UNIVERSITY OF CAPE COAST

LANGUAGE AND POWER IN ACADEMIC DISCOURSE: A CRITICAL

DISCOURSE ANALYSIS OF THESIS DEFENCE IN A GHANAIAN

UNIVERSITY

FRANK MENSAH (JUNIOR)

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BY

FRANK MENSAH (JUNIOR)

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 the Master of Philosophy Degree in English

JULY 2017

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: Frank Mensah (Junior)

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. Joseph B. A. Afful

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

Name: Dr. Richmond. S. Ngula

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ABSTRACT

Language use in academic discourse has received considerable attention from researchers over the years. These researchers have shown how language is used as a tool to communicate effectively and to enact power. The study investigated and examined the language used and its functions in thesis defence, using Conversation Analysis (CA) and Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) as analytical frameworks. The investigation and examination of the language used and its function was done using self-transcribed transcripts of the interaction between panel members and candidates of thesis defence organized by the Department of English of the University of Cape Coast. The study also examined the use of language as an effective tool for enacting and recognizing power in the thesis defence. Findings revealed that panel members mainly used interrogatives, declaratives and imperatives to examine candidates on their knowledge of the research topic area and to seek confirmation/disconfirmation from them whereas candidates mainly used declaratives and, less frequently, phrasal units to offer explanations to the questions asked them as well as to agree/disagree to question and comments made by panel members. The analysis also revealed that panel members signaled power more with their linguistic choices such as address forms, questions, imperatives and modal auxiliary verbs, while candidates used some address forms and hedging devices to show their subordination to panel members. The study has implications for academic discourse, postgraduate thesis defence pedagogy and serves as an impetus for further research.

KEY WORDS

Academic discourse

Discourse studies

Language

Power

Thesis defence

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DEDICATION

To my family

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LIST OF ACRONYMS

CA	Conversation Analysis
CDA	Critical Discourse Analysis
CGA	Critical Genre Analysis
RAs	Research Articles
SAD	Spoken Academic Discourse
SFL	Systemic Functional Linguistics
TD	Thesis Defence
TDP	Thesis Defence Presentation
UCC	University of Cape Coast

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

The aim of the introductory chapter is to create a general context for the study. Power, as a concept, has received much attention in linguistic studies. Scholars like Fairclough (1989, 2001) and van Dijk (1996) have studied power in several discourses using different linguistic features, including: prosody, clause types, pronouns, and modality. As a way of contributing to linguistic studies on power, the present study examines how participants involved in thesis defence employ various linguistic features to enact power. In this chapter, therefore, the following aspects are considered: the background to the study, the statement of the problem, the research questions, the delimitations of the work, the significance of the study, and the synopsis of the research.

Background to the Study

Research into academic discourse has grown considerably since the mid-1960s when Rodney D. Huddleston, Richard A. Hudson, and Eugene O. Winter conducted a British Government-funded study into the linguistic properties of scientific English (Huddleston, cited in Hyland, 2009). Studies on academic discourse have since then expanded first, to include student and instructional discourses as well as research papers. Second, these studies on academic discourse have expanded to embrace academic speech as well as writing, and third to address rhetorical purposes as well as syntactic forms (Hyland, 2009). While Huddleston and his colleagues revolutionized research into academic discourse by turning from intuition to look at real language use, research has gradually focused on

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particular genres and, increasingly, genres within specific disciplines, reaching deeper into the communicative purposes of spoken and written texts (cf. Hyland, 2009). Academic discourse has, thus, become a developing research area of interest to many scholars. Hyland (2009) posits that this interest relates to three major developments. These are "the growing diversity of the students who are entering universities as a result of widening access policies, the increased attention given to teaching and learning by funding bodies, and the emergence of English as the international language of scholarship" (Hyland, 2009, p. 3).

Hyland (2009, p. 1) defines academic discourse as "the ways of thinking and using language which exist in the academy". According to him, "its significance, in part, lies in the fact that complex social activities like educating students, demonstrating learning, disseminating ideas and constructing knowledge, rely on language to accomplish" (Hyland, 2009, p. 1). Hyland offers a list of some academic genres including textbooks, essays, conference presentations, dissertations, lectures and research articles. These academic genres are "central to the academic enterprise and are the essence of education and knowledge creation" (Hyland, 2009, p. 1). Also, these genres are governed by norms accepted by members of the academic discourse community such as professors, lecturers, and researchers. Swales (1990) defines discourse communities as groups that have goals or purposes, and use communication to achieve these goals. A discourse community can, therefore, be said to refer to a group of people joined together by particular ways in which they use language to construct knowledge; such people have similar beliefs, values and attitudes towards how language is used. Academic

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genres can be written or spoken. Spoken academic genres, in particular, include lectures, seminar presentations, round table discussions, and thesis defence, also known as viva voce.

Recski (2006) indicates that spoken discourse has been analysed from sociological, philosophical, linguistic and critical perspectives, all making important contributions towards understanding the nature of face-to-face interaction. The pervasiveness of spoken interaction in daily life has made it an interesting domain of study for researchers with various backgrounds (for example, ethnography, sociolinguistics, philosophy, social semiotics). Analysts from all these perspectives have sought to describe aspects of how talk works. Within ethnography, new ways of thinking about spoken interaction emerged in the 1970's from Conversation Analysis (CA), notably the work of Sacks, Schegloff, and Jefferson (1974). From sociolinguistics, we have contributions from the work of Dell Hymes, John J. Gumperz, and William Labov. Within linguistics, the study of spoken discourse has been pursued most actively by approaches interested in both structure and the functions of authentic discourse, notably Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL) as well as Genre Analysis. More recent perspectives have emerged from social semiotic orientations which arise from interdisciplinary connections between linguistics and critical theory, including Critical Linguistics (CL) and Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) (cf. Recski, 2006).

Thesis defence can be considered part of a rite of passage in ones' academic apprenticeship and the gateway to joining the academic community as an independent researcher. During a thesis defence (henceforth, TD), one

demonstrates one's skills relating to the written presentation of one's research, where the learner demonstrates his/her ability to participate in academic discussion with research colleagues: 'with the living voice'. Its purpose is to confirm that the thesis is the individuals' own work and that the individual understands what he/she has written. Bridges (as cited in Markulis & Stang, 2008) notes that the TD, like other oral examinations, aims at providing students with the opportunity to develop and demonstrate oral communication ability as well as helping students develop explanatory skills, powers of persuasion, oral poise and self-confidence. Although it may seem intimidating, TD provides the student with the opportunity to share his/her research with peers and members of the academic community at large. It allows one to showcase his/her efforts and present his/her findings in a supportive environment.

Statement of the Problem

Among the tasks usually required of graduate students is the oral presentation of their original research (Weissberg, 1993). Over the last few decades, researchers have shown much interest in written academic genres to the detriment of studies in spoken academic genres. Thus, whereas various sections of the thesis have received considerable attention in research conducted on sections such as that on acknowledgement (Hyland, 2004; Afful, 2016), its generic structure (Swales, 2004), the literature review (Kwan, 2006; Afful 2016) and conclusion (Hewings, 1993), the defence of the thesis has remained relatively under-researched in Africa and Ghana, in particular. This leaves room for the present study to be conducted.

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While there have been some studies on spoken academic discourse, these have focused on lectures (Johns, 1981; Richards, 1983; Csomay, 2000), seminars (Weissberg, 1993), and conference presentations (Dubois, 1980; Roley-Jolivet & Carter-Thomas, 2005), using various linguistic analysis and methodologies. For instance, genre analysis has been applied in studies of spoken academic discourse (Thompson, 1994; Aguilar, 2004) to illustrate the distinctiveness of spoken academic genres, what they have in common with other genres and how both instruction and research may overlap within academic discourse communities.

The TD has also attracted attention from researchers across Europe; even though the literature reveals that little or less research has been reported on the oral defence. Few studies on the TD conducted in Africa include Afful (2014) and Adjepong (2015). These two studies are very significant to the present study since they shed light on TD in the African setting and help me to establish the gap that this study explores and fills. Particularly, Afful (2014) employs the Ethnography of Speaking approach to study TD and he argues that the scene created for the TD is formal in nature. The study also reveals that one of the stylistic features that is evident in TD presentation is the use of some hedging devices. Adjepong's (2015) study differs from that of Afful (2014), as she examines the specific contextualization cues present in TD setting, as well as investigate the linguistic forms employed by participants. She reveals that the Chairman and the panel members use declaratives, interrogatives, and imperatives to invite the candidates to take their speaking turns while the candidates use declaratives to take their speaking turns. The analysis also reveals that address terms are used; these address

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terms were directed to only the Chairman and the panel members. These two studies are very relevant to the present research as the findings derived from them help to know the discursive practices and some of the rhetorical and linguistic features that are characteristic of TD. It is, however, clear that these two studies do not explore the area of language and power by looking at the relationship between the two in the context of TD. This gap in the literature has motivated me to undertake this study, which will add to the existing literature on this special spoken academic genre. The present study is situated within Africa, specifically Ghana.

Also, this study adopts the critical discourse analysis (CDA) approach and framework to study TD. By using the CDA approach, the researcher believes that the study will contribute meaningfully to the growing literature on TD. Specifically, the study intends to investigate the linguistic forms that are used in TD and how these forms aid in recognising and enacting power during TD of students of the Department of English at the University of Cape Coast.

Since the present study is situated within the academic setting, it is important to highlight the educational arrangement which inherently embodies unequal power relations. Is so doing, one is able to distinguish between legitimate use of power to bring about desired teaching and learning outcomes, which can be said to be one of the focus of the organization of TD, and illegitimate use of power. Edu-Buandoh and Mwinlaaru (2013) note that "the substantial cultural, social and structural variables which impinge on education as an institution inherently construct the interaction between educators and learners in terms of power relations" (p. 222). Generally, power can be conceived of as the ability to

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influence or control the decisions, actions or behaviour of other people. In the context of this study, however, power is not to be considered as the permanently forceful competition which is aimed at abusing the other for it (power) to become domination and illegitimate. Power is perceived or conceived as people wishing to be recognized or the ability to force a point in a communicative encounter. Thus, as already noted, the study intends to investigate the linguistic forms that are used in TD and how these forms aid in recognising and enacting power.

Research Questions

To clarify the aim of the study, the study is guided by three (3) research questions. It is important to mention here that since the main objective of the study is to examine the relationship between language and power, there is a primary research question and the other two (2) questions are secondary ones that help to achieve the objective of the primary research question.

Primary Research Question

1. How are power relations enacted in the linguistic choices made by panel members and candidates during TD?

Secondary Research Questions

2. What sentence types are used by panel members and candidate during the interaction at TD?
3. What communicative functions are served through the sentence types used by panel members and candidates at TD?

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I investigate TD from the perspective of Fairclough's (1989; 1995; 2001) CDA, as well as using CA approach (Sacks, Schegloff & Jefferson, 1974). Firstly, by using the CA approach, the sequence of turn-taking of each interaction among the participants (that is, panel members and candidates) and how the talk is organized are identified. This is to help in determining the sentence types used by these participants, as the second research question seeks to do. The sequence and organization of the talk will also guide me in identifying the communicative purpose of the sentence types used. Secondly, using the CDA approach helps me to examine the relationship that exists between language and power. After the linguistic forms have been identified, a descriptive analysis and interpretation of the linguistic choices made will be carried out. This will unearth the power relations in TD, as stated in the primary research question.

Delimitations of the Study

The following delimitations are necessary in order to set the present work in sharp focus and to establish the boundaries of the study.

First, the study is limited to the Department of English of the University of Cape Coast (UCC). This delimitation is informed by my proximity and affiliation to the institution and the department. My affiliation to the institution and the department enabled me to obtain the data for the study. More importantly, the study is limited to TD, and not any other spoken academic genre as the TD is gaining much momentum as an area of research in Europe. Thus, by studying TD in an African setting, particularly Ghana, the findings (from a different socio-cultural context) will add to the increasing studies conducted on TD.

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Further, the data used for the analysis in the study is limited to linguistic features. Since the data for the study centres mainly on the verbal aspect of conversation, it is characterized by both linguistic features such as language use and non-linguistic features such as interruptions, among others. Even though such non-linguistic features are very common in conversations, my interest in this study is purely on the linguistic features.

Thirdly, by considering the participants involved, the study is limited to only the interaction that ensues between the candidate who is defending his/her thesis and panel members who interact with the candidate. It is worthy to note that, in the TD setting, the panel involved are mostly senior academics who may include professors, deans of faculties, heads of departments, senior lecturers, assessors and external examiners. These senior academic staff who constitute the panel for assessing the candidate's work serve as gatekeepers who ensure the passage of the candidate to joining the academic community as an independent researcher. Even though an opportunity is given to other faculty members to engage the candidate after presenting his/her work, I consider the interaction that ensues between only senior members who serve as panel members and the candidate.

Significance of the Study

This study is important in the following ways. First, the study contributes to the scholarship on academic genres by focusing on TD. Thus, this research will add to the interest in TD as an area worthy of research. Moreover, the study will help members of the academic community, both senior and junior members, to become self-conscious about the shape of their own knowledge. Particularly, the

findings that will be arrived at will become useful to candidates and panel members as well as other faculty members and students who engage in postgraduate TD. This is because the findings will make them appreciate the linguistic choices that they make during the TD setting.

Also, the study has implications for the use of CDA as an analytical tool for investigating spoken academic genres, in particular, and spoken academic discourses, in general. That is, the findings of this study will be useful for theory. Given that CDA as an analytical tool has not received much application within academic discourse, particularly spoken academic genres, this study sheds light on the usefulness of the theory to academic discourse. Finally, the findings of this study will provide an impetus for further studies on TD.

Thesis Synopsis

The thesis will be organized in five chapters. This first chapter has highlighted the background to the study, the statement of the problem, the research questions which underpin the study, delimitations of the study, as well as the significance of the study. The second chapter explicates the conceptual lens on which the study is hinged and presents the empirical literature related to the study. The relationship between the previous studies on TD and the present study is presented in this chapter. Chapter three discusses the methodology of the present work, paying attention to the research design, the research site, data collection procedure and sample size, transcription and coding of data, validity and reliability, as well as the ethical considerations. The data analysis procedures and the challenges faced by the researcher during the collection and transcription of

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data are also presented. The fourth chapter presents the analysis and discussion of the data collected in order to answer the research questions raised in the study. Thus, the analytical frameworks provided by Fairclough (1989, 1995, 2001) and Sacks *et al*. (1974) are utilized to accomplish the task in chapter four. The final chapter provides a conclusion to the study. Here, the researcher highlights the major findings of the study, the implications of the findings, and recommendations for further studies.

Chapter Summary

This chapter has given a brief background to the study. The chapter highlights the fact that an oral presentation of one's original research or thesis is an important task required of graduate students (Weissberg, 1993). The chapter also establishes the fact that TD has relatively been under-researched in Africa, in general, and Ghana, in particular. This motivated me to conduct a study into TD by examining the language used and to look at how power is enacted during TD. The chapter has also established the significance of the study, the statement of the problem, and research questions. The study is meant to add to the existing knowledge on TD. The chapter also presented the synopsis of the research to guide readers. The next chapter will review related literature.

CHAPTER TWO

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

Introduction

This chapter provides a review of related literature. It discusses the conceptual framework that will help to put the study in a proper perspective. The chapter begins with a discussion on CDA and then some key concepts such as power, spoken academic discourse, and thesis writing and defence. It continues by presenting some related literature on language and power, and TD, and further, the chapter establishes the relationship between previous studies and the present study.

Conceptual Framework

Several approaches and/or frameworks have been used in the analysis of language and one of such frameworks is Critical Genre Analysis (CGA) by Vijay K. Bhatia. Central to the framework of CGA is the theme of "language at work", which is a recognized field of study within the larger area of Applied Linguistics. Researches carried out around this theme focuses, generally, on how language participates in the performance of professional tasks, creating environments, identities, social relations, etc. As a perspective that has emerged in genre studies, CGA has resulted from the fusion of and connection between two fields: Genre Analysis and Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA). Chen (2018) asserts that Bhatia's (2017) *Critical Genre Analysis: Investigating Interdiscursive Performance in Professional Practice* presents an innovative approach to genre analysis, which

allows a multi-dimensional study of the various factors interacting in the production of specialized genres in the professional setting.

According to Chen (2018) and Zhan and Huang (2018), the approach Bhatia proposes adds a new dimension of 'criticality' to genre theory, attempting to demystify the multi-perspective nature of professional practices in real-world situations. Bhatia thus makes an effort to distinguish it (CGA) from the use of the notion in the long-established CDA, a framework that is adopted for use in the present study. He does this distinction by offering a detailed and clear elucidation of the term 'critical' used in CDA and CGA. The basis for this distinction is that, as a form of methodology, the 'critical' in CDA means exposing the connections between language, power, and ideology, whereas the notion in CGA attempts to demystify the multi-dimensional nature of professional, institutional, and disciplinary genres and practices. Due to this underlying distinction between the two in the use of the word 'critical', I find CDA as a more appropriate framework for the present study. The justification for this is that first, the literature reveals that Bhatia's *Critical Genre Analysis: Investigating Interdiscursive Performance in Professional Practice* is the latest contribution to genre analysis and since the present study does not have carrying out a genre analysis as its focus, CDA as a framework is considered appropriate. Second, the present study seeks to contribute to linguistic studies on power since the study examines how participants involved in thesis defence employ various linguistic features to underlie the power semantics at play. Thus, since the 'critical' in CDA deals with exposing the connections between language and power, a concept which is very key to the

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present study, the present study is situated within the framework of Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) by Fairclough (1989, 1995, 2001). This framework enables me to explore and discover the ideologies underlying TD. This subsequent section discusses the CDA framework, as presented by Fairclough, and how it applies to this study.

Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA)

CDA is a rapidly developing area of language study, which regards discourse as 'a form of social practice' (Fairclough & Wodak, 1997: 258), and takes the context of language use to be crucial to discourse (Wodak, 2001). It takes particular interest in the relation between language and power. This study utilizes CDA as a methodological tool for analyzing TD – a genre of spoken academic discourse.

Proponents of CDA (e.g. Fairclough, 1995; Van Dijk, 1998; Wodak, 2002) hold the view that texts are not merely used for information but they are based on the ideological position of the persons involved in the production of texts. One of the main tenets of CDA as a methodological tool for doing discourse analysis, therefore, is to discover the ideologies underlying texts, whether spoken or written. According to Fairclough (1989), CDA views the relationship between discourse and society as a dialectic relationship: society shapes discourse and discourse shapes society; the two are mutually constitutive. A society is inconceivable without discourse and discourse cannot exist without social interaction. Fairclough and Wodak (1997) define CDA as follows:

CDA sees discourse – language use in speech and writing – as a form of 'social practice'. Describing discourse as social practice implies a dialectical relationship between a particular discursive event and the situation(s), institution(s) and social structure(s) which frame it: the discursive event is shaped by them, but it also shapes them. That is, discourse is socially constitutive as well as socially shaped: it constitutes situations, objects of knowledge, and the social identities of and relationships between people and groups of people. It is constitutive both in the sense that it helps to sustain and reproduce the social status quo, and in the sense that it contributes to transforming it ... Both the ideological loading of particular ways of using language and the relations of power which underlie them are often unclear to people. CDA aims to make more visible these opaque aspects of discourse. (Fairclough & Wodak, 1997, p. 258)

Discourse analysts like Fairclough, van Dijk, and Wodak, thus, study texts to find links between the kind of language used in a specific discourse and how this kind of language can be explained in socio-economic and political terms, as well as drawing our attention to how texts are so closely related to power relations in our societies.

Though critical discourse analysts have a common objective, they use different methodologies and approaches for doing CDA. Wodak's (1996, 2001) CDA is based on the discourse-historical approach which states that in analyzing texts, the historical context in which discursive events are embedded should be

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considered. Also, van Dijk's (1998) CDA accounts for the social and cognitive properties of ideologies; that is, ideologies are shared by group members and affect texts through the context models (knowledge, experience, ideas, opinions) of individual members of social actors. Fairclough's (1989, 1995, 2001) CDA, on the other hand, is based on the socio-cultural theory, which states that language is linked to social realities and brings about social change. Thus, all changes that occur in society are carried out through language use. The socio-cultural theory operates first with a dialectal relationship between the micro-structure of discourse (words, phrases, sentence choice) and the macro-structure of society (opinions, views, persuasion and manipulation). This means the macro-structures of society may determine the micro-structure of discourse, which, in turn, reproduce the larger social and ideological structures. In the subsequent paragraph, a detailed discussion of Fairclough's model of doing CDA is presented since it has the adequate and predictive powers of helping explore the relationship that exists between the kind of language used in spoken academic discourse, particularly the TD, and how power is enacted during TD. A justification is also provided to explain how important CDA is to studies in the field of academic discourse.

In doing CDA, there are two major streams or approaches. One stream is represented by the works of Fairclough (1989, 1995, 2001). These works are characterised by detailed textual analyses, while the other stream, represented by van Dijk (1997) and Gee (1999, 2005), is characterised by a focus on social variables such as action, context, power and ideology. Van Dijk (1997) and Gee (1999, 2005) both develop toolkits that are less oriented to lexico-syntactic

features of texts and more focused on cultural and social resources and contexts. Van Dijk's (1997) approach is, therefore, based on four categories: action, context, power and ideology, while Gee's (1999, 2005) methodological heuristics is based on six categories: semiotic building, world building, activity building, identity and relationship building, political building, and connection building. Even though the other approach provided by van Dijk and Gee can be used in carrying out a CDA of a text, this study, as stated earlier, is based largely in the first stream of CDA represented by the work of Fairclough. An outline of Fairclough's CDA is, thus, provided in the subsequent paragraphs.

Fairclough's approach to CDA identifies some key terms. The first term that is crucial in the understanding of CDA is *text*. In Fairclough's words, text refers to "the written or spoken language produced in a discursive event" (Fairclough, 1993: 138). Fairclough emphasizes the multi-semiotic character of texts and adds visual images and sound – using the example of television language – as other semiotic forms which may be simultaneously present in texts (Fairclough, 1995). Another key term Fairclough identifies is *genre*, which he considers as "the use of language associated with a particular social activity" (Fairclough, 1993: 138). For him, "different genres are different means of production of a specifically textual sort, different resources for texturing" (Fairclough, 2000: 441). Genre is also a means of textual structuring and a set of relatively stable conventions, which are both creative and conservative. That means that genre is both relatively stable and, at the same time, open to change. Fairclough (1993), again, identifies *discourse* as another key term and refers to it

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as "language use conceived as social practice" (p. 138), or as a "way of signifying experience from a particular perspective" (p. 138). He further points out that:

> The question of discourse is the question of how text figures (in relation to other moments) in how people represent the world, including themselves and their productive activities. Different discourses are different ways of representations associated with different positions. (Fairclough, 2000, p. 170)

Thus, discourse may not be only concerned with language in use, but also the pervasive and often invisible sets of values, beliefs and ideas in that social circumstance.

Other key terms Fairclough identifies are *discursive events* and *orders of discourse*. According to him, a discursive event is an "instance of language use, analysed as text, discursive practice, and social practice" (Fairclough, 1993: 138). Discursive event, thus, refers to text, discursive practice (production and interpretation of the text), and social practice (including situational, institutional and societal practice). On the other hand, he posits that orders of discourse concern the "totality of discursive practices of an institution and the relationship between them" (Fairclough, 1993, p. 138). They are usually associated with particular institutions or domains of social life. For example, there are particular orders of discourse associated with schools. In describing orders of discourse, one is concerned with specifying what discourse types are used in the domain, and the

relationships between each discursive practice (production and interpretation of discourse).

