and spoken) to make it easier for viewers to follow the news story. The semiotics presented here becomes even more pronounced when the news story associated with it is read:

Welcome back to Joy News Prime (.) Now on your election headquarters (.) **We are going straight to Krowo constituency where voter registration in the Krowo constituency was suspended for about 30 minutes and COVID-19 health protocols disregarded after a scuffle broke out between some applicants who had come to register at one of the registration centers (.)** It is still unclear what caused the fight (.) But

some persons involved in open brawl alleged the busing of non-residence in the registration center (Joy News, 15th July, 2020)

In a period where we are asked to observe COVID-19 protocols, the semiotics presented here in Extract 5.7 shows the exact opposite, which could be the reason why it was seen as newsworthy enough for Joy News to decide to present it as a major news bulletin as indicated in the news line: “COVID-19 health protocols disregarded after the scuffle broke out between some applicants...”

Extract 5.8 (15th July, 2020)

REG	DIGICUT				
REG	AGA				
REG	ALW	1,000	0.07		
REG	AGL				
REG	BOPP				
REG	CAL	17,300	1.71		
REG	CLYD				
REG	CMLT				
REG	CPC				
REG	EGH	200	11.25		
REG	ETI	7,700	0.17		
REG	FML	100	17.30	17.40	3,000
REG	GCB				

**GHANA STOCK EXCHANGE**  
Revenues decline by GHS6 million in 2019  
PRIME DEPUTY EDUCATION MINISTER || GOVERNMENT BEGINS INSTALLATION OF CCTV CAMERAS NATION

JOY NEWS  
19:43

As part of the primetime news, the business news makes a major feature in the data.

Hence, this semiotics that captures the exchange rates and the happenings on the interbank trade markets is presented on our screens. The semiotics here depicts the Ghana's Stock Exchange, and the highlighted third slot on the table is Ghana's position. This is telling the businessmen in Ghana what is happening in the area of

stocks as far as Ghana is concerned so they can know how to go about the management of their investments. Besides the table, which shows how Ghana is faring on the stocks market, there is the written aspect of the semiotics displayed on the screen, which says: **Ghana Stock Exchange, Revenue decline by GHS6**

**million in 2019.** The relevance of this written aspect of the semiotics is that it pits the semiotics into its proper spectrum because once this written text is supplied beneath the image, viewers obtain a clearer view of what this news story really means. The major point to this news report has been captured in the written semiotics beneath the image on the screen, which was to inform viewers that there was a decline in Ghana's revenue on the stock market in the year 2019. The spoken news related to this image for clearer understanding is presented below:

**The Ghana stock exchange (GSE) has recorded a 6million cedi reduction in revenue for the year 2019 financial year as compared with the previous year (.)** The performance is attributed to apprehension among some investors over the feature of the exchange (.) At a virtual annual general meeting of the GSE chairman of the board Albert Essien said the cleanup exercise by the securities and exchange commission played a key role (.)

(Joy News, 15th July, 2020)

The image and the news story together help businessmen and women and the general public to know how to go about their business strategies knowing what is happening on the stocks market in Ghana. This is a re-enforcement of meaning between semiotics and the news stories in the data (Wells, 2007).

Extract 5.9 (15th July, 2020)



For Extract 5.9, we see several beds packed in a room without occupants. It seems to be a large room and the beds look like the ones used in the hospitals, having wheels under them for easy and quick movement of patients from one spot to another. Again, there are medication boxes beside the beds, confirming that the beds here could be hospital beds. Beneath the image, there is a text that indicates that there are 115 hospital beds meant for COVID-19 treatment center yet to be used. This image alone does not fully communicate to viewers what this represents in the news. The possible confusion in the minds of viewers is cleared the moment the news below is read, which gives the image a clearer picture of its importance in the news:

Now health authorities have secured a facility for setting up the biggest COVID-19 treatment center so far in the Ashanti region (.)

↑The 115-bed capacity facility at Suase in the Atwiman Wabeagyee



municipality comes with intensive care unit and staff accommodation

(.) hh the facility was made available by the environment minister

**Prof. Kwabena Frimpong Boateng** (.) Health minister Opoku Agyeman

Manu is ↑excited about the development (.) He told journalists the location

of the facility makes it accessible even to patients from Ahafo (,) Bono (,)

Western North and other regions (Joy News, 15th July, 2020)

In the news, we understand the full import of the image. Thus, viewers are made

to know what the beds are meant for “COVID-19 treatment center”, where they

are located (in the Ashanti region) and who provided the beds – **Prof Kwabena**

**Frimpong Boateng**, as seen in the news line,

Now health authorities have secured a facility for setting up **the biggest**

**COVID-19 treatment center** so far **in the Ashanti region** (.) ↑The 115-

bed capacity facility at Suase in the Atwiman Wabeagye municipality

comes with intensive care unit and staff accommodation (.) hh the facility

was made available by **the environment minister Prof. Kwabena**

**Frimpong Boateng**.

Both the image and news text together make the news story worth viewing. The

news text plays a major role in bringing the meanings behind the signs to bear in

the data.

It was Saussure (1983) who observed that studying the role of signs as part

of social life encapsulates the import of semiotics. Furthering Saussure’s

observation, Bodker and Anderson (2005) added that a sign or an image basically

represents something else as the semiotics in this research are representing the

news contents. The images from Joy News, just as those from the other TV stations explored above, aid the communication process (Torop, 2012) of the news content they correspond. Interestingly, besides the semiotics and the spoken aspect of the news, the other news headlines are seen scrolling underneath the written semiotics on the visuals. These scrolling news headlines inform viewers the other news stories they should expect in the course of the bulletin. This strategy occupies almost all the senses of the viewers, including making viewers anticipate what they should expect next as they watch each news line. In other words, the semiotics employed in primetime news, serve as tools for evidence in news content, source of capturing viewers' attention and a platform for anticipating the next news story. Evidence, appropriately displayed during news presentations clears doubts in the minds of viewers and captures their full attention throughout the one-hour news session.

### Semiotic Mediations from Citi News

Extract 5.10 (30th November, 2020)



In Extract 5.10, there are some unfixed traffic system and other machines on the screens of Citi TV. On the top right corner of the image is the semiotics: Live, the election Bureau and the time, which is 20:07 (equivalent to 8:07 pm in the night).

This sign shows that this news story was presented live at 8:07pm on a station that

prides itself in the motto, the Election Bureau, which literally means, the station

that maintains the integrity of the election process. The sign is telling viewers that

Citi TV can be trusted, especially when it comes to news on elections. Apart from

this sign, there are countless number of boxes that can be seen besides the

displayed traffic gadgets. The text beneath the image gives us a feel of what the

news on this image is going to be and it says: **Accra intelligent traffic system,**

**Beijing everyway LTD threaten to sue government over plans to abrogate**

**contract.** As observed in Joy News, there are scrolling news headlines beneath

the written semiotics which is giving viewers a hint on what to expect in the

subsequent bulletins. A way of saying there is more news ahead, hence, viewers

should not move. In this particular semiotics, the scrolling news headline says:

**Ghana now net exporter of foodstuffs – Akufo Addo.** The scrolling news give

hints to viewers concerning what to look forward to as the news progresses. In the

case of this news line, it presupposes that ahead in the news, there will be a report

on President Akufo Addo's claim that Ghana is now net exporter of foodstuffs.

The impression from the visuals associated with this news line is that of a traffic

system company established in Accra, threatening to sue the government of

Ghana for cancelling their contract. A viewer could ask questions like; where are

these people (Beijin everyway traffic Limited) from to have such boldness to

decide to sue a whole Ghana government? And why should the company sue the government if the government says it will no longer be interested in the contract it earlier had with them? These questions are clarified as the news below is presented while the image is on the screen:

The background of the text is a large, semi-transparent watermark of the University of Cape Coast logo. The logo features a shield with a yellow eagle in the center, a red banner at the top with the word 'VERITAS', and a red banner at the bottom with the word 'LUMEN'. The shield is divided into sections of red, white, and blue. The text is overlaid on this watermark.

**Moving ahead management of Beijing Everyway traffic and lighten technology company Limited (.) the entity contracted by government to implement the Accra intelligent traffic management project has hinted that they will file a suit against government in the London court of international arbitration (.)** Now the company was contracted in 2018 to implement the project worth hh a 100 million dollars after parliament's approval ↑but hh on Friday the bill was relayed before parliament but this time with the contract agreement which is between the government of Ghana represented by the ministry of national security, Huawei's technology company limited and the China national import and export cooperation (.) Now the bill was subsequently passed on Saturday under the certificate of urgency (.) there is more on this report

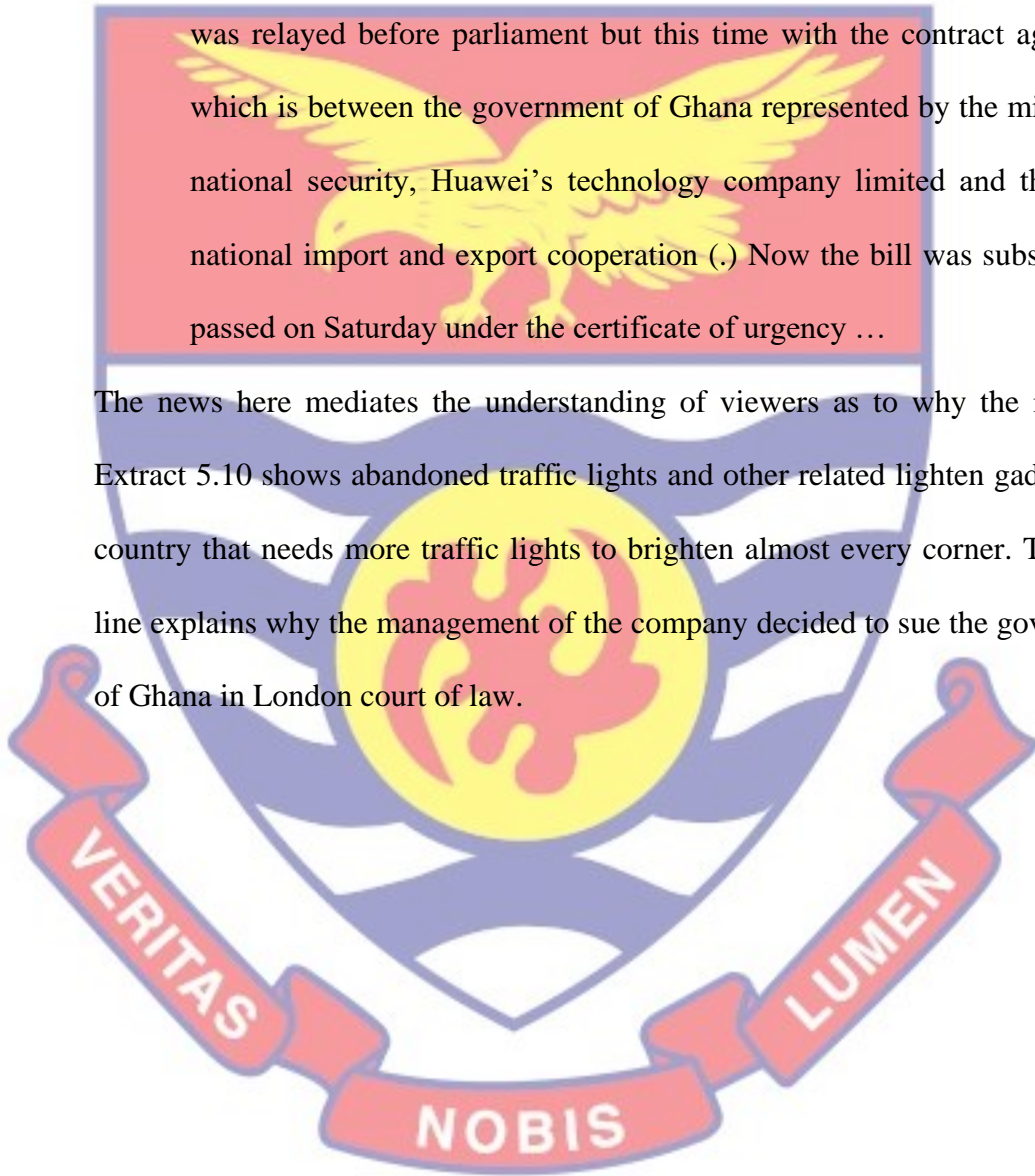
(Citi News, 30th November, 2020)

The question on who the Beijin Everyway Traffic LTD people are is answered by the first line of the news story, thus: ...management of Beijing Everyway traffic and lighten technology company Limited (.) **the entity contracted by government to implement the Accra intelligent traffic management project** has hinted that they will file a suit against government.... This news line resolves

the questions on who they are. The second question on why they should bother to sue the government if it is no longer interested is addressed in the news line:

...the company was contracted in 2018 to implement the project worth hh a 100 million dollars after parliament's approval ↑but hh on Friday the bill was relayed before parliament but this time with the contract agreement which is between the government of Ghana represented by the ministry of national security, Huawei's technology company limited and the China national import and export cooperation (.). Now the bill was subsequently passed on Saturday under the certificate of urgency ...

The news here mediates the understanding of viewers as to why the image in Extract 5.10 shows abandoned traffic lights and other related lighten gadgets in a country that needs more traffic lights to brighten almost every corner. The news line explains why the management of the company decided to sue the government of Ghana in London court of law.



