

# Identity of Successful Women: An Analysis of Transitivity System and Stance Markers in Selected TED Talks

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## Abstract

In recent years, as women continue to break through barriers and shatter glass ceilings, it becomes necessary to understand how they construct their identities as successful individuals. To fulfill this purpose, this research paper analyzed selected TED Talks delivered by five successful women entrepreneurs. The present study aims to unravel how women perceive success according to their personal experiences. The analysis is conducted in two phases. In the first, Halliday's transitivity system was used. In the second phase, Hyland's (2005) analysis of stance was applied to scrutinize the linguistic choices made by the speakers to construct and convey their identities as successful individuals. Results of data analysis revealed that with the prevailing use of material transitivity processes, successful women were able to present their experiences clearly. The dominance of self-mentions and scarcity of hedges revealed their confidence and certainty in their speech and their success experience as well.

**Keywords:** attitude markers, boosters, hedges, self-mention, stance, systemic functional linguistics, transitivity

## 1. Introduction

Language analysis is an essential tool to realize and understand human cognition (Mercer, 2013; Xiong & Proctor, 2018). From this perspective, analyzing individuals' speech uncovers their beliefs and ideas about the topic they are addressing. With the rise of women entrepreneurs challenging the stereotypical beliefs about women's abilities in leadership roles, it became important to try to understand how women construct their identities as successful individuals. For this purpose, this research paper delves deep into the linguistics used by selected female entrepreneurs delivering TED Talks. The paper aims to uncover how these successful women perceive success based on their personal experiences, and linguistically express and convey their identities to their audience. By using both quantitative and qualitative analysis techniques, the paper examines Halliday's transitivity system and Hyland's analysis of stance to uncover linguistic features that these entrepreneurs use to assert their identities.

According to Halliday's theory of Systemic Functional Grammar (2014), language is not only a form of communication but also a tool for people to understand and interpret the world around them by building mental models of the realities they experience. He believes that language has the power to shape our thoughts and our perceptions of reality and that it is important to study the use of language to understand how people interpret and make sense of the world around them. The theory provides a framework for understanding the mental processes involved in the use of language for communication. By dividing these processes into ideational, interpersonal, and textual categories, the theory provides a comprehensive model for analyzing and understanding the complexity of human communication. For the purpose of the present study, only the transitivity system which is a part of the ideational function is used as it is concerned with how language represents the world. According to the ideational metafunction of language, "Language provides a theory of human experience" (Halliday, 2014, p. 30).

In an attempt to provide a comprehensive view of the successful women, a metadiscourse analysis of the selected speeches was implemented. Metadiscourse plays a crucial role in constructing and conveying identity in linguistics. It refers to any language used to talk about language, including expressions used to organize discourse, signal textual relations, and convey rhetorical meanings. Several classifications of metadiscourse have been provided, however this study follows Hyland's approach (2017) in which Stance was recognized as a tool to reveal the individual's identity. According to this approach, stance has four types: hedges, boosters, attitude markers, and self-mentions. Therefore, the current study focuses on answering the following questions:

- 1) How frequently do the six different processes of the transitivity system occur in each speech?
- 2) What does the dominance of certain processes imply?
- 3) How frequently do the four types of stance occur in each speech?
- 4) What is the role that stance markers play in shaping the speakers' identities?

The paper commences with a theoretical background on which the study is based, then it turns to provide a summary of the pertinent studies in the field. This is followed by a methods section in which there are details about the database, tools, and research procedures. Subsequently, the results of the data analysis are revealed. Finally, a discussion and a conclusion were provided.

## 2. Literature Review

### 2.1 Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL)

Halliday's Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL) regards language as a system with various functions that help people interact effectively with the world around them. It provides people with various linguistic choices or forms that enable them to construct meaning and achieve their communicative needs.

