

<https://dx.doi.org/10.4314/gjl.v14i2.1>

**“Hello my ears, are you still there?” Analysing the discursive strategies in Yankah’s  
“Occasional Kwatriot’s” columns: A CDA approach**

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**Abstract**

This study examines the discursive strategies employed by Professor Kwesi Yankah in his "Occasional Kwatriot Kwesi Yankah Writes" commentaries, using Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) grounded in van Dijk’s socio-cognitive approach. Drawing on a qualitative methodology, the study analyses 20 commentaries published in 2024, with a special focus on Yankah’s integration of his unique writing style to critique societal norms and ideologies. The data reveal high lexical densities (75.80%–83.08%), emphasising Yankah’s content-rich discourse. Through the socio-cognitive framework, the research explores how Yankah’s columns negotiate language, cognition, and societal structures to construct ideological positions. Findings indicate his adept use of satire and anecdotes that blend local linguistic expressions (orature) with formal rhetoric to engage diverse audiences. Notable strategies include vivid imagery, intertextual references to Ghanaian music and folklore, metaphor, hyperbole and irony that transition seamlessly from anecdotal narratives to socio-political critiques. The study highlights Yankah’s ability to provoke critical reflection, challenge entrenched ideologies, and foster dialogue on social justice and political accountability. By decoding these discursive strategies, this research contributes to understanding how language mediates cultural identities to offer an understanding of the role of media discourse in shaping public opinion and advocating for social reform.

Keywords: Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA), Discursive Strategies, Media Discourse, Yankah

**1. Introduction**

The art of political and social commentary in Ghanaian media has long been a tool to examine and critique the dynamics of governance, societal norms, and cultural values. It

provides a platform for public discourse, challenges institutional practices, and holds leaders accountable for their actions (Ofori & Dogbatse, 2023). Among such commentaries, Professor Kwesi Yankah’s unorthodox orality, characterised by rhetorical sophistication and critical insight, has recently caught the attention of researchers who argue that Yankah’s fusion of indigenous communicative elements and oral literature in journalism narratives is not a new development. For instance, Glover-Meni (2017) argues that this approach has a long tradition, dating somewhere in the nineteenth century (1886) as seen in the writing of the pseudonymous author of *Marita or the Folly of Love* (Newell, 2002, pp. i–146). There is, therefore, no gainsaying that the writing of Yankah is a revival of what was previously practiced but has lost its lustre among the new crop of writers.

Yankah’s incisive opinion writings tackle pressing social, political, and cultural issues in Ghana. Simply put, he writes a commentary about every national issue that becomes topical in the media space, be it election, illegal mining, examination malpractice, political insults, to mention a few. Over the years, his columns, often penned under the moniker “*Occasional Kwatriot Kwesi Yankah Writes*,” and his book, *Woes of a Kwatriot*, have captivated and engaged readers in a reflective discourse, which demonstrates his expertise in political and social communication to construct compelling arguments. His commentaries can oscillate between humour, euphemism, and gravitas. This helps him to effectively address complex matters with accessibility and ease.

One would agree that Yankah, although of an older generation, can satisfy all his readers, both old and new. For instance, Yankah can connect with the new generation when he argues his viewpoint about the influences of electioneering outcome from a contemporary afrobeat hit song “*Makoma*” by King Paluta (2024), while servicing the old with a dose of Kojo Antwi’s (2002) “*Densu*” song when sharing his thoughts about the menace of illegal mining activities known as “*Galamsey*.”<sup>1</sup> (Ofosu, 2024). Yankah’s integration of oral literature in his commentaries is characterised by the creative use of discourse strategies that evoke critical thinking, which also challenge entrenched ideologies and subtly advocate for social reform. His mastery of intertextuality and narrative framing sets him apart as a commentator whose work resonates across diverse audiences. Beyond mere opinion expression, his columns serve as a mirror to societal norms, politics, and culture, often inviting readers to question their assumptions and consider alternative perspectives.

Numerous linguistic analyses have investigated political and social discourses in Ghana over time. The analyses spanned pragmatic (Gyasi, 2023), conversational (Addy & Ofori, 2020), rhetorical (Ofosu & Washew, 2024) and stylistic analysis (Mpotsiah et al., 2021), to mention a few. However, limited studies have examined discursive strategies of

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<sup>1</sup> *Galamsey*: “*Galamsey*” is a corrupted term derived from the phrase “gather them and sell.” It refers to the illegal practice of collecting and selling mineral resources, particularly gold. This activity, predominantly undertaken by young adults, results in the destruction of water bodies and creates significant water-related challenges for the community (Ofosu, 2024).

opinion writings, particularly from the ace Ghanaian linguist and politician, Professor Kwesi Yankah. It is on this research gap that this study is motivated. The analysis of the discursive strategies in “*Occasional Kwatriot Kwesi Yankah Writes*” through the lens of Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) can offer an avenue to explore the relationship between language, advocacy, and ideology. Closely, the study examines the discursive strategies to explicate the linguistic expressions, which carry implicit ideological structures in the opinionated writings.

CDA provides the tools to examine how Yankah constructs his arguments, frames his message, and positions his readers. Rooted in the works of scholars like Norman Fairclough, Ruth Wodak, and Teun van Dijk, CDA investigates how discourse structures perpetuate, challenge, or transform power asymmetries in society. Within this framework, Kwesi Yankah’s columns serve as fertile ground for analysing how linguistic and rhetorical devices critique authority, expose societal contradictions and provoke critical reflection. By decoding his discourse strategies, this study seeks to uncover how he wields language to foster dialogue and influence public opinion. The following questions, therefore, serve to guide the study.

1. What linguistic features and rhetorical strategies characterise Professor Kwesi Yankah’s columns in addressing socio-political issues in Ghana?
2. How do the discursive strategies employed in Yankah’s columns function to construct ideological meanings and critique power relations in Ghanaian society?