Extract 5.11 (30th November, 2020)



This is another Citi TV semiotics, depicting the station's logo on the top left-hand side, right on the face of the Member of Parliament behind the man standing behind Jean Mensa, the electoral commissioner. On the top right-hand side of the image is written: Live, the electoral bureau, indicating what the station stands for when it comes to news presentations. The setting looks like Ghana's parliament and the woman speaking is Ghana's electoral commissioner – Jean Mensa. The text right under the image gives a closer view of what this image is conveying to viewers, thus: **Parliamentary proceedings, we are 95% ready to deliver credible polls in December – Jean Mensa.** We see two women and two men. Again, the semiotics in this excerpt indicates the involvement of both gender in Ghana's parliament. The rest of the concerns are immediately resolved by the story line on this image as presented below:

Now the electoral commission says that it is 95% ready to deliver successful credible (,) fair and orderly elections on December 7 (,) hhh

**According to the chairperson of the commission Jean Mensah issues related to procurement logistics on the conduct of elections within a safe environment despite the advent of COVID-19 have been trashed out (,) hh Now speaking at a special hearing of the electoral commission in parliament on Saturday (,) Jean Mensah also dispelled the notion that she does not have respect for the house**

(Citi News, 30th November, 2020)

At the time this news was being presented, Ghana was close to the 2020 elections. She was called to appear before the parliament of Ghana to clarify some concerns raised by some Ghanaians about the credibility of that year's elections, concerning issues on procurement logistics as in ...according to the chairperson of the commission Jean Mensah **issues related to procurement logistics on the conduct of elections within a safe environment despite the advent of COVID-19 have been trashed out.** The news line here provides viewers with one of the issues she was speaking to: concerns about her attitude towards the parliament house of Ghana, seen in the news line ...speaking at a special hearing of the electoral commission in parliament on Saturday (,) **Jean Mensah also dispelled the notion that she does not have respect for the house...**

The observation here, as seen in the semiotic mediations of the other TV stations earlier presented above is that there is a link between the visuals and their corresponding news presented, known as co-construction of meaning (Wells,

2007) or inter semiotic (Royce, 2002), making primetime news, as seen in the data, understandable in terms of meaning-making. Admittedly, the mediation of semiotics in news makes news contents interesting, understandable, meaningful and viewer friendly.

**Extract 5.12 (30th November, 2020)**



Now **begging on the streets for survival is an act that many citizens usually frown upon extensively** hh due to the pressure they feel to give out to a beggar (,) hh the conditions of some of the beggars particularly those with one disability or the other sometimes drains potential givers psychologically (.) But not many Ghanaians are even aware that begging is illegal in Ghana and that both the beggar and the one who gives commit a ↑crime (.) In this report my colleague eh Akosua Okyere finds out from some beggars on the streets (Citi News, 30th November, 2020)



The image projected in Extract 5.12 concerns the issue of begging on the streets of most major towns in Ghana. The text beneath the image says, **street begging, persons living with disabilities appeal for structured support system.** In this image, a disabled woman is seen begging looking in the direction of a road user in his/her private car on the street. This scene is highlighting the part of the news content below the image that says:

... the conditions of some of the beggars particularly those with one disability or the other sometimes drains potential givers psychologically (.).

A close look at this begging sign shows that the road user, who the beggar is begging from is not showing any sign of giving her anything. This drama (which usually happens on the streets of Ghana), projects the aspect of the news story that says,

...begging on the streets for survival is an act that many citizens usually frown upon extensively due to the pressure they feel to give out to a beggar (.).

Both the visual and the news text corroborate to drive home the theme of the news story. In the next section, I present the major themes observed in the above discussions.

### **Semiotic Mediations Bring Out Meanings in News Stories**

The images from Citi News, just like the ones from TV3, GTV and Joy News, bring out meanings in news stories. In the data, the first role that semiotics plays is bringing out the inherent meaning out of news stories. As observed in

Extracts 5.4, 5.6, 5.8, 5.11 and 5.12, the contents of these news stories came out clearer due to the colorful presence of the visuals and written texts attached to the spoken news. This observation, where semiotics is used to bring out meanings in news stories out has something in common with Hyland's (2005) endophoric markers under his interpersonal model of metafunctions. Under Hyland's endophoric markers, figures and images are used in a text to explain what an aspect of the text is trying to imply. In this data, however, the visuals are not only referred to, but are part of the spoken news and reinforce the meanings in each news story. Thus, semiotic mediations in primetime news presentations lead to a co-construction of meaning between the visuals and the news content presented. This theme is discussed in the next section.

### **Semiotic Mediations Co-construct Meanings in News**

Semiotic mediations in the data co-construct meanings in news. When visuals are employed alongside the written and spoken texts in primetime news, they join to construct a specific meaning from the news stories. As the visuals come on board with their meanings, so does the written and spoken texts. These three components collaborate to construct the kind of meaning that the news stories are supposed to put across. Such an observation corroborates Wells' (2007) findings that semiotics in a text mainly co-construct and reinforce meanings. It has already been indicated in this dissertation that signs and visuals that act among themselves give news contents particular meaning (Arackal, 2015; Bodker & Anderson, 2005), which couldn't have been achieved without the semiotics.

It has been noted that semiotic mediations in the data have implications for news acceptance and trustworthiness, as well as major evidence tools. Evidence provided in news presentations mediated through semiotics, as observed in this study, makes news presentations in Ghana trustworthy. This observation could be one of the reasons why, according to GeoPoll's research conducted in 2019, most Ghanaians accept primetime news as credible source of information. The concept of visualization and the availability of images is said to have been listed as a major selection criterion for newsworthiness (Roessler et al., 2011). Despite the relevance associated with semiotics in effective communication and especially, news presentations, some scholars have raised concerns about the relationship between signs and evidence. In the next section, I pay attention to the concept of signs and evidence and how it plays out in this research.

### **Signs and Evidence**

In an era where people are accustomed to technology, face to face interactions are on the gradual decline. People access the social media often through various semiotics. Signs, as explained earlier in this thesis, are non-verbal systems (Torop, 2015), functioning as a medium for social or interpersonal interaction (Vygotsky, 1978) to give a text its intended meaning. Evidence in news is very important, because when signs and news texts interact, they enrich the meaning potential in that news presentation. Moreover, it is the relevant evidence supplied during news presentations that makes news stories trustworthy. One provides evidence when there is a sign to affirm what a speaker is presenting. Again, signs in any society's lexicon make up a rich vocabulary of colorful

communications (Encyclopedia Britannica, 2020). Semiotics plays a major role in making the vocabulary of a text meaningful. Harcup and O'Neill (2001, p. 274) have explained 'if a story provided a good picture opportunity, then it was often included even when there was little obvious intrinsic newsworthiness'. Although according to scholars like Eco (1976), Chandler (2016) and White (2016), there are insignificant contribution of signs in our daily lives, they are effective avenues for colorful communications and important tools for newsworthiness in news presentations (Harcup & O'Neill, 2001) and most importantly, as a source of evidence in news as emphasized in this study. In the data, different signs were presented on the TV screens, in support of the verbal news contents, to serve as an avenue for evidence. Instances of this observation in the data are presented below:

**Extract 5.13**

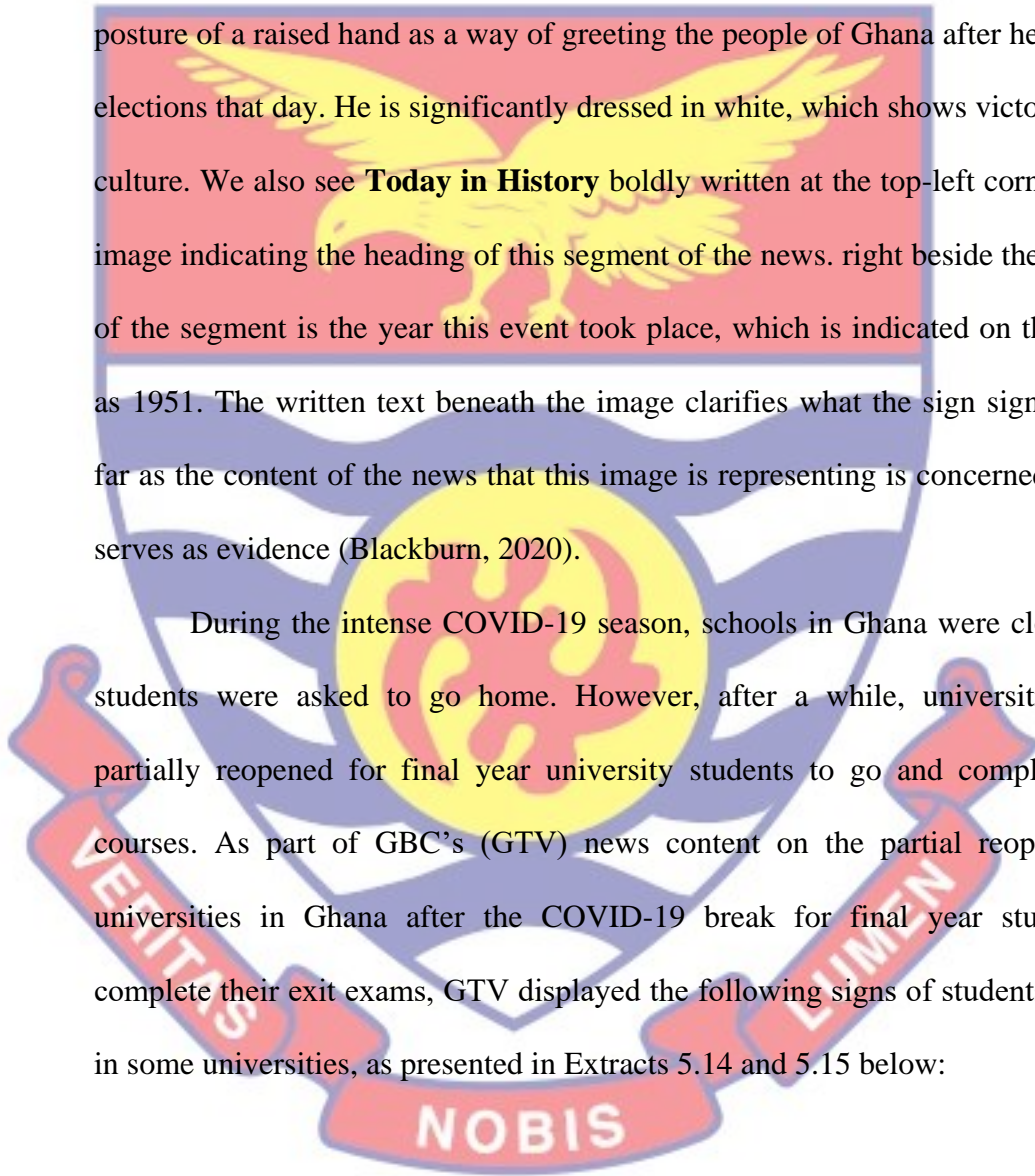


(TV3 News, 11th February, 2019)

In TV3's 360 primetime news, there is a segment known as **Today in History**. During this segment, the station educates viewers on the significance of that day in the history of the country. On this particular night's segment, since it was 11<sup>th</sup> February, viewers were being treated to the importance of that day in Ghana's

history. It was the day that Ghana's first president, Osagyefo Dr Kwame Nkrumah, won the first parliamentary elections in the then Gold Coast. For a colorful and rich presentation of that news story, TV3 displayed the image in Extract 5.13 as a means of evidence. On the image, we see Kwame Nkrumah's posture of a raised hand as a way of greeting the people of Ghana after he won the elections that day. He is significantly dressed in white, which shows victory in our culture. We also see **Today in History** boldly written at the top-left corner of the image indicating the heading of this segment of the news. right beside the heading of the segment is the year this event took place, which is indicated on the image as 1951. The written text beneath the image clarifies what the sign signifies. As far as the content of the news that this image is representing is concerned, it only serves as evidence (Blackburn, 2020).

During the intense COVID-19 season, schools in Ghana were closed and students were asked to go home. However, after a while, universities were partially reopened for final year university students to go and complete their courses. As part of GBC's (GTV) news content on the partial reopening of universities in Ghana after the COVID-19 break for final year students to complete their exit exams, GTV displayed the following signs of students' arrival in some universities, as presented in Extracts 5.14 and 5.15 below:



Extract 5.14



(GTV, 24th December, 2019)

In Extract 5.14, one can see students going through COVID-19 health protocols as they arrive. We also notice “partial reopening of schools...” presented as part of the image in Extract 5.14. This visual is projected with the news text:

**partial reopening of school, final year university students back on campus.**

Both the image and the news text are projecting one another (Hemais, 2014). In Hemais’s (2014) view, projection is when there is a relation between the visual and verbal text, “since the visual content is represented again in the text” (Hemais, 2014. p. 120). In this circumstance, it is right to assume that the semiotics is serving as an evidence tool, where GTV projects the news content on the partial reopening of universities in Ghana. Both the image and the written text on the image serve to bring color to the news by presenting evidence to clear some doubts that may have risen.

Another instance of the interaction between sign and evidence in the data was sighted in Joy News' news content on the first made-in-Ghana vehicles by the producers of Japan Motors as seen below:

**Extract 5.15**



This news bulletin was presented with this sign in Extract 5.15 as evidence of the story they were reporting on. Beyond this, they invited the personnel from Japan Motors, whose picture is in the image above, to affirm the news report concerning their company's achievement on producing the first made-in Ghana vehicles. The signs in this image, coupled with the personnel from Japan Motors' presence in the studio during this news story, served as evidence for this news story. Moreover, the written text beneath the image, which says: **made-in-Ghana vehicles, Japan Motors acquires six-acre land at Tema for assembling plant** gives viewers a clue as to what to expect concerning the news this sign is representing.

