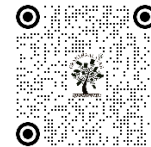


Original Article

THE HONEYMOON PERIOD IS OVER”: A DISCOURSE ANALYTICAL STUDY OF THE GFA PRESIDENT’S MEETING WITH THE GHANA BLACK STARS

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ABSTRACT

When times get tough, what a leader says and how they say it can make all the difference. Therefore, beyond mere words, the effectiveness of a leader’s address provides solid grounds for inspiration. Drawing on content analysis and Critical Discourse Analysis, the study examines the speech delivered by the President of the Ghana Football Association (GFA) during a meeting with the Ghana Black Stars team. The study identifies six communicative functions: constructing a shared Ghanaian identity, invoking the spirit of patriotism, expressing disappointment, referencing history, issuing a call to serve, and instilling confidence and hope. These discourse functions enable the GFA president to communicate his intention to a struggling team. The findings have implications for understanding discourse and leadership rhetoric. The paper concludes with a recommendation for future research.

Keywords: Communicative Functions, Leadership Communication, Ghana Black Stars, Nationalism

INTRODUCTION

The Ghana Football Association (GFA) is the official governing body responsible for the administration, regulation, and development of football in Ghana. Established under Ghanaian law, the Association represents Ghana within global and continental football structures, including the Fédération Internationale de Football Association (FIFA) and the Confederation of African Football (CAF) Darby (2016). Beyond its administrative mandate, the GFA holds a significant role in Ghanaian society because of its association with the senior national football team, the Black Stars. As Ghana’s national football team, the Black Stars represents more than a sporting entity. It embodies the nation’s identity, collective ambitions, and the emotions and expectations of the Ghanaian public. In recent years, however, the Black Stars have been the subject of intense scrutiny owing to a series of disappointing performances in major international competitions. These outcomes have generated widespread criticism from football supporters, media commentators, and sports analysts, many of whom have attributed the team’s struggles not only to technical deficiencies on the field but also to perceived shortcomings in football governance, player performance, and management. Public discourse surrounding the team frequently constructs administrative instability, leadership transitions, and strategic inconsistencies as factors undermining sustained success Soebbing and Washington (2011). Consequently, discourses about the Black Stars have increasingly become discussions about accountability, leadership, individual player performance, and institutional responsibility.

The growing dissatisfaction with the team’s performance has heightened expectations on both players and football administrators. In a football culture where national team success is closely linked to national pride, poor results often trigger intense public debate and demands for change. The pressure exerted by supporters and the media creates a discursive environment in which

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Received: 11 April 2026; Accepted: 14 May 2026; Published 17 June 2026

DOI: [10.29121/ShodhVichar.v2.i1.2026.75](https://doi.org/10.29121/ShodhVichar.v2.i1.2026.75)

Page Number: 183-191

Journal Title: ShodhVichar: Journal of Media and Mass Communication

Journal Abbreviation: ShodhVichar J. Media & Mass Commun.

Online ISSN: 3107-6408, Print ISSN: 3108-270X

Publisher: Granthaalayah Publications and Printers, India

Conflict of Interests: The authors declare that they have no competing interests.

Funding: This research received no specific grant from any funding agency in the public, commercial, or not-for-profit sectors.

Authors’ Contributions: Each author made an equal contribution to the conception and design of the study. All authors have reviewed and approved the final version of the manuscript for publication.

Transparency: The authors affirm that this manuscript presents an honest, accurate, and transparent account of the study. All essential aspects have been included, and any deviations from the original study plan have been clearly explained. The writing process strictly adhered to established ethical standards.

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football leaders are compelled to justify decisions, assign responsibilities, and articulate future directions for the team [Zimbalist \(2010\)](#). In football, leadership communication is a crucial mechanism through which authority is exercised and the country's aspirations and expectations are conveyed.