## 2. Literature review

### 2.1 The linguistic-oral tradition in Ghanaian public discourse

Ghanaian public discourse has become a hybrid oral-literature space where indigenous repertoires such as proverbs, storytelling, drumming and proverbial idioms are continuously reworked within prints, broadcasts and digital media (Asamoah-Poku, 2024). Rather than looking at orality as a disappearing residue of tradition, contemporary studies such as Hendricks (2019) and Briggs (2020) emphasise its adaptability and strategic use in modern communicative arenas. Abdulai, Ibrahim and Anas (2023) and Ibrahim, Alhassan and Diedong (2023) show that drums, town criers and communal performances remain central to information circulation and norm enforcement in rural areas in Ghana, even alongside radio and social media. These studies argue that such systems are not merely cultural artifacts but sites where authority, legitimacy and collective memory are negotiated. This compels linear narratives of modernisation and suggests that public discourse continues to be anchored in oral epistemologies.

Parallel research on proverbs, storytelling and indigenous language use highlights how these resources influence the cognition, stance and ideology of the people (Quarshie

& Poku, 2025). According to Fosus et al. (2023), Akan proverbs, especially, demonstrate resilience and continuity in everyday communication as vehicles for moral reasoning and social critique, including environmental and socioeconomic issues. Similarly, Wiafe-Akenten (2021), in her analysis of contemporary Akan news broadcasts, espouses that journalists weave proverbs into news bulletins to soften face-threatening acts, encode evaluative positions and invite audience alignment. Wiafe-Akenten adds that this strategy blurs the boundaries between objective reporting and culturally saturated commentary. Wiafe-Akenten’s (2021) findings corroborate with Osei-Tutu’s (2022) broader African work that foregrounds oral storytelling as a decolonial methodology which privileges rationality, community accountability and affects over strictly propositional argumentations.

The digital and mass-media environment has also entrenched these culturally loaded artifacts – they recontextualise them. Nweke et al. (2024) demonstrate that traditional Ghanaian storytelling formats are being re-embedded in radio talk shows and YouTube skits with narrators alternating between English and local languages to index authority and irony. Additionally, Ajani et al. (2023) argue that digital media can revitalise indigenous knowledge systems by providing new platforms for circulating oral genres and amplifying marginalised voices. Yet, this optimistic view is tempered by work documenting how post-colonial language hierarchies still privilege English in mainstream media, constraining the visibility and perceived legitimacy of indigenous linguistic resources (Adom et al., 2024; Dartey, 2025).

## **2.2 Yankah and the discourse community**

As man is a social being in an environment where communication is necessary and mandatory, language becomes a channel for transmitting ideas and information from one man to another (Kinzler, 2021). According to Dailey-O’Cain (2017), the use of language in the media and other communicative environments has established ideologies, and socio-political class distinctions have been essential engagements since time immemorial. Language used in this way is diplomatically referred to as being used critically. Eze and Amoniyani (2022) opine, “Language conceives the key to the heart of the people. If one loses it, one loses the people. If one keeps it safe, it unlocks the people’s hearts.” Yankah uses language as an organising apparatus to describe social life, as a means of constructing, deconstructing and reconstructing ideological standpoints, as well as a medium for structuring the knowledge base of the Ghanaian social group and constructing different versions of reality (Beetz et al., 2021).

In the Ghanaian media landscape, the significance of the style and strategies through which Yankah communicates his arguments with the use of language features cannot be relegated to the background. Yankah has the ability to introduce indigenous Akan words in his commentaries without harming the integrity of the English syntax, for

example, “*and you may have joined large droves of ‘Ogyakromains’ heading towards London with one-way ticket*” or “*should Ghanaians be asked to choose one auspicious day for ‘Dumsor’, it should be Father’s Day.*” The words ‘Ogyakromains’ (a humorous reference to Ghanaians) and ‘Dumsor’ (a term for crisis where electric power is not stable) are considered a coinage or even a calque that allows non-users of the Akan language to make sense of the expression in their respective cultural context. This reflects Yankah’s mission of experimenting and breaking the frontiers of creativity.

Yankah also culls words from the Ghanaian cultural scene, as in the following examples: “*agyengyensuo*” (dragonfly); “*adukro mu nsuo*” (raindrops that have settled at the buttress of a giant tree); “*Charlie wote*” (local coinage for bathroom slippers); ‘Tani’ (stereotypical name for someone from the northern parts of Ghana); ‘*Wiase aye den*’ (there is hardship in the world); ‘*booklong*’ (local coinage for well-educated people). However, Glover-Meni (2017) argues that Yankah has in mind specific readers, who are those who can speak the two languages. In other words, the author contends that the text is highly particularised. That is to say that it is meant for those who can listen, understand, and evaluate the multiplicity of languages being used, especially when he does not translate the foreign words that are lodged into the English language.

In discourse, analysis entails the description, interpretation, and explanation of textual conversation (Brown & Yule, 1983; Gee, 1999). According to the authors, textual conversation can be analysed at both the micro-level and the macro-level. They argue that micro-level analysis, on the one hand, concentrates on the linguistic level, identifying the textual markers that connect discourse and create texture like cohesion, coherence, and logical organisation of ideas. They add that the macro-level analysis, on the other hand, involves the semantic level, interpreting the various dynamics of meaning encoded by the various linguistic styles and features. Thus, macro-level analysis explores pragmatics, which entails explaining the implications of the various intended meanings in the dimensions of sociocultural contexts. In the course of describing macro-level analysis, discourse analysis as a network aims at understanding how language begets ideology, inequality, and advocates for change based on its findings in conversations (Eze & Amoniyah, 2022). Particularly, personal viewpoints (opinions), such as Yankah’s commentaries, according to Simpson (1993), have remained a veritable source of human activities where language is ideologically patterned and codified. As a dynamic social process and an interactive forum, it involves many linguistic negotiations that can be used for sociolinguistics research.

### **3. Theoretical thrust – Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA)**

This study adopts van Dijk’s (1998) socio-cognitive approach (SCA) to CDA, which posits that the relationship between discourse and society is mediated by cognitive processes. Van Dijk (1998) identifies three foundational components of the SCA: the social, cognitive, and

discourse components. The social component investigates the broader societal structures and group relations, including phenomena such as discrimination, racism, and sexism, as well as group dynamics like identity formation, norms, and access to resources. The cognitive component delves into social and personal cognition, which includes values, ideologies, and knowledge systems, thereby addressing the relationship between individual and collective worldviews. Lastly, the discourse component scrutinises linguistic features such as syntax, semantics, and lexical choices. The three key components of van Dijk’s (1998) approach, as well as how cognition mediates between speech and society, are illustrated in Figure 1.