Describing discourse as social practice implies that language and society bear a kind of dialectical relationship. This means that discourse constitutes situations, objects of knowledge and the identities of people. Discourse constitutes the social status quo and, at the same time, it is shaped by the situation. CDA, for Fairclough, is, therefore, concerned with the investigation of the relation between two assumptions about language use: that language use is both socially shaped and socially shaping. He bases this idea on Halliday's Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL) (cf. Halliday & Matthiessen, 2014). CDA, therefore, considers the relationship between language use and wider social and cultural structures. In Fairclough's terms, this means the relationships between a specific communicative event, such as a newspaper coverage of an event, and the total structure of an order of discourse, as well as modifications to the order of discourse and its constituents, genres and discourses (Fairclough, 1995).

For the operationalization of these theoretical considerations, Fairclough develops an analytical framework (Fairclough, 1992; 1995), drawing on the concepts of "intertextuality" (that is, the relationship between texts 'before' and 'after'), "interdiscursivity" (that is, the combination of genres and discourses in a text) and "hegemony" (the predominance in and the dominance of political, ideological and cultural domains of a society) (Fairclough, 1995). He attributes these three dimensions to each discursive event. According to Fairclough, a discursive event is simultaneously text, discursive practice (including the

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production and interpretation of texts) and social practice. Fairclough's analysis is based on three components or stages – *description, interpretation* and *explanation*.

At the stage of description, linguistic properties of texts are described (text analysis), raising our awareness of power relations and discourse effects. Fairclough (1989) divides this stage into three sub-sections which are vocabulary, grammar, and textual structures; these help to unravel a text and shed light on how power and ideology operate within the text. At the interpretation stage, a link is made between the kind of language used in the text (written or spoken) and its meanings in the social context. In other words, the relationship between the productive and interpretative processes of discursive practice and the texts is interpreted. Fairclough (1989) further adds that interpretation in CDA brings to the fore the meaning of a text as well as that of the interpreter, relying on his or her member resources. Finally, at the explanation stage, a discourse is described as it reflects a social process, a social practice and showing how that discourse is closely related to the social structures and the effects of this discourse on changing or sustaining those social practices or structures (Fairclough, 1989). Thus, at this stage, the relationship between discursive practice and social practice is explained (Fairclough, 1995).

In using these three stages, Fairclough attempts to establish a systematic method for exploring the relationship between text and its social context. This framework of CDA informs the present study. This is because, as a multi-layered analytical framework, it incorporates textual, processing and social levels of discourse analysis. Again, CDA informs the present study because of the fact that

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the study deals with texts, particularly, spoken text. The texts, which are at the core of the analysis, are, thus, analysed for linguistic evidence for claims made out of the discourse analytical work.

Key Concepts

The following key concepts guided the study: *power, spoken academic discourse* (henceforth, SAD), and *thesis writing* and *defence*. These concepts are discussed in this section to provide readers with an overview of the conceptual thrust of the study and to show how these concepts are used in the present study.

Power

Power is a concept which is at the heart of social stratification. It is, therefore, not surprising that there are disputes concerning its meaning. The study of power for many scholars is a thorny and fascinating issue whose definition and concrete conceptualization have not yet ended (Lukes, 1974). Clegg (1989) posits that modern thinking about power began in the writings of Nicollo Machiavelli (*The Prince*, early 16th century) and Thomas Hobbes (*Leviathan*, mid-17th century). Their books are considered classics of political writing, and the contrast between them represents the two main routes along which thought about power has continued to this day (Clegg, 1989). Machiavelli represents the strategic and decentralized thinking about power and organization. Hobbes, on the other hand, represents the causal thinking about power as hegemony. He also believes that power is centralized and focused on sovereignty.

CDA, as mentioned earlier, is concerned with the critical study of spoken or written texts. These texts, in turn, are far from being always neutral insofar as they are sometimes ideologically loaded and reflect the ambitions, needs, and interests of social groups. Accordingly, studying the manifestations of ideology in a discourse is nothing but the study of power relations in that discourse. If most ideologies are intimately linked to social context, which is full of conflict, hegemony, and resistance (van Dijk, 2005), then it is very likely that the discourses of these ideologies will use linguistic and non-linguistic strategies that will empower their in-group members and put their out-group members in vulnerable or unfavorable positions. The investigation of power relations in discourse is, therefore, an important, if not the most important, issue in the methodological paradigm of CDA.

According to CDA analysts, language is not powerful in itself; instead, it derives its power from the way people use it (Blommaert, 2005). When an individual or a group of people use language to control people's minds, beliefs, and action, then there is not a neutral use of language that aims at transmitting information but an *ideological use* of language which aims at acquiring more power and directing things and events towards a specific goal or agenda. For this reason, CDA theorists often work on the manifestations of power abuse in discourses. They focus on the participants in the discourses and analyze the language of those who dominate and those who are dominated, those who are responsible for the existence of inequalities and those who suffer from them. Van Dijk (1998: 5), thus, confirms that:

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CDA focuses on the *abuse* of (…) power, and especially on *dominance*, that is, on the ways control over discourse is abused to control people's beliefs and actions in the interest of dominant groups, and against the best interests or the will of the others. 'Abuse' in this case may be (very roughly) characterized as a norm-violation that hurts others, given some ethical standard, such as (just) rules, agreements, laws or human rights principles. In other words, dominance may be briefly defined as the illegitimate exercise of power (van Dijk, 1998).

Within the framework of CDA, texts are viewed as sites of struggle (Weiss & Wodak, 2003). They are arenas where different discourses, world views, and ideologies compete with each other and struggle for more dominance and more control. According to van Dijk (1993), power means control, the control that one group exercises over another group. This kind of control has two spheres in which it operates: the sphere of action and the sphere of cognition. Whereas the first sphere means limiting the actions and behaviors of a group of people, the second sphere simply means making an influence on their minds. Van Dijk asserts that cognition control is more subtle and sophisticated than action control and exemplifies this assertion by saying that action control means using corporal punishment or physical coercion (as in police violence against demonstrators, or male violence against women), while cognition control uses smart strategies such as persuasion, dissimulation or manipulation to make heavy impact on minds and to change attitudes in one's own interest (van Dijk, 1993).

Fairclough (1989) states that power emerges in discourse by the way powerful participants in discourse control and constrain the contributions of non-powerful participants. In any type of discourse, there are various *constraints* acting on the participants. Fairclough distinguishes three types: *contents*, what is said or done; *relations*, the social relations people enter into in discourse; *subjects*, or the 'subject positions' people can occupy (Fairclough, 1989, p. 46). These three constraints take shape in discourse to bring about the convergence of language and power. Also, these three, the *contents*, *relations* and *subject positions*, reflect the *asymmetrical* power relations that exist and also maintain the reproduction of the dominant ideology in discourse (Fairclough, 1989). Fairclough is quick to point out that the unequal relationships in discourses are not arbitrary but they stem from the nature of participant relation in the speech or communicative events they find themselves in. It is social conventions which distribute power and determine the way people should look at and talk to each other. That is, social structures and conditions determine the properties of discourse. However, these conventions and power relations are not fixed and unalterable and that the power relations could undergo a dramatic change in the discourse.

Lukes (1974, 2005) also adds his voice to the power theory and provides an elaborate view on it. Lukes (2005) defines power in three categories. He explains that power is enacted when a speaker causes a hearer to perform an action or to do something which the hearer would not have performed. Lukes adds that power is enacted when a speaker indicates an ability to perform a particular action and lastly, power is posited when a speaker makes an assertion authoritatively from a

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particular knowledge or information. He posits that power is one of those concepts which is unavoidably value-dependent, that is, "both its definition and any given use of it, once defined, are inextricably tied to a given set of (probably unacknowledged) value-assumptions which predetermine the range of its empirical application" (Lukes, 2005, p. 30). For Lukes, the common core to any mention of power in the analysis of social relationships is the notion that *A,* in some way, affects *B,* in a significant manner. The three views of power, as Lukes (2005) states, are alternative interpretations and applications of the same underlying concept of power, according to which *A* exercises power over *B* when *A* affects *B* in a manner contrary to *B's* interests (Lorenzi, 2006).

Lukes (1974) outlines three dimensions through which power had been theorized in the earlier parts of the twentieth century. These are the *one-dimensional power, the two-dimensional power* and the *three-dimensional power*. One-dimensional power is characterized by these features: power is decision making, exercised in formal institutions, measured by the outcomes of decisions. In other words, Lukes (1974) states that the "one-dimensional" view of power involves a focus on behaviour in the making of decisions on issues over which there is an observable conflict of (subjective) interests, seen as express policy preferences, revealed by political participation. With the two-dimensional power, Lukes (1974) includes: decision making and agenda-setting, institutions and informal influences, and the measured extent of informal influence. According to him, techniques used by two-dimensional power structures include: influence, inducement, persuasion, authority, coercion and direct force. Three-dimensional

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power shapes preferences via values, norms and ideologies. All social interaction, therefore, involves power because ideas operate behind all languages and actions.

Generally, CDA's ultimate purpose is to uncover opaque as well as transparent structural relationships of hegemony, dominance, discrimination, power and control as manifested in language. That is, the objective of CDA is to deconstruct social inequality as it is expressed, constructed, and legitimized by language use in text and talk. Most critical discourse analysts would, thus, agree with Habermas' claim that 'language is also a medium of domination and social force. It serves to legitimize relations of organized power (and in this way) language is also ideological' (Habermas, as cited in Weiss & Wodak, 2003, p. 15).

The discussion above implies that how one defines and operationalizes power will always depend on one's theoretical position and value orientation (Lukes, 1974). The studies reviewed above are of much significance to the present study. Since the present study seeks to examine the power relations in TD, the review of these studies helps make clear the idea that power and/or power relations is evident in any discourse that one is engaged in, TD inclusive, and that there is the ability of a person or group to influence the action of another in the pursuit of the will and goals of the other. These studies, thus, make the investigation of power relations in TD very relevant to the present study. In the context of this study, however, power is not to be considered as the permanently forceful competition. Power is perceived as people wishing to be recognized or the ability to force a point in a communicative encounter.

Spoken Academic Discourse (SAD)

A thorough classification of spoken academic genres, according to criteria of purpose, rather than to interaction between speaker and listener, has been provided by Fortanet (2005), who distinguishes three main levels of spoken academic genres: *classroom, institutional* and *research genres*. The classification given by Fortanet (2005) is illustrated below:

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                    ┌─────────────────────┐
                    │  SPOKEN ACADEMIC    │
                    │     DISCOURSE       │
                    └─────────────────────┘
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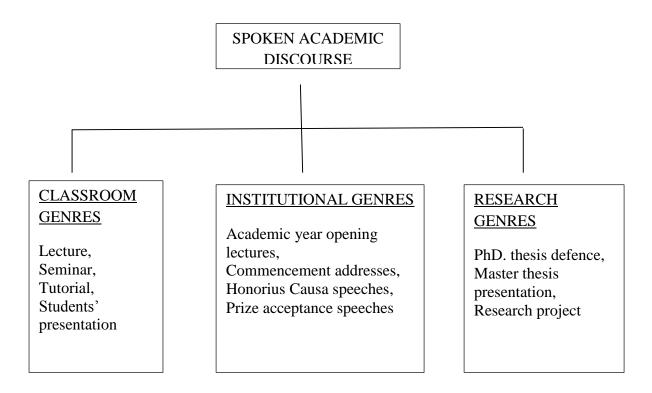| CLASSROOM GENRES	INSTITUTIONAL GENRES	RESEARCH GENRES
Lecture, Seminar, Tutorial, Students' presentation	Academic year opening lectures, Commencement addresses, Honorius Causa speeches, Prize acceptance speeches	PhD. thesis defence, Master thesis presentation, Research project

Figure 1: Classification of Spoken Academic Genres (Fortanet, 2005)

Figure 1 shows a classification of spoken academic genres proposed by Fortanet (2005). Academic discourse covers a wide variety of genres, among them those involving spoken discourse. This variety of genres needs to be classified so

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as to identify their distinct communicative purposes. As Swales (1990) points out, "a genre comprises a class of communicative events, the members of which share some set of communicative purposes. These purposes are recognized by the expert member of the parent discourse community, and thereby constitute the rationale for the genre" (Swales 1990, p. 58). Based on the communicative purposes of these genres, Fortanet classifies SADs along three (3) levels, as seen in the figure. According to Belles-Fortuno (2004) and Belles-Fortuno and Fortanet (2004), the first level of academic genres which is the 'classroom genres' has a clear pedagogical-instructional aim. The other two levels (institutional and research genres), which are mainly research-oriented, can easily be instructional when approached from an applied corpus linguistics analysis (Belles-Fortuno, 2004; Belles-Fortuno and Fortanet, 2004). One particular genre from the classification that is of interest to the present study is the 'master thesis presentation', termed in the present study as thesis defence (TD).

The TD can be classified as an academic genre since it is mainly used by discourse communities within academia. Using Fortanet's (2005) classification, one understands the nature of this genre as being research-oriented and the way it is related to other genres such as seminar, students' presentation and academic year opening lectures within academic discourse. Since Fortanet's classification uses the purpose of the genre as the main criterion for its classification, I believe it is important and helps me put the TD into its rights perspective of being a genre of SAD and research genre in SAD.

The literature indicates that, relatively, few studies have been conducted on SAD. Most studies on SADs have focused on classroom discourse, especially the postgraduate lecture (Johns, 1981; Richards, 1983; Csomay, 2000). Csomay (2000), for instance, investigated the linguistic features of academic lectures in comparison with face-to-face conversation and academic prose. His study revealed that academic lectures exhibit a high informational load represented by the dominance of nominals, the use of existential "there", inversions and pseudo-cleft structures. Again, studies such as those of Dubois (1980) and Rowley-Jolivet and Carter-Thomas (2005) have focused on conference presentations and have investigated variables such as information structure, style-shifting and generic structure. Dubois' (1980) study, for instance, presents a generic structure of biomedical conference presentations and concludes that such presentations have the structure of Introduction, Body and Termination moves. She argues that the introductory move, like the termination move, is either listener-oriented or content-oriented while the body embodies steps such as the situation, event and commentary.

Thompson (1994) also analyzes the rhetorical functions of introductions to lectures and found that in terms of communicative purpose, they seemed to have more in common with textbooks than with research articles (RAs). Aguilar's (2004) investigation of the move structure of peer seminars highlights their hybrid nature, not only sharing some features with lectures, conference presentations and written RAs, but also having an important status as a genre in their own right for the informal dissemination of scientific knowledge. These studies illustrate how

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genre analysis as a linguistic analytical procedure can reveal the distinctive characteristics of spoken academic genres, what they have in common with other genres, and how both instruction and research may overlap within academic discourse communities.

Concerning studies on the research genres as one of the classifications of SAD, I found that there are few empirical studies on viva voces (i.e., PhD thesis defence and master thesis presentation) especially. However, some theoretical studies such as that of Markulis and Stang (2008) discusses the history of and rationale for using oral exams, and provides a model for instructors of upper level business courses to augment their course pedagogy by using the oral exam format. The paper concludes by offering a set of guidelines for implementing the oral exam methodology in selected upper-level business courses.

The review indicates that studies on SADs are gradually gaining momentum and various linguistic analytic procedures and methodologies are used in conducting these studies. However, TD which is a genre of SAD has attracted less attention from researchers, particularly, in the African setting. In the next section, a discussion on thesis writing and defence is presented.

Thesis Writing and Defence

In the thesis process, writing and defending are two important parts that cannot be done away with, in order for one to be considered as an independent researcher in the academic discourse community. As cited in Recski (2006), the post-graduate degree awarded by universities is a research degree certifying that

the candidate has capabilities and training for independent scholarly work. The culmination of the degree programme is, thus, the dissertation itself (written) and normally, the associated oral defence. One can, therefore, say that there is a relationship between thesis writing and TD, as well as the examination of the thesis, whether written or oral, in order for the candidate to be admitted into the academic community as an independent researcher.

A thesis or dissertation is a document submitted in support of a student's candidature for an academic degree or professional qualification presenting the author's findings. The term *graduate thesis* is sometimes used to refer to both master's theses and doctoral dissertations. Afful (2012, p. 135) posits that a *thesis* can be broadly thought of as "a report of findings of higher research study and represents substantial subject knowledge gained as well as the cultural, professional norms, and practices acquired during years of socialization in a discipline". He adds that a thesis is usually written to perform, at least, one or all of the following functions: to solve a problem, to prove something, to contribute to knowledge and understanding of a particular topic, to demonstrate particular skills, to convince a reader or to gain admission to a particular area of study. Thesis presentations are also assessed, based on their uniqueness, freshness of ideas, evaluation of their contribution to the knowledge enterprise and publishability (Mullins & Kiley, as cited in Afful, 2012).

TD, like other oral examinations, aims at providing students with the opportunity to develop and demonstrate oral communication ability as well as help students develop explanatory skills, powers of persuasion, oral poise and self-

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confidence. Like written postgraduate thesis, TD is quintessential in graduate research education and it provides evidence of advanced academic literacies in several universities worldwide (Afful, 2012). A successful post-graduate TD, therefore, marks the terminal point that marks a successful completion of research work in most universities. In other words, a doctoral thesis represents the peak of a student's academic attainment (Afful, 2012).

In the U.K., the PhD examination consists of submission of a written dissertation and a private oral defence called a *viva*. In most British universities, only the examiners and the candidate attend the viva, though a few universities allow the supervisor to attend, and another few allow other people under certain conditions. In continental Europe, the university press would have published the candidate's dissertation before the defence. The defence, thus, "has the character of a ceremonial public academic debate" (Swales, 2004, p. 147). In Australia, the award of a doctorate usually depends solely on the quality of the written dissertation; only in rare cases (e.g., arts-based doctorates) is a candidate required to attend an oral examination (Dally, Holbrook, Graham & Lawry, 2004). In the U.S. and Canada, the majority of universities require an oral defence of a written dissertation, which is usually open to the public. A similar situation exists in most Asian and African countries (Powell & Green, 2007). Swales (2004), however, notes that, in the U.S., the University of California-Berkeley does not require an oral defence, contrary to what the majority of American universities do. Grimshaw and Burke (1994) mentioned that the institutions in the U.S. had "normative charters of varying degrees of specificity and enforceability" concerning the

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dissertation defence (p. 444). However, neither study further examined how wide the variation was and its possible implications.

The defence of the thesis in most universities is based on some institutional policies. Tinkler and Jackson (2000), therefore, examined the institutional policies concerning the PhD examination process of 20 British universities, and found three aspects of variation across these institutions: selection of examiners, production and submission of examiners' reports, and conduct of the oral examination. First, although all the universities conceived competency and impartiality as the criteria for selecting examiners, some universities had far more detailed criteria than others, especially the criteria concerning the selection of external examiners. Second, some universities required independent reports from the examiners prior to the defence while others required separate or joint reports after the defence. Time for the submission of examiner reports was related to whether the oral defence contributed to the final decision on the award of the degree, and submitting separate or joint reports was linked to the independence of each examiner and thus, to the fairness of the overall PhD examination process. Last, while most universities conducted the defence in private, a few had public examinations. These findings, Tinkler and Jackson argue, indicated that the universities conceptualize and operationalize the dissertation defence in diverse ways. In another study, Tinkler and Jackson (2002) identified three components of the oral defence; namely, *skills, content,* and *conduct*. They argue that two of them have "enormous potential for variability" in practice (p. 96). That is, policies

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around content are often vague in what should be assessed, and conduct of this examination is "the least regulated" (p. 90).

Chen (2008) also sheds some light on the assumed variation of institutional policies regarding the PhD dissertation defence, drawing upon publicly accessible information on the websites of ten Canadian research universities. In his study, Chen highlights the fact that there are some different institutional policies on the dissertation defence across Canadian universities, particularly the doctoral dissertation defence. He also argues that the differences in the doctoral dissertation defence do have some implications on the role, function, and purpose of the oral defence in the PhD examination in Canada. Chen (2008) further highlights how these differences inform PhD education in Canada and concludes with a call for academics and students' awareness of these variations in policy and practice. Chen (2008) asserts that the result of the analysis is not to argue for a consistent set of policies across higher education institutions, since variation across academic departments and programs is the norm both in policy and practice. However, he argues that awareness of the variation is important for both academics and students.

In terms of research in Applied Linguistics and other allied fields, the thesis continues to attract considerable scholarly attention. Similarly, the defence of the thesis is also gaining considerable momentum as an area of research. This perceptible and increasing interest in research of TD continues to provide useful insights to its audience. It is also worth mentioning that the literature has revealed that TD varies across national boundaries, and, within a country, it differs from

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university to university. Also, both in policy and in practice, there are debates on the transparency of the examination process, whether the oral defence is an examination, and what is being examined in it. All this implies that further exploration of the TD is needed, especially in the African setting, where little research has been conducted in this area.

Empirical Review

This section reviews some empirical studies, first, on language and power in the academic setting, such as Owusu-Ansah (1992), Gborsong (2001), Coker (2011) and Edu-Buandoh and Mwinlaaru (2013), and second, on TD, such Recski as (2005, 2006), Izadi (2013), Afful (2014), and Adjepong (2015). The section discusses the relationship between previous studies on language and power in the academic setting as well as that of TD and the present study.

Studies on Language and Power in Academic Setting

Power in discourse involves powerful participants controlling and constraining the contributions of non-powerful participants (Fairclough, 1989). Three types of such constraints on content are distinguished by Fairclough: what is said or done, the social relations people enter into in discourse, and the subject positions people can occupy (Fairclough, 1989). In the light of the fact that language can be used as a means of mediating power relations, some studies have explored the relationship between language and power. Some of these studies include Owusu-Ansah (1992), Gborsong (2001), Coker (2011) and Edu-Buandoh and Mwinlaaru (2013). I present a review on these studies in this part of the study.

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Owusu-Ansah (1992) examined how modality is employed to enact power in two institutionalized domains of language use. He considers the language patterning in two situations, the student-staff meeting and student resolutions, with special reference to how the use of modal items in directives can serve as a guide to the balance of power in student-staff interactions. He, thus, analyzes written minutes of meetings and resolution documents produced by student leaders. The analysis revealed that although in both cases students are interacting with participants of higher status, in meetings, their language suggests that they see themselves as bargaining from a weak position. Thus, they employed modality in the minutes of the meetings to show politeness and powerlessness. However, in the resolution documents, they perceive themselves as a powerful group and thus displayed a high degree of power in their demands by using strongly worded directives. He notes that this difference is due to the variation in context and the nature of interaction.