Existing scholarship on Ghanaian football has explored a range of themes, including the historical development of football in Ghana [\(2022\)](#), football and identity politics [Darby \(2016\)](#), structural challenges within the Ghana Premier League [Ayenor \(2020\)](#), fan engagement in the era of football globalization [Frimpong \(2014\)](#), football leadership and public value [Charway \(2021\)](#), women’s football and gendered nationalism [Adjepong \(2022\)](#), and African athletes’ give-back behaviors as expressions of cultural identity and popularity [Acheampong \(2024\)](#). While these studies have made important contributions to understanding Ghanaian football, little attention has been paid to the discursive construction of leadership, responsibility, and performance in interactions between football administrators and players. Particularly, the communicative practices through which football leaders respond to periods of underperformance remain underexplored.

Following this void, the present study examines a meeting between the President of the Ghana Football Association and the Black Stars. The meeting drew public attention due to the team’s abysmal performance in the 2024 AFCON qualifiers. In light of this meeting, the President declared that “the honeymoon period is over,” a statement that symbolically marked a shift from patience and tolerance to heightened accountability and performance expectations. From a discourse analytical perspective, this utterance is significant because it functions not merely as a literal statement but as a discursive resource through which authority, responsibility, and institutional expectations are constructed and negotiated. As a communicative event, the meeting provides important insights into how the GFA President employs language to negotiate authority, account for performance, and construct expectations of the Ghanaian people who hold the Black Stars in such high regard. The study adopts a critical discourse analytical perspective to investigate how linguistic choices, rhetorical strategies, and discursive practices are deployed in the President’s address to the team. By analyzing the discourse of the meeting, the study seeks to contribute to discussions on leadership communication, institutional power, and the role of discourse in the management of sporting organizations.

Mr. Kurt Edwin Simeon-Okraku, the current President of the Ghana Football Association, was first elected on 25 October 2019 and re-elected for a second term on 5 October 2023. Prior to assuming the presidency, he held several influential positions in Ghanaian football administration, including Communication and Marketing Director of Accra Hearts of Oak and Administrative Manager of the League Clubs Association of Ghana (GHALCA). He is also the owner of Dreams FC. His tenure as GFA President is expected to continue until 2027. As the principal administrative figure in Ghanaian football, he carries considerable institutional authority in his public communication and provides an important lens through which leadership discourse in Ghanaian football can be examined.

FOOTBALL DISCOURSE ANALYSIS

Discourse Analysis (DA) offers a framework for understanding how language both reflects and constructs social realities. As defined by [Potter and Wetherell \(1987\)](#), DA encompasses all forms of spoken or written interaction and explores how texts generate meaning within particular social contexts. In the realm of sports, discourse serves as a platform where ideologies of nationalism, masculinity, and competition are enacted [Mclean and Wainwright \(2009\)](#). Football commentary, media narratives, and fan interactions transcend mere description; they actively shape identities and mediate power dynamics [Numerato and Giulianotti \(2018\)](#).

Although the study is concerned about communicative functions, it fashions Critical Discourse Analysis [Fairclough \(2003\)](#), [Wodak \(2005\)](#) to examine football leadership discourse as a social practice that both reflects and influences national sentiment. By examining how the GFA President’s speech uses linguistic strategies such as inclusive pronouns, metaphors, and rhetorical questioning, the research uncovers how authority and solidarity are discursively negotiated.

METHODOLOGY RESEARCH DESIGN

This study adopts a qualitative research design grounded in Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) to examine the communicative strategies employed in the speech delivered by the President of the Ghana Football Association (GFA) during a meeting with the Ghana Black Stars team. The use of CDA in this study is justified by its capacity to reveal how language functions as a social practice through which meanings are constructed, power relations are expressed, and expectations are communicated within the sporting and socio-political context under investigation.

In addition to CDA, the study draws on content analysis to identify recurring communicative functions in the speech. These approaches are combined to allow for both interpretive depth and structured categorization of discourse features.