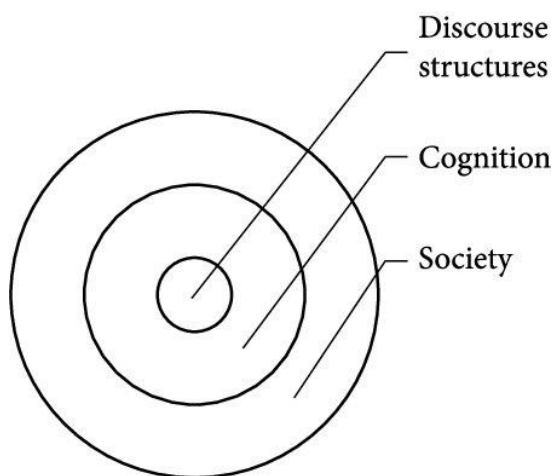


Figure 1: van Dijk’s three components of the socio-cognitive approach (1998, pp. 126-130)

Alt Text for Graphical Figure [28 words]

A concentric circle diagram with three labelled layers. The innermost circle is labelled “Discourse structures,” the middle circle is labelled “Cognition,” and the outermost circle is labelled “Society.”

Central to van Dijk’s SCA is the concept of mental models, which represent the cognitive frameworks individuals use to interpret, produce, and comprehend discourse (van Dijk, 1998). Mental models, grounded in episodic or autobiographical memory, provide subjective representations of personal experiences. These include emotional, cognitive and sensory dimensions. Van Dijk (1998, pp. 82-83) distinguishes between two types of mental models: situation models and context models. Situation models encapsulate an individual’s subjective understanding of specific situations, while context models evaluate the relevance of situational conditions within a communicative exchange. These models facilitate mutual understanding among interlocutors by drawing on shared knowledge expressed through language. In this way, language operates as a pivotal medium for constructing and interpreting subjective experiences.

The socio-cognitive approach further emphasises the role of cognition as a mediator between discourse and societal structures. It reveals how individuals’ cognitive processes, shaped by their social environments, influence their perception and production of

discourse. By uncovering the network of beliefs, attitudes, and biases that are activated during discourse interactions, the SCA provides a comprehensive framework for understanding how language reflects and perpetuates social ideological relations (van Dijk, 2005). This study examines how language, cognition, and cultural identities shape the communication and ideological positions of Yankah by applying the SCA to uncover the underlying ideological meanings embedded within Yankah's commentaries. It also aims to contribute to a deeper understanding of how language serves as both a reflection and a tool of societal transformation.

## 4. Methods

### 4.1 Data source

This study adopts a qualitative research approach to examine the discursive strategies employed by Professor Kwesi Yankah in his "*Occasional Kwatriot Kwasi Yankah Writes*" columns. The qualitative framework is particularly suited for the exploration of language use, ideological structures, and socio-political underpinnings embedded in textual discourse. The data comprises 20 commentaries authored by Yankah in 2024, which were published in Daily Graphic, an online media platform ([www.graphiconline.com](http://www.graphiconline.com)). These commentaries were purposefully selected to capture a representative sample of Yankah's discursive strategies, thematic diversity and rhetorical styles. The selection criterion was based on commentaries that address key socio-political and cultural issues that ensure the data reflects the core elements of his columns. The data was manually copied from the official website of the Daily Graphic and cleaned of all advertisements, pictures and extraneous materials that were not part of the content of the columns. The data was then stored as a plain text file which was further fed into Sketch Engine software for data processing which include word count and lexical density of the respective columns.

The study also employs van Dijk's socio-cognitive approach as the analytical framework. It focuses on three key dimensions: social component which investigates societal structures, group relations, and ideologies that influence and are reflected in Yankah's commentaries; cognitive component that analyses the mental models, values, and biases that underpin the production and interpretation of Yankah's commentaries and finally, the discourse component, which examines the lexical choices, syntactic patterns, and rhetorical strategies employed to frame socio-political arguments.

The data were given codes (KYC) for easy referencing and analysis. In addition to this coding, the particular column from which the various discursive strategies were identified was coded together with a number. Based on these, KYC 01 (which means Kwasi Yankah column one), for example, as shown below, refers to the extract from the first column where a strategy was identified.

1. *With rising election heat at home, what about a freezing cold experience elsewhere?* (KYC 01).

#### 4.2 Mode of analysis

Each column was carefully read and annotated to identify salient linguistic features, rhetorical strategies, and thematic elements. The lexical density was further calculated to identify the weight of information in each column. According to Afful and Mwinlaaru (2010), the higher the lexical density of a text, the more informative it is and vice versa. In measuring the lexical density of the columns, all the words in each column were counted using the Sketch Engine corpus tool (Kilgarriff et al., 2014). The function words were then also counted and subtracted from the total number of words to arrive at the number of lexical words. This was followed by the calculation of the proportion of the lexical words to the total number of words to arrive at the lexical density of the texts. As far as the data set was concerned, articles, conjunctions, prepositions, and possessive determiners were considered to be function words while nouns, pronouns, adjectives, verbs, and adverbs were considered lexical words.

The texts were further analysed through the lens of van Dijk’s SCA, focusing on the relationship between language, cognition, and societal structures. Finally, the findings from the textual analyses were synthesised to interpret how Yankah’s writings critique societal norms, construct ideological positions, and influence public opinion. The study adhered to ethical guidelines by ensuring proper attribution of Yankah’s commentaries and safeguarding the integrity of the textual data. Since the commentaries were publicly available, no personal or sensitive information was compromised during the research.

#### 5. Presentation of findings

The section presents the lexical density of the columns to ascertain the weight of information that is included in each commentary. The linguistic features, rhetorical strategies, and thematic elements of Yankah’s columns are also presented in this section. Table 1 summarises the measures of lexical density of the columns.