In using this approach as a tool of linguistic analysis that considers the clause the basic unit of the text, Halliday (2004) presented three ways of language use, or what he called metafunctions. They are the textual, the interpersonal, and the ideational metafunctions. The textual metafunction views the text as a message that has to be structurally well-connected. It aims at using linguistic cohesive devices to preserve the coherent relationship among the parts of the discourse. Secondly, interpersonal metafunction deals with language as a means of mutual communication or dialogue in which people express feelings, attitudes, and judgment. Finally, the ideational metafunction regards language as a 'theory of human experience' (Halliday & Matthiessen, 2013, p. 30). The ideational metafunction has two modes. The experiential mode deals with the ideas in the text whereas the logical mode deals with the relationship between those ideas. The experiential mode is based on the transitivity system which is the concern of the present study. There is no overlap among the language's metafunctions as the three can work simultaneously in a text (Bloor & Bloor, 2004).

### 2.2 The Transitivity System

Each language metafunction has its lexicogrammar system that represents it. As the transitivity system signifies language experiential metafunction, it encompasses three main parts that denote human experience which is represented in the language by a flow of events (Bakuuro, 2017). These three parts are a participant, a process, and, a circumstance. The participant is the doer of the action in the clause and its type is determined by the type of the process or the verb that he is doing. Different labels of the participant are Actor, Sayer, Sayer, Behaver, etc. Examples of the corresponding processes are plant, think, say a, and laugh respectively. The circumstance in the transitivity system signifies the setting in which the concurrent process is taking place (e.g., Location, Manner, cause, and Accompaniment of the process). There are six processes in the transitivity system: material, mental, behavioral, verbal, relational, and existential processes.

Material processes are those that involve physical or concrete actions, such as running, jumping, or touching. These processes are important in language because they allow speakers to describe actions and events in a way that is clear and specific. According to SFG, material processes can be expressed through the use of transitive verbs, which describe an action directed toward a specific object. For example, in the sentence "The dog chased the cat", the verb "chased" is a transitive verb that describes the action of the dog toward the cat. Another way to express material processes is through the use of intransitive verbs, which describe an action without requiring a specific object. For example, in the sentence "The boy ran", the verb "ran" is an intransitive verb that describes the action of the boy without requiring a specific object. Material processes can also be expressed through the use of nominal groups, which are phrases that function like nouns in a sentence.

One aspect of Halliday's theory is the concept of mental processes, which are the cognitive activities that take place when people use language to communicate. The mental processes according to Halliday's model include a range of cognitive activities, such as perception, cognition, experience, and affection. Examples are words such as think, see, and like.

Behavioral processes refer to the actions and behaviors that individuals engage in during social interaction. According to Halliday's SFG, language is an integral part of these behavioral processes, as it allows individuals to express their intentions, emotions, and opinions, and to negotiate meaning with others. They describe actions that involve more than one participant, such as social interactions between people. For example, "She smiled at me" is a behavioral process because it describes a social interaction.

Verbal processes describe the act of speaking or communicating. For example, "She told me about the accident" is a verbal process, because it describes the act of communication. Relational processes describe how things are related to each other. There are two types of relational processes: attributive and identifying. Attributive processes describe the characteristics of a person, thing, or event. For example, "The apple is red" is an attributive process, because it describes a characteristic of the apple. Identifying processes, on the other hand, describes the identity of a person, thing, or event. For example, "That apple is the one I like" is an identifying process because it describes the identity of the apple.

Existential process is used to refer to the existence or presence of things, as well as their absence or non-existence. It is used to represent both concrete and abstract entities, ranging from people and things to ideas and feelings. They can be divided into two types: material and mental. The former refers to the existence of physical objects, while the latter denotes the existence of ideas or concepts. Both types of the existential process have their subtypes.

### 2.3 Stance in Metadiscourse

Stance markers in language are one of the key ways in which people express their identity. Stance can be defined as an expression of

one's perspective, attitudes, feelings, or evaluations on a particular topic or issue. research has also shown that individuals may strategically use stance markers to construct and negotiate their identity in particular social contexts. For example, speakers may use hedges (e.g. kind of, sort of) or mitigators (e.g. I may be wrong, but...) to express their perspective in a less authoritative or confrontational way, particularly when interacting with people in higher positions of power or authority (Babaii, Atai & Mohammadi, 2016; Moini & Salami, 2015; Seyyedrezaie & Vahedi, 2017).