Gborsong (2001) also analyzes gender power relations in informal conversations between teachers and students in three Senior High Schools in the Cape Coast metropolis, as well as examining how power is signaled in the language of the genders. In this study, he focuses on topic initiation, turn-taking (particularly, turn-interruption) and the use of semantic types of sentences (statements, questions, commands and interjections) to investigate how the gender differentiation of participants influences dominance in conversation. The analysis of the data revealed that whereas gender plays an insignificant role in the conversation among teachers, it plays a vital role when teachers and students

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interact. He states that when male and female teachers interact, any of the genders can dominate the conversation; however, when teachers converse with students, the gender of the student as well as that of the teacher influences the use of language in the conversation. His findings revealed that whereas male teachers signaled more power in their conversation with male students than they did with female students, female teachers signaled more power in their conversation with male students than they did with female students. This was made possible by the usage of commands and questions in their interactions. However, students hardly used commands and direct questions in their conversation with teachers

Coker (2011) also investigates power struggle in a female discussion in a Ghanaian university. He particularly sought to explore how members in a group discussion contested one another in their attempt to enact power over other members through the use of interruptions. His study, therefore, took a particularist view at the phenomenal use of interruptions in the group discussion of four female students in a Ghanaian university, and how the interruptions express the members' quest for power, dominance and authority. The data he used for the study constituted a thirty-minute live recording of the discussion, and was analyzed within the framework of Vygotsky's sociocultural theory and Fairclough's (1995; 2001) concept of power. The analysis of the data revealed that in a small group discussion, it is the more powerful students (i.e. students who act as leaders of the discussion and determine topic shifts) that enact power in order to ensure that untenable contributions are minimized, to supply reliable information, and to keep the discussion on track. A key finding of the study is that these students interrupt

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the contributions of their peers in order to supply the most relevant, immediate, and adequate responses. The results, further, show that powerful participants interrupted others so as to prevent them from making untenable contributions, which in most cases stifle the progress of discussions in group discussions. Finally, the analysis revealed that the use of interruptions in group learning indicates the group's cooperation and attentiveness in the learning process.

Edu-Buandoh and Mwinlaaru (2013) also investigate power and domination in discourse in a Ghanaian educational context. The study applied CDA in analyzing a 13-minute segment of a meeting between members of staff and student leaders in a Ghanaian Senior High School. The findings revealed that in the discourse, six linguistic resources including clause types, pronouns and transitivity patterning, modality, vocabulary choice, speech exchange patterns, and prosodic features were identified as units used to enact power. However, Edu-Buandoh and Mwinlaaru (2013) isolate clause types and their pragmatic functions, and the interaction between pronouns and transitivity patterning for discussion in the study, arguing that they were the two most prominent features used. Of particular importance to the present study is their finding and discussion on the clause types and their pragmatic functions. They discuss that in the discourse, the Assistant Headmaster and Housemistress dominate in the use of all the clause types since their role is powerful. For the Assistant Headmaster, his role includes the animator, author and principal, which he brings together to portray his authority. He thus introduces and shifts topics while the other participants only speak to the issues he raises; it is his authority and power that drive the direction of

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the discussion. He therefore uses the various clause types to regulate, command, or warn the prefects, and to invite them to take a turn in the interaction. Edu-Buandoh and Mwinlaaru (2013) also highlight the interaction between pronouns and transitivity patterning in the utterances of the Assistant Headmaster and/or his administration. This interaction presents the Assistant Headmaster and/or his administration as being in total control of both the institutional (the school) and the local (the meeting) contexts of the discourse. They state that it is he (or they) that take(s) decisions, declare(s) them, and implement(s) them.

These studies reveal important findings that have bearing on the present study. For instance, Owusu-Ansah (1992) revealed that the use of modal items in directives can serve as a guide to the balance of power in student-staff interactions. Thus, students employed modality to show powerlessness, suggesting that they see themselves as bargaining from a weak position. This finding corroborates that of Edu-Buandoh and Mwinlaaru (2013) who also found that modality is used to enact power in the data they discuss. Also, Gborsong (2001), in his study, revealed that topic initiation, turn-taking (particularly, turn-interruption) and the use of semantic types of sentences (statements, questions, commands and interjections) are key to revealing the power semantics in the data he investigated. Particularly, the power semantics was made possible by the usage of commands and questions in the interactions. Again, the findings of Gborsong (2001) are in tandem with the findings of Coker (2011), who revealed that turn-interruption is used by more powerful participants to enact power, and Edu-Buandoh and Mwinlaaru (2013), who also revealed that clause types and their pragmatic functions are used by

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powerful participants to under the power relations in the data they investigated. Also, Gborsong (2001) and Edu-Buandoh and Mwinlaaru (2013) highlighted the fact that the clause types are used to invite the less powerful participants (i.e. the students) to take a turn in the interaction.

The discussion in this section highlights the fact that the relationship between language and power has been explored in human writing and speech from various contexts. With regard to the studies reviewed in this section, the setting or context for which the studies were conducted is the academic context. This context appears to be the same for the present study and as such, these studies are considered important. Even though these studies reviewed above (Owusu-Ansah, 1992; Gborsong, 2001; Coker, 2011; Edu-Buandoh & Mwinlaaru, 2013) have focused on the relationship between language and power in the academic context, it is obvious from my reading of the literature that much attention has not been paid to the relationship between language and power in the academic discourse of TD. This gap in the literature has motivated me to undertake this study, which will add to the existing literature on the language used during TD and how power is enacted during this speech/communicative event.

Studies on Thesis Defence

Studies on TD are limited to a very small number of studies particularly placed outside Africa. Hence, one primary aim of this study is to add to the existing literature on TD, as I review some studies on TD along some identified themes. Among the studies reviewed under this section are Recski (2005, 2006)

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and Izadi (2013) which are conducted in non-African settings, and Afful (2014) and Adjepong (2015) which are conducted in the African setting. I first review studies that have been conducted in non-African settings.

Presenting a functional account of dissertation defences, Recski (2005) investigates interpersonal engagement in SAD. He attempts to show that levels of modal certainty are an important characteristic of the discourse of PhD candidates, and that they work together with hedging to maintain the student's face. He also argues that in PhD defences, interpersonal meanings habitually spread themselves through the clauses functioning as a means to announce the tonality and force of the propositions that are being made, as well as to foreground the attitudinally salient information and background ideational content. The modal features investigated include modal auxiliary verbs, modal adverbs, lexical verbs, conditional clauses, nouns, evaluative adjectives, degree words, quantifiers and metalinguistic comments.

In discussing his results, Recski suggests that parallel to the strategy of tentativeness or low commitment, candidates also use strategies to accentuate their own certainty. He suggests that this latter strategy is, at least, as important as the former one and that, in fact, it is closely linked to it. He notes that when candidates avoid giving direct answers to difficult and, at times, face-threatening questions, they try to have relatively long turns, in which they wish to reinforce their own points of view. He finds out that in dissertation defences, one finds many items expressing strong commitment towards the candidates' main propositions, together with an accumulation of items expressing a negative attitude towards aspects that

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go against their propositions. He further points out that since the modal devices he investigated occur in combination with one another, their effect is, therefore, cumulative. Thus, he argues that, in this way, prosody is formed unfolding in numerous ways along the transcripts. This prosody, in turn, reflects the candidates' strong commitment to the validity of the propositions, and this meaning is amplified by being selected recurrently. Recski concludes that the modal prosody in the discourse of the two candidates he investigated was typically 'confident certainty', since the speakers' purpose was to convey an image of reliability and knowledgeability. Contrarily, he comments that when candidates are faced with challenges from the committee members which might be negative from their point of view, the modality they employed appears to be "low degree of commitment".

In sum, he suggests that three major functions of modal expressions appeared in the transcripts he meticulously investigated. Firstly, a high degree of commitment to the truth value of a proposition reflects the candidates' aim to convince others of the truth of a debatable point of view. Secondly, modal choices are linked to the candidates' engagement with the proposition and also to their degree of knowledge. When the candidates' attitude towards the state of affairs expressed in the proposition is positive, strong commitment will accompany the ideational choices; when the attitude is negative, weak commitment will aim to play down the importance and relevance of the 'unwelcome' argument. Finally, modal choices are linked to the candidates' role in the discourse. When they are confronted with face-threatening questions which they have to deal with, hedging and uncertainty features reflect a position of 'defendant'.

The findings of Recski's (2005) study are quite similar to his subsequent study in 2006, when he investigated the candidates' use of modality in the TD. With his data coming from U.S. dissertation defences, Recski (2006) investigated the use of modality in academic spoken discourse. With the study grounded in SFL theory and with eight U.S. dissertation defences totaling 131,752 words or 13,508 clauses, Recski (2006) investigated how the use of modality in U.S dissertation defences enables the participants to fine tune their propositions and proposals according to how explicit they want to be about where their assessments are coming from, how subjective or objective they want them to appear, how definite and how metaphorical. The analysis of the data revealed that the use of modality in U.S dissertation defences enables the speakers to negotiate their knowledge, ideological and theoretical assumptions, beliefs, academic norms and contributes in important ways to opening up or closing down dialogic space. Out of the 13,508 clauses, comprising the entire corpus, 2,159 were coded as modal and were subsequently sub-classified according to Halliday and Matthiessen's (2004) modality system network. Recski's study focused on, firstly, the probabilities attached to the system of modality; secondly, the functionality of the mental process *I think* as used during the dissertation defence; and, lastly, on the most common interpersonal strategy employed by committee members to ask questions and to give recommendations and/or suggestions. In relation to the probabilities in the modal system, the results suggest that since language varies according to context and since this variation is taken to be systematic and predictable, the role that a probabilistic modeling of language can play in this regard is to enable one to

describe explicitly the co-variation of language and context. With regards to the functionality *I think*, the results suggest that it is a pluri-functional expression and that it is necessary to jointly consider the nature of the argument, the context of neighboring clauses and the syntactic position of the expression in order to better understand which function it fulfills. Finally, with regard to the interpersonal strategy employed by committee members to question, suggest and/or recommend, the results show that they expand metaphorically the speech functional system because it increases the meaning potential available for academic negotiation in the defences.

Izadi (2013) investigates linguistic politeness in ten viva voce sessions occurring in two universities in Iran. Thus, by drawing upon Brown and Levinson's (1987) model of politeness to analyze academic talk in the review context of viva sessions, Izadi explored how politeness was expressed. The study, particularly, focused on negative politeness strategies, which are used to attend to the 'negative face' of the speaker and the hearer, due to the formality of the context. The analysis of the data revealed that of the negative politeness strategies which were used, *giving deference, hedging* and *impersonalization* were found to be the most frequent strategies. Izadi argues that the findings of his study can be a good contribution to understanding the politeness norms of Iranian society in general, and academic discourse in particular. These prominent strategies that he identifies, he argues, can be attributed not only to the politeness features of Iranian society, but also to the culture of academic discourse. Specifically, *hedging* and *impersonalization* are supposed to be the universal features of academic discourse.

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Izadi posits that the type of genre and the institutionality of discourse have a robust impact on almost every instance of talk, including politeness strategy choice. Thus, in the context of thesis review, which entails intrinsically face-threatening acts of criticisms and disagreements, using politeness strategies are appropriate in softening the harsh effect of the given acts. This helps to foster interpersonal relationship between the social members. That is, while raising one's awareness of academic discourse in Persian, the results of the study help foster interpersonal communication between the peers and academic members to enjoy a more pleasant social world, as intimated by Izadi.

Having reviewed studies on TD that have been conducted in non-African setting, I now turn attention to studies conducted in Africa, which seem to be relatively fewer than those conducted in the non-African setting. Two of such studies are worth mentioning.

A study by Afful (2014), employing the Ethnography of Speaking approach as postulated by Dell Hymes and with much focus on Setting, Participant and Act Sequence, investigates the viva voce organized by the Department of English of the University of Cape Coast. Based on the recorded and transcribed data of three episodes of the masters' TD, the study investigated how these elements of ethnography were manifested in TD. The analysis of the data revealed that the setting of viva voces is formal in nature, considering the scene created – which is that of an examination. This is because the viva voce is a formal oral examination for academic purpose which the candidate is expected to pass before he or she is awarded the postgraduate degree. The analysis of the data also revealed that the

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relationship between candidates and the assessors was asymmetrical and this was realized through the address system and lexico-grammatical choices that candidates make in line with the formal nature of interaction. Thus, candidates always addressed panel members by their titles such as *Prof.* and *Doc.* rather than their personal names. Also, the Chairman, despite sometimes being a supervisor of the candidate, was addressed by his title as *Chairman*. Finally, the study again revealed that in terms of form, the TD is organized into four moves - *Introductory move, Presentation of thesis, Defence of thesis,* and *Concluding move*. The introductory move of viva voces contained remarks usually made by the Chairman and it attempted to expose or give an overview of the oral examination. With the presentation of TD moves, the candidates demonstrate their presentation skills as they effectively employ the written, spoken and visual modes of communication (usually, power point presentations are made) to persuade their audience. The candidates then defend the thesis that they have presented, where they are asked questions, which is the defence of thesis move. In the concluding move, which signals the end of the viva voce, there is the adjournment of sitting and declaration of examination results. The study also highlighted some of the stylistic features that were evident during the presentation of the thesis. These stylistic features include intertextuality, hedging, coherence of ideas and appropriate vocabulary choices.

Adjepong (2015) also looked at how context is instantiated in the TD setting, using TD organized by the Department of English in the University of Cape Coast. She examined the specific contextualization cues present in the TD

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setting, the linguistic forms employed by participants during the defence and how the role, status and power of participants influence their choice of linguistic forms. The analysis of the data revealed that various contextualization cues, ranging from turn-taking cues, back-channeling cues and pre-empt signals. Turn-taking cues were dominant in the interactions as compared to back-channeling cues and pre-empt signals which appeared in the data. The turn-taking cues included sentential units, adjacency pairs and address terms. Also, the analysis of the data revealed back-channelling cues, including laughter, silences, pauses and some vocal expressions. The back-channelling cues served to perform some communicative functions such as unpreparedness, surprise and uncertainty. Also, the pre-empt signals that were identified in the data served as a means that participants employed to interrupt an on-going conversation. Finally, it was revealed that various sentential constructions, comprising functional and structural types of sentences, were used by the participants. The findings revealed that the Chairman and the panel members used declaratives, interrogatives and imperatives to invite the candidates to take their speaking turns while the candidates used more of declaratives to take their speaking turns. The analysis also revealed that address terms such as *Professor* (often *Prof.*), *Mr. Chairman, Doctor* (often *Doc.*), the title and surname of the panel member, and the title and full name of panel member were used during the defence; these address terms were directed to only the Chairman and the panel members.

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Relationship between Previous Studies and Present Study

There is no doubt that the study of TD is gaining momentum. Some studies that have looked at TD include Recski (2005, 2006), Izadi (2013), Afful (2014), and Adjepong (2015). These studies have also utilized various linguistic analytical procedures and methodologies such as SFL, Politeness theory and Ethnography of Speaking. Recski's (2005; 2006) works present a functional account of the dissertation defences from U. S. universities. Recski's (2005) study highlighted the fact that during the defence, candidates use modals to serve as engagement markers with the propositions that they make. These modals also serve to lay bare the candidate's role in the discourse that they are engaged in. These findings by Recski (2005) are in tandem with Recski (2006), who also investigated the candidates' use of modality. Recski (2006), conducting his study from the SFL perspective, found out that the use of modality in U.S dissertation defences enables the speakers to negotiate their knowledge, ideological and theoretical assumptions, beliefs, academic norms and contributes in important ways to opening up or closing down dialogic space.

Grounding his study in Brown and Levinson's linguistic politeness theory, Izadi (2013) also presents interesting findings on TD. Izadi asserts that since the setting created for the defence is a formal one, there is the need to respect the face, particularly, the negative face, of the candidate. This formal context of TD is also reiterated by Afful (2014) when he notes that the scene created for the defence is formal in nature. Izadi finds out that some of the negative politeness strategies which were used, *hedging* and *impersonalization,* are central to academic

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discourse. This proposition is further supported by the finding of Afful (2014) that one of the stylistic features that was evident during the presentation of the thesis was the use of some hedging devices such as *appear, believe, seem,* and *perhaps*. This stylistic feature can be said to be a way of trying to save the face of the candidate. Recski (2005) also found out that the use of modals together with hedging devices helps maintain the face of the students in TD.

Adjepong's (2015) study differs from those of Recski (2005, 2006), Izadi (2013) and Afful (2014), as she examined the specific contextualization cues present in TD setting, as well as investigate the linguistic forms employed by participants during the defence. One interesting finding that this study reveals is the linguistic forms that are employed by participants during the defence. Various sentential constructions which range from the functional and structural types of sentences were used by the participants. The Chairman and the panel members particularly used declaratives, interrogatives, and imperatives to invite the candidates to take their speaking turns while the candidates or the presenters used more of declaratives to take their speaking turns. The analysis also revealed that address terms were used; these address terms were directed to only the Chairman and the panel members.

These studies are very relevant to the present research as the findings derived from them help know the discursive practices and some of the rhetorical and linguistic features that are characteristic of TD. It is, however, clear that not much has been done in the area of language and power by looking at the relationship between the two in the context of TD. It is against this background

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that the present study is conducted. The present study is, thus, meant to add to the existing scholarship on TD. This study differs from the previous studies reviewed in the sense that unlike the other studies, the present study highlights the relationship between language and power, as enacted in TD. In doing so, the study employs a methodological approach that is different from other methodological approaches used in the previous studies.

The studies reviewed above show that various analytical procedures and methodological procedures are used to study TD. These methodological procedures include SFL (Recski, 2006), Politeness theory (Izadi, 2013) and Ethnography of Speaking (Afful, 2014), among others. The present study, however, employs the CDA approach. By using the CDA approach, I believe that the study will contribute meaningfully to the growing literature on TD as an important genre found in SAD. I, thus, set out to examine the relationship between language and power in TD.

Chapter Summary

The chapter focused on the review of literature applicable to the topic under investigation. In so doing, the chapter discussed the conceptual framework, CDA (Fairclough, 1989, 1995, 2001), which underpins the study. The concepts of power, SAD, and thesis writing and defence were also discussed. The chapter also reviewed some studies on language and power in the academic setting, and some empirical studies on TD. The next chapter will focus on the methodology employed in the study.

CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

Introduction

This chapter presents the methodological procedures used in the present study. The methodology used in this study is described with the view to further explain the data and its nature, the procedure through which the data was collected and processed to reach conclusions in this thesis. The chapter specifically discusses the research design, research site, data collection procedures and sample size, transcription and coding of data, validity and reliability, ethical considerations and the data analysis procedures. Also, problems encountered during the data collection and analysis are presented.

Research Design

This study is situated within the framework of qualitative research. Qualitative analysis, as Reinard (1994) notes, describes observations in predominantly non-numerical terms and emphasizes description or interpretation of communication events. It is appropriate to use the qualitative research design for the present study because this study concerns itself with the socio-human relationships, and the nature of interactions between participants in communicative events. This approach was chosen because the study examines the naturally occurring language use of members of the academic community and attempted to discover the underlying ideologies and power. According to Tagoe (2009), qualitative research refers to research that attempts to obtain an in-depth

understanding of the meaning and definitions of situation presented by informants. That is, qualitative researchers study things in their natural settings, and they attempt to understand or interpret phenomena in terms of the meaning people bring to them.

There are different approaches to qualitative design such as ethnography, case study, grounded theory, linguistic analysis and conversation analysis (CA) (Cresswell, 2003). CDA has emerged in recent times in the field of qualitative study. CDA, as a different type of qualitative study, particularly, considers the relationship between language and power (Fairclough, 1989; 1995; 2001), as well as considering the relationship between discourse and society and text and context. The present study, hence, associates itself with two of the types of qualitative studies: CA and CDA methodological paradigms.

Research Site

The research was conducted in the University of Cape Coast (UCC), one of the seventeen (17) public universities in Ghana. As cited in Edu-Buandoh (2010), UCC was established in 1962 as a University College of the University of Ghana to train graduate teachers for the second cycle institutions, teacher training colleges and technical institutions not only for Ghana, but also for the West Africa Sub-Region. In 1971, the university became autonomous and started awarding its own degrees, diplomas and certificates. In recent years, the University has repositioned itself to train manpower for other areas in the economy, apart from the field of education. The university awards degrees at all levels, and diplomas and

certificates in various fields of study (Edu-Buandoh, 2010; Osei Kwarteng, Boadi-Siaw & Dwarko, 2012). It comprises five colleges and a School of Graduate Studies, in which teaching and learning take place. The colleges comprise several faculties and schools, and these faculties and schools are also further divided into departments which in turn run various courses each semester. UCC is a multi-lingual community which is made up of people from various linguistic backgrounds.

The physical setting for the study was the Faculty of Arts Conference Room, UCC. Here, episodes of TD are organized for candidates from the Departments in the Faculty, the Department of English inclusive, who have successfully passed their written thesis and are to defend their thesis in an oral examination. The Faculty of Arts is the mother faculty of UCC (Osei Kwarteng, Boadi-Siaw & Dwarko, 2012) and has been in existence for over 50 years now. The Faculty hosts nine departments: English, French, Ghanaian Languages and Linguistics, Music and Dance Studies, Theatre and Film Studies, Religion and Human Values, History, Classics and Philosophy, and Communication Studies; a center, known as the Center for African and International Institute; one academic unit, known as the Information Literacy Unit, and the Confucius Institute (University of Cape Coast, 2016).

The research site is chosen for the study because members of the Faculty of Arts constitute a community of practice distinct from other faculties. Noted as one of the most vibrant and forward looking faculties in the university, the Faculty of Arts seeks to promote teaching, research and extension of the various aspects of

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the liberal arts (University of Cape Coast, 2015). The members of the faculty, therefore, have similar attitudes, beliefs and norms as regards the use of speech as a communicative tool in the academic context. I also considered UCC convenient for the study because I am a member of the university community and have good rapport with both students and lecturers.

Data Collection Procedure and Sample Size

Data for this study comprise transcripts of the presentations given by some graduate students of the Department of English of the Faculty of Arts of UCC who had submitted their written thesis to the School of Graduate Studies and were defending their thesis. These presentations were obtained by recording. The recording of the presentations was made possible after I was given permission by the Head of Department of English. Using a voice recorder, I recorded ten different presentations of TD in the Conference Room of the Faculty of Arts, UCC.

The recordings of the TD interaction mostly lasted between forty minutes to one hour. The recordings of the presentations and the duration for which the interaction lasted are presented in Table 1.

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Table 1: Thesis Defence Interaction and Duration

Presentations	Duration
First recording	56 minutes, 43 seconds
Second recording	43 minutes, 25 seconds
Third recording	41 minutes, 14 seconds
Fourth recording	53 minutes, 42 seconds
Fifth recording	40 minutes, 7 seconds
Sixth recording	56 minutes, 9 seconds
Seventh recording	49 minutes, 29 seconds
Eighth recording	53 minutes, 3 seconds
Ninth recording	48 minutes, 23 seconds
Tenth recording	60 minutes, 37 seconds

Source: Field survey (2017)

However, the interaction between panel members and candidates that served as the main data for the present study mostly lasted between thirty to forty minutes. Due to the occasional occurrence of TD, I was able to obtain ten (10) different recordings of TD held at the Conference Room of the Faculty of Arts, UCC.

Transcription of Data and Data Coding

The transcription was done by listening to each recorded interaction several times before listening in bits and writing down each utterance in a turn. The transcription was done, using the Jeffersonian transcription model. The major transcription methods and conventions used in this study were developed by Gail Jefferson (Bloomer, Griffiths & Merrison, 2005). These transcription methods and conventions or keys are used in CA. The Jeffersonian transcription conventions or

keys were used in transcribing the data since it provided all the needed keys for transcribing the data. However, not all the conventions were employed in the transcription of the data for this study.

The transcribed texts were then coded for analysis. The coding of the transcribed text was done, using file numbers (for example, TDP8, where TDP means "Thesis Defence Presentation") attached to each interaction. This was done in order to differentiate between the interactions.