**Table 1: Measurement of lexical density**

CODE	LEXICAL WORDS	FUNCTIONAL WORDS	TOTAL NO. OF WORDS	LEXICAL DENSITY (%)
KYC 01	404	129	533	75.80
KYC 02	576	159	735	78.37
KYC 03	983	249	1232	79.79
KYC 04	231	61	292	79.11
KYC 05	612	146	758	80.74
KYC 06	436	103	539	80.89

<b>KYC 07</b>	653	133	786	83.08
<b>KYC 08</b>	640	167	807	79.31
<b>KYC 09</b>	561	144	705	79.57
<b>KYC 10</b>	872	267	1139	76.56
<b>KYC 11</b>	703	201	904	77.75
<b>KYC 12</b>	928	244	1172	79.18
<b>KYC 13</b>	718	170	888	80.85
<b>KYC 14</b>	738	204	942	78.34
<b>KYC 15</b>	911	220	1131	80.55
<b>KYC 16</b>	809	227	1036	78.09
<b>KYC 17</b>	644	153	797	80.80
<b>KYC 18</b>	921	239	1160	79.40
<b>KYC 19</b>	1176	322	1498	78.50
<b>KYC 20</b>	613	163	776	78.99

Source:

From Table 1, lexical densities range from 75.80% to 83.08%, indicating content-rich texts. Commentaries such as KYC 05, 06, 07, 13,15, and 17 exceed 80%. This highlights a strong informational focus with limited functional words. KYC 07 (83.08%) is the highest, emphasising dense argumentation. Columns like KYC 02, 03, 04, 08, 09, 12, and 18 (79-79.79%) remain highly content-focused. Meanwhile, KYC 01, 10, 11, 14, 16, 19, and 20 (75-78.99%) show moderately dense.

The overall range of lexical densities suggests that the commentaries are predominantly content-driven. Higher lexical densities in texts typically correlate with more information-heavy discourse (Afful & Mwinlaaru, 2010) as seen in the case of KYC 07. On the other hand, the slightly lower densities in texts like KYC 01 and KYC 10 suggest a greater balance between explanatory and descriptive components, likely catering to a broader audience comprehension. These lexical densities, while indicative of the weight of information, also shed light on the style and purpose of the texts. Columns with higher lexical densities may aim at expert audiences requiring detailed analysis, whereas those with lower densities balance informativeness with readability for a general audience.

### 5.1 Linguistic features and rhetorical strategies of the columns

Yankah employs varied linguistic structures to capture his audience and drive home his points. His sentences are made of short phrases and complex and multi-clause constructions. This helps him to weave humour and serious critique into a cohesive narrative, as seen in the extract 2.

2. *Times have changed; and so have political choices. Working towards December 7, Flagbearers and political parties have spent resources producing manifestos (sometimes plagiarized), and crisscrossed the country trying to persuade voters with 'Wiase aye den' slogans, petrol prices, Free SHS, Pot Holes, Digitalization, etc (KYC 05).*

In the expression above, Yankah uses a semi-colon (;) to connect one idea to the other and commas (,) to list several items in a single sentence. In another example, he juxtaposes the biting cold of Aberdeen with the heat of political tensions in Ghana to draw readers into a deeper socio-political commentary. Yankah’s alternation between short clauses and extended multi-clause sentences directly reflects Halliday’s (1994) systematic function view that grammatical variation enables speakers and writers to manage ideational, interpersonal and textual meanings. Similar patterns have been identified in political commentary and opinion writing (see Ghawaidi & Alsmari, 2025; Tian, 2025), where syntactic flexibility is used to balance accessibility with analytical depth. In extract 2, the sentence structuring becomes a strategic resource that allows humour, irony and critique to coexist within the same discursive space. This confirms Raabe’s (2018) findings that effective political commentators often rely on hybrid sentence forms to maintain reader engagement while advancing ideological positions.

3. *Aberdeen cold was higher and hit so hard you were compelled to frequently touch your ears to ensure they had not been nibbled by rodents. ‘Hello, my ears, are you still there?’ I asked myself in Aberdeen (KYC 01).*

This fluid manipulation of language aligns with Halliday’s (1994) concept of language as a resource for meaning-making, where varied sentence structures enhance the communicative impact. Yankah’s columns are also crafted to guide readers through a progression of ideas. He often begins with engaging anecdotes or observations that transition into broader critiques of socio-political issues. Even though CDA studies in Ghana and beyond have largely focused on speeches, editorials, or hard news genres, emphasising evaluative language, pronoun use, and argumentation structures (Logogye, 2018; Addy & Ofori, 2020; Mpotsiah et al., 2021), Yankah uses personal anecdotes that evolve into broader socio-political critiques. This narrative progression aligns with research on African orality and storytelling, which highlights how personal experience functions as a culturally legitimate pathway to social critique (Hendricks, 2019; Osei-Tutu, 2022).

4. *Once upon a time, I met this celebrity eyeball to eyeball. It’s been a while since then, but I am calling Kojo today to rally to the resurrection of a dying river that once inspired his poetic fancy. I first met Kojo Antwi in the early 1990s while I pivoted, rolling out of Radio Universe, the first independent educational radio in Ghana (KYC 03).*

In the above extract, Yankah starts with a nostalgic encounter with musician Kojo Antwi, later connecting this narrative to the environmental degradation of Ghana’s water bodies. Anecdotes, such as his childhood memories of fetching water in “*Densu*”, lend authenticity to his critiques and foster a personal connection with readers. This layered information structure enhances the accessibility and intellectual depth of his arguments. Similarly, Yankah advocates the subscription of insurance policies for families and

institutions by opening his argument with the public scare of missing male genitalia at Kasoa, a heavily dense city in Ghana.

5. *In the past three weeks, fear and panic have gripped parts of Ghana. A legend of vanishing male genitals has been circulating, with a number of arrests made by the police of suspects. ... In all cases, though, no missing genitals have been proven, and suspected robbers or magicians have been set free* (KYC 16).