The sign in Extract 5.16 below is another instance of sign and evidence in the data. Citi TV displayed this sign in the course of their news presentation on the positions of the 12 presidential candidates on the ballot paper for Ghana's 2020 presidential elections. This was a critical period in Ghana's presidential election preparations in 2020. Due to the tensed nature of elections in this country, any news story concerning the elections needed to have evidence to help viewers accept what any broadcasting network was saying. The broadcasting networks also needed to maintain a certain brand name, which they have carved for themselves, hence, subjects of news ensured that evidence was presented alongside the stories they were presenting to reduce doubts. It is in this regard that Citi TV, in their quest to supply their viewers with evidence, displayed the image in Extract 5.16. Presidential candidates for the 2020 general elections had balloted for their positions on the ballot papers and had to be displayed for voters to see as seen in Extract 5.16 below

**Extract 5.16**



(Citi TV, 15th July, 2020)



Craig (1994) has suggested that “press photographs can and do confirm the newsworthiness of the story they accompany (p. 198). Supporting this view, Caple and Bednarek (2013) point out that photographs as we have seen here, are integral part of the news storytelling process right from their inception. In the sign (image) presented under Extract 5.16, we first see the logo of Citi TV, indicating the TV station displaying this image. Secondly, there is a written text giving viewers a hint on what the image is all about and it reads: **where the 12 presidential candidates will appear on the 2020 ballot**. It is after this introductory heading that the pictures of the 2020 presidential candidates and their balloted positions are displayed. At this point, one can notice the picture of each candidate, the sign of the political party he or she is representing, and his/her number on the ballot paper. Finally, there is another written text at the bottom of the image which reads: **2020 general elections, Ghanaians in high expectation ahead of December polls**. This text summarizes what the image stands for in the news and supplies the verbal news the needed evidence on the screens as can be observed. As suggested by Craig (1994), the image here, with all the diverse, signs act as a confirmation of newsworthiness. By implication, when signs provide enough evidence to the news being presented, it qualifies that news to be accepted as newsworthy for presentation.

Instances presented in the discussions above from primetime news presentations in the data suggest that signs are evidence tools in primetime news presentations. Moreover, semiotics used during news presentations are for confirmation and proofs of the efficacy of the news story they accompany (Craig,

1994). By way of summary, a sign becomes an evidence tool, depending on the context or content of usage. Thus, the content of the sign displayed on the TV screen in connection with the news being read, highlights the relevance of semiotic mediation in that news (Hemais, 2014; Miller, 1998; Royce, 2002; Unsworth & Cleirigh, 2011; and Wells, 2007). The discussion in this Chapter alludes to the fact that when semiotics mediate primetime news presentations, there are possible benefits, which I seek to present in the next section.

### **Relevance of Semiotic Mediations News Presentations**

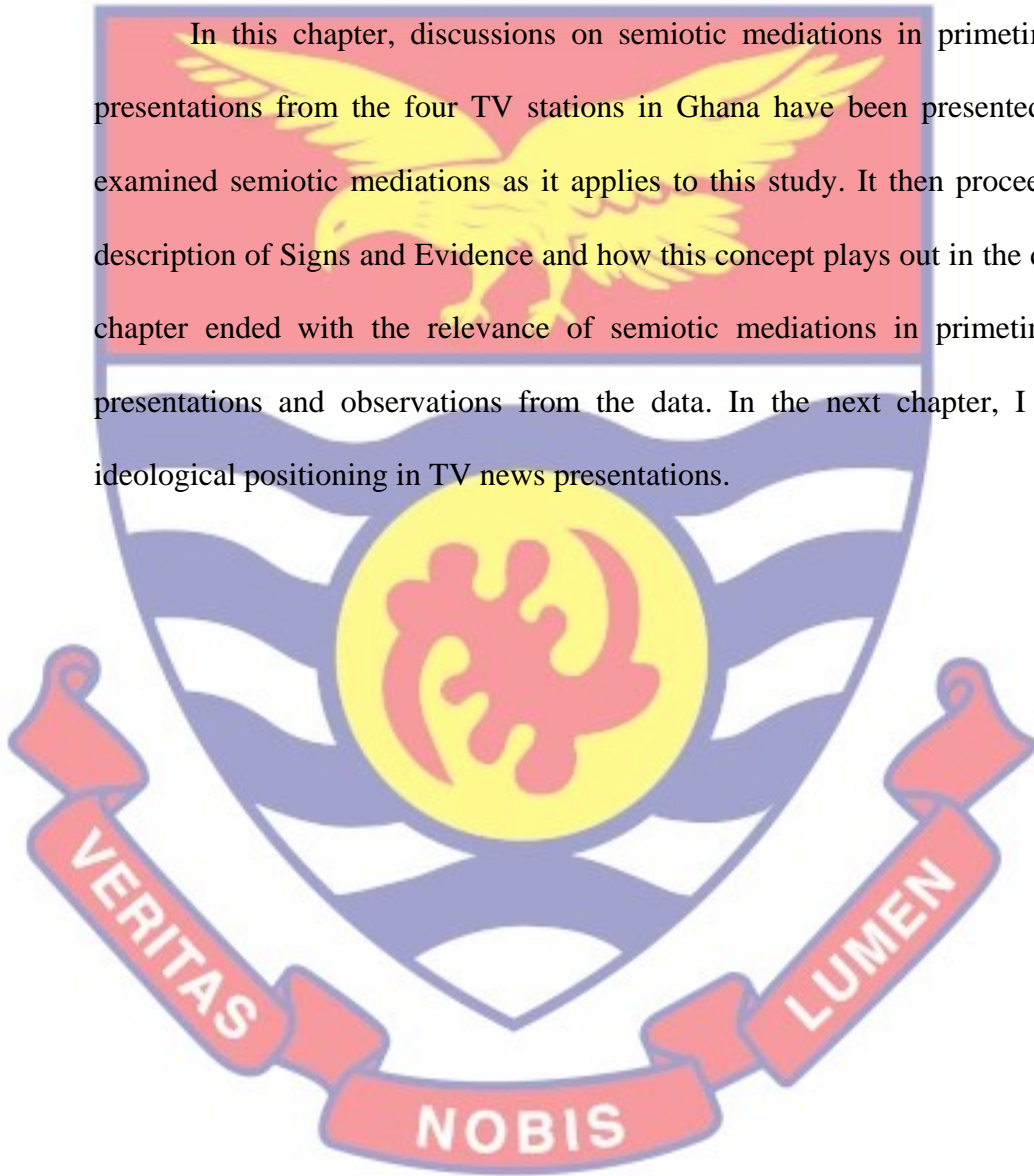
In this study, it has been observed that when semiotics is employed to mediate the presentation of news, there are clear correlations in news stories. This is a contributory factor to the lights shed on news stories by adding color to the news items, subsequently, structuring viewers' minds towards a particular direction as was intimated by scholars like Arackal (2015), Torop (2015), and Vygotsky (1981).

Regarding the concept of news types (Hard and Soft news), it is worth noting that in the data, most news contents were Hard news, hence, a huge number of the semiotics were employed while presenting Hard news. Moreover, Soft news in all the four TV stations is pushed to the "Entertainment segment", where news is not really serious, is less urgent and appears entertaining (Deahl, 2019; Limor & Mann, 1997; Tuchman, 1973; Wilzig & Seletzky, 2010). Additionally, the extracts presented in the discussions in this Chapter, explain how semiotics mediate primetime news, making news contents engaging and exciting, aside from being informative. Furthermore, semiotic mediations provide

news stories the much needed evidence for newsworthiness, which makes primetime news a credible source of information for most Ghanaians (GeoPoll, 2019).

### Chapter Conclusion

In this chapter, discussions on semiotic mediations in primetime news presentations from the four TV stations in Ghana have been presented. It first examined semiotic mediations as it applies to this study. It then proceeded to a description of Signs and Evidence and how this concept plays out in the data. The chapter ended with the relevance of semiotic mediations in primetime news presentations and observations from the data. In the next chapter, I examine ideological positioning in TV news presentations.



**CHAPTER SIX**  
**IDEOLOGICAL POSITIONING IN PRIMETIME TV NEWS**  
**PRESENTATIONS**

**Introduction**

The previous chapter examined semiotic mediations and their relevance in primetime news presentations. This chapter investigates ideological positioning in the selected TV stations' primetime news presentations. The chapter explores the significance of ideological presence in the news presentations. It begins with ideological positioning in evaluative resources. It then proceeds to ideological positioning in semiotics and ideological positioning through other linguistic features.

**Ideological Positioning in Evaluative Resources**

This section pays attention to how evaluative resources (discussed in Chapter Four) project the ideologies of subjects of primetime news as well as the selected TV stations. Thus, in this section, I have identified and discussed ideological implications of evaluative resources in the primetime news. In the study, it was observed that subjects of primetime news significantly resort to attributes and graduation resources as compared to attitude resources under the appraisal theory. This suggests that subjects of news, consciously or unconsciously, prefer to either endorse news contents or disassociate themselves from sensitive news contents. The following are primetime news bulletin extracts that demonstrate this observation (the highlighted resources are evaluative meaning making resources that ideologically position subjects of news). In the

instances below, NH represents News Headlines, BN stands for Business News and MN represents Main News:

**Extract 6.1**

Parliament **approves** Justice Kwesi Anim Yeboah as Chief Justice

Holiday makers **throng** bus terminals ↑ (*NH*)

And presidential candidate Yuom Soro **seeks refuge** in Ghana as

Cote D’evior issues warrant for his arrest (*NH*)

(GTV, 24th December, 2019)

**Extract 6.2 (TV3)**

↑National Labour Commission (NLC) to **suspend** salaries of worker groups flouting Labour Act (0.5)

(*News Headline, 13th April, 2018*)

**Right**↑ so talking about inflation **definitely** the cedi comes to play and the cedi has remained stable against its major trading currencies for today

(*Business News, 12<sup>th</sup> February, 2020*)

**Extract 6.3**

The world is changing ↑very fast and physical contact is becoming a thing of the past **particularly** due to the COVID-19 pandemic (.) Now joining me in the studio for more on this is Hans Siaw (.) He is head of digital banking support from UBA (*BN*)

↑Hello everyone my name is Sandra Esinam Akpenu welcome to business

(.) Inflation rate for the month of June has declined **marginally** (.) hh it stands at 11.2% **slightly** down from 11.3% recorded in May this year (*BN*)

(Joy News, 15th July, 2020)

#### Extract 6.4

In order of hierarchy (.) president Akufo Addo is the **highest** man of the land followed by the vice president and then the speaker of parliament (.) Now when he is not around then we have the Chief Justice (0.1) the 4th highest official on the land... (Citi TV, 2019)

Well (.) it's exactly 30 days to the 2020 presidential and parliamentary elections and Ghanaians are **highly** expectant

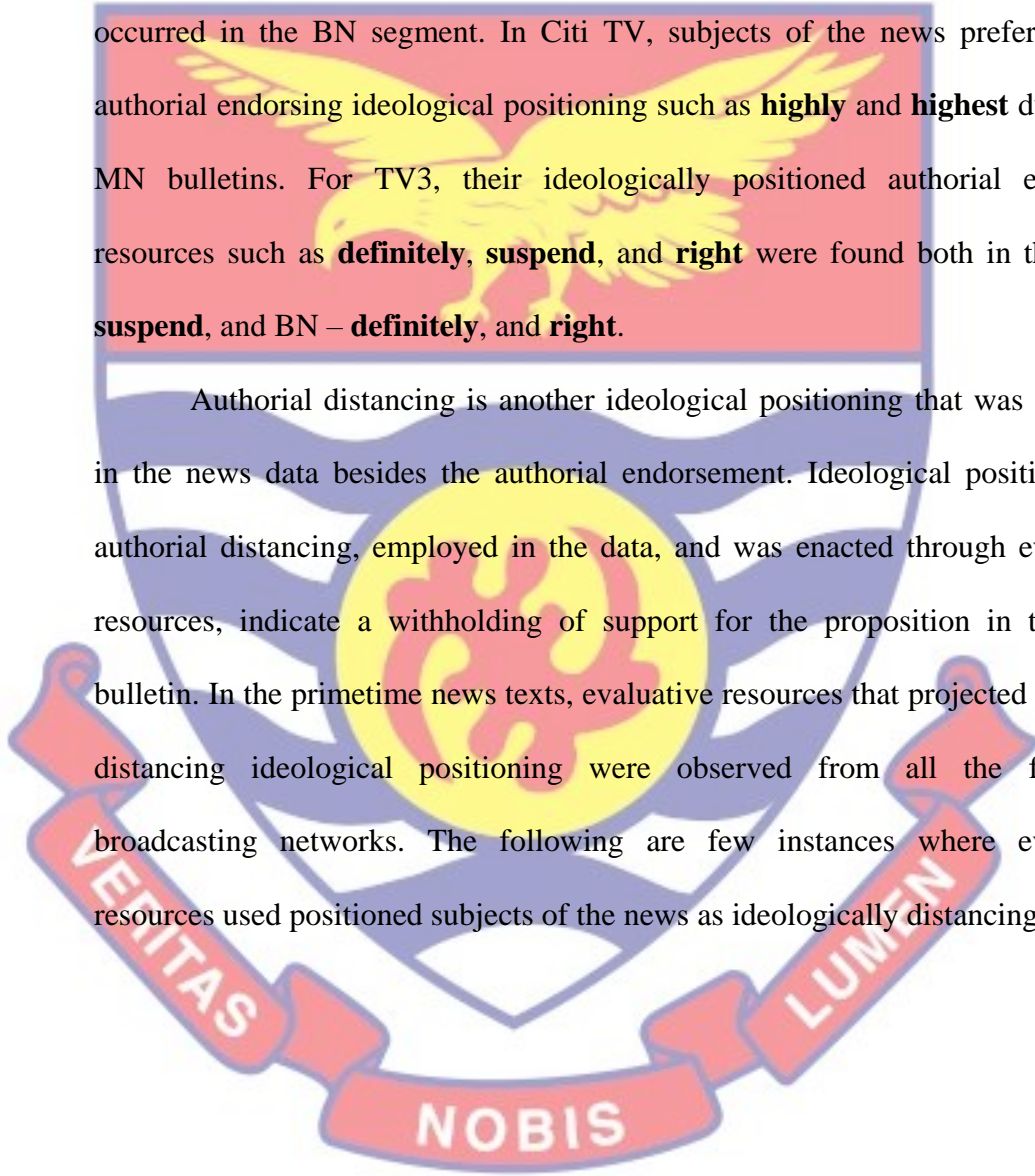
(*MN, 30<sup>th</sup> November, 2020*)

The instances provided here illustrate the use of unconstrained registers that enact authorial endorsement from the evaluative resources. In these illustrations, we notice the significant use of registers such as **approves, throng, particularly, marginally, highly**, among others, indicating news subjects' support for the reported news content by declaring it as true or credible. This situation in evaluative meanings, enacts the ideological positioning of endorsing, labelled under appraisal theory as authorial endorsing, a sub-type of attribution within the 'engagement' system by which the speaker/writer is aligned vis-à-vis other voices, other value positions and the putative addressee (Martin & White, 2005; White, 2002).