Hyland's (2005) typology of stance markers refers to different linguistic strategies that speakers or writers use to convey their perspective or attitude toward what they are saying or writing. These markers include hedges, boosters, attitude markers, and self-mentions. Hedges are elements that mitigate or soften a speaker's claim, suggesting a lack of certainty or a degree of tentativeness. Hedges are often used to show respect for the interlocutor's opinion and to acknowledge the existence of alternative views (Hyland, 1998). Boosters, on the other hand, are linguistic devices that signal a speaker's degree of conviction or confidence. Boosters give the impression that the speaker is sure about what they are saying and are used to bolster the argument (Hyland, Wang & Jiang, 2022).

In addition, attitude markers are expressions used to convey a speaker's emotional reaction to a topic. They may indicate agreement or disagreement, approval, or disapproval, and can be used to signal the speaker's stance toward a particular issue (Hyland, 2005; Wei, Zhou & Gong, 2016). Finally, self-mentions are references to the speaker or writer themselves, which may be used to signal their experience, expertise, or qualifications concerning the topic at hand. Self-mentions may also be used to signal the writer's intention to empathize with the reader (Hyland, 2008).

## 2.4 Previous Studies

### 2.4.1 TED Talk as a Genre

TED Talks have certainly emerged as a unique genre in the world of public speaking and knowledge-sharing. They have gained immense popularity in recent years, with over 3 billion views on their official website alone. TED Talks also emphasize storytelling and personal experiences, which make them more relatable and engaging for the audience. The success of TED Talks can be attributed to their ability to capture and hold the attention of audiences and inspire and motivate them to take action. They have become a platform for people to share their ideas and perspectives with a global audience, and to spark meaningful discussions and debates.

Ludewig (2017) discusses the emergence and characteristics of TED Talks as a distinct genre of public speaking. The paper explores the various techniques employed by TED speakers to engage with their audience. It also highlights the social and cultural factors contributing to the growth and popularity of TED Talks and discusses the potential implications of this emerging genre on the dynamics of public speaking and knowledge dissemination.

### 2.4.2 Transitivity as a Text-Analysis Tool

Halliday's transitivity is a way of describing the relationship between the participants and the action taking place in a clause. By identifying these relationships, researchers can better understand the meaning and purpose of a text. This system has been widely adopted in the field of discourse analysis and has proven to be useful in studying a variety of genres, from political speeches to literary works.

In regard to political discourse, transitivity analysis is considered a powerful tool to reveal the author's intentions and purposes. Kashif et al. (2020) conducted a transitivity analysis of the third presidential debate between Hillary Clinton and Donald Trump. The authors used a systemic functional linguistic approach to analyze the language used by the candidates in their responses to the debate questions. The study found that Clinton used more complex and diverse language while Trump used simpler and more repetitive language. Additionally, Clinton made greater use of causality, and agency, while Trump relied heavily on the use of personal pronouns. The paper highlights the importance of linguistic analysis in understanding political communication and discourse.

Transitivity has been used as a tool for shaping the opinion of the audience which can be referred to as persuasion. Iqbal, Sabiri & and Batool (2023) analyzed the speech given by Imran Khan, the Prime Minister of Pakistan, at the United Nations General Assembly regarding the issue of Jammu and Kashmir. The study uses a corpus-based transitivity analysis approach to identify the linguistic patterns and strategies employed by Imran Khan in his speech to address the issue of Islamophobia and the Kashmir conflict. The research findings show that Imran Khan uses a range of metaphorical expressiomodalities, and agency structures to convey his perspective on the issue of Islamophobia adversely affecting the resolution of the Kashmir conflict.