DATA COLLECTION AND TREATMENT

The data for the study was obtained from the internet, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?> on October 13, 2024. A 17-minute speech delivered by the GFA President, Mr. Kurt Edwin Simeon-Okraku, on October 9, 2024, at Kumasi, Ghana, constitutes the data for the study. The speech was transcribed at the initial stage, and later another researcher was engaged to confirm its accuracy. Some unnecessary repetitions were removed, and grammatical errors were corrected.

A day before the crucial match against Sudan in the 2025 African Cup of Nations (AFCON) qualifiers, the President of the GFA convened an important meeting with the players. He urged the team to give their utmost best in what is perceived as a must-win game for the Black Stars to secure their place in the AFCON tournament.

ANALYTICAL FRAMEWORK

The analysis is guided primarily by Fairclough's three-dimensional model of CDA, which examines discourse at the levels of: textual, discursive practice, and social practice. Complementary insights from pragmatic theory are also used to interpret how meaning is negotiated in interaction, particularly in relation to speech acts, implicature, and audience positioning.

Data Analysis Procedure

As indicated earlier, the speech delivered by the GFA President to the Ghana Black Stars team constitutes the dataset for the study. A content analysis method was conducted in three stages: identification, interpretation, and explanation. First, organizing and preparing the data for analysis. Second, a close reading of the data was conducted to discover the discourse function of the speech. Third, the identified communicative functions were interpreted in light of the circumstances surrounding the speech and available background information [Nartey \(2024\)](#), and were discussed within the framework of narrative and pragmatics at the discourse level.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

The discourse analytical study revealed six communicative functions of the GFA President's speech: (1) constructing a shared identity as Ghanaians, (2) invoking the spirit of patriotism, (3) expressing disappointment, (4) making reference to history, (5) calling to serve, and (6) instilling confidence and hope. The discursive functions establish the GFA President as an effective leader who aims for positive outcomes to enhance his reputation and elevate Ghana's football on the global stage. The communicative functions are discussed as follows:

CONSTRUCTING A SHARED IDENTITY AS GHANAIS

The term 'identity', according to [Gleason \(1983\)](#), falls into two opposing conceptions: "In one sense, identity can be called 'intrapsychic' in that it comes from within, is fixed and stable, and is what people speak of when they talk about 'who we are'. A second conception holds that identity can be 'acquired' in that it is a conscious or internalized adoption of socially imposed or socially constructed roles". The preceding excerpts highlight the idea that a group of individuals can share an identity shaped by social constructs. As noted by [Woodward \(1997\)](#), identity fundamentally informs us about who we are and how we connect with those around us. In the speaker's address, it becomes evident that there is a concerted effort to legitimize identity status. Specifically, in clauses (1-4), the use of inclusive pronouns "we" and "us" predominates the discourse. These linguistic choices serve to unite the audience and the speaker, framing them as a cohesive group bound by shared beliefs and aspirations. The following excerpts serve as evidence of the strategic construction of collective identity, emphasizing the strength of communal ties between the speaker and the audience.

- 1) It is imperative for me to join you, to remind all of us about who we are and the need for all of us to remember that we are Ghanaians.
- 2) And we are here because Ghana has called upon us to be here.
- 3) If we remember that we are Ghanaians, you have your family members, your friends, and your loved ones, Ghana will always be a name to be ringing in your ears all the time.
- 4) For this reason, if you are given the opportunity to represent Ghana, you should be eager and desirous of returning home to represent your country.

Pronouns such as "we," "I," "you," "them," "they," and "us" are not merely grammatical markers but important resources for meaning making in discourse. [Fairclough \(2003\)](#) notes that pronouns in English carry relational value, as they actively construct and negotiate social relationships between speakers and audiences. Through these choices, speakers can position individuals and groups in ways that include or exclude, often reflecting underlying ideological orientations. Similarly, [Wodak \(2005\)](#) emphasizes that pronoun use plays a crucial role in constructing group identity by establishing boundaries between insiders and outsiders and aligning speakers with particular coalitions or social actors. In this sense, the speaker's deployment of these pronouns functions to construct a sense of collective identity and shared belonging. Another means of constructing collective identity in the speaker's

address is the use of anthroponomic generic terms [Wodak and Meyer \(2009\)](#), such as “Ghanaians” and “Ghana”. I argue that the discourse goal influencing the lexicalization of those terms was to inform the addressees about the realization of their ‘self’ and to create the impression that they needed to play their collective role to merit their identity and the statuses they occupied. This discourse strategy is possibly prejudiced by the defeats conceded by the team, thereby making Ghanaians and some supporters tout the GFA President as a major cause of the Black Stars’ poor performance.