Interestingly, each broadcasting network was observed to have a particular segment where evaluative resources that suggest ideological positioning of

authorial endorsement are often used. In GTV, for instance, authorial endorsement such as **approves**, **throng** and **seeks refuge**, mainly occurred in their NH. It is different with Joy News, TV3 and Citi TV. In Joy News, all authorial endorsing resources such as **particularly**, **marginally**, and **slightly** occurred in the BN segment. In Citi TV, subjects of the news preferred their authorial endorsing ideological positioning such as **highly** and **highest** during the MN bulletins. For TV3, their ideologically positioned authorial endorsing resources such as **definitely**, **suspend**, and **right** were found both in the NH – **suspend**, and BN – **definitely**, and **right**.

Authorial distancing is another ideological positioning that was observed in the news data besides the authorial endorsement. Ideological positioning of authorial distancing, employed in the data, and was enacted through evaluative resources, indicate a withholding of support for the proposition in the news bulletin. In the primetime news texts, evaluative resources that projected authorial distancing ideological positioning were observed from all the four TV broadcasting networks. The following are few instances where evaluative resources used positioned subjects of the news as ideologically distancing:



### Extract 6.5

The **alleged** witches' camp at Nabuli in the Northern Region has been closed down (0.1) and the 45 inmates reintegrated into society (.). The women run from various communities in Northern Ghana to seek refuge in the camp after being accused of being witches and subjected to life threatening abuse (.)

(GTV, 24th December, 2019)

### Extract 6.6

↑Absolutely and to our first story tonight (.). hh a banking consultant Dr. Richmond Atuahene **has cautioned** the bank of Ghana not to force banks into mergers simply because they cannot raise the new minimum capital requirement of 400million cedis by (.). December 31 (.). He noted there are different risk complexities (.). systems and processes of each bank that could present stumbling blocks (.). after the merger is effected... (13th April, 2018)

Minority in parliament **threaten to boycott** president's state of the nation address next week (.). if government fails to settle MP's common fund (TV3, 12<sup>th</sup> February, 2020)

### Extract 6.7

↑**Grim and deadly** that's the description given by four teacher **unions** for the continuous stay of students on campuses at the various schools (.). The pre-tertiary unions GNAT (.). NAGRAT (.)



TEWU and Coalition of concerned teachers Ghana are asking government to close down schools in the wake of the spread of COVID-19 cases in Senior High Schools (.) The national council of PTA and Catholic Bishop Conference **have called for suspension** of WASSCE and BECE following the spike in COVID-19 cases in SHS (.) In a statement issued it read the situation is **really grim and deadly** (.)

(Joy News, 15th July, 2020)

#### Extract 6.8

...the court presided over by a supervising high court judge Justice Eric Baah **held** that since the offense of treason felony is one that a person can be imprisoned for life the accused persons will be denied bail (.) They have therefore been taken into lawful custody once more to reappear on December 18 2019 hhh They are being held for carrying out an exercise to declare parts of Ghana independent how be it without legal basis... (Citi TV, 2019)

Now **according to** projections (,) the incumbent eh well he beat the incumbent Donald Trump who has now become the 1st sitting president in the US to lose an election since 1992 (.) hh Now various world leaders have been congratulating Joe Biden (.) There is more in the following report (Citi TV, 30<sup>th</sup> November, 2020)

In the language of evaluation, resources are employed to indicate a particular stance by the writer or speaker. Hyland and Tse (2004) have shown that

authors dwell on a range of linguistic devices to engage readers and signal specific attitude to their readers. In Hyland and Tse's (2004) view, a major resource for stance or position taking in academic writing is self-mention, which is absent in the selected data for this study. Subjects of the news and for that matter, news presenters, do not employ self-mention linguistic resources such as **me** when presenting the news, except for the introductory stage. It is when news presenters are mentioning their names to viewers that they use the self-mention **my** as a precedence to their names. They do this not to pose as sources or in this case, viewers' reliable source of news, as suggested by Hyland (2003), but to initiate an interpersonal relationship with viewers for the news reports. It has been observed in this research that the tools news presenters use to ideologically position themselves and take a stance are mainly evaluative resources.

White (2003) has demonstrated that evaluative resources serve as tools by which textual voice engage and challenge utterances. The engagement system of the appraisal theory, by which evaluative resources are identified in a text has also been recognized as one effective strategy adopted for construing authorial stance (Brooke, 2014), whether for the purpose of endorsement or distancing. In the data for this research, evaluative resources, such as we have in the instances provided above, illustrate authorial distancing, where subjects of primetime news get to indicate directly or indirectly a restraint of support for the proposition in the content of that news bulletin. As presented in Extracts 6.5 to 6.8, such resources include **alleged**, **has cautioned**, **threatened to boycott**, **grim and deadly** and **according to**. These evaluative resources enact what Martin and White (2005)

and White (2002) call ‘authorial distancing’. The ideological implication is that news subjects, by using **allege**, for instance, actively distance themselves from the attributed material in the primetime news, presenting subjects of news as withholding support for that proposition, while the case is slightly different with **according to**. In the case of the use of **according to**, and other related resources such as **say** or **said**, they suggest neutrality because they portray the speaker neither as supportive of nor unsupportive of the proposition. In other words, the use of evaluative resources like **alleges**, **claimed**, **threatened**, **grim and deadly** (categorized under Appraisal theory as attribute for acknowledging the source of news stories), ideologically positions subjects of primetime news as directly unsupportive and absolutely distanced from the facts in the news bulletins being presented, whereas the use of neutral resources such as **according to**, **said** or **say** ideologically positions subjects of primetime news as neither unsupportive nor supportive of that particular proposition in the news (neutral). However, both evaluative meaning categories (whether as directly and actively distancing or neutral) illustrate the ideological positioning of authorial distancing for news subjects of primetime news presentations.

### **Ideological Positioning in Primetime News Semiotics**

In Chapter Five (5), the relevance of semiotics for effective primetime news presentations was discussed. This section explores ideological relevance of semiotics in the data. It will specifically discuss how semiotics in primetime news presentations in Ghana enact ideological positioning for subjects of the news. The session pays attention to News Headlines (NH) semiotics because NH segment

happens to be the one that has all the various components of semiotics (sound, visuals, and language) fully used for the effect of securing viewers' attention.

It has been observed in this study that sounds and visuals accompany the reading of especially NH. As discussed earlier (in Chapter Five), semiotics is well utilized in the entire primetime news for effective presentation of the meanings associated with each news story line. The collective use of sounds, visuals and language in NH has the pulling or attention-grabbing capacity on viewers, which has ideological implications for subjects of news as serious-minded, creative, attention grabbers and those who would want to present only the best to their viewers. This observation is illustrated in the following extracts of NH semiotics from the four TV broadcasting networks for some selected news nights. Each station's set of headlines will be accompanied by the news texts that were read while visuals were displayed, and sound played on the screens:

**Extract 6.3.1 (GTV)**



President Akuffo Addo **ends** Western regional tour expressing confidence in the Ghanaian workforce (NH, PR1)



National Social Protection Policy taken through final validation (NH, PR1)



Effective implementation of mother tongue language policy discussed (NH, PR2)

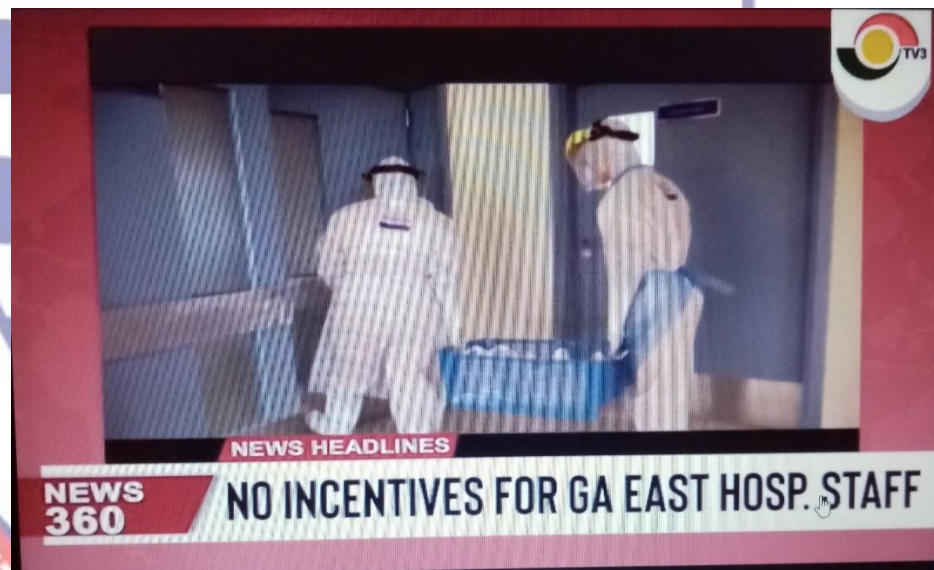


And in Guinea (,) EU observers pick on validity of polls  
(NH, PR1)

The semiotics presented in the NH above from GTV have a way of attracting the attention of viewers and giving viewers a feel of what is in store for them as far as that news night was concerned. In the NH above, we see that in the news, there was going to be report that would capture president Akufo Addo's tour to the Western region and why he expressed confidence in the Ghanaian workforce. A

viewer can sit and wait for the details of this news. Again, viewers are made to know that there will be an aspect of the news that will dwell on our mother tongue policy in our educational system. This news line can make any curious viewer wait and find out how policy makers intend to do that, knowing how many times attempts to do this have literally failed. These and the other NH have the capacity to grab viewers' attention right from the beginning of the one-hour news broadcast till the end of the news presentation. Similar observations were made in NH from TV3, Joy News and Citi TV as illustrated below:

**Extract 6.3.2**



Incentives for Ga East Hospital staff (TV3, 12<sup>th</sup> February, 2020)

“Ahead in the news (increased volume in the sound being played for headline news for 20 seconds) Health workers at Ga East Hospital complain of lack of incentives as they are mandated with more COVID-19 cases (sound is played while the rest of the visuals are displayed for 5 seconds)” (TV3, NH, PR2)



Enforcing strict protocols in churches (TV3, 12<sup>th</sup> February, 2020)

“We will also tell you how the Christian Council of Ghana is directing all church heads to ensure the strict enforcement of COVID-19 protocols (.) failing which there could be some repercussions (sound is played while the rest of the visuals for this headline story displayed)” (TV3, NH, PR1)





Cocoa farmer tastes chocolate (TV3, NH)

“As Ghana climaxes chocolate week (,) we tell you the story of 95-year-old cocoa farmer who has ↑NEVER tasted chocolate before (0.4)”

(TV3, NH, PR2)



Niger-Delta shell dispute (TV3, NH)

And on the international front tonight (,) UK's Supreme Court rules oil polluted Nigerian communities can sue shell petroleum in English Courts

(TV3, NH, PR2)

The NH presented here ideologically positions TV3's news subjects as focused on COVID-19, production of cocoa and Nigeria's oil related issues. Amidst several events that took place in the country that day, TV3's News 360 chose to concentrate their NH on COVID-19 (representing the health sector), cocoa production, which represents the sector of our economy that generates income for the country and Nigeria's major income generating natural resource – oil. This shows that when the chance was given, subjects of TV3's news 360 settled on the

health and economy of both Ghana and Nigeria, revealing their values and belief positions (McQuail, 2010) concerning health and economic situation communicated through their selection of news items for the primetime news. This agrees with Fowler and Marshall's (1985) view that ideological positioning in news is inherent values and beliefs hidden in speakers' utterances and can only be revealed through language.