In clarifying the significant role transitivity processes play in connecting the speaker to the audience, Toribio, Morandarte & Paster (2023) analyzed the transitivity processes employed in the commencement speech delivered by the Department of Education Secretary in the Philippines, Leonor Briones, in 2021. The study examines the clauses and verbal processes used in the speech to understand the speaker's message and intentions. The paper concludes that Briones used a range of transitivity processes to connect with her audience and convey the importance of education in shaping the future of the country. A concurrent conclusion was reached by Cabrejas-Peñuelas (2023) who compared the two speeches of the 2015 State of the Union Address in the US and Spain. The study concludes that although both speeches share similar discourse strategies, they reflect different cultural and political contexts, providing valuable insights into the workings of power and ideology in society.

A correlating study by Kondowe (2014) analyzes the inaugural address of Bingu wa Mutharika, the former President of Malawi, from the perspective of transitivity. The analysis reveals that Mutharika's address reflects a neoliberal ideology that emphasizes individualism, self-reliance, and economic development through free-market policies. The paper highlights the importance of using linguistic analysis to

uncover hidden ideological meanings in political discourse. Anggraini (2018) in his doctoral dissertation analyzed the use of the transitivity process in different speeches delivered by Donald Trump to understand the underlying ideological constructs in his speeches.

Shariffar, M., & Rahimi, E. (2015) investigated critical discourse analysis of political speeches through a case study of Obama and Rouhani's speeches at the UN. The aim is to analyze and compare the linguistic and discursive features used by both leaders in their speeches, to understand how they construct their political ideologies and worldviews. The study concludes that Obama and Rouhani employed different discursive strategies and language features in their speeches, reflecting their political identities and underlying political goals. The paper contributes to the growing field of critical discourse analysis, providing insights into the complex relationship between language, power, and ideology in political communication.

Transitivity has also been used in analyzing literary works. Isti'annah (2019) examines the linguistic choices made by Afghan women characters in Asne Seierstad's *The Bookseller of Kabul*. The study finds that Afghan women in the novel are often depicted as having limited agency and power, especially in relation to their male family members. Additionally, the analysis reveals how the women characters use different linguistic strategies, such as passive voice and modality, to navigate their constrained circumstances. For example, they may use passive voice to avoid taking responsibility for certain actions or use modality to express uncertainty or hesitation.

Another example is the study by Dossoumou (2015) in which the author analyzed the characters in Habila's "Oil on Water". Dossoumou argues that the book uses the ideational metafunction to convey the complex and diverse experiences of African women, challenging traditional and limiting stereotypes. The paper presents several examples from the book to support this argument, such as how the character of Zara is portrayed as a strong and independent woman who defies societal expectations. Overall, the paper highlights the power of literature and language to reshape society's perceptions of African women's identities and personalities.

Accordingly, In their analysis of Mary Norton's novel, "The Borrowers", Rendadirza & Ardi (2020) examined the transitivity patterns in the novel using systemic functional linguistics (SFL) as a framework. They identified various transitivity processes in a way that contributes to the understanding of the linguistic features in children's literature and how they shape the narrative and characters.

Furthermore, transitivity was used as a tool to reveal the intersection of language and psychology. Sawirman & Ridhwani (2020) utilize the framework of systemic functional linguistics to analyze the clauses in the suicide notes written by four famous people. They found that the frequent use of material processes indicates the writers' focus on their actions and the emotional involvement they experienced during the process of suicide. The writers also used more first-person pronouns and past-tense verbs, suggesting their internalization of the decision and their self-focused stance (Botchwey et al., 2022).

#### 2.4.3 Stance as an Identity-Revealing Tool

Hyland (2005) proposed a model of interaction in academic discourse that focuses on two key features: stance and engagement. As discourse includes both written and spoken texts, this section will provide an overview of the literature that examines the importance of stance markers for both genres.

In writing, Stance refers to the writer's position or attitude toward the subject matter, while engagement refers to the writer's interaction with other writers and their ideas in the field of study. Both features are essential for effective communication, and they can be used to analyze and evaluate academic texts. Stance can be conveyed through different types of metadiscourse, such as hedges, boosters, attitude markers, and self-mentions. Hyland (2017), argues that metadiscourse is an essential tool for writers to establish credibility, persuade readers, and guide them through the text.