Validity and Reliability

According to Bryman (2001), ensuring validity and reliability of research is one way of producing useful and trustworthy research findings. Validity is assessed in terms of how well the research tools measure the phenomena under investigation (Punch, 1998), while reliability measures the extent to which results are consistent over time (Joppe, 2000). In ensuring validity and reliability of the study, I tried to eliminate personal biases in the recording and transcription of the data since the oral presentations of theses that I had access to were the ones recorded, transcribed and used as the data for the analysis.

After the data had been transcribed, I sought the assistance of three people. These were a colleague MPhil student and two Teaching Assistants, all of the Department of English, who understand the concept of working with spoken interaction text as used in the present study, the technicalities involved in transcription and the objective of the study. Further, additional training was given to them in order to explain the concept and the purpose of the research. These

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people were consulted to cross check the transcription to ensure that no important part had been left out and that nothing had been added. The transcribed data were compared with the recorded ones to ensure consistency and further enhance the validity and reliability of the study. The three people further served as inter-raters for the identification of the linguistic choices made by participants at TD that I identified in the analysis and discussion section of the present study. The inter-rater reliability was calculated to be 85% which was considered acceptable. This helped to ensure that the objectives of the study were met.

Ethical Considerations

In terms of ethical considerations, participants were not coerced to participate in the research. Furthermore, for confidentiality reasons, the real names or any information that might reveal the identity of the lecturers and students have been omitted in the writing of the study. This is done, paying attention to the ethical considerations that guide academic research of this nature. Prior to the recording, I sought permission from the Head, Department of English, who also doubled as the Chairman for the TD. Also, since many discursive approaches, including conversation analysis, prefer to use naturally occurring data, I had to record the interaction mostly without the consent of the participants, except for the Chairman who was aware of the recording. In so doing, I believe I was able to record a naturally occurring data to use for the study. However, before the analysis was done, I had to further seek the consent of the candidates before using their recorded interaction. Having explained to them the rationale of the study and echoing the fact that it was purely for academic purpose, I was granted permission

on the part of the candidates for their recorded interaction to be used as data for the study. One problem with the whole process was my inability to further seek the consent of the panel members whom I had recorded. However, since permission was sought from the Chairman of the occasion, I believe my inability to seek the consent of the panel members does not affect the variables tested and the analysis and discussion that is done and presented in the next chapter.

Data Analysis Procedures

In analyzing the data, I used the qualitative research technique since it was my main aim to gather in-depth understanding of human behaviour and the nature of interactions between participants in communicative events. The study, therefore, adopted CA and CDA as combined analytical framework. This combined analytical framework allowed for a critical observation, description and comment on participants' verbal behaviour. Having discussed the analytical framework of CDA in the second chapter of this study, I discuss the CA analytical framework in the subsequent paragraphs and show how it is used in the analysis of the data.

Conversation Analysis (CA)

CA has been in use since the 1960s. One of the main objectives in interactive discourse such as conversations and discussions is to achieve fluent discourse while avoiding simultaneous talking among participants. It is, therefore, acceptable that in a conversation between two or more participants, turn-taking will proceed in such a way that "only one person will take a turn a time" and the current speaker will also be allowed to finish what he or she is saying (Sacks *et al.*,

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1974). Sacks *et al.* (1974), therefore, observe a number of characteristics of a conversation. These characteristics include: one party talks at a time though speakers change and the size of speaking turns varies; transitions are finely coordinated; and techniques are used for the allocation of turns. Thus, in any conversation, there are rules that govern turn construction, helping in the allocation of a next turn to one party and in coordinating transfers.

Other scholars also seek to highlight some tenets of CA. Heritage (1997) says that, first, any utterance is considered to be performing social actions of various forms. That is, talk is interactionally built by the participants involved. Secondly, utterances or actions are connected in sequences of action so that what one participant says and does is generated by and depends upon what the other has said and done. Hence, CA focuses on the dynamic process through which connected sequences of actions are built up. Thirdly, these sequences have stable patterns such that how one participant speaks or acts has recurrent consequences for how the other responds; thus, shaping the outcome of the interaction (Drew, Chatwin & Collins, 2001). Drew *et al.* (2001) further posit that CA focuses on largely verbal communicative practices which people recurrently use in interacting with one another. These practices are employed by participants in order to produce meaningful actions and to interpret the other's meaning. Hence, using CA as an analytical model allows for the interpretation and explanation of utterances made by participants in their attempt to make meaningful contribution to the interaction.

One important notion of CA that is of much relevance to the study is the notion of turn. In this study, therefore, CA is used to identify the sequence of turn-

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taking of each interaction among the participants and how the talk is organized in order to determine the linguistic forms used by the participants during the interaction. I was also guided in the sequence and organization of the talk in identifying the communicative purpose of the linguistic forms used by the participants in taking their speaking turns.

Combining the CA and CDA analytical frameworks, it is my aim that they will help address adequately the research questions as I seek to examine the linguistic forms used in TD and the communicative functions of these linguistic forms used, and how power is enacted by the use of these linguistic forms that will be identified.

Problems Encountered

I encountered major challenges during the data collection. The first challenge was my inability to obtain a good, clearly audible, quality conversational data in natural settings like the TD setting. This was due to the fact that first, the setting did not have a good and quality recording apparatus. Secondly, there were various back-channelling cues from some of the student-supporters present that affected the quality of voice recorded. However, for the present study, I tried my best to get a good and quality recording apparatus for recording the interaction.

Also, the process of transcription was very difficult. Transcription requires a huge amount of time, whereby recordings have to be repeated countless times to enable the researcher to obtain a clear hearing of some words and as well understand the complex nature of interaction. Therefore, there was the need for

thorough patience during the transcription. This caused a great deal of delays in the transcription of the data. The least duration of the interaction between candidates and panel members was 28 minutes, with a number of the interaction extending beyond 30 minutes; thus, an average time of five hours was spent in transcribing some of the interactions. Also, it is known to researchers, in general, that transcribing an oral text into a written form poses great deal of difficulties and problems due to hesitations, overlappings and interruptions (Birdwhistell, Stubbs, as cited in Edu-Buandoh, 1999). Notably, these features were not absent in my data. Besides, parts of the interactions were inaudible, so I had to play the recordings back and forth for the information to be clearly assessed, with every reverse play starting from the beginning all over again. It is, however, worth mentioning that the huge volume of the data was transcribed at the end.

Chapter Summary

This chapter has discussed the methodological procedures used in the study. The qualitative research approach adopted in the study was briefly discussed. Procedures for collecting and analysing data were also discussed in this chapter. This chapter also presented the challenges encountered during the data collection and transcription of data for analysis. The next chapters deal with the analysis and discussion of data.

CHAPTER FOUR

DATA ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

Introduction

This chapter aims at presenting the analysis and discussion of the data. This is done in three sections guided by the theory that underpins the study, the analytical frameworks, and the research questions. The analysis and discussion is done by first presenting the findings to the secondary research questions and second, by presenting findings to the primary research question. The first section of this chapter therefore analyses and discusses the various sentence types employed by panel members to invite candidates to take their speaking turns as well as the sentence types employed by candidates to take their speaking turns. The second section presents an analysis and discussion of the discourse or communicative functions of the sentence types that the interactants (that is, the panel members and the candidates) employ to take their speaking turns. Finally, a discussion on how power is enacted is presented, paying attention to the various linguistic choices made by the interactants.

Sentence Types Used by Interactants at Thesis Defence

In the present study, the nature of the "conversation" mostly calls for the interactants to be invited to take their turns at talk. This is mainly due to the fact that the conversation used as the data for the study is a chairperson-controlled speech exchange, where the chairperson usually has to invite the candidate, on one hand, and the lecturers, senior lecturers and assessors who constitute the panel

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members, on the other hand, to take turns at talk. Each turn requires some kind of technique to select its speaker before it is constructed. According to Sacks *et al.* (1974), turns are allocated differently in every interaction. A speaker may select a person or by asking the person a question. The current speaker either selects a next speaker; a next speaker self-selects; or the current speaker continues to speak and neither of the first two is employed.

It is worth mentioning that, for the nature of the interaction which is used in the present study, one feature of CA that plays an important role in making clear the communicative actions of the participants involved as they make their linguistic choices is adjacency pairs. According to Bloomer *et al*. (2005), adjacency pairs are sequences of two communicative actions that are usually produced by different persons and are adjacent to one another. This means that utterances can be tied to one another in pairs. Adjacency pairs are connected to the mechanism of turn-taking by the notion that on the finished production of a first part of some pair, the current speaker must subsequently stop speaking to give the next speaker an opportunity to produce some second part to the same pair (Bloomer *et al.*, 2005). This means that adjacency pairs are very important devices for the selection of potential next speakers. Extract 1 illustrates the use of adjacency pairs in the TD interaction.

Extract 1:

Panel Member 2: Okay. You claimed you have conducted some interviews.

Candidate: Yes

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Panel Member 2: But you have not given us enough information, yeah detailed information, on how you went about the interview; whether it was recorded, it was transcribed, the steps involved in the interview, nothing, so that is one thing you want to react to.

Candidate: Yes, what I did purposely for that was to look for other information that I needed for the analysis.

Panel Member 2: *So did you use any interview guide, any?*

Candidate: *It was unstructured.*

Chairman: Just unstructured?

Candidate: Yes.

Panel Member 2: *But did you specify in the work?* I didn't find it.

Candidate: *Yes, I specified it in the work.*

Panel Member 2: Alright.   **[TDP 3]**

In Extract 1, the question asked by the panel member *So did you use any interview guide, any?* and its response from the candidate *It was unstructured*, as well as the question *But did you specify in the work?* and its response *Yes, I specified it in the work* are clear indications of the notion of adjacency pairs that is present in the data. The questions are adjacency pairs because they are connected to the mechanism of turn-taking and they require the listener (here, the candidate) to give a response. I agree with Bloomer *et al.* (2005) on the notion that on the finished production of a first part of some pair, the current speaker must subsequently stop speaking to give the next speaker an opportunity to produce some part of the same pair. Thus, as the panel member finishes the first part of the pair by asking the

question and subsequently stops speaking, the candidate is given the opportunity to produce the second part of the pair by responding to the question asked. This means that adjacency pairs are cues which panel members use to elicit responses from candidates.

Through this notion of adjacency pairs, as panel members finish a first part of the pair and candidates produce another part of the pair, various linguistic choices are made by both panel members and candidates. I identified in the data that each panel member mostly used sentential units ranging from interrogatives, declaratives and imperatives to invite a candidate to take his/her speaking turn whereas the candidate mostly used declaratives to take their speaking turns. These units used by both panel members and candidates are discussed in the subsequent sections.

By Panel Members

A sentence is a basic unit of a language which expresses a complete thought. A sentence is a set of words that is complete in itself, typically containing a subject and a predicate, conveying a statement, question, exclamation or command. Functionally, the sentence can either be declarative, interrogative, imperative or exclamatory (Quirk & Greenbaum, 1973). The data showed that these types of sentence: interrogatives, declaratives and imperatives, are mostly employed by panel members to invite candidates to take their speaking turns.

Interrogative Sentences

Interrogative sentences are generally used to ask questions and solicit information. Interrogatives are classified into two groups: yes/no or polar questions and wh-interrogative questions. The yes/no or polar questions demand yes or no answers while the wh-interrogative questions usually demand an infinite range of answers. In other words, the yes/no questions seek the truth or falsehood of the question asked but the wh-interrogatives seek more information about the question asked. Whereas the yes/no or polar questions are often marked by the subject-auxiliary inversion and/or rising intonation, the wh-interrogatives are often marked by wh-element-auxiliary-subject-main verb order and/or falling intonation (Quirk & Greenbaum, 1973). The data shows that interrogatives are mostly used by panel members to invite candidates to take their speaking turns. Some examples are provided below:

Extract 2a:

Panel Member 1: … I must confess I was really impressed and I learnt a lot, you know, through your choice of this theory – the theory of chronotope. Now can you uhmm but I think I still need (pause) I want some few (pause) I want more information on it. *Can you tell us exactly what the theory of the chronotope is? Can you explain it to us and how relevant it is here to your study?*

Candidate: Now, the theory of the chronotope (pause) now what this theory essentially does or what it suggests is that (pause) if you take the novel, the most important information within the novel that you can use to characterize it as a sub-type is the manner in which that novel uses space and time and by space and time, they are also two dimensions. … **[TDP 1]**

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Extract 2b:

Panel Member 4: I mean apart from the idea of negotiation, *are there no other tenets of nego-feminism? Is it all negotiation as you want us to believe? Is that what it means?*

Candidate: It also talks about (pause). Thank you. It also talks about, uhmm, complementarity. It talks about (pause)… See, the important thing here is the man is not the enemy. In negotiating realities, the African woman does not have any problem with the man. …   **[TDP 2]**

Extract 2c:

Panel Member 2: So, *did you use any interview guide?*

Candidate: It was unstructured.

Panel Member 2: *But did you specify in the work?*

Candidate: Yes, I specified it in the work.

Panel Member 2: Alright.   **[TDP 3]**

In Extracts 2a, 2b and 2c, the italicised structures are typical examples of yes/no interrogatives employed by panel members to invite candidates to take their speaking turns. In 2a, *Can you tell us exactly what the theory of the chronotope is?* and *Can you explain it to us and how relevant it is here to your study?* are said to be yes/no interrogatives because they are marked by the subject-operator/auxiliary inversion. Thus, in both examples, the modal auxiliary "can" comes before the subject "you" which is also followed by the main verbs "tell" and "explain" in extract 2a. Similarly, in 2b, the italicised structures *are there no other tenets of nego-feminism? Is it all negotiation as you want us to believe? Is that what it means?* are also typical examples of yes/no interrogatives where there is the

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subject-operator inversion. In this particular Extract (2b), the main verbs "are", "is" and "is" all come before their respective subjects the existential "there", "it" and "all". In all these examples, the structures under focus are marked by the operator – either the modal verb or the auxiliary and the main verb being placed before the subject. Panel members use these types of interrogatives to invite candidates to take their turns while soliciting for information from the candidates.

Another form of interrogatives used by panel members to invite candidates to take their speaking turns is the wh-interrogative. Wh-interrogatives are question types that are formed with the aid of one of the wh-question words (who, whom, whose, what, which, when, where and how) and are marked by wh-element-auxiliary-subject-main verb order (Quirk & Greenbaum, 1973). Some examples of this form of interrogatives found in the data are provided below:

Extract 3a:

Panel Member 1: But actually, in doing your own work, you find that there is enough grounds for you to go beyond what is normally done by Swales and Bhatia. *What is it that you did in your work that differs from theirs?*

Candidate: Okay, from the analysis that I (pause) from the literature review, I observed that with Swales and Bhatia they will look at the move structure and with this they will account for the sequence of moves, the rhetorical structure and some unique language used in each move you identify. …

Panel Member 1: *Why do you find that necessary?*

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Candidate: Okay, what I wanted to do was to find out (pause) was to find some words that can be tagged as prototypical of sports news presentation. …   **[TDP 3]**

Extract 3b:

Candidate: Prof, I reviewed works on that but I didn't, because that was not my focus.

Panel Member 3: *What was not your focus?*

Candidate: I said I reviewed work on gender-related work.   **[TDP 5]**

In Extracts 3a and 3b, the italicised structures indicate wh-interrogatives that panel members use to invite candidates to take their speaking turns. The wh-interrogatives are introduced by the wh-word "what" and "why" in the structures italicised in the Extracts. They are also marked by the feature "wh-element + subject-operator inversion" order. Thus, in 3a, *What is it that you did in your work that differs from theirs?*, the wh-element "what" comes before the operator "is" which is also followed by the subject of the construction "it", and then the other grammatical elements. The same explanation can be said of the italicised structure in 3b where the wh-element "what" comes first, followed by the main verb "was", and then a negative maker "not" before the subject of the construction "your focus". Similarly, in the second italicised structure in 3a, *Why do you find that necessary?*, the wh-element "why" comes first; this is followed by the auxiliary "do", which is then followed by the subject of the structure "you" and then the main verb "find" and finally the object "that" and its complement "necessary". All these examples are marked by the wh-word + subject-operator inversion order which identifies them as wh-interrogatives. Just like the yes/no interrogatives, the

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wh-interrogatives are also used by panel members to invite candidates to take their turns while soliciting for information from the candidates.

From the foregoing discussion, it is evident that seeking information and knowledge in our daily life is a normal practice among individuals as well as institutions, the academic discourse community inclusive. The use of these interrogatives, i.e. the yes/no and wh-interrogatives, thus, serves as a form of elicitation that constitutes one way by which we seek information. As Tracy and Robles (2009) note, eliciting is one of the central communicative practices of institutional encounters. It was, therefore, not surprising that panel members employed interrogatives as a tool to eliciting information from candidates. Moreover, the use of interrogatives as questions elicits, especially in institutional encounters. As Tracy and Robles (2009) further note, questioning is a demarcated social practice that exists in particular institutional scenes such as public hearings, dissertation defences and interviews with institutional representatives; thus, the usage of interrogatives, i.e. the yes/no and wh-interrogatives, by panel members in the TD setting, as panel members seek to elicit and seek information from candidates, while examining them.

Declarative Sentences

Declaratives are syntactic configurations which usually display an unmarked (i.e. expected) order of the functional categories Subject, Predicator, Direct Object, et cetera. This means that the Subject comes first in the sentence, followed by the Predicator, which in turn is followed by an Indirect Object (if there

is one) and a Direct Object (again, if present) (Aarts, 2001). The sentence patterns SV, SVC, SVOC, SVOO, SVOA, and SVA are usually taken by declarative sentences (Quirk & Greenbaum, 1973), and they can either be simple, compound, complex or compound-complex. The data revealed that, on some occasions, panel members invite candidates to take their speaking turns with a declarative. This declarative used was usually a simple clause structure with one independent clause, and on some occasions, a compound clause structure with two independent clauses. Extracts 4 show the use of declaratives by panel members to invite candidates.

Extract 4a:

Panel Member 4: … I observed that you were very elaborate when you were responding to Dr. Troare's question on the meaning of the chronotope. Uhmm, but *what I found missing was your own stance; I mean your own understanding.*

Candidate: of? (pause)

Panel Member 4: *I mean you seemed to be excited about punching holes in errhh different errhh meanings of all these theories without telling us where you stand and I am keen to find out your place.*

Candidate: Okay, errhh, it was difficult for me to accept wholly any of these errhh these stances or these theories about what the postcolonial novel is because … **[TDP 1]**

Extract 4b:

Panel Member 2: Okay. *You claimed you have conducted some interviews.*

Candidate: Yes

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Panel Member 2: But you have not given us enough information on, yeah detailed information, on how you went about the interview; whether it was recorded, it was transcribed, the steps involved in the interview, nothing. *So that is one thing you want to react to.*

Candidate: Yes, what I did purposely for that was to look for other information that I needed for the analysis. **[TDP 3]**

In Extracts 4a and 4b, the italicised structures illustrate declarative structures used by panel members to invite candidates to take their speaking turns. These italicised structures are considered declaratives because they follow the unmarked order of functional categories where the subject of the structure comes first before the predicator and other elements that complete the meaning of the predicator. In 4a, *what I found missing was your own stance* is consider a declarative because the subject, the nominal relative clause "what I found missing", comes first and is followed by the copula verb "was" which is also followed by the complement (a noun phrase) "your own stance" which completes the meaning of the copula verb "was" and complements the subject "what I found missing". In the same extract, again, the panel member makes use of a declarative structure to invite candidate to construct his speaking turn. The panel member says "*I mean you seemed to be excited about punching holes in errhh different errhh meanings of all these theories without telling us where you stand and I am keen to find out your place.*" This structure is said to be a declarative structure because, structurally, it displays an unmarked order of the functional categories where the subject comes first, followed by the verb and any other grammatical element that completes the meaning of the verb. Similarly, in 4b, *You claimed you have conducted some*

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interviews is a declarative structure which has the SVO structure with "you" being the subject, "have conducted" being the verbal element and "you have conducted some interviews" being a nominal zero that clause serving as the direct object. These declaratives are used by panel members to give permission to candidates to take the floor.

This finding that declaratives are used in TD confirms Farinde, Ojo and Ogunsiji's (2015) study that declaratives are used in institutional encounters. Farinde *et al.* (2015) assert that, in the institutional scene, i.e. the courtroom, that they investigate, lawyers maintain tight control of courtroom discourse through their use of declarative, particularly, declarative questions with falling intonation that are always conducive during cross-examination. This situation is also particular with the TD setting, where panel members sought to maintain power of the interaction through their use of declaratives, as evident and explained in Extracts 4a and 4b. Also, since the interaction at TD is based on question/answer adjacency pairs, once panel members utter their declaratives, seeking to elicit some information from candidates, candidates knew that it was their turn to respond to the utterance made by panel members; this further shows the asymmetrical nature of the TD setting. This view is also supported by Farinde *et al.* (2015).

Imperative Sentences

Imperatives are sentence types that usually make a directive, issues a command or requests for an action to be completed. In this sentence type, the main verb begins the construction which is followed by, usually, an object. Imperatives

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usually do not have perceivable subjects but the subject can be an evoked one or implied or realized pragmatically. In the data, it was identified that panel members occasionally employed imperatives to invite candidates to the floor. Some examples are provided below:

Extract 5a:

Panel Member 3: So did you have to set a collocation span?

Candidate: Yes.

Panel Member 3: Okay, *tell us.*

Candidate: Uhmm, I used uhmm 5 from the left and 5 from the right; that is what I used.   **[TDP 3]**

Extract 5b:

Panel Member 4: Did you have any other hypothesis apart from the null?

Candidate: Yes

Panel Member 4: *So briefly tell me what these hypotheses were*.

Candidate: I used the, the null hypothesis I said that there is no differences in uhmm a politeness structures used by the male and female …   **[TDP 5]**

Extract 5c:

Panel Member 1: Okay, so you did some cleaning of uhmm those elements of disfluency in the transcription because you didn't need them in your analysis.

Candidate: I actually didn't look at that in the analysis

Panel Member 4: Because you didn't need them?

Candidate: Yeah, I didn't need them so I didn't look at that.

Panel Member 4: Well, are you (pause) but *show us some of them*.

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Panel Member 1: Yeah, if you have any.   **[TDP 3]**

The italicised structures in Extracts 5a, 5b and 5c illustrate the use of imperatives by panel members in inviting candidates to take their turns at talk. In 5a, the utterance *okay, tell us* is an imperative structure because syntactically, it contains no subject and the verb "tell" begins the utterance which is followed by the object "us" – a pronoun. However, the subject, which refers to the candidate being questioned, is realised pragmatically in the discourse. It also means that the candidate to whom the command is addressed is overt. In 5b, the panel member makes use of the imperative *So briefly tell me what these hypotheses were* to invite the candidate to the floor. This structure is said to be an imperative one because it has no overt subject coming before the main verb "tell". In this particular structure, the conjunction "so" which is sometimes used as a way of starting a new sentence begins the structure, and this is followed by the mobile adverbial "briefly". However, since there is no overt subject and the main verb of the structure "tell" is in its base form, it is considered an imperative one. The verb "tell" is then followed by "me" and the wh-interrogative nominal clause "what these hypotheses were" serving as the indirect and direct objects respectively. Similarly, in 5c, the structure *show us some of them* is said to be an imperative structure because there is no overt subject in the structure and it has the base form of the verb "show" beginning the structure which then is followed by "me" the indirect object and "some of them" the direct object.