Extract 6.3.3 (Joy News, 15th July, 2020)



Voter registration blues (Joy News, NH)

“↑Tonight (,) on Joy News Prime (,) Exchange of ↑hefty blows at Krowor Constituency of voter registration over allegations of busing non-residents to register”

(Joy News, NH, PR1)



Communications Minister engaging the press (Joy News, NH)

“And also (,) in this bulletin (,) Communications minister Ursula Owusu Akufo **rejects** claims by the minority in parliament to close down three of its terrestrial channels”

(Joy News, NH, PR1)



The performance of Ghana stock exchange (Joy News, BS)

And in business (,) Ghana’s stock exchange drop by six million cedis in 2009 (Joy News, NH, PR2)

On this night's primetime news, one can easily deduce, based on the NH from Joy News, that their focus was on politically related issues in Ghana, the Ghana stock exchange, and issues surrounding the voter's registration. In the NH, we notice a report on voter registration blues and its associated controversies. The details of this NH took almost 10 minutes to report, instead of the almost 5 minutes allocated to each news story. Additionally, there was a story on the communications minister, Ursula Owusu Akufo, who is reported to have rejected the claim by the minority in parliament to close a section of Ghana Broadcasting Corporation's (GBC) terrestrial channel. This NH was equally given about 10 minutes for the presentation of its details. Ursula Owusu's speech was fully captured to show how important this NH was. It is a known fact that one gives more time to what he/she values. The final NH focused on Ghana's stock exchange, which represents the business or economic sector of the country and the decline it is experiencing. These NH show that subjects of the news from Joy News value political issues, represented by the NH on Ursula Owusu's comment on the Minority's claim as well as the Minority in Parliament's reaction to her comment. Another politically related NH from Joy News is the report on electoral registration controversies during the period of election. They finally presented NH on the economic sector, represented in the NH as the decline in Ghana's Stock Exchange by six million cedis as of 2019. The choice of NH presented on in this particular News line, enacts what subjects of Joy News believe in and value. Earlier in this thesis, it had been stated that ideological positioning in news has to do with the set of beliefs and values of subjects of news, especially, news presenters enacted through news

stories that reveal news presenters' stance or position in the news, as noticed in the selected data for this study, in line with the views of scholars like McQuail (2010) and Van Dijk (2006). The following NH are from Citi TV:

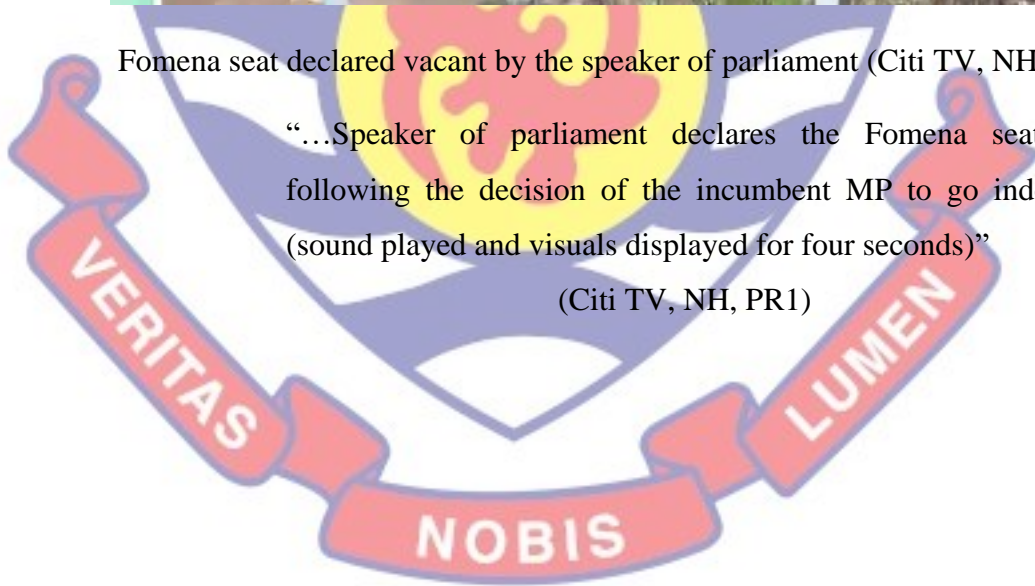
**Extract 6.3.4 (Citi TV, 7<sup>th</sup> November, 2020)**



Fomena seat declared vacant by the speaker of parliament (Citi TV, NH)

“...Speaker of parliament declares the Fomena seat vacant following the decision of the incumbent MP to go independent (sound played and visuals displayed for four seconds)”

(Citi TV, NH, PR1)





Political campaigns in Ashanti region (Citi TV, NH)

“↑And later (,) our reader will be on the Ashanti and Eastern Regions as we join the NPP and NDC residential candidates campaigning to win the hearts of Ghanaians (sound and short speeches from both presidential candidates for 28 seconds)”

(Citi TV, NH, PR2)



Private firm to sue the government of Ghana over plans to abrogate street  
lightening contract (Citi TV, NH)

“Also in this package (,) company contracted by government to implement Accra intelligent traffic management project hhh

Beijing Everyway Traffic and Lightning Technology ↑**threatens** to drag Ghana to the London court of international arbitration following the abrogation of its contract” (Citi TV, NH, PR1)



“And later on (,) Joe Biden is projected to win the US elections”

(Citi TV, NH, PR2)

In Citi TV’s semiotics for the NH sessions, one gets the impression that news subjects’ focus and for that matter value and beliefs (Marshall & Fowler, 1985; and McQuail, 2010) will be on issues around elections, both in Ghana and US, as well as a threat issued by a Chinese company to Ghana due to Ghana’s decision to withdraw from a contract agreement it earlier had with them. The semiotics used in the NH shows the exact themes that subjects of news seek to present on and, thereby reveal to viewers what news subjects value and their area of interest as either health, business, political, economic, or social noting that NH are usually hard news that need urgent attention. The ideological positions of the four TV stations are summarized and presented in Figure 10. This table was presented

earlier in Chapter Three as part of the data description. However, for the purpose of this discussion, I present the table again here as Figure 10. The data for Figure 10 as used in this study, were downloaded, and transcribed from the 2019 and 2020 archives of the four TV stations, since they were quite current and available:

TV Stations	GTV	TV3	JOY NEWS	CITI TV
Year	2019	2019	2019	2019
Focus of News Items	NI, 1: Politics NI,2: Social issue on closure of a witch camp NI,3: Chieftaincy NI, 4: News on religious activity NI,5: Education NI,6: Law NI,7: Business NI,8: Business NI,9: Business NI, 10: Health	NI,1: Social issue NI,2: Politics NI,3: Politics NI,4: Education NI,5: Education NI, 6: Health	NI, 1: Politics NI,2: Law NI, 3: Politics NI,4: Media NI,5: Elections NI,6: Parliament NI, 7: Business NI,8: Parliament NI,9: Elections NI,10: Sanitation	NI,1: Politics NI,2: Politics NI,3: Industrial strikes-GRIDCO NI,4: - Teacher unions' strike NI,5: Law NI,6: Elections NI,7: Politics NI,8: Politics NI,9: Law
Source	Facebook	YouTube	YouTube	Facebook
Year	2020	2020	2020	2020
News focus	NI,1: Education NI,2: Education NI,3: Sanitation NI,4: Politics NI,5: Education Humanitarian NI,8: Health NI,9: Business NI,10: Health	NI,1: Politics NI,2: Politics NI,3: Law NI,4: Law NI,5: Education NI,6: Health NI,7: Business NI,8: Business NI,9: Business NI,10: Business	NI,1: Politics NI,2: Politics NI,3: Education NI,4: Business NI,5: Business NI,6: Entertainment NI,7: Health NI,8: Health NI,9: Health NI,10: Politics	NI,1: Politics NI,2: Business NI,3: Politics NI,4: Law NI,5: Elections NI,6: Elections NI,7: Politics NI,8: Politics NI,9: Politics NI,10: Politics NI,11: social issue
Source	Facebook	YouTube	YouTube	YouTube

Figure 10: What News Items (NI) Presented by the TV Stations Focus on



Figure 10 above gives us an impression of what the news items from the TV stations focus on. A quick look at the focus of news items affirms the view that news items are selected and presented as values and beliefs that are disseminated and reinforced by news presentations (Bloor & Bloor, 2007; McQuail, 2010; Toolan, 2002). Subjects of the news disseminate their beliefs by selecting and presenting news contents on issues they believe, conform to what they stand for, hence, as observed in the data, each TV station's focus in each year's selected news presentation, is quite different, ranging from health issues, educational issues, business and political news contents. As suggested by Mesthrie (2010), the selection and presentation processes are ideological practices that operate to the advantage of a particular social group, representing the ideological positioning of these social groups or in this case, the ideological positioning of the TV stations. Figure 10 shows that in 2019, GTV's NI focused more on business but paid more attention to education in 2020. For TV3, their NI focused on politics and education in 2019, but paid more attention to business in 2020. Joy News paid more attention to politics, election, and parliamentary issues in 2019, and focused more on politics and health issues in 2020. This observation gives us a fair idea of the ideological positioning of the news subjects of the TV stations when it comes to news content, which according to Van Dijk (2004), represents the beliefs of the group (in this case, the subjects of the TV station) by expressing the identity of that group in social memory. This is what Bloor and Bloor (2007) explain as beliefs and attitudes shared by members of a particular social group projecting the group's ideological position.

Admittedly, attractive sights amidst interesting, customized sounds for each NH from the selected TV stations and accompanying language during primetime news, have a way of grabbing viewers' attention for the one-hour primetime news session. Once viewers' attention is grabbed, news subjects assume that the audience of their viewers is secured through online feedbacks from viewers on news stories already presented. Keane (2003) has mentioned that ideology in semiotics functions within a representational economy, where the totality of technologies, media, institutions, and practices prevalent in any given social context, have effect on one another. In line with the observation made by scholars such as McQuail, (2010), Mesthrie (2010), Bloor & Bloor (2007), Toolan, (2002), and Keane (2003), semiotics in NH in the selected data for this study interacts to have both tacit and intended effects and enact political, economic, health and social ideological positioning apart from authorial endorsement and distancing positioning for news subjects, especially, news presenters. The next session explores ideological positioning in primetime news through other linguistic features.

### **Ideological Positioning Through Some Linguistic Features in Primetime**

#### **News**

Due to the length of time used to deliver primetime news, several linguistic features are employed to make the session lively, creative, yet informative. Linguistic features such as pronouns, tenses, alliterations, metaphors, interpersonal expressions are among the many linguistic features that are employed. Frequently used linguistic features in primetime news are pronouns,

which have interpersonal effect on presenter – viewer relationship. Consequently, this session will focus on pronouns used in the news texts as part of the interactional roles enacted in the data by some linguistic expressions, since these linguistic features ideologically position subjects of the news as agents of inclusivity (Uzum, 2017) in their presentation of the primetime news. Hence, this session will pay attention to ideological positioning in primetime news through linguistic features that enact interactional roles in the data.

### **Interactional Roles in Primetime News**

Another significantly employed linguistic feature in the primetime news text is interpersonal expressions. Interpersonal, as mentioned earlier (in Chapter Two), represents the use of language to establish relationship between speaker and listener, in this case, between subjects of the news or news presenters and viewers. As Mwinlaaru (2016) notes, the interpersonal meaning encodes interactional roles, identities, relationships, attitude and stance in discourse. To enact interpersonal relationship with viewers, news presenters employ interpersonal expressions: **welcome...**, **please do stay...**, **let's talk about ...**, **let's move to...** **Hello everyone...** In this way, presenters assure viewers that their presence is cherished, not ignored. Such expressions position news presenters as the ones in authority and have capacity of leading and asking viewers to join them as they shift from one segment of the news to another. Reactions of viewers to such linguistics resources are seen in their comments or feedbacks in the comment section online as the news is presented. The primetime news extracts below

demonstrate interpersonal techniques, adopted by news presenters to construct interactional roles and relationships with viewers:

#### Extract 6.4.1

Good evening (,) it is the eve of Christmas my name is Winifred Afum (,)

↑**welcome to news hour** (MN, PR2)

**\_Hello good evening and welcome...**There is more news after this break

(0.1) **please do stay**↓ (BS)

Hello good evening (,) **let's talk sports** (SS)

GTV (24th December, 2019)

**Thanks** for joining us on news 360

**Let's move on** to our first story this evening

**Let's move from** parliament and go straight to the court

(MN)

**Let's do** MTN\_video report now

**Thanks for staying** with us on news 360 (,) **Let's do business** with me...

(MN)

Well↑ it remains stable or recorded some gains against the dollar and the

Euro but depreciated slightly against the pounds by 0.15% there **let's see**

**what am talking about as the figures play out by itself** (BN)

TV3 (12th February, 2020)

Alright before we go on that break (,) **let's get straight to the Ashanti**

**region** and speak with Erastus Asare Donkoh who filed that report and

also has been monitoring (,) (MN)

↑**Hello everyone** my name is Sandra Esinam Akpenu **welcome to**

**business** (BN)...(,) **Grateful for your time** (,) I have more business news

updates after 8pm (,) **Thanks for watching** (BN)

**Let's do more on COVID-19** because Ghana has recorded the total 264 new COVID-19 cases (.)... **Join the hashtag save the health worker now**↓ (.) And eh **don't forget**\_this is being championed by Joy News (.) and the multimedia group (.) (MN)

**Log on** to myjoyonline.com for more business updates (.) **Stay home** (.) **safe and stay beautiful**\_(.) (BN)

(Joy News, 15th July, 2020)

**Hello and welcome** to the Citi newsroom my name is Bobie Osei (MN)

Well so **let's go back to our story** on the nomination of Justice Anim Yeboah as the new Chief Justice (Citi TV, 2019)

This is the election bureau (.) **welcome** to the Citi newsroom on Citi TV (.)

You are **welcome back** to the Citi newsroom (.) **Let's move to more stories** now...**Let's get more** from our central regional correspondent Calves Tetteh (()) (MN)

**...it's been a pleasure coming your** ↑way (.)

(Citi TV, 30th November, 2020)

We notice in these extracts that expressions such as **let's move to more stories...**, **let's get more...**, **let's go back to our story....**, **let's talk sports....**, enact interactional roles (Mwinlaaru, 2016) and relationships in the news discourse. In these expressions, news presenters are positioned as friendly and engaging as seen in the expression, **let's** literally saying that viewers should come along as they move to the next segment.