Shen and Tao (2021) compared the use of stance markers in English medical research articles and newspaper opinion columns. Both types of texts used a variety of stance markers, but medical research articles rely more on objective language, while newspaper opinion columns tend to use more subjective language and evaluative expressions. Modal verbs were used in both types of texts to indicate levels of certainty, but medical research articles use them more frequently to indicate the level of scientific evidence, while newspaper opinion columns use them to express the author's attitude toward a topic.

In spoken discourse, whether in social, political, or religious speech, stance plays a significant role in constructing identity. In 2013, Nan and Liu conducted a study in which they analyzed Steve Jobs' Stanford speech. They employed Hyland's metadiscourse theory to examine the speech's interpersonal and textual meaning. The study's findings showed that Jobs used a high frequency of interactional metadiscourse markers, such as "you know," "okay," and "right," to create a connection with the audience and to assert his authority as a speaker. Moreover, he also utilized a considerable amount of evidential metadiscourse markers to bolster his arguments and demonstrate his credibility as a speaker. For instance, Jobs frequently used phrases like "I've been there," "I know," and "I believe."

Angraini and Effrianti (2020) analyzed the use of interpersonal metadiscourse markers in speeches delivered by the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Indonesia. The authors identified several types of interpersonal markers, including hedges, boosters, attitude markers, self-mentions, and engagement markers. used to express confidence and assert the Minister's views.to connect with the audience and facilitate understanding.

An example from religious discourse is the study of Alkhodari & Habil (2021). They discussed the use of metadiscourse markers in the persuasive discourse of Dr. Zakir Naik. It examined how Naik uses linguistic devices like hedges, boosters, attitude markers, and engagement markers to increase the persuasiveness of his arguments. The study analyzed Naik's speeches and debates to understand how he uses these markers in different ways to enhance the effectiveness of his discourse. The paper provides insights into how metadiscourse

markers can be used in persuasive discourse and how they contribute to the construction of persuasive arguments.

**3. Methods**

*3.1 Corpus*

Corpus analyzed in this study is comprised of the transcript of five TED talks delivered by successful women entrepreneurs. The talks were chosen based on the similarity of several factors which are: the speaker (female), the topic (personal success) the duration, the number of views in addition to the number of tokens in each speech with a total number of 10,187 of all tokens in all the five speeches.

Table 1. Characteristics of the five selected speeches

The speaker	No. of views	Duration	No. of tokens
Agnes Binagwaho	1,671,136	11:55	1178
Dame Stephanie Shirley	2,272,371	13:30	1487
Halla Tómasdóttir	1,089,708	16:58	2353
Leila Hoteit	4,315,115	13:53	2397
Sheryl Sandberg	11,688,105	14:42	2772

*3.2 Research Instruments*

Two instruments were used to analyze the corpora. They are The UAM Corpus Tool and the Antconc software. The UAM Corpus Tool is a software program developed by researchers at the Universidad Autónoma de Madrid (UAM) in Spain and is used to annotate the transcriptions of the texts with various linguistic features such as part-of-speech tags, syntactic structures, and transitivity analysis which is the focus of the first part of the analysis of the present study.

The AntConc is a freeware corpus analysis software used to extract linguistic and literary patterns of texts. It provides a wide range of features including concordance, collocation, word frequency analysis, and keyword analysis. AntConc is used in the present study to conduct the quantitative search of the stance markers in the corpora.

*3.3 Procedures*

The present study aims to investigate how successful women perceive success. A transitivity analysis based on Halliday’s Systemic Functional Analysis was conducted on five TED talks delivered by successful women entrepreneurs. A transcript for each talk was downloaded in txt format to fit for uploading on UAM CorpusTool. Unfortunately, the researcher inspected errors in text segmentation. Therefore, a preliminary step had to be applied. The researcher used the free BFSU Sentence Segmenter 1.0 software to accurately segment the text and then uploaded it to the corpus analysis tool.