As contained in Ahialey (2012), imperatives are action-eliciting questions which require the performance of an action by the addressee. The italicized

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structures in Extracts 5a, b and c, thus, perform action-eliciting functions and were intended to make the addressees (the candidates) act in a certain way. This finding of the present study with regard to the use of imperatives corroborates that of Swales *et al.* (1998) who investigate and find that imperatives are present in the academic genre of research article. Though Swales *et al.* (1998) do not deal with spoken academic genre, as the present study does, I believe the findings validate the use of imperatives in the general context of academic discourse, whether written or oral. Again, I am of the view that panel members use the imperatives for the purpose of engaging candidates and for seeking and eliciting information.

By Candidates

This section discusses the sentence types used by candidates during TD. The data reveals that candidates usually used declaratives to take their speaking turns and manage the floor afterwards. This linguistic choice made by candidates are explained further in the subsequent paragraphs.

Declarative Sentences

The declaratives were frequently and mostly used, as compared to the phrasal units. The declaratives used were usually simple clause structures with one independent clause, and on some occasions, compound clause structures with two independent clauses and complex clause structures with one independent clause and at least one dependent clause. Extracts 6 show the use of declaratives by candidates to take their turn.

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Extract 6a:

Panel Member 1: … The first is what is the basic element in nego-feminism? What is the basic element? Then after that I will continue with the second.

Candidate: *The basic element is negotiation, negotiation, yeah*. It implies like let us negotiate; everything is negotiable even if the man happens to be the head … **[TDP 2]**

Extract 6b:

Panel Member 1: But let me add to that; a follow-up to that. Uhmm, did you need that element of disfluency in your analysis or did you not?

Candidate: No, I didn't. Actually, that wasn't my focus.

Panel Member 1: Okay, so you did some cleaning of uhmm those elements of disfluency in the transcription because you didn't need them in your analysis.

Candidate: *I actually didn't look at that in the analysis.*

Panel Member 4: Because you didn't need them?

Candidate: *Yeah, I didn't need them so I didn't look at that*. **[TDP 3]**

From Extracts 6a and b, it can be seen that candidates use declaratives in taking their speaking turns. This observation can be attributed to the fact that candidates needed to provide statements that would answer the questions that they were asked. Thus, it is not surprising that candidates use declaratives which have the force of making statements to take their speaking turns. However, there were variations in the use of the declaratives by the candidates to take their speaking turns. In 6a, the structure *The basic element is negotiation, negotiation, yeah* is considered a declarative because it displays an unmarked order of the functional

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categories where the subject "the basic element" comes first and it is followed by the verbal element "is". The verbal element is then followed by its complement "negotiation". The structure, thus, has the SVC order. Similarly, in 6b, *I actually didn't look at that in the analysis* is also considered declarative clause because it has the subject "I" coming first before the verbal element "didn't look at". Here, one sees an adverbial particle "actually" coming in between the subject and the verbal element. The verbal element is then followed by the object "that" and then the prepositional phrase "in the analysis" which functions as an adverbial. This particular structure has the SAVOA order.

It is important to mention here that these declaratives, as discussed in Extracts 6a and 6b, are also instances of the use of simple sentences that the candidates use to take their speaking turns. A simple sentence consists of an independent clause and is complete in itself. The simple sentence contains a subject and a verb (Quirk & Greenbaum, 1973). These declaratives are considered simple sentences because they contain one independent clause each which make complete thoughts on their own. From the data, I realized that candidates used these simple sentences to take their speaking turns on some occasions. Other declaratives used by candidates to take their speaking turns are compound and complex sentences. Examples of these are seen in Extracts 6b above and 6c below respectively.

Extract 6c:

Panel Member 2: Yes, exactly. Are they different things? … Do you make distinction between reality and fiction in your study? Did you approach it as fiction or you approached it as reality?

Candidate: *I think that was one of my challenges because I remember my supervisor once told me this is a fiction.* We are dealing with fiction and this is not reality. Yes, I did approach it as fiction because …   **[TDP 2]**

In Extract 6b, the structure *Yeah, I didn't need them so I didn't look at that* is first of all considered as a declarative because it has the subject "I" coming before the verbal element "didn't need" which is also followed by the object "them" and then other grammatical units. This declarative is said to also be an example of a compound sentence that the candidates use in taking their speaking turns. A compound sentence consists of two or more simple sentences or independent clauses joined by a coordinating conjunction, a semicolon or a correlative conjunction. This particular structure *Yeah, I didn't need them so I didn't look at that* is considered a compound sentence because the sentence is made up of two independent clauses, "I didn't need them" and "I didn't look at that" which are joined together by the coordinating conjunction "so". The use of this coordinating conjunction shows a consequence of the first clause in the structure on the second one. In Extract 6c, however, the structure *I think that was one of my challenges because I remember my supervisor once told me this is a fiction* which is a declarative is considered a complex sentence that the candidates used to take their speaking turn. This structure is a declarative because it has the subject "I" coming

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before the verbal element "think" which is also followed by other grammatical elements that complete the meaning of this verb.

Also, the structure in Extract 6c is considered a complex sentence. A complex sentence consists of a combination of an independent clause and at least one dependent clause. The independent clause is the main clause, which makes a complete thought on its own, and the dependent clause is the subordinate clause, which depends on the main clause to make meaning. The italicized structure in 6c is considered a complex sentence, a matrix clause, because it contains a main clause and a subordinate clause. The main clause is *I think* and the subordinate clause is *that was one of my challenges because I remember my supervisor once told me this is a fiction* which has in it an embedded subordinate clause *because I remember my supervisor once told me this is a fiction*. This subordinate clause which has another subordinate embedded in it does not make any complete meaning on its own and thus depends on the main clause of the utterance to make meaning. The first subordinate clause *that was one of my challenges* is a nominal zero that clause that serves as the direct object of the verb "think" and the embedded subordinate clause *because I remember my supervisor once told me this is a fiction* is an adverbial clause of reason.

This finding of the present study where candidates use declaratives as response devices to take their speaking turn is in line with that of Tracy and Robles (2009), Edu-Buandoh and Ahialey (2012), and Saan (2015), who found that the responses to elicitations, particularly, in doctor-patient interaction and in courtroom discourse respectively, usually serve as explanations, confirmation and

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disconfirmation, and agreeing and disagreeing of the elicitations. Thus, it is prudent that, to serve these functions properly, declaratives are used. It is, therefore, not surprising that candidates mostly used declaratives as response tools to the elicitations by panel members as seen in the data used for the present study.

With regard to sentence types used by candidates, what is most striking in the data is the absence of the other three types of sentence types, namely; the interrogative, the imperative and the exclamatory. The reason for this absence is the asymmetrical relationship between participants (here, panel members and candidates) in TD. Thus, it is not surprising that panel members mostly use questions as well as declaratives and imperatives that demand responses as ways to underlie the inequalities between them and candidates. Since these linguistic choices by panel members demand responses from candidates, it is prudent that candidates use declaratives which have the traditional function of making statements (see Aarts, 2001; Quirk, Greenbaum, Leech & Svartvik, 1985) to make their responses known to panel members. That is, the context in which the interaction between panel members and candidates takes place greatly determines the linguistic forms employed by candidates to construct their responses that are elicited by panel members. This explains why the interrogative, imperative and exclamatory sentence types which have the traditional functions of asking questions, issuing directives and making exclamations respectively (see Aarts, 2001; Quirk *et al.*, 1985) are absent from the linguistic choices made by candidates.

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Communicative Functions of Sentence Types Used during Thesis Defence

This section of the study discusses the functions of the sentence types used by both panel members and candidates. In the previous section, it was revealed that panel members often used sentence structures which include interrogatives, declaratives, and imperatives to invite candidates to take the floor, while candidates used declarative sentences to take their speaking turns. These structures employed by participants perform some functions in the discourse. These functions are discussed below.

By Panel Members

Firstly, one function that the linguistic forms used by panel members served was to examine. In other words, *Examination* is one function of the linguistic forms used by panel members. Panel members used particularly interrogatives as a tool to examine candidates on their knowledge of the topic area they have researched into, while seeking to get or obtain some amount of information from them. By examining candidates, panel members sought to request candidates to share their views on the topic they researched into. In the process of finding out the amount of knowledge candidates have about the topic and how valid and true it is that they did the research themselves, panel members used questioning, specifically, wh-interrogatives, to formally request candidates to give key information and facts about the claims that they make during the presentation. This is seen in the extracts provided below:

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Extract 7a:

Panel Member 4: … *What is politeness?*

Candidate: Politeness is an act of giving preference to the others when you are in uhmm a social interaction. In conversation, we try as much as possible to present our speech so that we will not offend the hearer.

[TDP 5]

Extract 7b:

Panel Member 4: *What is formality?* Because you were throwing these terms about without explaining them at all. *What is formality? Is formality the same as politeness?*

Candidate: Prof, errhh, I didn't delve so much into that because my focus …

(INTERRUPTION)

Panel Member 4: But you kept saying some texts were formal; some were not formal; women were more formal and so on. *What was it that you were measuring when you looked at formality? What was it?*

Candidate: Prof, I didn't talk about formality ... I didn't mention it.

[TDP 5]

In Extracts 7a and 7b are italicized structures that indicate the use of questioning. As Athanasiadou (1990) notes, the first thing anyone thinks of when reflecting on the purpose and function of a question is that it is a means of requesting information. Thus, it was not surprising that while panel members used questions to examine candidates, they sought to seek or request information from candidates. In Extracts 7a and 7b, therefore, panel members used questioning to seek or request information while examining candidates. Athanasiadou (1990), again,

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asserts that the chief motivation for information questions is a desire for knowledge; the speaker wants to know something and assumes that the hearer of the question knows it. Thus, questioning for information is the traditional perspective, which considers that a question is a request to supply unknown information, and that what is linked to a question, i.e. a response, is the utterance which provides this information (Athanasiadou, 1990). Athanasiadou further asserts that with questions that seek to examine an individual, one asks the question not because he assumes that respondent to the question has some information that he needs, but because he wants to find out whether the respondent knows the answer. In this type of question, therefore, the speaker knows the answer but he is not sure if the respondent knows it or not. So, the questioner tests the knowledge of the respondent. Extracts 7a and 7b, thus, indicate the use of questions by panel members to test the knowledge of candidates. Particularly, in 7a, the panel member seeks clarification in thought with regard to what politeness is; thus, the utterance *What is politeness?* serves as a tool to clarify the thought of the one asking the question about the concept. In 7b, however, while the panel member seeks to test the knowledge of the candidate, he asks for the candidate to make distinctions between the concepts of 'formality' and 'politeness' in order for him to understand what the candidate has presented on. The panel member, thus, asks *What is formality? Is formality the same as politeness?*

This finding of eliciting information from candidates when they are being examined by panel members confirms Balogun's (2011) argument that the ultimate goal of an interrogative clause is to elicit information. This helps to allay the

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inquisitiveness of panel members about the truth or falsehood of a claim being made. It also provided an avenue for panel members to conclude on the genuineness of the work presented. The use of the wh-interrogatives by panel members demonstrates their affiliations in these ways: first, panel members claim to have a greater knowledge of the topic and the field and/or area of study being presented on; panel members have grater instructional status and institutional roles. Therefore, the intentions of panel members are to test candidates' knowledge since they have the power to do so.

Another function that the linguistic forms used by panel members served was to seek confirmation or disconfirmation of the proposition made by candidates in their presentation. This is mainly achieved by using the yes/no questions, a form of interrogative clause, to get candidates to confirm or disconfirm propositions they make during their presentation. As argued by Balogun (2011), one ultimate goal of an interrogative clause is to get a confirmation or a denial of a particular fact where there is any. Thus, it is not surprising that the use of yes/no questions by panel members seek confirmation or disconfirmation of a particular proposition made, as seen in the extracts below:

Extract 8a:

Panel Member 3: … Do you find the same principle operating in this dialectic?

Candidate: No

Panel Member 3: No?

Candidate: Yes   **[TDP 1]**

Extract 8b:

Panel Member 3: … You know that when you talk about collocates, in corpus linguistics, it is not (pause) it is slightly different from the general understanding of collocation.

Candidate: Yes

Panel Member 3: So did you have to set a collocation span?

Candidate: Yes   **[TDP 3]**

The interactions in Extracts 8a and b illustrate the use of yes/no questions by panel members to make candidates confirm or disconfirm the propositions put forth in the questions asked. As a result, candidates have to either confirm or disconfirm the proposition put forth by panel members. By involving candidates in the interaction, panel members are able to decide on the genuineness of the work presented by candidates. This finding contradicts the use of yes/no questions in cross-examination in courtroom discourse (Ahialey, 2012) where counsels deploy yes/no questions to constrain witnesses/defendants' responses. This finding also corroborates the use of yes/no questions in doctor-patient interaction (Saan, 2015) where doctors use yes/no questions to arrive at a collective decision concerning the patient's medication and most importantly, the purpose of which was to confirm or disconfirm doctors' proposals.

By Candidates

One important function that the linguistic forms used by candidates serve is to give explanations. This function is achieved by the declaratives that candidates use mostly in taking their speaking turns. By giving explanations, candidates

responded to the questions of panel members, bearing in mind that the outcome of the whole interaction depends on whatever information they give to panel members. Thus, candidates gave adequate explanations and information on the questions that were asked them in order to achieve solidarity from panel members. Also, they demonstrate knowledge of the topic for the presentation by giving these explanations. In Extract 9 are examples of the use of declaratives by candidates that serve to give explanations.

Extract 9a:

Panel Member 1: … The first is what is the basic element in nego-feminism? What is the basic element? Then after that I will continue with the second.

Candidate: *The basic element is negotiation, negotiation, yeah*. It implies like let us negotiate; everything is negotiable even if the man happens to be the head … **[TDP 2]**

Extract 9b:

Panel Member 1: But let me add to that; a follow-up to that. Uhmm, did you need that element of disfluency in your analysis or did you not?

Candidate: No, I didn't. Actually, that wasn't my focus.

Panel Member 1: Okay, so you did some cleaning of uhmm those elements of disfluency in the transcription because you didn't need them in your analysis.

Candidate: *I actually didn't look at that in the analysis.*

Panel Member 4: Because you didn't need them?

Candidate: *Yeah, I didn't need them so I didn't look at that*.   **[TDP 3]**

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In Extracts 9a and b, the italicized structures are examples of declarative clauses from the data that candidates used which served to give explanations to the questions asked by panel members. While the candidates used declaratives to give explanations to the questions asked them by the panel members, they tried to show a delimitation of the study for which they are presenting on. This is seen in the utterance of the candidate in 9b – *I actually didn't look at that in the analysis*. The candidate, by giving explanation to the question asked him, shows a delimitation of his study. Again, candidates sought to lay emphasis as they gave explanations to the questions asked. Thus, by saying *Yeah, I didn't need them so I didn't look at that*, the candidate sought to lay emphasis on the explanation he is giving. This emphasis is seen more in the second independent clause of the utterance, which is *so I didn't look at that*.

Another function played by the linguistic forms used by candidates in the data is agreeing or disagreeing with the comments or questions of panel members. According to Wu (2006), agreement is a speech act of explicitly or implicitly expressing similar opinion as an initiator. It is also defined as the willingness to accept the proposal and propositions of others (Eggins & Diana, 1997). These definitions suggest that agreement occurs when we accept another person's view and express our approval of it. On the contrary, disagreement is a speech act of explicitly or implicitly expressing opposition to that of an initiator (Wu, 2006). Malamed (2010) also expresses a similar definition and reinstates that disagreement is "a conflicting view offered as a response to an expressed view of a previous speaker" (Malamed, 2010: 200). Therefore, it is widely acknowledged

that a speaker expresses disagreement when he or she does not come to terms with the opinion or proposition uttered by an addressee.

In the data, it is observed that while panel members want to know how versed candidates are in their area of study, they seem to make some judgements that candidates have to confirm or disconfirm with their responses. Candidates, thus, had to either agree or disagree with the comments or questions made by panel members to enable panel members make an informed decision on the presentation of the work. This particular function is achieved in the yes and no responses given by candidates. The response of the candidates had to either be in the affirmative or non-affirmative, corresponding respectively to yes or no responses. Thus, the use of 'yes' served as an agreement to the question asked or comment made while the use of 'no' served as a disagreement. Examples of these from the data are provided in Extracts 10a and 10b.

Extract 10a:

Panel Member 3: …. Do you find the same principle operating in this dialectic?

Candidate: *No*   **[TDP 1]**

Extract 10b:

Panel Member 3: … You know that when you talk about collocates, in corpus linguistics, it is not (pause) it is slightly different from the general understanding of collocation.

Candidate: *Yes*   **[TDP 3]**

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The interactions in Extracts 10a and b illustrate how candidates either agree or disagree with the comments or questions of panel members when they respond to the comments or questions of panel members with either a 'yes' or a 'no'. In 10a, we see the candidate disagreeing to the proposition carried in the question asked. In this way, the candidate responds in the non-affirmative by using "no". This finding of candidates having to disagree with the comments or questions of panel members supports the finding of Choyimah and Latief (2014) who assert that disagreement is one of the speech acts that commonly occur in academic settings. Thus, it was not surprising that, with the TD occurring in an academic setting, candidates had to disagree to some of the comments by panel members. In 10b, however, we see the candidate agreeing to the comments made by the panel member. In this way, the candidate responds in the affirmative by using "yes", which is seen as an approval to the panel member's opinion.

It is also important to mention here that even though some of the questions asked demanded either confirmation or disconfirmation from candidates with them either responding with just a "yes" or "no", they, on some occasions, went beyond giving more information about the close-ended nature of the questions asked. They, thus, elaborated on the answer they provided. This is seen in Extract 11.

Extract 11:

Panel Member 2: Does it mean the eleventh item of keyword did not have that keyness value?

Candidate: Yes. So if you look at the analysis, the far right side, you have the keyness value. So we have the first keyword which is sports and it had the keyness value of 1361.557. So if you compare to the last one, that is

ten, it had 209.291 keyness value. So I used those statistical figures to determine and select the first ten.   **[TDP 3]**

In Extract 11, it can be seen that even though the panel member's question just needed a "yes" or "no" response, the candidate went beyond just responding with either a "yes" or "no" to give additional information that the candidate thought was relevant in making his response persuasive and acceptable. In so doing, candidates sought to elaborate on the response they give to the question by developing and presenting their response in details in order to demonstrate that they have mastery over the area of study and understood its tenets. Also, giving more than necessary information in response to the questions asked shows how candidates use that as an opportunity to make their claim valid and acceptable in front of panel members who are seen to have greater knowledge and also as the gate keepers of the academic discourse community. Thus, giving panel members with information they did not elicit could still be useful in making them agree more or less with the submission made by candidates.

Language Use and Power in Thesis Defence

This section discusses power relations, as demonstrated in the interaction at TD. The issue of power in the academic setting has received considerable interest from scholars (Owusu-Ansah, 1992; Gborsong, 2001; Coker, 2011; Edu-Buandoh & Mwinlaaru, 2013), and these scholars have pointed out the asymmetrical nature of the interaction among participants found in the academic discourse community in the language use.

The notion of power in TD is believed to have institutional backing because a discourse of power is often embedded in the social power of groups or institutions. As cited in Edu-Buandoh (2010), institutions are linked to power and may serve the interest of particular groups (Agar, 1985; Mayr, 2008); institutional power is usually expressed through language. Mumby (1987), thus, argues that language is a principal means by which institutions create a coherent social reality that frames their sense of who they are. In effect, language becomes a tool for mediating power relations. The language that is used by institutions for crafting their social realities forms part of the discourse that becomes shared in the institution as a community of practice (c.f. Edu-Buandoh, 2010). Power, thus, is not only a social phenomenon; it can be expressed linguistically.

The educational arrangement inherently embodies unequal power relations. Edu-Buandoh and Mwinlaaru (2013) note that "the substantial cultural, social and structural variables which impinge on education as an institution inherently construct the interaction between educators and learners in terms of power relations" (p. 222). The unequal power relations are observed through the linguistic choices made by the participants, as the present study reveals. In the context of this study, power is not to be considered as the permanently forceful competition which is aimed at abusing the other for it (power) to become domination and illegitimate. Power is perceived or conceived as people wishing to be recognized or the ability to force a point in a communicative encounter. Thus, through the linguistic choices, an asymmetrical relationship is demonstrated in the interaction between panel members, who are seen as super-ordinates, and candidates, who are seen as

subordinates. That is, due to the assumption that during TD, panel members are seen as having greater knowledge, greater institutional status and an instructional role, they wield power over candidates. It can, therefore, be said that the wider social and institutional contexts facilitate the language choices of the participants in ways that display inequality. For instance, the elicitation and response device used by panel members indicate some power imbalance. Thus, the interrogatives, imperatives and modal auxiliary verbs as well as using only the first names of candidates as address forms made by panel members from the data suggest that they wield power over the candidates who use hedges and address forms (for example, titles such as 'Prof.' and 'Doc.', and title plus surname of panel members) to show that they are subordinates to the panel members. The use of the address forms are also indicators of formality.

From the analysis of the data, it is revealed that participants, mainly panel members, used various linguistic forms to signal power. That is to say that various structures are employed in the language of panel members to signal power, as against the structures employed in the language of candidates to signal their subordination in the interaction. These linguistic choices and how they enact power relations are discussed below.

By Candidates

The analysis of the data revealed that candidates often used address forms and hedging devices to signal their subordination to panel members. These are discussed below:

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Address Forms

Terms of address are linguistic forms that are used in addressing others to attract their attention or for referring to them in the course of a conversation. According to Fasold (1990), address forms are words that interlocutors utilize to designate persons they are talking in a conversation. Oyatade (1995) also defines address terms as expressions which are used in face-to-face situations to designate an addressee (Oyatade, as cited in Afful, 2007). It is widely believed that the choice of linguistic forms is determined by the formality of context and the relationship between interlocutors in a speech event (see Brown & Gilman, 1960; Braun, 1988; Keshavarz, 2001). In any given communicative event, therefore, address forms are used to signal either power or solidarity since they reveal, to a large extent, the relationship that exists between a speaker and the addressee. In the data, I observed that address forms are used, and these address forms are used to signal power since they reveal the relationship that exists between participants that are involved in the interaction. Specifically, titles as a form/term of address are mainly used by candidates to designate their addressee. We would consider the extracts below:

Extract 12a:

FM 2: … but I was going to direct you to a particular text. In contemporary history, the Sagranti war, there was a woman in Cape Coast called Mrs. Baldridge. She was a black woman but apparently married to a certain Baldridge … And what is interesting about Mrs. Baldridge is that she paid this work force out of her own "tommaa"; that's what she did. She didn't

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take a loan from any man or anything so there are, you know, characters like that which will confirm your literary analysis in your work.

Candidate: Then *Dr. Arko* will come and accuse me of being sociological. (all laugh)

Panel Member 2: No, not completely. You know, you need to have some basis and then history or even in reality, you have to understand that the characters you are analyzing …   **[TDP 2]**

Extract 12b:

Panel Member 2: It's like you have accepted whatever you saw in the literature as the truth without questioning it.

Candidate: *Doc*, I think I will have to look at that.

Chairman: Oh, no, no. But have you or have you not? …   **[TDP 3]**

Extract 12c:

Panel Member 3: Now, with the data uhmm you have … I mean, I find it just like a play of words and I don't really understand what you mean. Uhmm, what do you mean?