There were other interpersonal expressions used in the data that welcomed viewers to various segments of the primetime news: **welcome back...**, **welcome to news hour...**, **Hello and welcome...**, **Hello good evening and welcome.** These welcoming expressions, in Martin and White's (2005) view, connote satisfaction and make viewers feel warmly welcomed to the various segments of the news. Viewers' satisfaction is felt through their complementing comments in the comment session of the news online. Other satisfying resources that enacted interactional roles in the data include **Hello everyone...**, **Grateful for your time...**, **don't forget this is being championed by Joy News (.)**, **Stay home (.) stay safe and stay beautiful...**, **it's been a pleasure coming your way.**

#### **Pronouns in Primetime News**

Another interpersonal resource used in the data, which shows interaction is the pronoun. Interpreting pronouns, according to Pennycook (1994) is a challenging task, since they are complex and political words that always raise difficult issues of who is not being represented. Despite their ambiguous and problematic nature, Uzum (2017) insists that analyzing and interpreting pronouns is dependent on the information provided in the context. In the data for this study, personal pronouns "we", "us", "our", "you", "your", "my" and "I" are intermittently used during news presentations to refer to subjects of the news, especially the news presenters and viewers. The referent of the use of "we", "us" and "our" is subjects of the news or the news presenters in this study. The role these personal pronouns play is that they ideologically position subjects of the news or the news presenters as actors, who consciously or otherwise, lure and

lead viewers on as the news items are presented. This observation corroborates the findings of Edu-Buandoh and Mwinlaaru (2013) that such personal pronouns are frequently the ‘Actor’ in goal-directed clauses. Instances of the use of the personal pronoun “we” as the Actor in goal-directed clauses include:

*We now go*’ (GTV)

*We are going*’ (TV3)

*We will bring you*’ (Citi TV)

*We are going straight*’ (Joy News)

The personal pronoun, “we” used in the instances above falls under the 1<sup>st</sup> person pronouns category (Quirk, Greenbaum, Leech & Svartvik, 1985). The authors explain that the pronoun “we”, as employed in some of the instances above, are used such that the referents include the author, such as “we will bring you...”. In this instance, “we” is used in reference to the speakers (news presenters). This use of “we”, which refers only to the speaker and excludes the viewer is what Uzum (2017) calls exclusive “we”. But, as suggested by Uzum (2017), the interpretation of pronouns is dependent on the context, in that, in some of the instances of the use of “we”, it is referring to both the speaker and the viewer, known as the inclusive “we” (Uzum, 2017; Pennycook, 1994). Instances of the use of inclusive “we” include “we are going straight...” (Joy New); “we now go...” (GTV). In the use of both inclusive and exclusive “we”, the news presenters are ideologically positioned as actors (Mwinlaaru, 2016), who call the shot and determine what viewers should hear about.

This pattern of pronoun usage presents news subjects (especially, the news presenters) or their respective TV broadcasting networks as actors, in charge of news items that viewers should consume each news night. Further, whenever the pronoun “we” is used, related pronouns, “us”, “our” “you” and “yours”, are often in its company. The following primetime news extracts illustrate the collective use of personal pronouns “we”, “us”, “our”, “you” and “your”:

**Extract 6.4.2**

Well↑ we are live on TV3 Ghana on Facebook (,) DSTV channel 279 all across the world on 3news.com (.) Share your thoughts with us as we go on (0.4) (TV3, 12th February, 2020)

...ehh we will be joined shortly by ehh our correspondent in Kumasi (.) and for more after this break (.) Alright before we go on that break (,) (Joy News, 15th July, 2020)

And on that note (,) we end the Citi News (.) We have more stories on Citi newsroom.com (.) You can download Citi newsroom app from the google play store (.) You can also watch Citi TV on DSTV channel 363 and Go TV channel 182 (Citi TV, 30th November, 2020)

We now go to Dagbon (0.1) It was a process that lasted for 17 years and as in the case with many disputes (0.1) The Dagbon chieftaincy conflicts brought in its wake negative repercussions (PR2)

You are watching the business segment of the news hour live on GBC news and governor’s channel (BS PR) (GTV, 24th December, 2019)



In the extracts above, subjects of the news (through the presenters), enact their total control of events during the primetime news sessions, except for GTV where the personal pronouns “we” and “you” are the only pronouns used on few occasions. TV3, Joy News and Citi TV’s primetime news texts are, however, filled with personal pronouns “we”, “us”, “you” and “your” as seen in the instances presented in Example 6.4.2. “We” and “us” are used to refer to subjects of the news while the use of “you” and “your” refer to viewers. This shows that news subjects involve their viewers in the news being presented, giving viewers opportunity to feel that they are part of the primetime news. This is usually seen when subjects of the news invite viewers to share their views and watch more news on their digital channels:

**You** can watch **us** on DSTV channel...

**you** can download...

share **your** thought with **us** on as **we** go on...

**You** can download Citi newsroom app from the google play store...

It is interesting to note that news presenters get very personal as they present news when they use personal pronouns “I” and “my”. Pronouns “I” and “my”, used in primetime news presentations by news presenters are introductory techniques that news presenters use to introduce themselves to their viewers. The extracts below demonstrate the use of personal pronouns “I” and “my” as introductory techniques by news presenters:

**My** name is Emmanuel Amegashie (PR1)

Good evening it is the eve of Christmas (,) my name is Winifred Afum

(GTV, 24th December, 2019)

Thanks for joining us on news 360 (,) we are live at our news hub here at

Adesawe (,) Kanda in Accra my name is Aisha Yakubu

And I am Alfred Ocansey coming up tonight... (TV3, 12th February, 2020)

That's how we wrap up for business tonight (,) I am Sandra Esinam Akpeno (,) Log on to myJoyonline.com for more business updates (,)

Thank you for staying with us for sports I am Garry Aspect (Joy News, 15th July, 2020)

My name is Pearl Akanyo Ofori

And I am Bobie Osei (,) hh it's been a pleasure coming your way

(Citi TV, 30<sup>th</sup> November, 2020)

Hyland (2005) has demonstrated in his interpersonal model of metadiscourse that when such personal pronouns are employed in a text, they are known as self-mentions. In Hyland's (2005) estimation, self-mentions such as "I", "me", "my", "we" and "our" are linguistic tools for explicit reference to the author or in the case of this study, news presenters, as observed in the selected data for this thesis. Pronouns, ideologically position news presenters as agents, having the capacity to lead discursive inclusivity in news presentation.

### Observations

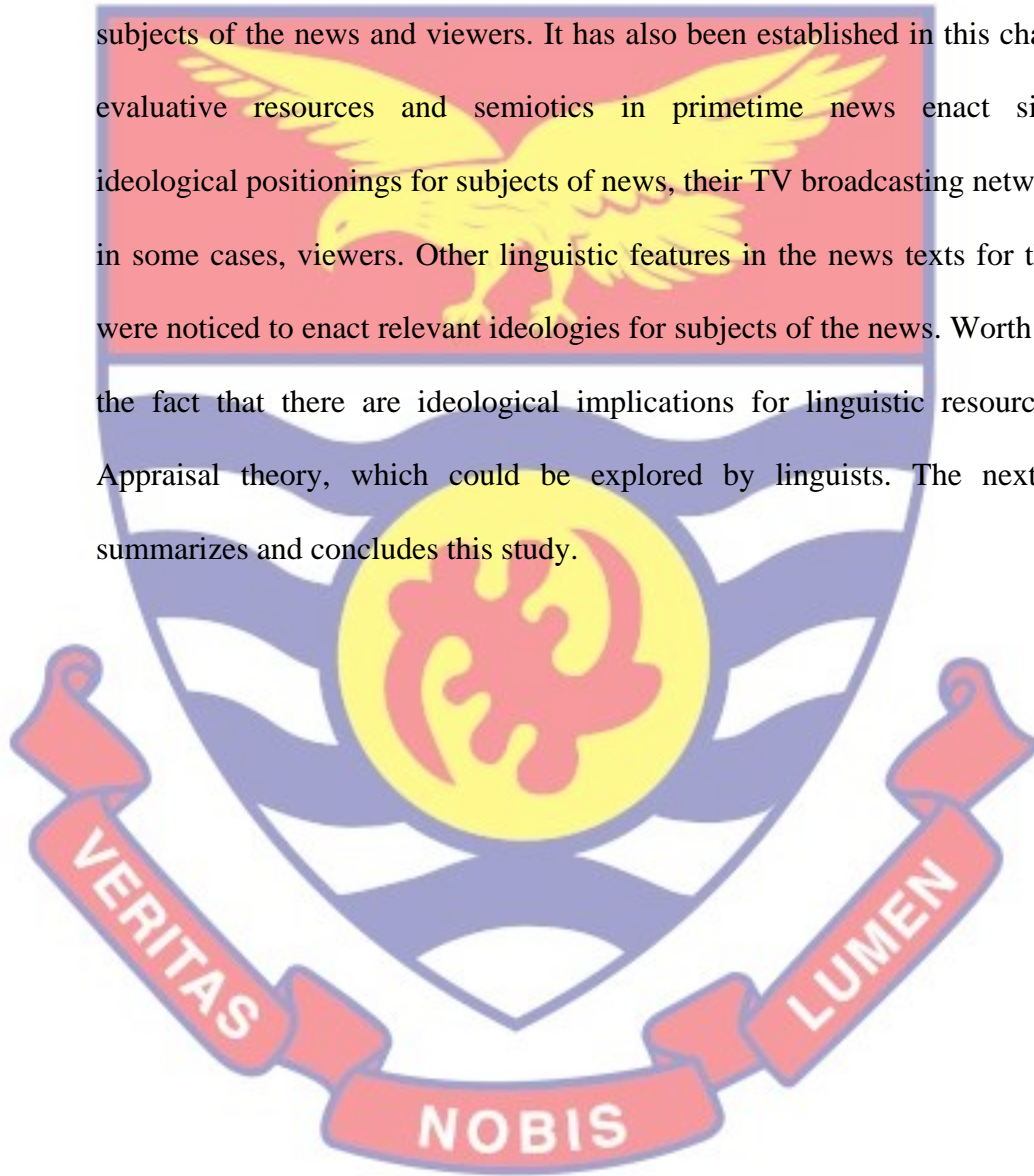
Primetime news is a discourse with its unique linguistic features. As major news presentation platforms, TV broadcasting networks in Ghana, in connection

with their news subjects, have seized the opportunity to present daily news stories on what Asensio (2016) calls social issues and by so doing, unravel ideological positionings such as authorial endorsement, authorial distancing as well as interpersonality, enacted mainly through some evaluative resources and other linguistic features. The underlying assumptions for this Chapter and for that matter, this study, have been appraisal theory which, according to Read, Hope and Carroll (2007), describes language employed in communicating evaluation, explaining how users of English language convey attitude, dwelling on evaluative resources and how authors or speakers modify the strength of their attitude or engagement towards and with their viewers. While viewers, who are the consumers, seem to have no choice than to accept, take in and swallow whatever they are served during news presentations, news presenters call the shot. The social power between news subjects and their viewers corroborates Van Dijk's (2008) proposition of what CDA represents, except for the fact that power displayed in primetime news presentation is neither political nor an abuse of power, as suggested by Van Dijk (2008).

### **Chapter Conclusion**

This chapter sought to examine positioning such as authorial endorsement and distancing, interpersonal relation, among others, in primetime news presentations, which are inherent in spoken news language and, as indicated by Arackal (2015), McQuail (2010) and Fowler and Marshal (1985), are only revealed through linguistic analysis to establish the ideologies in them. Discussions in this chapter have focused on ideological implications of significant

linguistic features in the news texts. It first examined ideological positioning in evaluative resources. It then proceeded to examine ideological implications of semiotic mediations in primetime news. The chapter rounded up by presenting other linguistic features in the news texts that enact ideological positioning for subjects of the news and viewers. It has also been established in this chapter that evaluative resources and semiotics in primetime news enact significant ideological positionings for subjects of news, their TV broadcasting networks and, in some cases, viewers. Other linguistic features in the news texts for this study were noticed to enact relevant ideologies for subjects of the news. Worth noting is the fact that there are ideological implications for linguistic resources under Appraisal theory, which could be explored by linguists. The next chapter summarizes and concludes this study.



## CHAPTER SEVEN

### CONCLUSION

#### Introduction

The last three preceding chapters of this study have presented a detailed discussion of the linguistic phenomena (evaluation, semiotic mediations, and ideological positioning) in primetime news. This chapter will summarize and conclude the study. It will first recap the aims of the study as well as the theoretical and methodological procedures I adopted. It will then proceed to summarize the linguistic phenomena presented in the earlier chapters. The chapter will finally draw implications of the study, in terms of theory, research and practical applications.

#### Summary of Study

The general objective of the study has been to contribute to studies in the Appraisal system of language typology. Specifically, the aim has been to give an in-depth description of linguistic features of primetime news, comprising evaluation, semiotics and ideological positionings. It has been indicated that research on news presentations dates to the 1970s. Studies on the language of the news can be segmented into two main stages. The early research, which falls within the 1970s and 1990s, was within the context of news classifications and what constitutes news. The second stage of the news presentation research, pioneered by linguists such as Bazzi (2009), Bednarek (2010), Martin and Rose (2007), Montgomery (2007), Pekarova (2011) Sikanku (2011), Kpelle (2017), among many others, provided insight into broadcast news. These descriptions

have provided material for the discourse of spoken and written news. One limitation is that discussions on semiotics and ideological meanings that accompany news language are almost ignored in these studies, revealing little information on the rich interrelated meaning potential of primetime news. The present study has been structured to respond to these concerns.