Previous studies have highlighted that leadership plays a crucial role in driving organizational success [Barrick et al. \(1991\)](#), [Judge et al. \(2004\)](#), [Weiner and Mahoney \(1981\)](#). Great leaders inspire and motivate their teams, setting the stage for achieving remarkable results; hence, this may arguably inform the speaker to accept such a responsibility in a monolithic endeavor to make the statement “It is imperative for me to join you, to remind all of us about who we are and the need for us to remember that we are Ghanaians”. The principal clause in extract (4) contextually implied that the speaker’s meeting with the addressees was important following certain circumstances, perhaps a revulsion, that the speaker could not bear. As to-infinitive clauses can be used to express purpose or opinion, the clause “to remind all of us about who we are” served as a wake-up call for self-identification and the onus of responsibility on both the players and the speaker.

While multiple factors may be implicated in the meeting between the GFA President and the team, the speaker’s address suggests that a key concern is the players’ perceived failure to internalize a shared collective identity. This lack of cohesion is constructed as contributing to their reluctance to accept national call-ups for international duty. From a performance- and results-oriented leadership standpoint, such conduct is considered undesirable. Consequently, the President issues an advisory, stating: “For this reason, if you are given the opportunity to represent Ghana, you should be eager and desirous of returning home to represent your country” (Extract 4). Also, the place of the phoric adverb “here” in extract (2) pragmatically imposed synthetic personalization, indicating an action including both actors taking place at a time where such a meeting could be reckoned as crucial.

INVOKING THE SPIRIT OF PATRIOTISM

Patriotism is a passionate and unwavering commitment to one’s country, fueled by deep love, devotion, and loyalty [Smith \(2019\)](#). Similarly, patriotism is also seen as an emotional attachment to one’s country, intertwined with linguistic expressions that shape and are shaped by collective identities [Bodnar \(1996\)](#), [Yusupova \(2024\)](#). It can be expressed through symbols, sports, traditions, and other means in honor of a nation. After watching the games lost by the Ghana Black Stars, it became apparent that the team’s performances influenced the discourse between the two parties. This prompted the speaker’s conscience and that of Ghanaians to realize that the team lacked sufficient dedication. The emphasis on the word “love” in the speech serves as a noun, representing an intense feeling of deep affection. Generally, love is accompanied by commitment. Consequently, the speaker felt the team lacked this quality, resulting in consecutive match losses and sparking arguments among Ghanaians. The extracts below are evidence:

- 1) Under no circumstance must you lose your love for your country.
- 2) Millions of people need our help.
- 3) What they need from us is good performance, passion, a victory that heals souls, a victory that heals wounds, and a victory that heals families.
- 4) This is what the people outside need from us.
- 5) Why do we not appreciate that we occupy a special space and are given the chance to impact society?

As the team’s performance has been the focal point of the discourse, the speaker’s posture and linguistic resources conveyed the impression that the supporters’ place was relevant and that they were referred to in various linguistic forms throughout the speech. Firstly, the mention of the nominal phrase “millions of people” in clause (10) referred not only to Ghanaians but also to sports lovers who pledged their support for the Black Stars team. As it has always been in football, supporters share common ground, forge relationships, and form alliances of solidarity to cheer their team to victory. In the event that the team does not perform, supporters become upset and criticize players and the technical team. For others, being unable to hold their emotions cause chaos. As ardent fans can cause violence and hooliganism [Poulton \(2008\)](#), [Young \(2002\)](#), it is unsurprising to see ‘die-hard’ supporters target the homes of players they believe are responsible for the team’s defeats and vent their anger on their families. Amid the high expectations of supporters, the speaker was informed and had no choice but to proclaim, “Millions of people need our help” (extract 15). This discourse practice is essential, as players’ commitment and victory are consequential in bringing joy to supporters.