Candidate: Okay, *Prof*. actually, the first one, as you said, I was limiting my data to College of Education where I work …   **[TDP 5]**

Extract 12d:

Panel Member 1: So if you take your first - - take us to the data, the data, where you had the table … could you use that to explain the transitivity projection by talking about the roles?

Candidate: Alright, uhmm, thank you *madam*. Errhh, the first example: 'I sustained several degrees of injuries at my back through beatings'. Now, uhmm, the 'I' there is a participant and the sustained is material or the process, that's the verb, and then several degrees of injuries is the goal.

[TDP 4]

The italicised structures in Extracts 12a, b, c and d illustrate address forms found in the data to show the power relations that exist among candidates and panel members. The data makes it clear that candidates use the address forms to refer to the panel member that is interrogating them. These address forms mainly used in the data are mostly the titles, particularly academic titles, of the panel members. Thus, in 12b and 12c, candidates use the forms "Doc." and "Prof." to address the panel members. These address forms are the academic titles of the panel members involved. It is also important to mention that these forms are the diminutive forms of the words "Doctor" and "Professor" respectively, and since these short forms are seen to be conventional in everyday language usage, they are accepted and used within the otherwise formal setting of TD. As Afful and Mwinlaaru (2012) note, these academic titles are more familiar and less deferential than *Sir* and *Madam*, another use of title that is realized in the data and is explained later. Again, Afful and Mwinlaaru assert that students tend to use the short forms more often than the full forms of academic titles, perhaps, to create a heightened familiarity with faculty. This suggests why the short forms of these academic titles are mostly used by the candidates who tend to be students too. However, the use of these short forms to create a heightened familiarity does not downplay the power semantics between candidates and panel members.

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In Extract 12d, the candidate again uses the title "madam", a general deferential form noted by Afful and Mwinlaaru (2012), to refer to the panel member. The use of "madam" marks a high degree of deference to faculty and thus enacts the traditional student-teacher relationship (Afful & Mwinlaaru, 2012). However, in 12a, the candidate uses the title 'Dr.' plus the last name of the panel member. The use of these address forms by candidates to address panel members indicates the asymmetrical relationship that exists between them and panel members as Hudson (1980) observes and recalls the power semantics of Brown and Gilman (1960). Thus, the use of "Dr. Arko", for instance, in addressing this particular panel member, shows that this panel member wields power over the candidate. These findings corroborate the findings of the power-oriented studies on address forms (e.g. Brown & Gilman, 1960; Brown & Ford, 1961) and the use of address terms in an academic setting (Formentelli, 2009).

Hedges

Another linguistic choice candidates use to show their subordination to panel members is hedging devices. Hedging is crucial in academic discourse as members of the academic discourse community may want to use hedging devices and/or tentative language to distinguish between facts and claims. As Hyland (1994) puts is, academics are crucially concerned with varieties of cognition, and cognition is inevitably "hedged." Hedging refers to words or phrases "whose job it is to make things fuzzier" (Lakoff, 1972, p. 195), implying that the writer is less than fully committed to the certainty of the referential information given (cf. Hyland, 1994, p. 240). Using hedging devices such as modal auxiliary verbs;

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adjectival, adverbial and nominal modal expressions; modal lexical verbs; and passivisation, among others, are, thus, concerned with a display of confidence, or more usually lack of confidence, in the truth of propositional information; this signals power relations among interlocutors when these hedging devices are used in the communicative event. The data shows that hedging devices are used by participants, particularly candidates, to signal power relations that exist between them and panel members. Some instances of the use of these hedging devices found in the data are given below:

Extract 13a:

Panel Member 4: yeah, but at what cost to the theory itself? That is the point. It was designed originally for academic discourse; now you are moving it out of that context to sports. Does the theory survive intact or does it undergo a change? That is what we would like to know.

Candidate: *I think* from what I read too in the literature, *it was confirmed that they survive.* It shows its flexibility nature …   **[TDP 3]**

Extract 13b:

Panel Member 4: I mean you seem to be excited about punching holes in errhh different errhh meanings of all these theories without telling us where you stand and I am keen to find out your place. Yes.

Candidate: Okay, errhh, *it was difficult for me* to accept wholly any of these errhh these stances or these theories about what the postcolonial novel is because once I do that then I have to ask myself why then do I have to still go on and look at what the postcolonial novel is if I already accept one of the views ... So *I thought* that *perhaps* abruptness was a good measure of determining or starting to look at the postcolonial novel …

                                                                [TDP 1]

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Generally, by hedging, candidates toned down their statements in order to reduce the risk of opposition. Also, these devices served as politeness strategies in which candidates tried to appear humble rather than arrogant or all-knowing. Thus, candidates' use of hedging devices helped them to make claims accompanied by some degree of uncertainty, to prevent any future criticism thereof capable of damaging their image, and also to gain acceptability by presenting facts as tentative. In Extracts 13a and 14b, candidates use hedging devices in making their arguments. These hedging devices include the modal lexical verbs "think" and its past form "thought", as seen in Extracts 13a and 13b respectively, the passive structure "it was confirmed that they survive" in 13a, the impersonal phrase "it was difficult for me to …" and the modal adverb "perhaps", both in 13b. By using the modal lexical verbs "think" and "thought", the candidates signal that the claim is perhaps a personal opinion and not commit themselves to being judged by panel members. This finding corroborates that of Musa (2014) who asserts that student researchers use modal lexical verbs to signal that the claim is a personal opinion. Also, by using the expression *I think,* the candidate modifies the force of the entire utterance, placing the proposition somewhere on the continuum between absolute truth and falsehood. This also corroborates the findings of Varttala (2001) on the use of the expression *I think that*. In this way, the hedging strategy marks the utterance as a subjective view but not a categorically correct assertion.

Again, by using the passive structure "it was confirmed that they survive" and the impersonal expression "it was difficult for me …" as seen in 13a and 13b respectively, the candidates tried to distance themselves from the proposition being

made, thereby avoiding imposing their claims on the panel members. Most importantly, embedded in the use of these hedging devices is the power relation that exists between candidates and panel members. That is, by using hedges, candidates did not want to be seen as imposing their views on the panel members who are regarded as the gate keepers of the discourse community and that these gate keepers of the discourse community have a greater knowledge, a greater institutional status and an instructional role during the interaction. The assumption that panel members (the gate keepers of the academic discourse community) have greater knowledge, greater institutional status and instructional roles reflects the power dynamics between them and candidates, leading to the choice of hedging devices by candidates.

By Panel Members

The analysis of the data revealed that whereas candidates often used address forms and hedging devices to signal their subordination to the panel members, panel members often used address forms (different from the one used by candidates), questions (interrogatives), imperatives, and modal auxiliary verbs to indicate that they wield power over the candidates. These are discussed below:

Address Forms

In the data, I found that address forms were used by panel members to signal power. Panel members mostly used the first name only of candidates when addressing or interrogating them. Some examples are observed in the Extracts below:

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Extract 14a:

Panel Member 1: … Thank you *Elijah* for this errhh good presentation. Errhh *Elijah* my first question to you is this one …   **[TDP 1]**

Extract 14b:

Chairman: Okay, so errhh, shall we invite Panel Member 2 … errhh Panel Member 2.

Panel Member 2: … Okay, *Elijah*, I think I will like to congratulate you errhh (pause) errmm for a very scholarly kind of presentation lecture you have made based on your thesis …   **[TDP 1]**

Extract 14c:

Panel Member 1: … *Benjamin*, I would congratulate you errhh I think you have come very far and this is the final point and I think you have done well …   **[TDP 3]**

Extract 14d:

Panel Member 1: Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman. *Edward*, Ayekoo.

Candidate: Thank you

Panel Member 1: I have three main questions, but before that ... **[TDP 4]**

In Extracts 14a, b, c and d, the italicised structures indicate that panel members use first names of candidates to address them. The use of these first names as address forms by panel members suggests the power semantics that exists between them. Thus, whereas the candidates use titles, that is, the general differential forms and academic titles (as seen in the examples in Extract 12), to address panel members, showing the asymmetric relation between them, panel members used only the first

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names of candidates to show a degree of solidarity between them and candidates. This finding confirms Hudson's (1980) finding when he observes that the choice of an address form by a speaker to address an addressee would indicate the relationship between the speaker and the addressee. Thus, if the speaker uses only the first name, then there must be a high degree of solidarity between the speaker and the addressee.

Also, one interesting finding that can be drawn with regard to the use of address forms by both participants in the interaction is the issue of non-reciprocity, particularly with the usage of first names as address forms. As Formentelli and Hajek (2015) note, address non-reciprocity is perceived as the natural reflection of different roles and relative age, and is evaluated positively by the majority of students, the increase in familiarity putting students at ease inside and outside class. Thus, due to the assumption that panel members have greater institutional status and instructional role, which contributes to and reflects a power dynamic which underlines the way the interaction unfolds, candidates wield no power to address panel members with only their first name. Moreover, there is the natural reflection of different roles played by both candidates and panel members.

It is also important to mention here that the use of address forms by both panel members and candidates hinges on formality. Thus, whereas the choice of the first name by panel members to address candidates is likely to indicate intimacy and if possible, less formality between them and candidates, the use of the general differential forms (for example, 'madam') and academic titles (for example, 'Prof.' and 'Doc.') as well as the title plus the last name (for example,

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Dr. Arko) of panel members shows distance and a higher level of formality. This finding corroborates Gborsong's (2001) finding that the use of these address forms shows the parallel or horizontal relationship between participants in a discourse or communicative event, and that formality is always present in the choice of an address form in the data he analyzed.

Also, the use of the forms *Doc* and *Prof,* especially, in formal settings, is more popular among postgraduate students than undergraduate students, as argued by Afful and Mwinlaaru (2012). Thus, it did not come as a surprise when these forms of address manifested in the data. This is because the candidates who use these forms are postgraduate students and they are seen as members of the academic discourse community, where there is some form of familiarity between them and the panel members who constitute the senior members of the academic discourse community. Again, in this setting, the choice of an address form is confined to a certain group of people; thus, the use of first names of candidates (e.g. 'Elijah') usually by panel members who are senior faculty members and the use of titles – general deferential forms (e.g. 'madam') and academic titles (e.g. 'Doc.' or 'Prof."), and titles plus last names (e.g. 'Dr. Arko') by candidates who are the students of the faculty. Thus, the power relations determine whether a participant chooses a particular address form over the other.

Questions

Again, the analysis of the data indicates that one of the syntactic forms that are mostly used to enact power relations is questions, particularly, the interrogative

sentence types, which are used as a form of elicitation strategy mainly by panel members. Questions are usually discussed as grammatical forms used to elicit information, as attention getters or conversation strategies for sustaining interest among interlocutors. Questions are sentences, phrases or even gestures that show that the speaker or writer wants the reader or listener to supply them with some information, perform a task or in some other way respond to request (Edu-Buandoh & Ahialey, 2012). As Edu-Buandoh and Ahialey (2012) assert, the context in which communication takes place is significant in determining the kind of response questions elicit. These questions can also be seen as grammatical forms with pragmatic functions, and that in discourse, questions are sometimes used strategically by interlocutors of greater authority against those without power (Fairclough, 2001). More powerful participants in a discourse tend to ask questions whereas the less powerful participants are required to provide answers to the questions asked. That is, types of questions such as wh-interrogatives, yes/no interrogatives, alternative questions, and tag questions identified by linguists (see Danet *et al.*, 1980) used in a discourse are very much likely to show the power relations that exist between the interlocutors. Thus, from the analysis of the data, it was revealed that wh-questions, yes-no questions and declarative questions are used by panel members to enact the power relations between them and candidates. The use of these forms of questions is discussed in the subsequent paragraphs.

The use of the wh-question to enact power is pervasive in the data due to the fact that it allowed panel members to obtain what they wanted to hear from the candidates. Since this type of question is open-ended and may elicit an infinite

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range of answers, panel members used it to elicit responses from candidates as candidates went about giving required and expected answers to the questions that were asked. Wh-interrogatives are question types that are formed with the aid of one of the wh-question words (who, whom, whose, what, which, when, where and how), and are marked by wh-element-auxiliary-subject-main verb order (Quirk & Greenbaum, 1973). The data reveals that this question type is used to show the asymmetric relationship between panel members and candidates and here are some examples:

Extract 15a:

Panel Member 1: But actually, in doing your own work, you find that there is enough grounds for you to go beyond what is normally done by Swales and Bhatia. *What is it that you did in your work that differs from theirs?*

Candidate: Okay, from the analysis that I (pause) from the literature review, I observed that with Swales and Bhatia, they will look at ... So what I added that is different from theirs was to add an aspect of corpus linguistics where I used the errhh AntConc software to account for some key words and their collocates in the data …

Panel Member 1: *Why do you find that necessary?*

Candidate: Okay, what I wanted to do was to find out (pause) was to find some words that can be tagged as prototypical of sports news presentation ... So within what I did, I also wanted to come out with some key words that if you come across it will give you an idea about what kind of genre, the type of genre you are analyzing … **[TDP 3]**

Extract 15b:

Panel Member 4: *What sort of data can you treat with chi square?*

Candidate: … You treat it with quantitative data.

Panel Member 4: You treat it with quantitative data. Good. But there are other statistics. There is ANOVA; there is a t-test. *Why did you use chi square?* Because there is (pause) in the literature, the data must have a certain shape, must have a certain layout for you to use chi square. *When do you use chi square?*

Candidate: When they have different, the data have independent variables, you can use chi square to check the differences.

Panel Member 4: *What were your independent variables?*

Candidate: That is errhh male and female and then within age groups. That's what I used.   **[TDP 5]**

The italicized structures in Extracts 15a and b indicate how panel members demonstrate their power over candidates by using wh-questions. Through wh-questions, the speakers express their sincere inquisitiveness about issues they are not clear about. For instance, in Extracts 15a and b, the wh-questions italicized all allow their speakers to make enquiries on the reasons for particular actions by the hearers who are the candidates. As expected of wh-questions, the hearers (here, candidates) of these questions give a range of answers to these questions so as to allay the inquisitiveness of the speakers (here, panel members) of the questions. Beyond these pieces of information that are sought is the interplay of power embedded within the clause (Athanasiadou, 1990; Fairclough, 2001; Balogun, 2011). In other words, inasmuch as wh-questions seek information and

clarification, as shown on the surface level, they are also used to enact power relations.

The data also revealed that yes/no question types were used by panel members when engaging candidates in the interaction to show their power over the latter. In yes/no interrogatives, the operator is placed before the subject, and the sentence is given a rising intonation (Quirk & Greenbaum, 1973). These question types are also referred to as 'closed questions' because the set of possible answers is closed, containing just two members – 'yes' or 'no'. Here are some examples of 'yes' and 'no' answers to yes/no questions taken from the data:

Extract 16a:

Panel Member 2: Well, okay. But let me shelve the question for now. You said you did qualitative content analysis. *Did you actually do that?*

Candidate: Yes.

Panel Member 2: What is that, qualitative content analysis? … **[TDP 2]**

Extract 16b:

Panel Member 2: But are you saying that errhh, you didn't find any? Can you show me one, I mean, from the main work?

Candidate: Okay

Panel Member 1: But let me add to that; a follow-up to that. Uhmm, *did you need that elements of disfluency in your analysis or did you not?*

Candidate: No, I didn't; actually, that wasn't my focus.   **[TDP 3]**

Extract 16c:

Panel Member 3: 13,120. Okay, very well. Errmm, it is a small corpus. Well, you generated the keywords and then you also went further to generate the collates. Did you have to set a collocation span? You know that when you talk about collocates, in corpus linguistics, it is not (pause) it is slightly different from the general understanding of collocation.

Candidate: Yes

Panel Member 3: So *did you have to set a collocation span?*

Candidate: Yes

Panel Member 3: Okay, tell us.   **[TDP 3]**

The italicised structures in 16a, b and c illustrate the fact that yes-no questions are used by panel members to show the power relation that exists between them and candidates. This type of question, as mentioned earlier, limits the preferred answer to "yes" or "no", but it was observed that candidates, in some contexts, went beyond just giving just a "yes" or "no" answer to further provide infinite range of replies to make the claim that they make very strong and persuasive. Like the wh-questions, this question type also reveals the power semantics that can be seen between panel members and candidates. Thus, by using yes/no questions also, panel members seek to show that they wield the power to enquire from candidates who are seen as subordinates, just as they use wh-questions.

The data also revealed that declarative questions were used by panel members to enact the power relations that exist between them and candidates. These declarative questions are the traditional declarative structures said with a rising tone. Some examples are provided below:

Extract 17a:

Panel Member 1: Okay, uhmm, the second thing that I would like you to explain to me … Did you use the French or English?

Candidate: I used the English.

Panel Member 1: *You used the English?*

Candidate: Yes   **[TDP 2]**

Extract 17b:

Candidate: Within the literature, it will be the step.

Panel Member 4: The step

Candidate: Yes

Panel Member 4: *So below the step, nothing happens?*

Candidate: uhmm, from my reading, when I was doing the review, I didn't come across any unit below the errhh step.   **[TDP 3]**

In Extracts 17a and b, the italicized structures are declarative questions. Looking at these structures, they are seen as having the form of declaratives where there is an unmarked order of the functional categories. Thus, in 17a, we have *You used the English*, a declarative that has the SVO structure with "you" being the subject, "used" being the verb and "the English" being the direct object. This clause, traditionally, is intended to make a statement. However, in its context of usage in the interaction, it is said with a rising intonation and as a result, has a question mark put at the end of the clause. This makes the clause have an extended communicating function of seeking for information from the candidate. By using

this clause to question the candidate, the panel member exerts some form of power over the candidate as the panel member requires the candidate to take a certain action. The same situation is seen in the italicized structure in 17b.

Imperatives

Again, imperatives were also used to show power relations in the interaction among panel members and candidates. These imperatives were used by panel members for the purpose of influencing the actions of candidates one way or another, either by commanding, ordering and requesting for them to take a certain action they (panel members) wanted the candidates to do. Here are some examples from the data:

Extract 18a:

Panel Member 3: So did you have to set a collocation span?

Candidate: Yes

Panel Member 3: Okay, *tell us.*

Candidate: Uhmm, I used uhmm 5 from the left and 5 from the right; that is what I used.   **[TDP 3]**

Extract 18b:

Panel Member 4: Did you have any other hypothesis apart from the null?

Candidate: Yes

Panel Member 4: *So briefly tell me what these hypotheses were.*

Candidate: I used the, the null hypothesis I said that there are no differences in uhmm politeness structures used by the male and female …

                                                                        [TDP 5]

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Extract 18c:

Candidate: I actually didn't look at that in the analysis

Panel Member 4: Because you didn't need them?

Candidate: Yeah, I didn't need them so I didn't look at that.

Panel Member 4: Well, are you (pause) but *show us some of them.*

[TDP 3]

The exchanges in Extracts 18a, b and c show that panel members make use of the imperative to show the power they wield over the candidate. In these Extracts (i.e. 18a, b and c), the italicized structures are imperatives since they have the form typical of imperatives, i.e. syntactically, they do not normally contain subjects and that their verb is in the base form. For instance, in 18a, we have *okay, tell us*, an imperative that has the VO structure with "tell" being the verb and "us" being the direct object. Here, the subject, which refers to the candidate being questioned, is realised pragmatically in the discourse. Traditionally, the function of this clause type is to influence the actions of the addressee (the person spoken to) one way or another, either by commanding, ordering, requesting, inviting, et cetera (Aarts, 2001). These clause types are very often used in indicating power and as such they are hardly issued by subordinates to their bosses. Also, they are apt to sound abrupt (Quirk & Greenbaum, 1973), unless toned down by markers of politeness such as *please*, usually said with a falling intonation at the end. It is important to mention that in the context of usage in the interaction, these imperatives were occasionally used to show power since they may be quite face-threatening. However, they were used by panel members to influence the actions of the candidates, either by

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commanding, ordering and requesting for them to take a certain action they (panel members) wanted the candidates to do. For the Extracts seen in 18a, b and c, the italicized imperative structures were used to request or seek information from the candidate. By using this clause in this regard, panel members exerted some form of power over the candidate.

Modal Auxiliary Verbs

Apart from the use of address terms and the sentence types discussed, the analysis reveals that some grammatical items, mainly modal auxiliary verbs, are used to enact power relations that exist among the interactants. Examples of the use of modal auxiliary verbs in the data are discussed below.

Modal auxiliary verbs are verbs such as *can, may, shall, should, must, need to* and *will*, among others, that are used with a main verb – other than another modal – to express possibility, permission, obligation, volition, necessity, among others (Quirk, Greenbaum, Leech & Svartvik, 1972). These modal auxiliaries have different semantic implications and can be used as resources to try to influence people in various ways. Thus, the use of some of these modal auxiliaries unveils some sense of power and thus, modal auxiliaries can be used by those in authority who wish to signal power to their subordinates. In the data, it was realized that some of the modal auxiliaries are used to reveal power relations that exist between panel members and candidates. Some examples are given below:

Extract 19a:

Panel Member 3: … in <u>Heart of Darkness</u>, we will find the chronotope of the encounter, of course. So are we to say that <u>Heart of Darkness</u> is a postcolonial text? *That is important so you **should** answer that.*

Candidate: Thank you. Okay, now the (pause) you see that, for instance, when Bakhtin uses the theory of chronotope to study the western novels from its errhh its different sub-categories like the romantic novels, the adventure novels and so on, you find that the chronotope …   **[TDP 1]**

Extract 19b:

Candidate: Doc, I think I will have to look at that.

Panel Member 4: Oh, no, no. But have you or have you not? Is there any point that which you critique what you are reporting on or the fact that it's printed means is that it has to be good. *An answer to that **should** be forthcoming now*; it *can't* wait, because we have to continue.

Candidate: Uhmm, critiquing them (pause)

Panel Member 4: You had so much respect for the literature.   **[TDP 3]**

Extract 19c:

Candidate: I think the emphasis was much more on the women characters in the society, the characters as individuals, and how they are negotiating the realities within which they find themselves.

Panel Member 2: within the fictional society?

Candidate: within the fictional society

Panel Member 2: within a literary text.

Candidate: Yes.

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Panel Member 2: so *the handling of the analysis **must** also portray the literary nature*, you know, in the fictionality of the characters … **[TDP 2]**

Extract 19d:

Panel Member 2: But you use them at times as one word and at times too as two words.

Candidate: in the work?

Panel Member 2: Yes, *so you **need to** look at that*. Uhmm, (pause) and also, there are issues with spacing in between words and uhmm omissions here and there … **[TDP 3]**

Extracts 19a, b, c and d are exchanges between panel members and candidates in which modal auxiliary verbs are used by panel members to exert some power over candidates. These modals show the deontic functions of the modals such as expressing obligation and necessity. With regard to the modal auxiliary "should", Coates (1983) indicates that "should" as an obligation takes two important forms: the weak form which only express advice and suggestion while at its strongest expresses obligation and duty. In 19a and 19b, therefore, the use of the modal "should" expresses obligation. For instance, in 19a, by saying *That is important so you **should** answer that,* the panel member (using should) exerts some control over the candidate, expecting the candidate to take a certain action. As a result, the candidate is obliged to take this action. In 19c, also, the panel member exerts some authority (power) over the candidate by the use of "must". Here, the use of "must" expresses also obligation as well as logical necessity. Thus, by saying *the handling of the analysis **must** also portray the literary nature …*, the panel member puts forth that it is strongly necessary and obligatory for the candidate to take a certain

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course of line so as to make clear a claim that the candidate makes. Again, in 19d, the use of "need to" by the panel member shows the power that the panel member has over the candidate. The use of "need to" conveys a necessity, as it is used to add importance to the proposition already mentioned by the panel member for the candidate to take a certain action. Thus, there is the sense of strong necessity and obligation in the statement made by the panel member. In sum, the deontic use of these modal verbs (should, must and need to), as can be seen in Extracts 19 (a, b, c and d), is better understood by viewing the phenomenon as power rather than force, as argued by Winter and Gardenfors (2006). Thus, modal auxiliaries are used to position the panel members as powerful, expressing their authority.