To achieve these objectives, the study resorted to systems of evaluative analysis, provided by Appraisal Theory, a well-established framework in Systemic Functional Linguistics as a guide. Besides, semiotics and ideological positioning in the news are explored under the auspices of Appraisal Theory. The instances of meanings from the data provide insights into the systems of evaluation, semiotic mediations, and ideological descriptions in news language. The system of Appraisal provides attitudinal and stance views of linguistic lexis featured in news.

Concerning methodology, the study adopted qualitative content analysis approach, following linguists such as Bell (1991), Bednarek (2010), Martin and White (2005) as well as Montgomery (2007). The data for the study comprises primetime news texts, collected from four most influential TV stations in Ghana. Techniques employed in analyzing the data include examining appraisal systems in the news texts. These were supported by Appraisal theoretical guidance, texts comparison and linguistic feature identifications.

## Evaluation, Semiotic Mediation, and Ideological Positioning

The study described three linguistic phenomena, and presented a detailed description of evaluative presence in primetime news language. It paid attention to the Attitude, Engagement and Graduation expressions in the context of the news. On Attitude, the chapter identified few attitudinal resources, which fell under Affect and Appreciation sub-systems of the Appraisal theory. In all, the chapter identified 20 words that qualified to be labelled as Attitude resources. The Affect expressions indicate emotions of named personalities in the news while the Appreciation resources were employed to indicate value placed on the event in the news story presented.

On Engagement, the study identified four sub-systems: Disclaim, Proclaim, Attribute and Entertain. Engagement resources used in the news texts show a speaker's stance or position concerning the event being reported on in the news. In the data, Engagement resources are all attributed to named individuals in the news content. In all, 90 Engagement resources were identified in the data. Out of the 90, 14 were Disclaim resources, 66 were Attribute, five were Proclaim and five were Entertain.

The study identified 16 Graduation resources categorized into two: degree of positivity and degree of negativity. The Graduation resources depict increasing degree of intensity of the reported event. Thus, such resources construe greater degree of positivity in the data. Further, Graduation degree of negativity resources noted in the study indicate decreasing or lowering degree of positivity in the reported events in the news. Out of the 16 Graduation resources, 13 were used to

show degree of positivity while three indicated degrees of decreasing or lowering positivity (degrees of negativity).

Next, the study examined semiotic mediation in the news texts. It was established that semiotic mediation in news plays a major role in grabbing viewers' attention and understanding of news stories. Finally, the study investigated ideological positionings in primetime news for authorial stance construction. It was observed that evaluative resources and semiotics ideologically position subjects of news in the news contents.

### **Implications of the Study**

This section presents the contributions of this study. The study makes contributions to theory, and research into media language description, specifically, spoken news. Both theoretical and research contributions, as discussed below, have potentials in suggesting other linguistic features in various professional contexts.

### **Theoretical Contributions**

First, the study contributes to theory in language description. It is a comprehensive description of language of the media in a systematic manner, based on Appraisal Theory of language. The merit is its contribution to Appraisal theory while, describing primetime news language at the same time in its own ways. Thus, the study bridges the gap between theory and description of language of the news. Following the Appraisal systems, there has been extensions by Bednarek (2008), Hood (2010) and White (2012) on evaluative parameters. All theories provide descriptive frameworks that give linguistic account of news



language (for details, see Bednarek, 2010; Martin & White, 2005). The present study places the description of news language within the Appraisal Theory by Martin and White (2005) and shows how theory and description can enforce and enrich each other. While the study adopts all systems of the Appraisal linguistic theory, it makes direct and indirect connections with the interpersonal metafunction of Systemic Functional Linguistic (SFL) (see Chapter Two). The study shares most of the evaluative characteristics with previous descriptions of news language based on Appraisal theory.

### **Contributions to Research**

Besides theoretical contributions, the study also makes contributions to research. It first contributes to studies in language of the media in general and language of spoken news in particular. As noted in Chapter Two, description of linguistic resources in news language should be viewed as mutually related for the purpose of meaning making. Thus, the linguistic phenomena discussed in this study are to bring about interrelatedness in meaning, such that meaning in news stories will be effortlessly achieved. Again, it has been noted in the same chapter that the systems of appraisal were developed to accommodate different languages, including varieties of English language from different parts of the world. By implication, whenever a non-native English is described, it contributes to the ongoing discussion of the vast nature of appraisal theory. Moreover, it adds to previous descriptions on language of evaluation (Bednarek, 2010; Bell, 1991; Martin & White, 2005), semiotics and ideological presence in language of the media.

Furthermore, the study contributes to African media linguistics and primetime news. Most studies on African media language have been on written news (newspaper) and language used on radio (Agu, 2015; Nyarko, 2006; Sikanku, 2011; Kpelle, 2013; Benamara, Inkpen & Taboada, 2018). For studies on primetime news presentation, this interrelated approach is quite different and unique. By taking qualitative content and text-based approach, the study provides an account that shows how language is used in news presentations to portray attitudes, stances, and ideologies of subjects of the news and named personalities in the news stories. It shows that language in major news presentations performs various functions for interaction, for distancing, for mediating semiotics in news and for ideologies inherent in spoken news language. The findings of the study will also be useful to scholars and students of language of the media. Categories such as Attitudinal resources, Proclaim, Entertain, Disclaim Engagement resources, degree of value resources under Graduation, semiotic mediations, and ideological positioning have been identified and described in the study. These are helpful linguistic resources for analysing the language of spoken news, which has received partial treatment in previous scholarly discussions. Language of the media scholars will have a clearer view of primetime news language features.

### **Practical Applications**

The study is relevant for media practitioners, discourse analysts, students, and scholars interested in language of the media. In the first place, the research is geared towards research in language of the media. All over the world and in Ghana, language of the news has been studied and described to reveal hidden

meanings. However, one challenge with primetime news language is the absence of a comprehensive description of semiotics and ideological meaning relations with evaluation in news language. The description in this study provides material for media practitioners to engage discussions on linguistic implications of media language use. Students interested in news language can also use the study as a reference material to explore how media language could be investigated to contribute to culture of respect and acceptance from various news outlets. The study is useful to political analysts interested in presenting ideological relevance of news language in high profile submissions. Evidence could be reliably tended in through semiotic mediations in the news as established in this study.

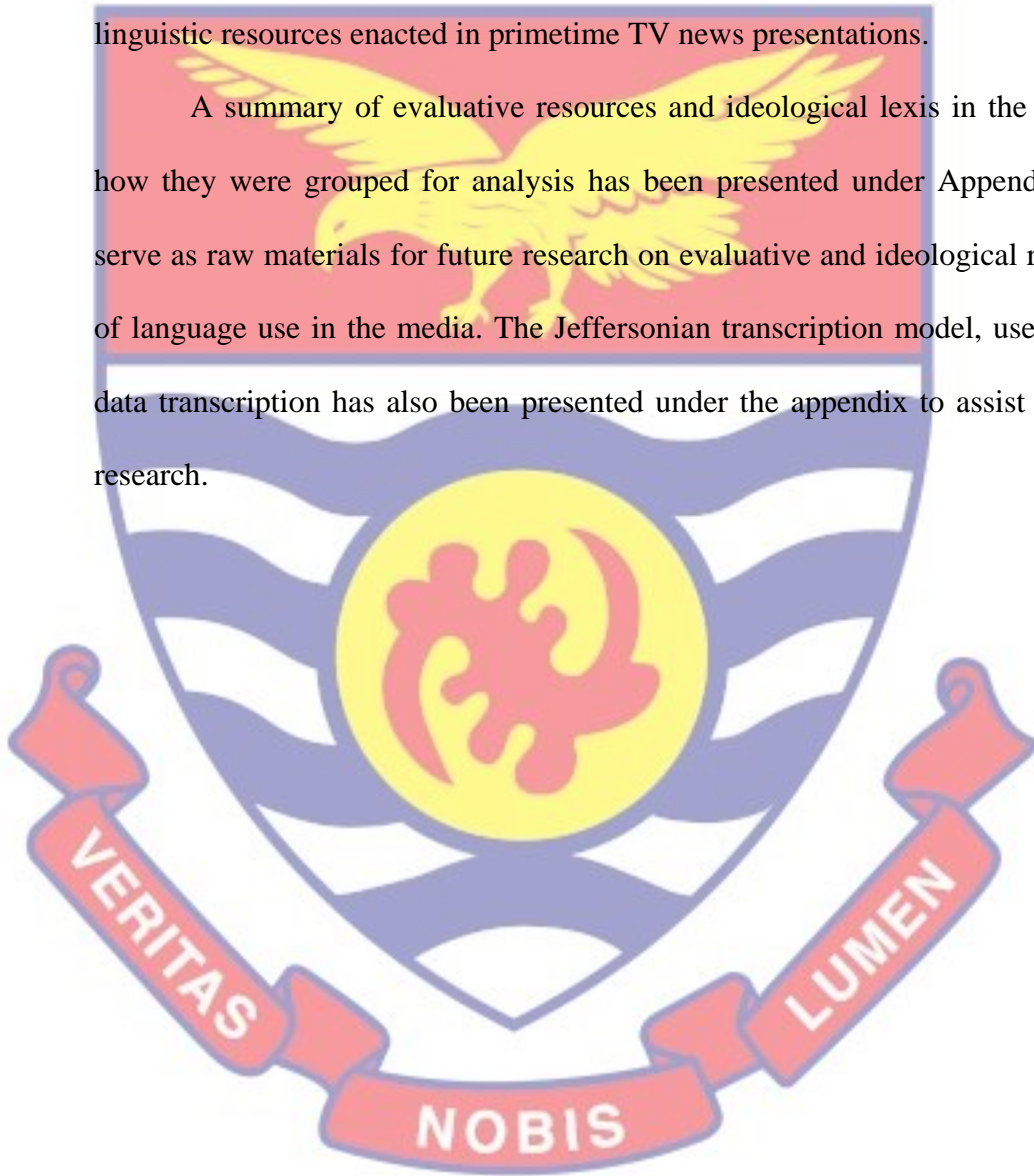
### **Recommendations for Further Research**

This research opens interesting discourse in different contexts of news stories, including mid-day news, news-in-brief, and late-night news. It describes three (3) linguistic phenomena in primetime news; however, further studies could be conducted to explain other evaluative resources in primetime TV news presentations to identify different evaluative patterns of language use in primetime TV news presentations.

In addition, semiotic mediations in primetime TV news presentations have been observed as important for news presentation clarity. Semiotics such as cartoons and other images in primetime TV news presentations can be given attention in future research. In this regard, further research can concentrate on several linguistic implications of semiotics in the news presentations that this study could not discuss.

Finally, it was noticed from this study that news presenters employed several linguistic resources that ideologically positioned them in different ways. Few of these ideological positioning resources were explored in the present study. Hence, further studies can examine the several other ideological positioning linguistic resources enacted in primetime TV news presentations.

A summary of evaluative resources and ideological lexis in the data and how they were grouped for analysis has been presented under Appendix. They serve as raw materials for future research on evaluative and ideological relevance of language use in the media. The Jeffersonian transcription model, used for the data transcription has also been presented under the appendix to assist in future research.



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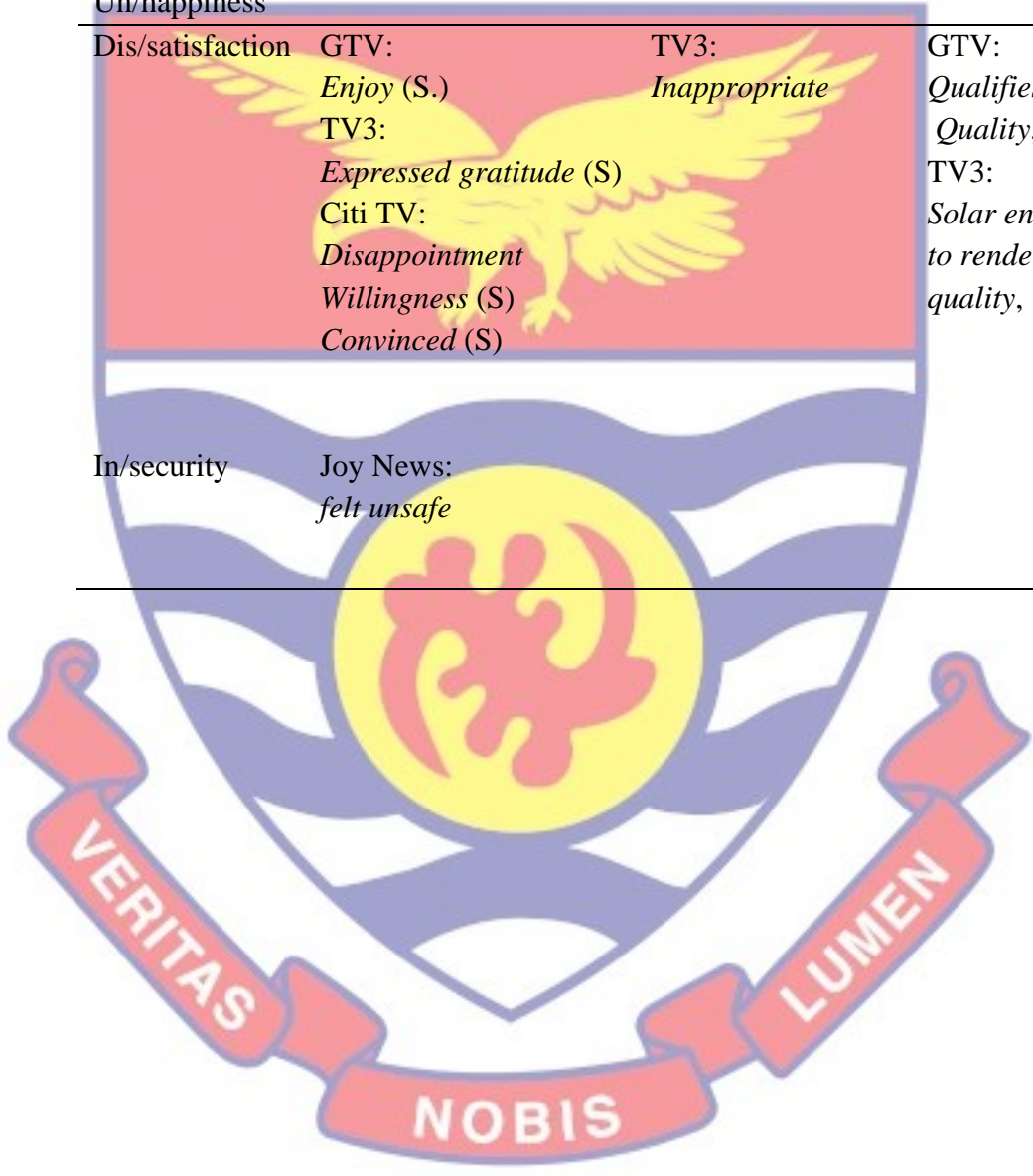