Secondly, the speaker frequently used the third-person plural agent “they” in the speech as a referentiality to navigate the discourse. The choice of personal pronouns reflects the speaker’s strategic approach to communication [Gocheo \(2012\)](#), hence, the pronoun “they” was used anaphorically in the mood structure in the excerpt (16), set off by parallel structures to make orientation to the important space supporters occupied.

Parallel structures have an ideological effect in discourse. [Heffner and Slevc \(2015\)](#) assert that parallel structures consist of syntactic recursion with musical effects. They create rhythm and balance in writing and speech, making ideas clearer and more convincing (Bezbaruah, 2025; [Nolan and Jeon \(2014\)](#)). In this way, it makes the message easier for the addressees to grasp. Therefore,

the speaker's rhetorical choices contribute to a framing in which improved performance is presented as a necessary condition for restoring collective emotional stability and public satisfaction.

It is incontestable that the Black Stars' poor performance and consistent defeats caused dissension among sports pundits, wounds among families, and broken hearts among supporters. Given this perspective, it becomes necessary for a concerned leader to foreground the realities faced by supporters so that players are better positioned to fulfill their roles and ultimately deliver victory. This concern is made evident in the excerpt: "What they need from us is good performance, passion, a victory that heals souls, a victory that heals wounds, a victory that heals families" (extract 16).

By framing both himself and the team as bearing a central responsibility for performance, the speaker constructs a shared obligation toward national expectations. Furthermore, by deploying a rhetorical question in extract (19), he strategically underscores their significance within the broader social contract, highlighting their role in contributing meaningfully to the emotional and collective wellbeing of Ghanaians and supporters.

EXPRESSING DISAPPOINTMENT

It is common knowledge that the Black Stars participated in a series of matches during the 2024 edition of the AFCON, in which the team recorded several disappointing results. Throughout the speaker's address, interrogative constructions recur and are prominent. Although questions conventionally serve to elicit information or seek clarification, in this context they extend beyond their surface-level function to play significant rhetorical and pragmatic roles within the discourse.

In this regard, the deployment of questions can be interpreted as a deliberate discursive strategy used by the speaker to foreground dissatisfaction and articulate concern regarding the team's performance. Rather than seeking literal responses, these interrogatives serve to dramatize the situation, highlight perceived shortcomings, and project emotional engagement with the team's underperformance. The excerpts below provide empirical evidence of how these questioning strategies are linguistically realized in the speech.

- 1) Few weeks ago, we played against Niger.
- 2) How did you guys?
- 3) Having drawn against Niger, how did you feel?
- 4) Were we happy?
- 5) Were you happy?
- 6) Niger! Come on guys!
- 7) You drew 1-1 against Niger!
- 8) That was the score line.
- 9) No joke! 1 - 1 against Niger!
- 10) We saw the Black Stars team play without energy, passion, or desire to play.

Interestingly, most of the speaker's questions are framed in simple structures, such as (VSC), (S)(VS), and concise phrases, ending with exclamations. A retrospective examination of [Sarfo and Krampa \(2013\)](#) study on Language at War suggests that complex phenomena can be expressed in complex language; however, in contrast, the current study advances a different view, arguing that complex issues can be communicated in simple language for easy comprehension.

As Ghana is recognized as a prominent football nation, the historic successes of former players raise questions about the current team's performance. The speaker maintained that it was inconceivable for the Black Stars to settle for a draw against Niger. The speaker's remarks painted a picture of Niger as not a suitable opponent for the Black Stars, and therefore, drawing the match and conceding defeat should be a source of concern for any dedicated supporter. The speaker's dissatisfaction can be inferred from excerpts (34-37). The reiteration of his frustration in excerpts (38) and (39) conveys a strong evaluative tone and evokes emotion. The phrase in extract (49), "No joke! 1 - 1 against Niger!" illustrates the speaker's use of exclamatory language as inherently emotional and volatile—reflecting a moment that the speaker believed was not appropriate for celebration.