Using lists of stance markers prepared by some recent research analyzing large corpora (Aull & Lancaster, 2014; Azar & Hashim, 2019; Shen & Tao, 2021), the author used Antconc to calculate the frequency of each word or phrase compiled in the lists. To guarantee the accuracy of the results, each concordance was manually checked in the original text to determine if the intended elements fulfill the interpersonal function of the stance. Furthermore, each text was thoroughly examined to identify more terms that do not exist in the lists used.

**4. Data Analysis and Results**

*4.1 Transitivity Analysis*

With the aid of the UAM Corpus Tool, the five selected speeches were analyzed for transitivity. Table 2 displays the results that the majority of the clauses, identified in the selected speeches, were material, followed by relational and mental in that order. The largest share went to material processes accounting for 56.4%, 51.5%, 41.6%, 41.1%, and 37.2% of all the clauses found in the five selected speeches. Relational clauses came second with a total of 391 (30.3%), with a distribution of 32.6%, 32.4%, 30%, 29.3%, and 23.6% in the speeches. Whereas mental clauses constituted 12.6%, verbal clauses represented 9.4%. Behavioral and existential ranked the last as they signified 2.3% and 2% respectively.

Table 2. Percentages of the six transitivity processes used in the five speeches

Process Speaker		Material	Mental	Relational	Verbal	Existential	Behavioral	Total
Agnes_ Binag	N	93	20	39	4	7	2	165
	Percent.	56.4	12.1	23.6	2.4	4.3	1.2	100
Dame Stephanie	N	86	16	49	11	3	2	167
	Percent.	51.5	9.6	29.3	6.6	1.8	1.2	100
Halla_	N	134	36	105	30	7	10	322

Tomas	Percent.	41.6	11.2	32.6	9.3	2.2	3.1	100
Leila_Huteit	N	113	40	89	23	3	7	275
	Percent.	41.1	14.5	32.4	8.4	1.1	2.5	100
Sheryl_Sandberg	N	135	51	109	53	6	9	363
	Percent.	37.2	14.0	30.0	14.6	1.7	2.5	100
Total	N	561	163	391	121	26	30	1292
	Percent.	43.4	12.6	30.3	9.4	2	2.3	100

As presented in the Literature Review section, relational processes are divided into two types: attributive and identifying processes. Furthermore, the attributive relational processes are subdivided into attributive and possessive processes. To provide accurate results, further analysis was applied to the data regarding the relational processes (Table 3).

Table 3. Percentages of the relational process with its subtypes attributive and identifying processes

Relational Process Speaker		attributive			identifying	Total
		attributive	possessive			
Agnes_Binag	N	26	8	5	39	
	Percent.	66.7	20.5	12.8	100	
Dame Stephanie	N	36	7	6	49	
	Percent.	73.5	14.3	12.2	100	
Halla_Tomas	N	59	21	25	105	
	Percent.	56.2	20.0	23.8	100	
Leila_Huteit	N	49	11	29	89	
	Percent.	55.1	12.4	32.6	100	
Sheryl_Sandberg	N	66	20	23	109	
	Percent.	60.6	18.3	21.1	100	