Chapter Summary

This chapter has analyzed and discussed the data collected for the purpose of the study. This approach was aimed at providing answers to the research questions that guide the study. Firstly, the chapter discussed the sentence types employed by panel members in inviting candidates to take their speaking turns as well as the sentence types employed by candidates to take their speaking turns. Secondly, the discussion presented the functions of these sentence types used by the participants. Lastly, this chapter also discussed how power is enacted through the linguistic forms used by panel members and candidates during the interaction. The next chapter presents the conclusion of the entire study.

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Introduction

The study aimed at examining the language used in TD and how power is enacted through the various linguistic choices made by participants, specifically panel members and candidates. In the previous chapter, the results of the analysis of the data for the study were discussed. This final chapter presents a summary of the entire study, highlighting the key findings of the study. Conclusions are then drawn based on the findings. The chapter further presents the implications of the study, recommendations for further studies and conclusions of the study.

Summary of the Study

This research centred on language and power in academic discourse by examining the case of TD in the Department of English of UCC. Particularly, the study sought to examine the linguistic forms employed by participants (that is, panel members and candidates), the functions of these linguistic forms, and how power is enacted through the linguistic forms. By focusing on this problem, the primary research question formulated was this:

1. How are power relations enacted in the linguistic choices of panel members and candidates during thesis defence?

The following secondary research questions were formulated:

2. What sentence types are used by panel members and candidates during the interaction at thesis defence?

3. What communicative purposes are served through the sentence types used by panel members and candidates during the interaction at thesis defence?

In answering these research questions, the study adopted CA and CDA as the analytical frameworks. These frameworks helped me to focus on the analysis of linguistic forms such as hedging devices, address forms, modal auxiliary verbs, clause and/or sentences, and how these linguistic forms help to unearth the power semantics present during TD. The study used ten (10) different recordings of TD presentations as the data for the analysis. By using the CA and CDA analytical frameworks in the analysis of the data, I arrived at the findings that have been discussed and presented in the previous chapter.

Key Findings

The analysis of the data which was guided by the research questions stated above revealed the following key findings which are presented in the subsequent paragraphs. It is important to state here that since it was important to identify the sentence types and other linguistic choices made by participants first in order to examine how the linguistic choices made reveal the power dynamics in the interaction, the key findings presented here do not follow the order in which the questions are asked in the introductory chapter of the study.

Research Question Two

1. What sentence types are used by panel members and candidates during the interaction at thesis defence?

The study revealed that panel members mostly used sentential units ranging from interrogatives, declaratives and imperatives to invite candidates to take the

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floor whereas candidates mostly used declaratives to take their speaking turns. I observed that, in most cases, the interrogatives were used by panel members to invite candidates to take their speaking turns. Per this finding, I am of the view that the frequent use of interrogatives by panel members to invite candidates to take their turns at talk is an indicator that TD interaction is mostly controlled by panel members as they use the interrogatives to gain responses from candidates and to ascertain whether candidates have in-depth knowledge on their research topics. Again, it was observed that candidates, in most cases, used declaratives to take their speaking turns.

Research Question Three

2. What communicative purposes are served through the sentence types used by panel members and candidates during the interaction at thesis defence?

With regard to this research question, the following were observed. The study revealed that the sentence types used by participants served various communicative functions within TD setting. First, the study revealed that the most common function that the sentence types used by panel members served was to examine candidates. Panel members particularly used interrogatives in the data as a tool for examining candidates on their knowledge of the topic area they have researched into, while seeking to get or obtain some amount of information from them. By examining candidates on their knowledge of the topic they have researched into, panel members sought to request for candidates to share their views on the topic they researched into. Secondly, the study revealed that the sentence types used by panel members served to seek confirmation or

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disconfirmation of the proposition made by candidates in the course of their presentation. This was mainly achieved by using the yes/no questions, a form of interrogative clause, to get candidates to confirm or disconfirm propositions they made during their presentation.

With regard to the function of the sentence types used by candidates, the study revealed that candidates often used declaratives to offer explanations. By giving explanations, candidates responded to the questions of panel members, bearing in mind that the outcome of the whole interaction depended on whatever information they give to panel members. Thus, candidates gave adequate explanations on the questions that were asked them in order to achieve solidarity from panel members, as they demonstrated knowledge of the research area. Also, candidates agreed or disagreed with the comments or questions of panel members through the linguistic choices they made, so as to enable panel members to make an informed decision on the presentation of the work. In some instances, candidates, while using yes/no responses, went further to elaborate on the question asked them that demanded just a yes or no answer. This was to make their response persuasive, valid, and acceptable, as they demonstrated that they have mastery over the area of study.

Research Question One

3. How are power relations enacted in the linguistic choices of panel members and candidates during thesis defence?

With regard to this research question, the study revealed that power relations are embedded in the linguistic choices made by participants. That is, power relations were observed in various ways through the elicitation and response devices and linguistic expressions that participants employed. Through these devices and linguistic expressions, both symmetric and asymmetric power relationships are demonstrated both explicitly and implicitly. The study revealed that whereas candidates often used address forms and hedges to show their subordination to panel members, panel members often used address forms, questions, imperatives and modal auxiliary verbs to show they wield power over the candidates. For the address forms, they display power semantics, as the forms used by candidates mark a high degree of deference to panel members and thus, enact the traditional student-teacher relationship. For questions, the study revealed that even though they seem to be pure information-seeking questions, in reality, they are also control-oriented. Thus, more powerful participants in a discourse tend to ask questions whereas the less powerful participants are required to provide answers to the questions asked. It was, therefore, not surprising that panel members who are of greater authority used questions against candidates who are without power (Fairclough, 2001). The data also revealed that declarative questions as well as imperatives are used by panel members to enact the power relations that exist between them and candidates. These clause types are used by panel members for the purpose of influencing the actions of the candidates one way or another, either by commanding, ordering and requesting for them to take a certain action they (panel members) want the candidates to do. Apart from the use

of address terms and the sentence types discussed, the study revealed that modal auxiliary verbs and hedging devices were used to enact power relations that exist among the interlocutors during TD.

Conclusions

From the foregoing discussions and findings of the study, the following conclusions are drawn with respect to the objective of the study. It can be concluded that language can be used as an effective tool to enact power relations in the TD setting. The analysis and discussion reveal that power, which is normally asymmetrical (Fairclough, 2001), is manifested in the interaction of TD through the various linguistic choices made by the participants. The study identified that the candidates used declaratives that served to provide information, address forms and hedges to show that they are subordinates. On the other hand, the panel members used interrogatives (i.e. questions), imperatives, address forms and modal auxiliary verbs to show that they wield power over the candidates.

Implications of the Study

Based on the findings of the study, this section discusses the implications of the present study. First, the study contributes to the scholarship on spoken academic genres. Specifically, it has added to the growth of the scholarship on TD in the African setting. Research in spoken academic genres, particularly TD, in Africa is rather insufficient and this study, therefore, contributes significantly to the existing literature. It is however important to mention here some dynamics that are identified in TD in the African setting and non-African setting, taking into consideration the findings. The findings reveal that hedging devices are used in

both settings (see Izadi, 2013), as well as modality (see Recski, 2005; 2006). Izadi (2013), for instance, thus mentions that hedging is supported to be a universal feature of academic discourse. On the contrary, considering both the African and the non-African setting of TD, it is seen that modality is used differently. Findings from this study reveal that modal auxiliary verbs are used deontically by panel members to show that they wield power over the candidates while for TD in the non-African setting (i.e. in America), findings reveal that levels of modal certainty are an important characteristic of the discourse of the candidates and that they work together with hedging to maintain the student's face (see Recski, 2005, 2006).

Also, the study has implications for the use of CDA as an analytical tool for SADs. By using the CDA approach and framework, coupled with the CA framework, the study contributes meaningfully to the growing literature on TD as an important spoken academic genre while examining the relationship between language and power.

Finally, in terms of practice, the study will become useful to candidates and panel members as well as other faculty members and students who engage in postgraduate TD. In relation to candidates and students, they will appreciate the linguistic choices that they make during the TD setting while presenting their thesis as they seek to be acknowledged in the field of study they have taken and the academic discourse community, in general. In relation to panel members and other faculty members who are present during TD, they will also appreciate the linguistic choices that they make during TD, as they seek to examine candidates to

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ascertain the credibility and validity of the work done and presented on. Together, these participants will be aware of the various linguistic choices that they have to make when engaged in TD presentation.

Recommendations for Further Studies

Based on the findings and implications that emerged from the present study, the following recommendations are made for further studies. First, a further study can be done on the topic area by looking at the para-linguistic features that are present during TD, as it was not the focus of the present study, and how these para-linguistic features play important roles in underlying the power semantics that exist in TD as found by the present study.

Second, since the present study was limited to only TD at the Department of English of UCC, another study can be conducted by looking at TD presentation from other departments in the university to find out if the findings arrived at will be in tandem with that of this study or depart from the findings. More so, there could be a study comparing the TD settings of two different departments to find out the linguistic choices made by participants in both settings and how power is enacted during the TD of these departments. This particular recommendation will help to bring out the disciplinary variations in TDs that can be seen in the different departments. By so doing, the findings arrived at can be generalized for members of the academic discourse community to become aware of the linguistic choices they can make when engaging in interactions at thesis defence.

Third, a further study can employ a different methodological tool to study TD. Since TD is regarded as a communicative event, it is imperative that

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participants in the setting employ language so as to attain the purpose for this genre of SAD. As participants use these linguistic structures, they perform different communicative functions. As a result, a further study may adopt the Speech Act theory as an analytical tool to understand the linguistic choices made by participants during TD.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A: THESIS DEFENCE PRESENTATION 2

Chairman: Uhmm, first I will invite Panel Member 1.

Panel Member 1: Thank you very much Grace. Thank you for your work and presentation and then coming up with errhh nego-feminism errmm I have a few issues that I would want clarification for. The first is what is the basic element in nego-feminism? What is the basic element? Then after that I will continue with the second.

Candidate: The basic element is negotiation, negotiation, yeah. It implies like let us negotiate; everything is negotiable even if the man happens to be the head, for instance, right from choosing a wife to sending our children to school to managing the home, it is negotiable. So the basic element is negotiation.

Panel Member 1: So, let us look at Flo and Joel. Flo uhmm Joel is not part or I don't find him discussing that Joel is part of the negotiation for him to sleep with Doris.

Candidate: Yes.

Panel Member 1: How come that? That is why I asked about the basic element; let us all come together. So I was expecting to see Joel to be part of that discussion, that negotiation for him to sleep with errhh Doris who is errhh close. Errhh, that is one example. Then also errhh Adizua, you remember that character? Yes, the stubborn daughter is not allowed to negotiate, to talk. You were explaining that women have been put down but in nego-feminism, they come out and challenge but I don't find you discussing that in the phase of Adizua the stubborn daughter who is not allowed to take; decisions were errhh taken on behalf of her. So all of them in relation to this element of errhh negotiation, I am bringing them all up so that you explain. And the final one concerning that is errhh Flo, errhh egocentrism and nego-feminism − how related are they because I find that Flo just went on to do things to satisfy herself because this is the way I want it and you are talking

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about the fact that nego-feminism is negotiation so that we all live together but I find some kind of egocentrism in Flo's behaviour. How does it relate with errhh nego-feminism?

Candidate: Thank you. That is why I said the educated, so called educated women are the ones; most of the conflicts in the novels stem from the educated women characters. They are the ones with most problems because they were having problems with negotiating reality; they will not accept what is there. The fact that I cannot give my husband a second wife (sorry), the fact that I cannot give my husband a child doesn't mean he should go in for a second wife. I will not accept it but let us look at a fool; let me put it that she is not educated, she is an illiterate village girl, I don't care, I am a barren woman, let my husband bring in a second wife. So we put these two women, we put them side by side and you are like which one, with all my education, egocentrism centers on the self. It must be about I, whereas nego-feminism says no let us negotiate and let peace prevail. And you mentioned Joel during the party is sleeping with Doris. I don't (pause) I bet to differ on that point because I think initially Joel was not part of that plan. I think maybe he fell for it along the way because he was more of encouraging Flo like let us take our time; we will have children, they are gifts from God. If we take our time, definitely in God's own time, we are going to have our own children but Flo being educated will not accept the concept of a second wife. No, it was foreign and I must not have everything to do with that.

Panel Member 1: Okay, uhmm, the second thing that I would like you to explain to me, which of the texts a French or English version, errhh I mean the Essential Encounters (pause) because you in your reference, I find the two essential and errhh I don't want to trust that that is in French - the Essential Encounters. Which one did you uhmm did you use in your work? Did you use the French or English?

Candidate: I used the English.

Panel Member 1: You used the English?

Candidate: Yes

Panel Member 1: But you also referenced the French and there is nothing in the work to show that you were using the English.

Candidate: Oh okay, I used the French.

Panel Member 1: Now, the (pause)

Chairman: Yeah, go ahead.

Panel Member 1: Oh okay, the issue I would like you to look at is at page 147 of your work.

Chairman: Do you have a copy?

Candidate: Yes please.

Panel Member 1: Oh okay, to 140, so that is 140. You were talking about the women; in the end, they were united in carrying the message across through their female characters, that is the writers, the modern African woman is certain on, set on child being a course to her destiny. In the end, both Flo and Esi remain hopeful characters. So my question is they are charting a new course for themselves. Uhmm, are they compromising their own kind? Because all that they did in the novels I find that Flo, for example, was hurting sisters as she tried to get what she wanted. So if they are charting a new course, is it to the (pause) or is it against their own? That is your conclusion that (pause) but by the end, I don't find them doing that as far as negotiation is concerned. Flo did all that she did because she wanted something for herself and that you said is egocentrism, yes, and coming from the background of western education; these are errhh and she is part of errhh the characters at the end of it and said they are charting a new course. Errmm that message, are they doing it against their own (pause) because feminism in general does not subscribe to that kind of issue where we are talking of sisterhood then we are hurting (pause) the other so that we can achieve our aim.

Candidate: I think the duality achieved in Flo is a bit battering because initially Joel was not for the motion of I want to date your friend. No, I don't think he was

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in for an idea of no let me bring Doris to the table, no. But then when he did buy into it, we are left asking ourselves, "Why was Flo hurting?" After all you were the one who did the pushing so if you can, errhh my man has accepted the woman into his arms, what is your problem? So this is where you come back to see that Flo is errhh was so alienated from her traditional African culture so much so that she could not even see in Doris this potential of being a second wife; that question did not even come up. And in Esi too, you see her married to Oko and she gave all the reasons for not wanting to and then you ditch him only to go in for somebody else's husband. So I am left at the end of the story to ask, "Is Ama Atta Aidoo a feminist? If the female characters that she portrays are left unfulfilled and are hopeful of a better tomorrow, then what is she saying? Or it is the education. What did education really do to our women? Is it good, is it bad?

Panel Member 1: That is why I asked you that question because you concluded that way.

Candidate: Yes.

Panel Member 1: That is a new, there is hope for them because they are charting a new course.

Candidate: Yeah, because of what Esi said. She said maybe one day I might find somebody who will understand my kind of love. But then the question that goes around and comes back is "What is your kind of love; a man for yourself? (pause) Perhaps.

Panel Member 1: Thank you.

Chairman: Alright. Errmm, (pause) can I ask errmm Panel Member 2.

Panel Member 2: Yeah, errmm let me read the WhatsApp message that I got recently. Uhmm, we will ask you whether you can identify what is going on, but this is somebody reporting on a school debate. "Mr. Chairman, girl child education leads to the destruction of marriage (laugh from background). This is because the divorce rate among educated women is higher than even uneducated women as a

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result of lack of commitment on the part of the educated women. When girls are educated, they call themselves feminists (laugh from background) ; therefore kick against the most sacrosanct institution created by God. Should girls be educated only to kick against the institution created by God? Mr. Chairman, ladies and gentlemen, permit me to quote a few comments by feminist concerning marriage. In 1969, University of Cape errhh Chicago (laugh from background) Sociology professor Millen Dickson declared that and errhh it's quoted, 'The institution of marriage is the chief vehicle for the perpetration of the oppression of women'. In the same year, the feminist Pamela Karen and Barbara Marble declared that and I quote, 'marriage and the family must be eliminated'. In 1970, Shemar Coleman declared that, 'marriage is a form of slavery', and 'freedom for women cannot be one without the abolition of marriage'. In 1971, Helen Solita and Nancy Layman released a manifesto that declares that male societies have sold out the idea of marriage. Now, we know it is the institution that has failed us and we must work to destroy it." Uhmm, do you recognize that as truly feminist and if this is feminist, why have you people back-tracked into nego-feminism?

Candidate: Let me say the answer to that lies in, true, back-tracking. The answer to that is in African feminism. That is why I said initially that the answer to that is African feminism, the kind of feminism that is collaborative, that is this all togetherness; let us all come together. Marriage is not seen as the man being the head, being the authority, being the overall boss. No, marriage is the two of us being partners; let's come together; let's build a family; that is the African concept of it, unless you are talking about the western kind of feminism where, like I said, men are seen as the devils at it where. I even mentioned that nego-feminism sees the men as agents of social change. They invite them to the table; come and let's work this thing together, and the women are not seen as being in a lesser position, no. Western feminism, if you like, there is a term that it is a radical, anti-men. African one is not so; I didn't find it that, at least not in the literature I read.

Panel Member 2: Well, okay. But let me shelve the question for now. You said you did qualitative content analysis. Did you actually do that?

Candidate: Yes.

Panel Member 2: What is that, qualitative content analysis? Did you actually do qualitative content study?

Candidate: As in looking at the text?

Panel Member 2: Because that is what you said you did, qualitative content study, errhh?

Candidate: As a textual study?

Panel Member 2: Yes, exactly. Are they different things? You have to be careful about that. Now, your study, what is it? Uhmm, is it an analysis of fiction or an analysis of reality? Do you make distinction between reality and fiction in your study? Did you approach it as fiction or you approached it as reality?

Candidate: I think that was one of my challenges because I remember my supervisor once told me this is a fiction, we are dealing with fiction and this is not reality. Yes, I did approach it as fiction because I situated the discussion and everything in the selected texts; the data for the study was in the selected texts. They were all fictionalized lives of women, not actual women in society, yeah.

Panel Member 2: Well, so, but if it is fiction then the literariness of the portrayal of the situations, of the characters, of events in the literary nature, I mean, in all that you are saying, I see a lot of philosophy in it. I see a lot of psychology, I see a lot of sociology in it but I don't see anything of literary in it. That is why I am quite puzzled whether this is a work on fiction or a work on reality.

Candidate: I think the emphasis was much more on the women characters in the society, the characters as individuals, and how they are negotiating the realities within which they find themselves.

Panel Member 2: Within the fictional society?

Candidate: Within the fictional society

Panel Member 2: Within a literary text.

Candidate: Yes.

Panel Member 2: So the handling of the analysis must also portray the literary nature, you know, in the fictionality of the characters, you know. But you talk as though you were talking about real characters out there in the world as a sociologist will talk about them or as a philosopher will talk about them but as (pause), or you don't see the difference? Okay, I will end here.

Chairman: Okay, thank you. Uhmm, can I now invite Panel Member 3.

Panel Member 3: Mr. Chairman, I am afraid I have no questions for the candidate.

Panel Member 4: Okay. I have (pause), uhmm, I get the sense that the work is a comparative study, is that true?

Candidate: Yes, that is true.

Panel Member 4: But I failed to see the comparative aspect of it.

Candidate: The comparative aspect?

Panel Member 4: Yes

Candidate: As in the Anglophone versus the francophone?

Panel Member 4: Uhmm, at least, can you give us just one finding that speaks to the issue of comparison?

Candidate: For instance, in the issue of where I will compare the Anglophones and the Francophones, Flo is a character in the uhmm francophone text and Esi Sakyi is a character in the uhmm Anglophone text, that is Ama Atta Aidoo's <u>Changes</u>. Now in these, with these two women, Flo lived in a predominantly Islamic society whereas Esi lived in a predominantly Christian society. So what you see laid out here is that we will expect a character like Flo to be

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understanding; after all Islam welcomes the issue of polygamy. So what is the problem with my husband bringing in a second woman because I can't give birth? With Esi, it is understandable. Christianity goes with monogamy, one man equals to one wife, but then you see Esi also coming against I will not accept. Esi rather is placed at the opposite extreme. Esi comes to say I don't mind; my husband is married to another woman; I don't mind let me have him. And Flo rather says oh even though I am in a Muslim society, I will not accept my husband having a second wife. That is one aspect of the comparativeness.

Panel Member 4: Okay. Uhmm, shall we go to one of your slides? Uhmm, the one on uhmm (pause) I think (pause). Can we start (pause) ahaa, here. You talked about a purposive sampling.

Candidate: I talked about?

Panel Member 4: Purposive sampling, I saw (pause)

Candidate: Yes, yes.

Panel Member 4: What is that?

Candidate: That one was for the selection. I had a lot of Anglophone and Francophone texts; so what was it that informed my selection of a particular Anglophone novel and my selection of a particular francophone novel? So the purpose being that I wanted to see how the women paly out their stories. As in in negotiating reality, how did they play it out? So that purpose informed my decision to select specific texts for the justification for selections.

Panel Member 4: And uhmm, I will be leaving today's interaction with the understanding that nego-feminism is all collaboration. Am I right?

Candidate: Yes

Panel Member 4: I mean apart from the idea of negotiation, are there no other tenets of nego-feminism? Is it all negotiation as you want us to believe? Is that what it means?

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Candidate: It also talks about (pause). Thank you. It also talks about, uhmm, complementarity. It talks about (pause)… See, the important thing here is the man is not the enemy. In negotiating realities, the African woman does not have any problem with the man. So you find out that all this hype about feminism, is it misplaced? Is it a borrowed concept? Are we making so much noise about something we have heard somewhere? The noise they are making, is the reality on the grounds? Because you see your mothers and grandmothers accepting co-wives and modern as it were, educated women say no, no, it must be just me and this possessiveness. It looks like errhh negotiation, complementarity, the tenets of matriarchy, group centeredness; let's come together; let's all of us come to the table; this is workable, let's talk about it.

Panel Member 4: Now, my last question. I mean can we get to the slides on factors (pause) I think you have something that says factors that errhh influence (pause)

Candidate: Yes, character development

Panel Member 4: Ah, what is the place of this in your work? I mean having regard to the research questions, I mean why is this slide necessary?

Candidate: The second research question was like, "Did the characters evolve over time?" And if they did evolve, "Are there certain factors that negotiated their evolvement?" Or they are just flat characters; we need them as we find them. And I was saying some of them change with time based on what they were faced with, but then others also changed. And if they did change, these were some of the factors that caused the change and those that remained the same, these are some of the factors that made them remain where they are.