MAKING REFERENCE TO HISTORY

History serves as a vivacious reference in discourse to illuminate the roots of current issues and shape understanding of societal dynamics. Yet, its illustrious place in the speech reflects patterns learned from past mistakes and the appreciation of diverse perspectives. Ultimately, history permits conscious minds to make informed decisions for a better future. Given its importance, it is unsurprising that the speaker strategically interlaces history into the discourse to underscore his communication goal. Intertwining the discourse with history, the speaker brings the conscience of the team to bear, suggesting that history-making goes with resilient determination and the urge to fight.

- 1) You lost a game in Baba Yara after 34 years; it is not acceptable.

- 2) It is no joke.
- 3) In 1957, Ghana gained independence, led by men with chests and hearts.
- 4) Not men who will run away from the battlefield.
- 5) That was the only reason why we gained independence.
- 6) When Kudus, you were not born, this team existed.
- 7) Alex, when you were not born, this team called Black Stars existed.

The term “battlefield”, as used by the speaker in excerpt (70), is conventionally associated with military or war contexts. However, in this discourse it is metaphorically extended to signify a domain of intense struggle, competition, and high confrontation. Within this framing, the tournament is constructed as a “battlefield” that demands “men” who embody courage, resilience, and combat readiness. In many African sociocultural contexts, the term “men” is ideologically loaded, often symbolizing masculinity, physical strength, bravery, and endurance. These metaphorical propagations therefore demonstrate that the players must position themselves accordingly to deliver the desired results for Ghanaians. Also, by invoking ‘Baba Yara’, a historically undefeated ground, the speaker taps into collective memory as a rhetorical appeal. This intertextual reference functions to evoke nostalgia and moral accountability, reminding players of a lost legacy and urging them to restore national pride. Referring to this account, the speaker conveyed a discourse of disenchantment, as Ghanaians were unhappy about the long-standing record that had been broken.

In extracts (72) and (73), the speaker makes reference to key players such as Kudus and Alex, whom he presents as capable of transforming the team’s fortunes. However, the framing appears overly optimistic in retrospect, as the anticipated impact of these individuals did not materialize, suggesting a mismatch between expectation and outcome.

ISSUING A CALL TO SERVE

The phrase “to serve” refers to offering support or assistance to others. This encompasses acting in the interest of individuals or groups by performing tasks. In essence, “to serve” embodies a sense of duty. Following the team’s performance in meeting expectations, the speaker noted that it was a remarkable opportunity for individual players to shine, especially given the presence of equally talented players seeking a chance to join the team. It can be deduced from the speech that to be part of the team is to serve the interests of the nation, as instantiated below:

- 1) It is important that we are here to serve.
- 2) It is important for us to remember that we belong to a privileged group.
- 3) Please the time for jokes, the time for not fully connected is gone.
- 4) In our parlance we say the honeymoon period is gone.
- 5) For me and the 30 million people, the message is clear.
- 6) It is either you are with this family or you are out of this family.
- 7) Believe, I swear on my life.
- 8) Don’t forget somebody played before you.
- 9) It is time for you to play, and somebody will also play after you.

The speaker’s utterances in excerpts (79) and (80) index negativity at both structural and pragmatic levels. Structurally, they are marked by assertive, confrontational choices, while pragmatically, they signal a widening solidarity gap between the speaker and the players. This gap reflects the speaker’s attempt to directly challenge what he perceives as the players’ unwillingness and lack of commitment, factors he presents as detrimental to the team’s progress.

In excerpt (82), the lexical item “family” is used metaphorically to denote a collective bound by shared purpose rather than biological kinship. In this framing, the speaker seeks to motivate alignment around a common goal while implying that individuals unwilling to commit to this collective course may need to reconsider their participation. In this sense, the expression carries both an inclusive ideological appeal and an implicit exclusionary pressure.