Another feature that characterises Yankah’s writings is the blend of precise, formal language with colloquialism. This positions his column as a reflection of his Ghanaian heritage and linguistic expertise. For example, terms like “*Ogyakromians*” (KYC 01), *Aboa konkontimaa* (the tadpole), and “*Awengaa*” (KYC 15) (a term for predatory older men – paedophile) ground his writings in local cultural contexts. This strategic word choice supports Fairclough’s (1995) assertion that language is inherently tied to cultural and ideological frameworks, as Yankah’s use of language reflects his Ghanaian origin. While earlier studies have noted code-mixing and indigenous language use in Ghanaian media (Wiafe-Akenten, 2021; Nweke et al., 2024), Yankah’s columns demonstrate how he consistently deploys this hybridity to authenticate his voice, align with local audiences, and simultaneously critique power structures. This pattern reinforces van Dijk’s socio-cognitive claim that discourse draws on shared cultural knowledge and mental models to guide interpretation and evaluation (van Dijk, 1998, 2005).

## 5.2 Discursive strategies

Yankah employs a range of discursive strategies that enrich his commentaries and enhance their rhetorical power. The analysis demonstrates the utilisation of several strategies. The strategies and their frequencies have been presented in the table below.

**Table 2: Frequency distribution of discussive strategies**

STRATEGY	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE (%)
Irony	78	30.5
Metaphor	56	21.9
Hyperbole/exaggeration	52	20.3
Euphemism	11	4.3
Intertextuality	8	3.1
Counterfactual	5	1.9
Authority	4	1.6
Categorisation	2	0.8
Actor Description	22	8.6
Illustration	11	4.3
Victimisation	7	2.7

TOTAL	256	100
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Source:

From the analysis, Irony is used the most, with a frequency of 78 (30.5%). This dominant usage allows Yankah to emphasise contradictions, expose absurdities, and engage his audience with subtle wit. According to Wieslander (2019) the use of irony in communication suggests that it is a central tool in shaping his arguments and delivering impactful critiques. Following irony, Metaphor occurred 56 (21.9%) times. Scholars such as Thibodeau et al. (2019), Afreh and Ofosu (2024), Ofosu and Washew (2024), and Ofosu et al. (2025) have argued that metaphors enhance the aesthetic quality of discourses and facilitate deeper audience understanding by framing abstract concepts in familiar terms. Additionally, Hyperbole occurred 52 (20.3%) times. Similarly, Counterfactual occurred 8 times, Authority occurred 4 times, and Categorisation occurred the least.

### 5.2.1 Irony

Irony is a discursive strategy for maintaining relationships and influencing social interactions. Listeners are more impacted by sardonic tones, which might be situational or verbal. In the columns, Yankah exploits this in extracts 6 and 7.

6. *Besides intimidating crowds pulled by rival parties, the worst offenders are the so-called pollsters, who wake up hallucinating on lotto numbers, but compel an entire Ashanti region to sleep on empty stomachs, only because they saw on TV the face of Global Analytics?* (KYC 01)
7. *That also means in a sense, One Ghana has two majority leaders in Parliament (Afenyo Markin and Ato Forson), and no minority until the Supreme God has finally spoken. Coming Tuesday, the drama peaks, and it is unknown how many majority leaders will show up, and whether there will be enough room on the right-hand side of God to seat 275 lawmakers* (KYC 06)

Yankah uses sarcasm, a form of verbal irony, in extracts 6 and 7 to ridicule the views of Ghanaian lawmakers and false prophets. According to van Dijk (2005), irony can express disapproval or criticism without offending people directly. People who made personal sacrifices, made grandiose political promises and predictions, or showed various degrees of “hysteria and negativity” regarding the 2024 elections are all mocked by Yankah. He exposes the incorrect predictions made by false prophets about the results of the 2024 Ghanaian election. In extract 6, for instance, this mockery is emphasised by the comment: “*the worst offenders are the so-called pollsters, who wake up hallucinating on lotto numbers.*” Yankah also intends the exact opposite in extract 7 when he said, “*No minority until the Supreme God has finally spoken.*”

### 5.2.2 Metaphor

Yankah's use of metaphors and vivid imagery, such as describing polluted rivers as "*Milo Rivers*" in (KYC 08), evokes emotional responses and underscores the gravity of environmental degradation. Here, the writer projects the characteristics of the brownish nature of the cocoa product, Milo, as the source domain onto the Ayensu River, and by extension, all rivers in Ghana polluted by illegal mining activities, as the target domain. Also, Yankah likens the activities of *galamsey* in Ghana to that of terrorism when he described those involved in the menace as "*Galamsey terrorists*," just as the expression "*protesting 'rebels'*" paradoxically equates the protest of the catholic church to a rebellion (KYC 07). He satirises how destructive the actors in *galamsey* have caused the nation with nonchalance, which required the calmest social/religious group to rebel on the streets to register their displeasure.

Yankah's metaphorical treatment of water bodies corroborates Ofosu's (2024) ecocritical study that foregrounds water as victims of *galamsey* activities. By reimagining polluted rivers as a thick, brown beverage, Yankah renders environmental destruction visually immediate and emotionally unsettling, which echoes the ecocritical study's claim that literature and discourse must make ecological harm perceptible in order to provoke ethical reflection. In both texts, water is no longer neutral infrastructure but a symbol of violated life systems.

### 5.2.3 Hyperbole

This discussive strategy describes how certain facts or figures are purposefully exaggerated to have a stronger effect. Yankah employed exaggeration as a rhetorical device to intentionally emphasise things by using hyperbolic words.