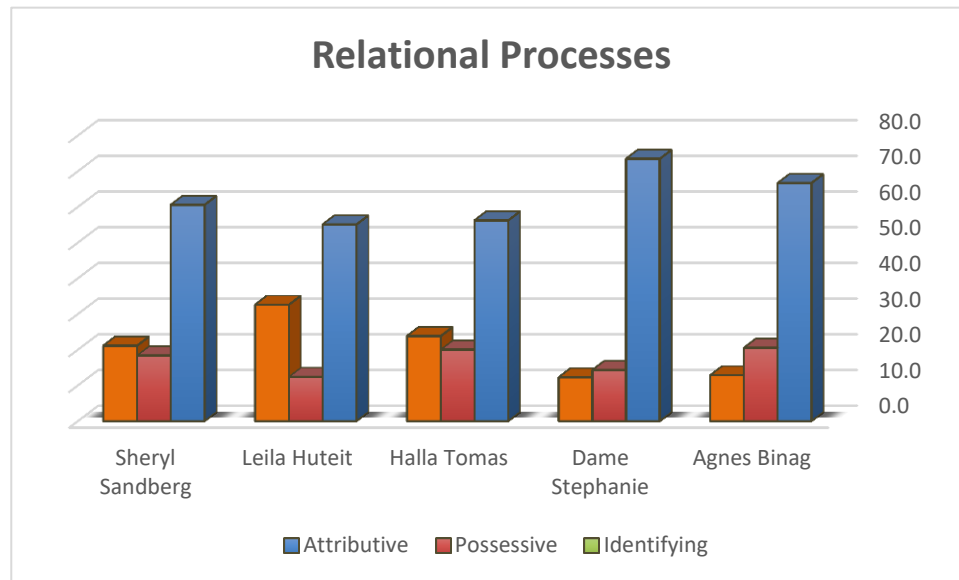


Figure 1. Percentages of the attributive, possessive, and identifying processes

As illustrated in Figure 1, the attributive relational processes are the most dominant subtype. Its percentages in the five speeches are 73.5%, 66.7%, 60.6%, 56.2%, and 55.1% out of the total number of all the relational processes in each speech.

4.2 Analysis of Stance Markers

Using Antconc software, the five speeches were thoroughly examined to extract results about stance markers. The total occurrences of stance markers in the five speeches were largely consistent (Table 4). The percentages of the total stance feature out of the total tokens (n=10.187) in each speech are 14.9%, 13.2%, 12.5%, 12.3%, and 10.6%. Regarding the percentage of each type of the four features of stance: hedges, boosters, attitude markers, and self-mentions, findings were 1, 2.4, 3.4, and 5.8 respectively. Hence, self-mentions ranked first among other stance markers. The second place went to attitude markers followed by boosters. The least marker of the stance used was the hedges.

Table 4. Percentages of the four stance markers used in the five speeches

Frequency of Stance markers Speaker	Hedges	Boosters	Attitude Markers	Self-mentions	Total markers stance	Total tokens	Percent.
Agnes_Binag	10	22	57	58	147	1178	12.5%
Dame Stephanie	9	31	84	72	196	1487	13.2%
Halla_Tomas	42	67	81	160	350	2353	14.9%
Leila_Huteit	22	59	55	159	295	2397	12.3%
Sheryl_Sandberg	18	68	70	137	293	2772	10.6%
Total	101	247	347	586	1281	10.187	
	1%	2.4%	3.4%	5.8%	12.6%	100%	

5. Discussion

5.1 RQ1: How Frequently Do the Six Different Processes of the Transitivity System Occur in Each Speech?

Based on the results presented above, it can be concluded that the majority of the clauses used in the selected speeches were material in nature. Material clauses are used to explain actions and events that can be directly observed and are often associated with concrete subjects, objects, and circumstances. This suggests that successful women were more focused on describing and discussing real-world situations and events to portray the efforts they exerted in making their success. The role that material processes play in clarifying and linking the author with their actions was affirmed by recent research (AlAfnan, 2022; Alraimi & Abdalla, 2019).

Relational clauses came in second, indicating that the speakers also placed a strong emphasis on the connections and relationships between different people, concepts, and ideas. The use of relational clauses highlights the importance of highlighting the connections and relationships between different aspects of the speeches. Mental clauses, although less frequently used, suggest that the speakers also placed a certain amount of focus on the psychological aspects of their speeches. Verbal clauses, on the other hand, were used to describe speech and communication activities.

Finally, behavioral and existential clauses were used to a lesser extent and indicate that the speakers were less focused on describing human behavior and existence. Overall, it can be inferred that the selected speeches primarily focused on describing material events and the relationships between different aspects of these events.