Chairman: Anyway, uhmm, I will now ask uhmm two faculty members outside the panel if any. Yes, so Dr. Troare.

Chairman: Errhh, Prof. errhh, I hope it's just a comment.

F M: It's just a question.

Chairman: Oh, okay.

F M: Thank you Grace. I (pause) wonder (pause) the relationship; what is the relationship between art as in literature, what you have done, and history? Because you do mention errmm that the errmm our grandmothers were not compromising, they were strong solid women and I wonder what historical text you are using to back this up. Errhh, I don't disagree with you, errhh but what (pause), did you go into history? And please, make sure you don't quote me Yaa Asantewaa. We are tired of Yaa Asantewa (background laughter)

Chairman: Yes, yeah Grace.

Candidate: I was (pause); uhmm, it comes back to the question Dr. Arko asked earlier

(Interruption by FM)

F M: Oh okay, I wasn't here, forgive me. (background laughter)

Candidate: Because it was like there was always a problem of; Grace, this is a work in art not sociology, not history. So I had to keep coming back to narrow yourself to the text before (pause). But then I was like insofar as are women in society, there is going to be bled lives; I stand to be corrected.

F M: Yeah but you do make historical statements

Candidate: Yes, based on the fictionalized lines, based on the fiction, the work before me. Like Efuru, for instance.

F M: But I was going to direct you to a particular text. In contemporary history, the Sagranti war, there was a woman in Cape Coast called Mrs. Baldridge. She was a black woman but apparently married to a certain Baldridge and she was able to organize a thousand women as auxiliary troops to errhh (pause) they were doing a supply chain of the war, thousand women. And what is interesting about Mrs. Baldridge is that she paid this work force out of her own "tommaa"; that's what

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APPENDIX B: THESIS DEFENCE PRESENTATION 3

Chairman: Well, thank you very much. Let us errhh invite Dr. Arko to interact with the victim.

Panel Member 1: Okay, thank you very much Mr. Chairman. Benjamin, I would congratulate you errhh I think you have come very far and this is the final point and I think you have done well. Errhh, but I still want you to clarify certain issues for me. You said that errmm the genre theory was uhmm developed for ESP, English for Specific Purposes, is that not it? But then has been applied to other domains of discourse and you wished to apply it to media discourse. Now when the genre theory which was developed particularly for academic discourse is applied to other domains, what happens to it? (pause) What kind of changes occur? How different do they become when they apply to other domains?

Candidate: Okay, so with that situation, it will help to throw more light on the possibility of the theory to extend the boundaries of academic discourse and also help us to appreciate the structure and some general language use within other professional settings like errmm sports news presentation.

Chairman: Maybe you can leave academic discourse alone to talk about its application outside the academic discourse; that is what he is asking you.

Candidate: Okay so outside the academic discourse errmm the theory will help us appreciate

(INTERRUPTION BY CHAIRMAN)

Chairman: Well definitely, in what way?

Candidate: It helps us appreciate how errmm other domains of discourse too structure their texts in terms of some specialized language used and then their rhetorical structure

Chairman: Yeah, but at what cost to the theory itself? That is the point. It was designed originally for academic discourse; now you are moving it out of that

context to sports. Does the theory survive intact or does it undergo a change? That is what we would like to know.

Candidate: I think from what I read too in the literature, it was confirmed that they survive. It shows its flexibility nature for it to be applied to other domains of discourse. So as it worked for academic discourse, when you extend it beyond academia too, it works perfectly to errmm help us appreciate how language is used in those domains.

Panel Member 1: But actually, in doing your own work, you find that there is enough grounds for you to go beyond what is normally done by Swales and Bhatia. What is it that you did in your work that differs from theirs?

Candidate: Okay, from the analysis that I (pause) from the literature review, I observed that with Swales and Bhatia they will look at the move structure and with this they will account for the sequence of moves, the rhetorical structure and some unique language used in each move you identify. So what I added that is different from theirs was to add an aspect of corpus linguistics where I used the errhh AntConc software to account for some key words and their collocates in the data. So that is what is different from what is normally done in the literature.

Panel Member 1: Why do you find that necessary?

Candidate: Okay what I wanted to do was to find out (pause) was to find some words that can be tagged as prototypical of sports news presentation. So when you are here, if you hear words like judge, maybe accuse, errmm, lawyer, then it gives you an idea about the kind of genre that you are talking about. So within what I did, I also wanted to come out with some key words that if you come across it will give you an idea about what kind of genre, the type of genre you are analyzing. That was what I wished to do

Panel Member 1: And that is not something that uhmm Swales and Bhatia conclude. So it means that you are going errmm beyond the limit of their theory and you thought there was enough motivation for you to do that because you are

handling a media discourse which is not normally what they do. And so you needed to make uhmm some adjustments to the study in order to account for yours.

Candidate: They also look at discourse within other professional settings. So if you look at Bhatia, most of his work, it is outside academia so then that confirms that that theory is applicable to other discourses outside academia

Panel Member 1: Right, okay, can you can you explain for us how the moves which you identified errmm, how do you identified the moves, the procedures that you used and how you classified them? So identification and classification and also how you validate the moves.

Candidate: Alright

Chairman: Have you got all of them?

Candidate: Yeah.

Chairman: Okay

Candidate: So the first one is classification, uhmm, no, identification of the moves. Errhh, I used the semantic functional approach and with this, we look at the pragmatic function of a specific expression. We don't look at the move as maybe as a paragraph or as a sentence or as a word but rather we use errhh the pragmatic function of that structure determined the name of that move and with the classification, I used (long pause) with the classification, I resulted to a scholar in the literature, Huttner. He has classified or given out ways that we can solve errhh ways that we can use to give errhh means to an identified move and from his perspective, if a move has 90% to 100%, it is tagged as obligatory; if it has 50-89%, it is also tagged as a core move; then from 30-49%, it is also tagged as an ambiguous move and in this regard, you have to consult other scholars within the field to help you to determine whether it should be an optional move or as a core move and if you have a move from 1-29%, that was regarded as an optional move. So I used this model to help me give classifications to issues that I identified.

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Panel Member 1: Now validation

Candidate: Validation, errmm, for me to text for the validity of the work or for the analysis, I did an inter-rater test where I involved four people, two who were post-graduate students to help me to analyze. So I gave them some of the text to also analyze and look at the level of uhmm sameness.

(INTERRUPTION)

Panel Member 1: With respect to classifications too?

Candidate: No

Panel Member 1: So how were they able to identify them?

Candidate: So they were exposed to what I wanted to do – the notion of genre – and I was lucky that both of them were aware of were introduced to the concept before I involved them in the work. So they also analyzed the moves and I looked at the sameness where we could side to determine the inter-rater text that I did.

Chairman: Okay, can we ask errhh Dr. Bakah to interrogate him.

Panel Member 2: Thank you very much. Uhmm, Ben congratulations.

Candidate: Thank you.

Panel Member 2: Yes errmm I think I am in love with your work (pause) but I have few issues that I would like you to clarify. Uhmm, I will start with the form of the work. I have read the work and I realized that you have uhmm, I don't know how to put it but there are a number of challenges regarding the form that you didn't pay attention to. You have, for instance, cited works in the text that are not in the reference. We are looking at errhh over 20 references and you also included references in the reference place, about 15, which are not in the main text. Do you want to react to that?

Candidate: I will look at that later.

Panel Member 2: Okay, alright. In addition, there are inconsistencies in the use of certain words or I will say expressions. Keyword, is it one word or two words? Newspaper, newscaster, uhmm postgraduate, are they one word or two words?

Candidate: Two words

Panel Member 2: But you use them at times as one word and at times too as two words.

Candidate: In the work?

Panel Member 2: Yes, so you need to look at that. Uhmm, (pause) and also, there are issues with spacing in between words and uhmm omissions here and there. So please, when you get the report, make sure to take note of that. Uhmm, in your literature review, uhmm you have not been able to point out certain weakness in the theory and also the empirical studies you have errmm cited; may I know why?

Chairman: Did you hear the question?

Candidate: Yes

Chairman: Do you understand it?

Candidate: Yes, I understand it.

Chairman: Because I am not sure that I understand it

Candidate: The weakness in the theory

Panel Member 2: Yes

(LAUGHTER)

Panel Member 2: It's like you have accepted whatever you saw in the literature as the truth without questioning it

Candidate: Doc, I think I will have to look at that

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Chairman: Oh, no, no but have you or have you not? Is there any point that which you critique what you are reporting on or the fact that it's printed means is that it has to be good. An answer to that should be forthcoming now; it can't wait, because we have to continue.

Candidate: Uhmm, critiquing them (pause)

Chairman: You had so much respect for the literature.

(LAUGHTER)

Candidate: Well, I will like to look at that later

Panel Member 2: Okay. You claimed you have conducted some interviews

Candidate: Yes

Panel Member 2: But you have not given us enough information on yeah detailed information on how you went about the interview; whether it was recorded, it was transcribed, the steps involved in the interview, nothing, so that is one thing you want to react to.

Candidate: Yes, what I did purposely for that was to look for other information that I needed for the analysis

Panel Member 2: So did you use any interview guide, any?

Candidate: It was unstructured.

Chairman: Just unstructured?

Candidate: Yes.

Panel Member 2: But did you specify in the work? I didn't find it.

Candidate: Yes, I specified it in the work.

Panel Member 2: Alright.

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Chairman: But, sure, even an unstructured interview can be transcribed. Do you have any transcript to prove that you did this?

Candidate: What I did was to ….

(INTERRUPTION)

Chairman: Did you have a transcript to prove that you did it?

SILENT

Panel Member 1: What was the purpose? What use did you make of the interview?

Candidate: Yes, it wasn't integral, a much integral part of the work. Sometimes you go to the station, you have about three sports presentations or this sports program. So then, what will be your justification for selecting one against the other? So you ask, maybe which is the first program that was introduced? And with these information, I needed them from those heads of sports. So maybe sports highlights was the first program that was introduced in the station. So maybe that will be for my justification for selecting that text. So actually, that was what the interview was meant for. It wasn't an integral part of the work that I did, so it was for probing and maybe for other questions that I needed to inquire. So especially errhh, maybe names of the presenters, that I wanted to confirm. So that was actually what I did with the unstructured interview.

Panel Member 2: Then those things should be included in the work.

Candidate: Okay

Panel Member 2: Yeah. Now, coming to the transcription of the data, yes, uhmm you provided virtually no information on how you went about the transcription of the data you collected. And I think you have to write about that. Uhmm, now, looking at the data, one gets the impression that you deliberately omitted certain characteristics of spontaneous discourse like repetition, hesitation and all that. Are they found in the data?

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Candidate: Some of the data have that in them like uhmm and other pauses. But I didn't identify them as some of the things that I used.

Panel Member 2: But are you saying that errhh, you didn't find any? Can you show me one, I mean, from the main work?

Candidate: Okay

Panel Member 1: But let me add to that; a follow-up to that. Uhmm, did you need that element of disfluency in your analysis or did you not?

Candidate: No, I didn't; actually, that wasn't my focus.

Panel Member 1: okay, so you did some cleaning of uhmm those elements of disfluency in the transcription because you didn't need them in your analysis.

Candidate: I actually didn't look at that in the analysis

Chairman: Because you didn't need them?

Candidate: Yeah, I didn't need them so I didn't look at that.

Chairman: Well, are you (pause) but you show us some of them

Panel Member 1: Yeah, if you have any

Chairman: The thing is that such things do have modal meanings when you talk about modal

Candidate: Yeah, so we have one here

Panel Member 2: On which page

Candidate: Uhmm 157

Panel Member 2: Okay. Yes go ahead

Candidate: "We will bring you all the highlights on the premier league, the Italian Serie A, uhmm (pause) the uhmm over there, the Spanish La Liga where Micheal

Essien scored his first goal." So the uhmm, text 11, last but three lines: "We will bring you all the highlights on the premier league, the Italian Serie A, uhmm (pause); so I accounted for the uhmm over there. Yes, but actually these are not all the things that I used

Panel Member 1: Well, I think we can move on. But actually, what I was trying to drive at is that if you had done some cleaning, you should indicate it in the methodology that you are not presenting the natural data of the discourse you analyzed.

Candidate: Okay

Panel Member 2: That is very important. Now, you (pause) I also realized that uhmm you used uhmm ten keywords. What informed the choice of those words? Because I believe you had the eleventh most recurrent and then et cetera, why limit yourself to just ten?

Candidate: Okay, I made that choice based on the keyness value of those words. So if you used the antconc software to cater for the keywords, it will give you some keyness value and I picked the first ten keywords with the highest keyness value to cater for their collocates. That influenced it.

Panel Member 2: Does it mean the eleventh item of keyword did not have that keyness value?

Candidate: Yes. So if you look at the analysis, the far right side, you have the keyness value. So we have the first keyword which is sports and it had the keyness value of 1361.557. So if you compare to the last one, that is ten, it had 209.291 keyness value. So I used those statistical figures to determine and select the first ten.

Panel Member 2: Yeah, what I want to understand is well, yeah, what informed the choice of the first ten because what you are saying, errhh is there anything in the literature which says that when you get to 209, for instance, you should cut it there?

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Candidate: Yeah, for the purpose of space, uhmm I could have talked about all the keywords that I identified though I wanted to leave myself to these

(INTERRUPTION)

Panel Member 2: You used your own discretion too. Alright. Okay, uhmm, how many minutes more do I have?

(LAUGHTER)

Panel Member 2: Then let me ask two more questions and then I will round it up. Ben, yes, uhmm, you collected the data from two newscasters, sorry three.

Candidate: Yes

Panel Member 2: Yes, and you tried to establish some pattern in the discourse, good. Uhmm, and when you came to uhmm the sequence of the moves you said you got 19 and there were a lot of irregularities in the pattern. Don't you think that if you had included more newscasters, you would have established some regularities in the pattern of the moves in some of the sequences?

Candidate: Well, uhmm, this work was limited to these three TV station and even within these stations, I didn't recognize any single pattern. They don't have a stable structure which they follow for giving these sporting presentations.

Panel Member 2: Yes, I agree but if you are looking for a pattern, if you limit it to the presentation of three people without considering probably those who replace them when they were not available, without including their presentation, uhmm, I think you are limiting the findings or you will not be able to get the pattern you want, right. But if you include more presenters, I believe that will give you a wider room too.

Candidate: Well, yeah. But I don't see how including more presenters will yield a more stable pattern because with only three, he got 19 patterns. With ten, he will probably get 900.

(LAUGHTER)

Panel Member 2: Well, prof. I think it is possible because assuming he includes let's say 7 more, out of the 7, 5 can have a particular pattern that they can work with.

Chairman: Can, but may not

Panel Member 2: Of course. So I am just trying to show that uhmm there is a possibility that if he had included more errhh presenters, probably the issue of irregularities in the sequencing can be catered for. Errhh the last thing has to do with certain uhmm categorical statements that I think you were not able to support but let me just mention this one. On page 9, sorry page 55; are you there?

Candidate: Yeah

Panel Member 2: Oh okay. I think you claimed that the uhmm genre theory was used only twice to analyze sport news. Am I right?

Candidate: Not that but what I wanted to establish was that or what I established was that works within the sports discourse domain that have applied the theory is limited.

Panel Member 2: But you have used the word too here

Candidate: Yeah, that was based on my review that I did

Panel Member 2: So you need to do some hedging in the work because I have seen a number of them. Thank you very much.

Chairman: Ok, Richmond

Panel Member 3: Uhmm, thank you prof. chair. And uhmm, thank you for the presentation, Benjamin. Uhmm, first of all let me commend you errhh for trying to incorporate corpus analysis in your study. I think errhh that is a commendable effort. I think I will commend you on that. But I have a few complaints. Maybe just look at them. If you feel you want to respond to any of them, you can do that.

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Errhh, the first has to do with you keep taking about the genre theory as though there is one monolytic approach to genre. But errhh (pause) and I saw that on one of your slides you gave us the three main approaches. Okay. Uhmm, the problem is that you didn't quite try to distinguish them. You settled on ESP but you didn't talk about the new rhetoric approach and the Australian. Do you want to errhh enlighten us on the distinctions?

Candidate: Yeah

Panel Member 3: Alright

Candidate: Okay, in the literature, it is confirmed by Hyon (1996) that these three schools they are complementary rather than contradictory. So to a very large extent they try to do the same thing but the main difference between these schools is with regards to the section or the target group that they wish to or they analyze text in that discourse. So within the ESP, they have their main concern with uhmm language used within that particular setting and mostly, within other professional domains or other professional settings within which sports news or maybe media discourse can qualify to be that aspect. Then the SFL will also cater for second language education within the secondary and primary uhmm setting. But with them, their language analysis is within the framework of systemic functional grammar. So then, if you want to go by their approach, it means you will be analyzing the language used over there from that perspective, which the ESP doesn't do. So if you look at my work, I went by the normal descriptive grammar where I just catered for some language use but not necessarily the SFL approach. And if you look at my research questions too, first the second highlight, it says the ESP approach places some emphasis on some unique features with the content of the text, sequence of presentation and then rhetorical elements. So if you look at this aim, it confirms the errhh or it makes it appropriate for me to use it for my analysis. Because if you look at what I did, I looked at the sequence of moves, then I looked at the rhetorical structure and some language use that was typical of that domain. So actually, that was the main reason why I used the ESP.

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Panel Member 3: Why have you gone to the next (pause) because I just want to draw your attention to errhh (pause). It's okay that you used the genre approach, specifically the ESP but uhmm, I think I have mentioned this before, somewhere uhmm that as far as this kind of analysis is concerned, there are other analytical frameworks. In fact, if you read Halliday & Hasan's work on the Generic Structure Potential, okay, where they talk about the contextual configuration and they demonstrate that this framework is more general, okay, and not pinned down to specific context or text, I would have thought that this would be a better model. But if you didn't want to use that, I am sure that you should have mentioned it somehow because there is a more powerful framework as far as I am concerned. You didn't mention it at all so probably, you should mention it. If you are not going to use it, errmm demonstrate that you are familiar with it, okay. Now, with the errhh (pause) I commended you about using corpus linguistics but uhmm there are certain things that I will like to find out from you. Did you process your text? You transcribed your data, right?

Candidate: Yes

Panel Member 3: Did you also process it as a corpus?

Candidate: Errhh, I formed it in a plain text

Panel Member 3: And then you did what? You treated it with the antconc.

Candidate: Yes

Panel Member 3: So how did you generate the keywords?

Candidate: I compared it with the reference corpus.

Panel Member 3: Which reference corpus?

Candidate: I had errhh Brown/LOB corpus; the Brown/LOB corpus, that is what I used.

Panel Member 3: Okay. So what was your corpus size? In terms of, I mean, treating it with the antconc, what was your corpus size? I saw at some point in your analysis, the textual space you were talking about errhh the move and the number of words – 8, 300; how did you generate them?

Candidate: Alright. Okay, so as I said earlier on uhmm I made that analysis

(INTERRUPTION)

Panel Member 3: But first of all can you tell us the size of your corpus? Once you put it into antconc, you should be able to tell us the size of the corpus

Candidate: Size, it was 13,120 words

Panel Member 3: 13,120. Okay, very well. Errhh, it is a small corpus. Well, you generated the keywords and then you also went further to generate the collates. Did you have to set a collocation span? You know that when you talk about collocates, in corpus linguistics, it is not (pause) it is slightly different from the general understanding of collocation.

Candidate: Yes

Panel Member 3: So did you have to set a collocation span?

Candidate: yes

Panel Member 3: Okay, tell us.

Candidate: Uhmm, I used uhmm 5 from the left and 5 from the right; that is what I used.

Panel Member 3: Alright, wonderful. And which collocational measure did you use?

Candidate: I used errmm

(INTERRUPTION) (LAUGHTER)

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Panel Member 3: I have changed errmm I have changed the collocational trend, the keyness which demonstrates collocational trend. But which tool, errmm, which collocational trend measure did you use? Because like in there, there is neutral information; did you check that?

Candidate: Errhh, I restricted the analysis to the keyness value

Panel Member 3: Yeah, I know. That keyness value, there are different rules for generating it. But if you didn't do that, if you didn't observe that, perhaps, probably you used the default in antconc.

Candidate: To be more specific, errmm, I was helped by somebody to uhmm in some way help me operate mine

(LAUGHTER)

Chairman: I think uhmm, do you have another question or you will continue with your technical terms.

(LAUGHTER)

Panel Member 3: Yeah, the final comments. Uhmm, in the literature, where you (pause) I know you mentioned Bhatia but you put it somewhere under the analytical framework where you were specifically errhh drawing our attention to studies that have applied this framework in other contexts. That should be the starting point actually. But you only come to mention Bhatia in the analytical framework. If you read Bhatia (1993), several professional genres have been analyzed beyond academic discourse and I didn't see that in your main studies so that should have come there. But well done.

Candidate: Thank you

(CLAPPING)

Panel Member 4: Well, what is a move?

Candidate: When you talk about a move, if I should paraphrase form Swales, it is a functional rhetorical unit of a text with a distinct meaning. But according to Swales (1990), those units help in the realization of the overall communicative purpose of that text. So if I cite or use my work as an example, if you look at the introduction section, you have the first one to be an opening. Even though it has a unique communicative purpose, all the (pause) that move plus the other five will all help in the realization of the communicative purpose of that text that I analyzed. So that is what I can explain a move to be.

Panel Member 4: Is there any rankscale in relation to describing the move? For example, I noticed that you used the word step as well. What is a step in relation to a move? Is there anything thing below the step?

Candidate: So if I should pick it from this way, we have a text; the moves in the text help to realize the overall communicative purpose of that text but with each move, sometimes too, we get that move from errmm some units or some sub-units. We find some sub-units within the move that also help us to realize uhmm; the steps will also help us to realize the moves.

Panel Member 4: So what is errhh a minimum indivisible (pause)

Candidate: With the literature, it will be the step.

Panel Member 4: The step

Candidate: Yes

Panel Member 4: So below the step, nothing happens?

Candidate: Uhmm, from my reading, when I was doing the review, I didn't come across any unit below the errhh step

Panel Member 4: Well, you will look at that more closely. Tell me, what is the difference between genre and register? You know, some of the things you have talked about uhmm look, to me, like uhmm elements of register.

Candidate: Register will specifically look at some language use uhmm within a specific domain or within a text but without necessarily looking at the rhetorical structure and then sequencing within that domain. But with genre, genre will uhmm cater for both the language used within the text plus the rhetorical structure, and in details, will cater for some sequencing of moves and then uhmm some textual space that each of the moves identified will maybe uhmm reported to be.

Panel Member 4: So whose understanding of register are you reporting on?

Candidate: Uhmm, in the literature, I (pause) have (pause) Halliday and Hasan have talked about register studies. In the literature, I can mention Halliday and Hasan

Panel Member 4: is your understanding of literature based on Halliday and Hasan? And which Halliday and Hasan is that? There are several Halliday and Hasans.

Candidate: Okay, Prof. with this, I read something about register studies. Since it wasn't my focus, I just read something on register.

Panel Member 4: Yeah, but which one is bigger? Is it register or genre? What is it? I mean I think there are writings which try to resolve these things. Are you familiar with them, Biber and Conrad, for example? Because I can't see how you will do genre without reading Biber and Conrad.

(LONG PAUSE)

Chairman: Alright. We will bring proceedings (pause) well I think we will bring part of the proceedings to an end here and allow him to catch his breathask you and your supporters to excuse us.