8. *Tempers are high in Ogyakrom. Never seen such turmoil at the floor of Parliament: the bulging eyes of the Majority Leader fighting back an attempt by the Speaker to diminish him to Minority* (KYC 06)
9. *He sprang to his feet and spoke in fury; he spat fire and, almost dispensing civilities, indulged the Speaker in hot exchanges, battling him on a writ frustrated by the Speaker's office. The shouting dialogue compelled the Speaker to wind up* (KYC 06)

Yankah wishes to convey in extract 8 the magnitude of the Majority Leader's ire "on a writ frustrated by the Speaker's office" and his response in parliament. Yankah's assertion that "*The shouting dialogue compelled the Speaker to wind up*" again exaggerates the severity of the overall affair. The phrase "*never seen such turmoil*" in extract 8 immediately amplifies the situation, portraying it as unparalleled in parliamentary history. The use of "*bulging eyes of the Majority Leader*" further heightens the tension and provides a vivid visual image of the leader's agitation. Additionally, the suggestion that the Speaker

attempted to “*diminish him to Minority*” dramatises the power struggle that frames it as a direct and personal affront to the Majority Leader’s authority.

Extract 9 continues the narrative with an equally intense portrayal of the events. The phrase “*spoke in fury; he spat fire*” suggests an intensity that transcends ordinary anger, as though the speaker’s words were so heated that they became figurative flames. The idea that he “*almost dispensed with civilities*” underscores the departure from parliamentary decorum, suggesting a situation where the normal rules of engagement were nearly abandoned. The description of “*hot exchanges*” further intensifies the portrayal of the conflict, conveying a level of hostility that is palpable and disruptive.

### 5.2.4 Euphemism

Euphemism is the term used to describe the substitution of a moderate or pleasant term. To ease tensions, politicians use more gentle rhetoric (van Dijk, 1998). Euphemisms are hardly utilised by Yankah in his columns. An illustration of this is given in extracts 10 and 11.

10. ... where our conference bus strayed into a public protest by Spanish women in the nude! In other words, women demonstrating in their birthday clothes! (KYC 07)

11. It meant squeezing your little thing in between your thighs along with the pair of pillows beneath (KYC 03)

Yankah uses euphemism to conceal harsh facts in his columns. In extracts 10 and 11, he uses a friendlier and softer phrase to achieve a good framing effect by substituting the terms “*Spanish women in nude*” and “*in their birthday clothes*” for “nakedness.” He attempted to lessen the intolerable guilt attached to rot. Similarly, the direct and rude references to “penis” and “testicles” are replaced with the phrases “*little thing in between your thighs*” and “*with the pair of pillows beneath*,” respectively.

### 5.2.5 Intertextuality

Yankah also incorporates intertextual references to Ghanaian music, folklore, and cultural icons, such as Kojoko Antwi and Kwaku Ananse. This creates a sense of familiarity for his audience. Yankah alluded to related stories, ideas, or contexts to establish connections. For instance, in extract 12, he makes reference to the South African election while speaking about the motivation of Ghanaians to vote for a candidate in the 2024 general election. Similarly, he refers to a protest in Spain, which he likens to the peaceful protest by the Catholic Archdiocese of Accra against illegal mining.

12. I took a taxi from Joburg airport to the city centre when political campaigning was at its peak in South Africa. I started chatting with the taxi driver, a young Zulu of 35. ‘How is politics going here, and who is likely to win your presidential elections?’ The answer was easier than thought: ‘Jacob Zuma,’ the driver said, smiling. ‘Why Zuma?’ The young man tilted his head and then dropped a

- bombshell: 'Zuma dances very well on stage; he will win the elections.' I nodded like a Duakwa lizard. (KYC 05)*
13. *This also reminded me of a conference I attended in 2010 in Madrid with Prof Joshua Alabi (then heading IPS, now UPSA), where our conference bus strayed into a public protest by Spanish women in the nude! In other words, women demonstrating in their birthday clothes! The male police on duty maintained a safe distance, but they were all in dark goggles, quietly protecting the rotating eyeballs. (KYC 07)*

### 5.2.6 Counterfactual

A counterfactual remark explains how something or someone might be different in new situations (Brown, Mangelsdorf, & Neff, 2012). Politicians frequently use counterfactuals to support absurd or persuasive claims. Using universal emotions and a positive self-image, Yankah uses counterfactuals in the articles.

14. *Your party and Agonaman are solidly behind you, and your doctors say you will recover soon. (KYC 04)*

In practically every column, Yankah uses emotive framing to highlight his message and evoke strong feelings in the recipients. For example, he closes his statement with the lexical unit “soon,” and “*Your party and Agonaman are solidly behind you*” instead of a logical conclusion (KYC 04). By showing empathy for the recipients’ feelings, Yankah seeks to evoke their emotions to earn their trust.

### 5.2.7 Authority

People with different opinions frequently cite multiple sources to support their arguments. Yankah strengthened the case for his views by using authority. According to van Dijk, these authorities are groups or people who are respected as experts in their field and are not influenced by political parties. The purpose of authority is to either support or bolster the in-group while discouraging the out-group. When discussing legislative processes and the current status of the Ghanaian parliament, Yankah cited the Rt Hon. Speaker Bagbin, Majority Leader Afenyo Markin, and Minority Leader Ato Forson. Yankah referenced the Supreme Court of Ghana when speaking about the reversal of Speaker Bagbin’s declaration on four vacant seats in parliament. This is exemplified in extracts 15 and 16.

15. *The Rt Hon Speaker Bagbin had formally declared four seats vacant, reducing the majority status, and giving Ato Forson’s minority an overnight elevation. Afenyo Markin, Majority Leader, would not hear that (KYC 06)*
16. *Soon after the Supreme Court reversal last Friday, came the Efutu Boy, Afenyo Markin, and his peers to meet the press, all of them sporting dimpled smiles. Their*

*position as the majority had been restored by the Supreme Court until further notice.* (KYC 06)

Using the Supreme Court and Parliamentary Leadership as examples, Yankah aimed to demonstrate the appropriate institution’s authority to guide or reroute parliamentary determinations.

### **5.2.8 Categorisation**

According to van Dijk (2015), people tend to categorise others, especially when it comes to immigrants and refugees. This is done to classify people based on their regionalism, religion, ideology, and nationality. The Church flock protesting *galamsey* is divided into groups or categories by Yankah. Yankah used categorisation to describe “*a motley congregation of priests,*” “*choristers in mufti,*” “*church elders,*” “*diocesans young and old,*” and “*altar boys.*” He explicitly mentions the various societal memberships and their significance to the fight against *galamsey*. A good self-image is presented when he shows that the Christian and traditional priests were the ones who voiced all of the worries and laments about the *galamsey* menace.