APPENDIXES

APPENDIX 1: Evaluative Resources for Primetime News Presentations

ATTITUDINAL RESOURCES FROM THE DATA

Affect	Judgement	Appreciation
Un/happiness		
Dis/satisfaction	GTV: <i>Enjoy (S.)</i> TV3: <i>Expressed gratitude (S)</i> Citi TV: <i>Disappointment</i> <i>Willingness (S)</i> <i>Convinced (S)</i>	TV3: <i>Inappropriate</i>
		GTV: <i>Qualifies,</i> <i>Quality,</i> TV3: <i>Solar energy is</i> <i>to render</i> <i>quality,</i>
In/security	Joy News: <i>felt unsafe</i>	





**APPENDIX 2: Engagement Resources**

Attribute	Disclaim	Proclaim	Entertain
GTV:	GTV:	GTV:	Citi TV:
Positive attributes:	<i>However,</i>	<i>Right,</i>	<i>Could,</i>
<i>Approved, called, said, says,</i>	<i>but,</i>	<i>absolutely,</i>	<i>may,</i>
<i>Say, hinted, according to, believes,</i>	<i>However,</i>	TV3:	TV3:
<i>said, Secures, cautioned, noted, has</i>	<i>But,</i>	<i>Absolutely,</i>	<i>Could</i>
<i>called,</i>	Joy News:	<i>Right</i>	
Joy News:	<i>But,</i>		
<i>Insist, says, is learning, announced,</i>	<i>however,</i>		
<i>according to, felt unsafe, told,</i>	Citi TV:		
<i>Appealing, claims, Reveal, announced</i>	<i>But,</i>		
Citi TV:	<i>however,</i>		
<i>Expressed, according to him, adds,</i>	<i>but,</i>		
<i>say, Justice Eric Baah held, reports,</i>	<i>however,</i>		
<i>declares, threatens, Hinted, tasked,</i>			
<i>says, dispelled.</i>			
TV3:			
<i>Secures, boycotts, noted, calling, said,</i>			
<i>have added their voice to calls for...</i>			
Negative Attributes			
GTV: <i>Warned, fears, boycotts</i>			
Joy News: <i>Rejects, rejected, blamed</i>			
TV3: <i>Fears, threaten, threatened</i>			

**APPENDIX 3: Graduation Resources**

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Force	Focus
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GTV:

*ruthlessly deal, formally, definitely,  
unanimously approved,*

Joy News:

*really, particularly,*

Citi TV:

*slightly, highly, subsequently, seriously,*

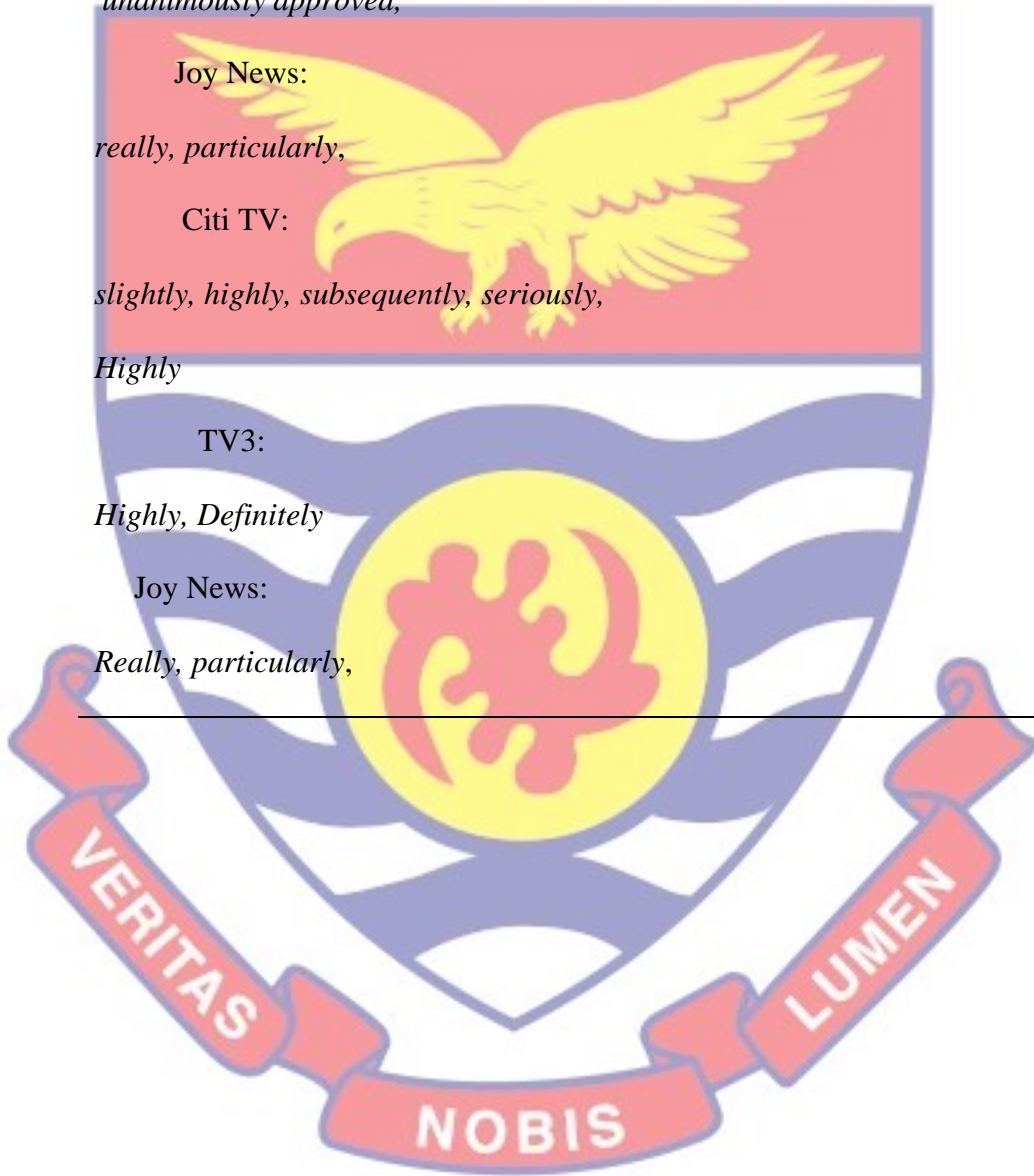
*Highly*

TV3:

*Highly, Definitely*

Joy News:

*Really, particularly,*



**APPENDIX 4: Ideological Lexis for Ideological Positioning Analysis**

Positive

Negative

GTV:

*Let's talk, you, for you..., I always say*

Joy News:

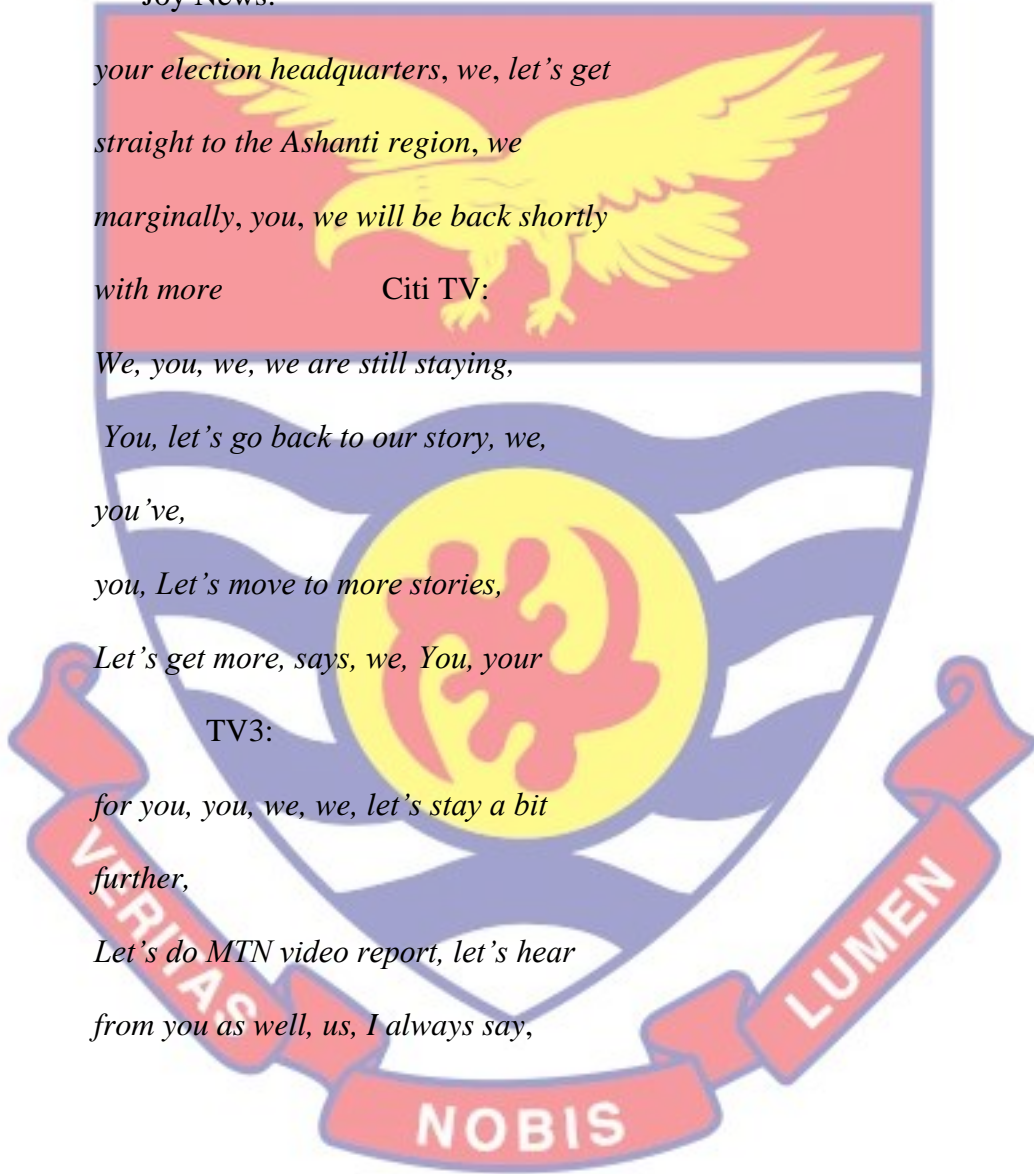
*your election headquarters, we, let's get  
straight to the Ashanti region, we  
marginally, you, we will be back shortly  
with more*

Citi TV:

*We, you, we, we are still staying,  
You, let's go back to our story, we,  
you've,  
you, Let's move to more stories,  
Let's get more, says, we, You, your*

TV3:

*for you, you, we, we, let's stay a bit  
further,  
Let's do MTN video report, let's hear  
from you as well, us, I always say,*



## APPENDIX 5: Jeffersonian Transcription Model

Symbol	Name	Use
[ text]	Brackets	Indicates the start and end points of overlapping speech.
=	Equal Sign	Indicates the break and subsequent continuation of a single interrupted utterance.
(#of seconds)	Timed Pause	A number in parentheses indicates the time, in seconds, of a pause in speech.
(.)	Micropause	A brief pause, usually less than 0.2 seconds.
. or ↓	Period or Down Arrow	Indicates falling pitch.
? or ↑	Question Mark or Up Arrow	Indicates rising pitch.
,	Comma	Indicates a temporary rise or fall in intonation.
-	Hyphen	Indicates an abrupt halt or interruption in utterance.
>text<	Greater than / Less than symbols	Indicates that the enclosed speech was delivered more rapidly than usual for the speaker.
<text>	Less than/ Greater than Symbols	Indicates that the enclosed speech was delivered more slowly than usual for the speaker.
°	Degree Symbol	Indicates whisper or reduced volume speech.
ALL CAPS	Capitalized Text	Indicates shouted or increased volume speech.
Underline	Underlined Text	Indicates the speaker is emphasizing or stressing the speech.
:::	Colon(s)	Indicates prolongation of an utterance.
(hhh)		Audible exhalation
? or (.hhh)	High Dot	Audible inhalation
(text)	Parentheses	Speech which is unclear or in doubt in the transcript.
((italic text ))	Double Parentheses	Annotation of non-verbal activity.

Jeffersonian Transcription Notation described in G. Jefferson