The use of “please” further complicates the pragmatic force of the utterance. While conventionally associated with politeness and mitigation, it functions ambivalently in this context. First, it softens the directive on the surface while still maintaining a firm, authoritative stance; second, it also subtly constructs a relational distance between the speaker and the players, as he positions himself as direct and uncompromising in contrast to the implied resistance of his audience.

Similarly, in excerpt (81), the statement “For me and the 30 million people, the message is clear” amplifies the social stakes of the discourse by invoking a national collective. However, it also imposes a cognitive demand on the players, requiring them to interpret the utterance not only within the immediate interactional context but also in relation to a broader imagined national constituency. This expands the pragmatic load of the message, positioning the speaker as a mediator of public expectation and accountability. In a subsequent remark, as reflected in extracts (85) and (86), the speaker recalled that the Black Stars had previously

been served by distinguished players. Speaking in his capacity as leader, he further admonished the team that being selected to play should be understood as an opportunity to serve.

INSTILLING CONFIDENCE AND HOPE

Throughout the speech, the speaker's manner of communication and the functional use of linguistic resources bequeathed the impression that the meeting was not a friendly one, as circumstances could influence his demeanor and linguistic choices. In the latter part of the address, it is apparent that the speaker uses positive framing to instill trust and confidence in the team, so that the team will not be left with a negative face, since it may have a psychological effect on individual players. This mien demonstrates a good leader who is strategic and mindful of rhetoric. The extracts are shreds of evidence:

- 1) We have shown we can do it.
- 2) If you ask me, I will tell the entire nation that we have the men to do it.
- 3) I have absolute confidence in this squared.
- 4) I have absolute confidence in the technical team and the staff.
- 5) You transforming my confidence into performance is what we need.
- 6) The indomitable fighting spirit of the Blackstars must be resurrected.
- 7) I wish you well.
- 8) God bless our homeland, Ghana, and make us strong.

The discourse enacted and the team's posture may have prompted the speaker to reflect soberly and to believe that the situation would change. The speaker could be informed that the team had a lot of talent, along with a mixture of expertise involving the technical men. He alluded to himself by using the first person pronoun "I" to offer a discourse of hope embedded in clauses like "If you ask me, I will tell the entire nation that we have the men to do it", "I have absolute confidence in this squad", "I have absolute confidence in the technical team and the staff". The singular honor of a leader to perform such a duty corroborates the studies of Agbanyo (2024) and Woods (2006) that the pronoun "I" is used to show commitment to taking responsibility for certain actions.

Lastly, the mention of 'God' by the speaker in extract (104) may be timely. God is supremely seen as a "provider", "problem solver", and more. As situations may be beyond the speaker and leader, he thought that the solutions to man's problems must come from God. As helpless as he might be, the speaker resorted to spiritual warfare and left the team with goodwill messages in extracts (103) and (104).

CONCLUSION

This study draws on insights from discourse and critical discourse analysis to explore the speech delivered by the GFA President during a meeting with the Ghana Black Stars team. It identifies six discourse functions: (1) constructing a shared identity as Ghanaians, (2) invoking the spirit of patriotism, (3) expressing disappointment, (4) making reference to history, (5) issuing a call to serve, and (6) instilling confidence and hope. The speaker's linguistic choices portray him as a leader dedicated to achieving collective goals rather than pursuing personal gain. These identified discourse functions were conveyed through a series of linguistic resources, including anecdotes, topoi, carefully selected vocabulary, and positive self-presentation. Such elements enabled the speaker to communicate his intentions effectively to the audience. The study contributes to the body of discourse studies and offers a more nuanced approach to understanding communication. Future research in this area could investigate similar dynamics in other national football contexts to uncover deeper insights into universal linguistic patterns.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I am thankful to anonymous reviewers for their constructive comments, which have shaped this paper.

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