### **5.2.9 Actor Description**

Actor descriptions are used repeatedly to highlight the benefits and drawbacks of being a member of a group. According to their traits and characteristics, characters are described in various ways. It is common practice to portray members of the ingroup as neutral or positive and members of the outgroup as negative (van Dijk 1993). In order to emphasise the positive and negative traits in people, Yankah used the actor’s description 22 times. For instance, Yankah presents a positive picture of Bawumia, the flagbearer of the New Patriotic Party.

*17. Mahamudu Bawumia looks like a happy man having roused the country to its feet since May. With all eyes on him, he has quietly choreographed the new face of party-political campaigns. Mahamudu has asked his campaign team to shed arrogance, quit plush offices, and show respect to the masses who empowered them. He has also worked the minds of pedestrians, and for once, plush V8s and long convoys attract public boos. Mahamudu’s campaign prospectus was simple, knowing his party’s elitist history.* (KYC 11)

In the aforementioned extract, Yankah exhibits Bawumia’s capacity for work. He used Bawumia’s dynamism in the 2024 election campaign to try to win over the populace. Clausal expressions like “*he has quietly choreographed the new face of party-political campaigns,*” “*Mahamudu has asked his campaign team to shed arrogance, quit plush offices, and show respect to the masses that empowered them,*” and “*Mahamudu’s campaign prospectus was simple knowing his party’s elitist history*” demonstrate the

energy he has brought to Ghana's 2024 election campaign. From extract 18, Yankah characterised the false prophets as evil.

18. *Hardly a day passes without a newly bleached face emerging on social media, white towel on the shoulder, pacing back and forth on the dais, and yelling a prophecy that could well be an inaugural lecture.* (KYC 09)

Yankah used the phrases “*a newly bleached face emerging on social media*” and “*yelling a prophecy that could well be an inaugural lecture*” to mock phony pastors posing as prophets and making false predictions or prophecies about the 2024 elections.

### 5.2.10 Illustration

In each of his pieces, Yankah employed the discursive technique of illustration to support his position or increase his authenticity.

19. *I was to be the 21st speaker and the 5th Ghanaian after E. A. Boateng (1996), Florence Dolphyne (2001), Ivan Addae-Mensah (2006), and D. A. Akyeampong (2011).* (KYC 20)

20. *Our delegation to visit Otumfuo at Manhyia and extend the invitation was a high-powered one, including the following: Kwaku Kyei, former IGP who was alumni president; Nana Adade Boamah (Tom Sawyer), Kofi Dua Adonten; Yaw Afriyie Nketia, Gloria Akuffo, Ursula Owusu, Betty Mould Iddrisu, Adu Gyimah (Castro), Lee Atoms Ofei, Ivy Heward Mills, Agyeman Badu-Akosah, Yaa Osei Brempong, Margaret Insaidoo, Maxwell Opoku Agyeman, Rosina Kyeremateng, Nana Twum (king of mpusuo) etc* (KYC 13)

In KYC 20 and 13, respectively, the list of Ghanaian speakers in WAEC's Endowment Fund Lecture series and the information about the powerful delegation that is scheduled to visit Otumfuo at Manhyia paint a clear and complete picture of Yankah's successful use of van Dijk's discursive technique of “Illustration” in communication. Making the content more concrete, relatable, and memorable for his audience is the goal of this strategy.

### 5.2.11 Victimisation

Victimisation occurs when the dichotomy of ingroups and outgroups is applied. The way that members of the outgroup hurt members of the ingroup is metaphorically represented. According to D'Errico, Poggi, and Vincze (2012), someone may damage another person's reputation by using verbal abuse, including criticism, accusations, and insults that imply a poor assessment. Yankah used the concept of Us-Them division, in which supporters of the NDC publicly denounced and demonised JAK, “the 88-year-old,” as illustrated in extract 21.

21. *Desperate political rivals took the 88-year-old to the cleaners, taunting him for the wheelchair to which he is now confined! In their words: ‘The heartless man who inflicted cruel policies as President deserves the wheelchair; it serves him right.’ Ouch! (KYC 02)*

The statement “*The heartless man who inflicted cruel policies as President deserves the wheelchair*” in the extract seemed to be biased against former President J. A. Kuffour. This controversial statement suggests that his overt participation in the 2024 election campaign is at odds with his “*Desperate political rivals.*” As a result, they claimed that “*The wheelchair is deserved by the heartless man who implemented cruel policies as President.*”

### 5.2.12 Discussion of findings

The research indicates that Professor Kwasi Yankah employs a range of discursive strategies to sway the opinions and behaviour of his audience. Irony, authority, victimisation, categorisation, counterfactuals, euphemism, illustration, hyperbole, and metaphor are some strategies that were identified. Irony is utilised to craft thought-provoking messages. It is intended through the use of metaphors and hyperbole. Irony is also employed to attract interest, arouse feelings, and produce memorable and convincing scenarios that highlight the importance of Yankah’s messages. Yankah’s commentaries reveal his commitment to social justice, political accountability, and cultural preservation. He uses his platform to critique power dynamics, societal hypocrisy, and the neglect of marginalised groups. In KYC 02, Yankah condemns the ageism and ableism directed at a former president, where he advocates respect toward the elderly and persons with disabilities. Thus, the columns are testaments to the power of language in shaping public discourse.

Additionally, satire and anecdotal storytelling are hallmarks of Yankah’s writing style. His use of satire first entertains and second, underscores the absurdities in societal practices and political discourse. For instance, in one of the columns, Yankah humorously laments the marginalisation of fathers on Father’s Day in the following words.

22. *Breaking News: Today is Father’s Day ooo! . . . And how come on this auspicious occasion of Father’s Day, all Chinese Restaurants have been closed for fumigation? As for Gift shops, owners and attendants have all left for a funeral or Thanksgiving service, and Ghana has even decided that, should Ghanaians be asked to choose one auspicious day for Dumsor, it should be Father’s Day (KYC 12).*

He critiques societal biases through light-hearted narratives. There is minimal evidence of categorisation, victimisation, euphemism, actor descriptions, authority, and counterfactuals. Yankah uses these strategies to depict Ghanaian socio-political events as dangerous to the populace, the nation, and democracy. He stresses how crucial it is to restore Ghana's social and physical environment in order to promote growth and change.