### *5.2 RQ2: What Does the Dominance of Certain Processes Imply?*

Drawing on the above results of data analyses, it is clarified that each successful woman used material processes rigorously to present her own successful experience. Thus material processes were the most prevalent type of clauses used. Relational clauses followed in frequency, while mental, verbal, behavioral, and existential clauses were used to a lesser extent. These results suggest that the speakers' focus was primarily on describing actions and events rather than on discussing emotions or thoughts. These findings provide insight into the style and emphasis of the speakers and may be useful in understanding their communication strategies (AlAfnan, 2022)

Consequently, Transitivity analysis proved to be a practical tool for analyzing various genres (Alraimi & Abdalla, 2019; Jomaa & Alia, 2019; Xiang, 2022). Transitivity can be a powerful tool for revealing the ideological underpinnings of texts and for understanding how power is constructed and maintained in society (Matu, 2008).

### *5.3 RQ3: How Frequently Do the Four Types of Stance Occur in Each Speech?*

Based on the results obtained through Antconc software, it can be concluded that the occurrences of stance markers in the five speeches were largely consistent. Additionally, the percentages of the total stance markers out of the total tokens were relatively similar across each speech. It is interesting to note that self-mentions were the most frequently used stance feature, followed by attitude markers and boosters. On the other hand, hedges were the least frequently used feature of stance. Overall, the findings provide insight into the speaker's use of language to express their attitudes and perspectives.

### *5.4 RQ4: What Is the Role that Stance Markers Play in Shaping the Speakers' Identities?*

The results suggest that self-mention is the most used feature of stance among successful women. This indicates that the speakers are emphasizing their identities and personal experiences. The use of attitude markers and boosters also reinforces this idea as they are both used to express certainty and confidence in one's opinion or point of view. On the other hand, the low percentage of the use of hedges suggests that the speakers are less hesitant or uncertain in their speech. This could imply that they are more confident in their opinions, have made up their minds about certain issues, or are more experienced speakers. The results coincide with various research (Hyland, 2017; Vande Kopple, 2012; Sayah and Hashemi, 2014) that assert the importance of metadiscourse for both writers and readers to establish credibility and convey personal attitudes.

Correlating the same issue with social media, Evans (2016) examined the relationship between stance and identity in Twitter hashtags. The author argued that hashtags can be used to express an individual's stance on a topic and to construct a social identity within the online community. Downing and Perucha (2014) proposed an allied view as they concluded that speakers in media interviews use stance markers to position themselves and construct their public identities.

Overall, stance plays an important role in shaping speakers' identities as it reflects their personal experiences and attitudes toward a particular topic. The use of self-mentions and other stance features helps the speakers establish credibility and connect with their audience, while the minimal use of hedges indicates confidence and certainty in their speech.

## **6. Conclusion**

The present study aims to understand how women define and understand success based on their individual experiences. In order to gain a fuller perspective on their attitudes toward success, an analysis of the language used by successful women to express their identities was conducted.

Based on the transitivity analysis of the clauses used in the selected speeches, it can be concluded that successful women have a strong focus on concrete, observable situations and the relationships between different people, concepts, and ideas. Although mental clauses and verbal clauses were also used, they were not as prevalent in their speeches. Behavioral and existential clauses were used to a lesser extent, suggesting that successful women were less interested in describing human behavior and existence.

Furthermore, analysis of stance features showed that self-mention is the most prevalent feature of stance among successful women, and this feature reflects their emphasis on their individual identities and personal experiences. The use of attitude markers and boosters also reinforces this idea, indicating confidence and certainty in their speech. The low use of hedges suggests that the speakers are more experienced and confident in their opinions, making up their minds about certain issues. These findings highlight the importance of establishing credibility and conveying personal attitudes. They provide valuable insights into the priorities and perspectives of successful women and can be useful in further analyzing and understanding their characters.



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The data that support the findings of this study are available on request from the corresponding author. The data are not publicly available due to privacy or ethical restrictions.

**Data sharing statement**

No additional data are available.

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