These findings both confirm and extend core insight in CDA by showing how the Ghanaian columnist mobilises humour, orality, and affect as key resources in ideological work. The prevalence of irony, metaphor, hyperbole, and actor description in Yankah's columns empirically substantiates van Dijk's (1998, 2015) assertion that discourse structures (lexis, syntax, figurative language) are systematically correlated with underlying cognitive frameworks and collective ideologies. For example, irony and hyperbole are used over and over to highlight the hypocrisy of the elite, the contradictions in institutions, and the vulnerability of everyday people. This activates shared cognitive models of "corrupt politicians," "false prophets," or "neglected citizens" that are easy to recognise in the Ghanaian socio-political context. The columns show how information-dense and rhetorically rich text can lead readers to make certain moral and political judgements by using these strategies along with high lexical density and tightly packed propositions.

Simultaneously, the study refines SCA by emphasising the significance of affect and humour in the formation of ideological stances. Recent CDA scholarship posits that political persuasion increasingly functions through affective and multimodal resources rather than solely through explicit argumentation (Hart, 2008; KhosraviNik, 2020). The current analysis corroborates this trend within the context of an African newspaper: satire, anecdotes, and whimsical neologisms such as "Ogyakromians," "Milo Rivers," or "*Galamsey* terrorists" do not merely embellish propositions; they distil intricate socio-cognitive frameworks into memorable images that provoke laughter, anger, or moral outrage. This corresponds with research on satire and multimodal humour in African and global media (Onwubiko, 2022; Ogbodo, 2024), indicating that irony, exaggeration, and parody can undermine official narratives while maintaining plausible deniability. In this context, the results enhance CDA by empirically demonstrating the coexistence of affective "lightness" (humour, anecdotes) and ideological "seriousness" (critiques of ableism, environmental degradation, democratic vulnerability) within a singular socio-cognitive initiative.

The study also aligns with and diverges from prevailing trends. CDA research centred on Ghana, exemplified by Addy and Ofori's (2020) examination of campaign speeches and Logogye's (2018) analysis of the State of the Nation Address, illustrates how political elites utilise inclusive pronouns, evaluative language, and argumentation frameworks to validate policies and foster in-group cohesion. In the same way, Mpotsiah et al. (2021) show how insults in Ghanaian politics show hostility, power struggles, and ideological polarisation. Research in Nigeria and South Africa examining headlines, editorials, and reports on war or insecurity reveals persistent discursive patterns of "us–

them” polarisation, victimisation, and securitisation (Akpere, 2021; Nartey & Ladegaard, 2021; Nkoala, 2022). Yankah’s columns corroborate numerous these trends: His use of actor description, categorisation, and victimisation clearly creates ideological lines between responsible citizens and predatory elites, or between sincere religious practice and exploitative prophecy. Nonetheless, the current study elucidates unique characteristics that challenge prevailing CDA narratives concerning African media. A lot of CDA work on African newspaper discourse looks at hard news genres like headlines, straight reports, and editorials. In these genres, humour and personal stories are often downplayed (Nkoala, 2022; Henaku, 2023).

In contrast, Yankah’s opinion pieces use anecdotal storytelling, references to music and folklore, and playful wordplay as main ways to criticise. This bolsters nascent assertions that African media commentary cannot be comprehensively interpreted through frameworks that solely emphasise linear, deductive reasoning (Mathe, 2024; Terkper & Baddianaah, 2024). Instead, ideological meaning is spread out through the order of events, humour, and references to other cultures. These three things work together to get readers to agree with certain points of view while keeping the tone conversational and “storytelling.” Yankah’s creative orality significantly enhances existing CDA frameworks concerning satire and political commentary. Research on satirical news within Euro-American contexts frequently emphasises the parody of journalistic genres, visual-verbal irony, and intertextuality with mainstream news (Jaballah, 2025). African research on satire has primarily concentrated on cartoons, stand-up comedy, and tabloid or peripheral journalism (Ng’etich, 2020; Ogbodo, 2024; Avoaja, 2025).

Yankah’s columns demonstrate that print opinion writing can serve as a medium for “oralised satire,” integrating proverbs, code-switching, and performative narratives into a written format that retains the rhythm of oral delivery. His transition from a personal anecdote (“meeting Kojo Antwi”) to a more general critique of *galamsey*, or from a funny Father’s Day rant to structural reflections on gendered care and social value, shows how oral narrative templates can be used to “smuggle” critical reflection into conversations that seem light and casual.

## 6. Conclusion

Professor Kwesi Yankah’s “Occasional Kwatriot” columns stand as a masterclass in the strategic use of language to critique societal norms, question entrenched ideologies, and foster public dialogue. His writing reflects a seamless blend of traditional oral forms and modern rhetorical techniques, as seen in his use of indigenous Akan words, intertextuality, satire, and anecdotes. Yankah crafts engaging and thought-provoking narratives that resonate with diverse audiences by incorporating elements such as humour, metaphor, hyperbole, and irony. His ability to adapt oral traditions within the formal conventions of

English writing enriches his commentaries and allows him to effectively address complex themes such as political accountability, environmental degradation, and societal biases. This study has demonstrated how Yankah's discursive strategies construct ideological positions, making his work a vital contribution to media discourse in Ghana.

Beyond analysing Yankah's writings, this study advances the broader field of political and social commentaries by illuminating the power of language in shaping public discourse. The study bridges the gap between oral and written traditions and demonstrates the flexibility of critical discourse analysis in uncovering the socio-political functions of language. This research contributes to the understanding of how culturally rooted rhetorical strategies can be harnessed to critique societal issues. Moreover, it underscores the relevance of CDA in deconstructing ideologies embedded within political communication, thus enriching scholarly approaches to discourse studies and reinforcing the role of commentary as a vehicle for societal transformation.

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