

## A CRITICAL DISCOURSE ANALYSIS ON A TEENAGER'S WITH PROGERIA TO SHARE AN EMPOWERING LIFE PHILOSOPHY: A CASE STUDY ON TEDX

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Critical discourse analysis; Teenagers progeria; Life philosophy; Functional linguistics; Storytelling;	<i>This study aimed at investigating the strategy of a teenager with progeria to represent his identity and ideology through the analysis of transitivity and critical discourse analysis. This research applied a qualitative descriptive study. The data is taken from TEDx Talk <a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=36m1o-tM05g">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=36m1o-tM05g</a> entitled My philosophy for a happy life. The storyteller named Sam Bern told his life philosophy despite his disability due progeria disease. This study applied Fairclough's approach (1989) on critical discourse analysis incorporating with Hallyday &amp; Matthiessen's SFL (2004) to the analysis of transitivity and discourse practice. The study found that the storyteller frequently used relational process with 39.79%, material process with 33.16%, and mental process with 24.62%. In relational process, the storyteller bravely defined himself, his condition, his sickness, and his struggle against progeria. Through material process, he represented himself as a dynamic and active person that even his disease or physical disability could not hinder him from doing what he could do. The study also found that Sam Bern showed his success in accepting himself as a child with progeria by trying to negotiate his identity and resilience. The implication of this study suggests that storytelling can be a powerful pedagogical resource for teachers and educators to promote resilience, identity formation, and positive values among students, particularly in contexts where personal challenges and diversity need to be addressed.</i>

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## INTRODUCTION

Storytelling has been a powerful tool to convey emotions, ideas, and experiences. Storytelling allows individuals to connect with others on a deeper level and understand different perspectives. Storytelling is an activity to spread information or message from someone to others and from one generation to generation (Satriani, 2019). In recent years, storytelling has evolved into more than just a form of entertainment, but it can be used as a persuasive device (Krause & Rucker, 2020), as a methodology in education to improve language skill like speaking skill (Hasanah, Mahmud, & Salija, 2022; Ghani, Mahmud & Salija, 2022); as a method and tool in public health for empathy, equity, and social change, (Fiddian-Green, Gubrium, & Hill, 2023), as a compelling brand narrative to interest consumers using storytelling marketing (Mavilinda, Putri, & Nazaruddin (2023), as sharing experiences in media like storytelling in

Ted Talks (Rychkova, 2020), and as a campaign to empower teens in health awareness, knowledge and attitudes toward HIV prevention (Nelson, Cordova, Walters & Szecsy, 2016). This shows that storytelling provides abundant benefits in various fields and makes the information more memorable, reinforcing their effectiveness in various fields.

This study focuses on a teenager' storytelling named Sam Bern who had physical limitation caused by a disease called progeria. His storytelling was posted on TEDx official YouTube where he talked about his personal story about living with progeria. Progeria or progeroid disorder is a rare and complex heredity syndrome emerging with pleiotropic phenotypes related with normal aging (Worm, et.al., 2024). Progeria is derived from Greek term meaning "prematurely old". Progeria is also known as Hutchinson-Gilford progeria syndrome (HGPS). It is signed by "extreme short stature, low body weight, early loss of hair, decreased joint mobility, osteolysis, and facial features that resembled aged people" (Hennekam in Srinivasan, 2022). Thus, progeria limits one's mobility and physical ability. Despite his physical limitation, Sam Bern built his life philosophy and lived his life well. Since posted on TEDx official YouTube channel on December 14, 2013, this video has been watched 53 million and liked by 1.1M. Sam Bern was died on January 10, 2014 at the age of 17 years old. Just before he passed away, he achieved highest honor as a Junior at Foxboro High School and became a percussion section leader in his high school marching band. He also bravely talked about his disability on media (TEDx) in order to encourage people. This courage and inspiration became one of the backgrounds to this research to find his strategy to his storytelling. His story has been successful to send message, feeling and condition of what he had experienced in life.

The objective of this study is to investigate Sam Bern's strategy to represent himself dealing with his disability because of progeria syndrome. Disabilities and inability often trigger people to have mental breakdown. This statement highlights the significant impact that disabilities and inability can have on a person's mental well-being. When individuals face limitations or challenges due to their physical or mental conditions, it can lead to feelings of frustration, isolation, and a sense of being overwhelmed. These factors can contribute to the development of mental health issues and one of the main reasons why disabilities and inability can trigger mental breakdowns is the inherent difficulty of living with these conditions. Individuals with disabilities often face numerous challenges, such as mobility limitations, chronic pain, or sensory impairments. Through narratives that highlight social issues and give voice to marginalized communities, storytelling has the ability to create empathy, raise awareness, and inspire action. It allows individuals to connect with one another on a deeper level and understand the lived experiences of others.

Some studies have been conducted to investigate how certain discourses to convey message through stories, speech, or news. The first previous study was conducted by Abbas & Nisa (2023) which focused on Mazari's speech which focused on traditional perceptions through language choices and discourse formation and strengthened people with disability and gender stereotyping. Mazari's speech promoted a novel perception of gender, disability, perfection, and existence. The second study was conducted by Mubarak (2023) which investigated about how T. D Jakes's speech has built the ideology of empowerment through motivating, encouraging and reinforcing his viewers through his speech. The author analyzed the speech using positive discourse analysis (PDA). This study found that the ideology of empowerment is shown through declarative sentence, conditionals, repetition, emphasizing goods, de-emphasizing negatives, metaphors, and personifications. The third previous research is conducted by Al-Badri & Al-Janabi (2022) who analyze the speech of Prime Minister Boris in order to find his ideologies and to identify interpersonal and ideational function in his speech. This study used Van Dijk's theory of CDA (2000) and Halliday's Systemic Functional Linguistics (2004). This study found that material process to reflect his power and dominant

ideology. Through the dominant use of material processes were dominantly used in his speech and showed his contribution power in health issue upon being elected a prime minister.

The three previous research has the same concern to the current research in terms of focus to spoken discourse and the combination of theories. The three studies concerned about speeches while current study focuses on a storytelling. The former study applied critical discourse analysis, the second used PDA, and the third applied CDA and Halliday. The gaps of previous studies with current study can be seen in the combination of theory CDA and Halliday and also the concern of the data. The three previous study concerned with adult's discourse while this study will discuss about a teenager's discourse of storytelling. Then this study will focus on how a teenager with certain disability, in this case represented by Sam Bern, strategized to speak out his life philosophy through a storytelling.

From the research gap, two research questions are formulated to be investigated; (1) What is the storyteller's strategy to represent himself through the analysis of transitivity? (2) What ideology and identity did the storyteller build his personal story? The two research questions would be answered by applying Fairclough's framework of Critical Discourse Analysis and the theory of Halliday & Matthiessen's SFL (2004). the objectives of your work and provide an adequate background, avoiding a detailed literature survey or a summary of the results. Explicitly state the gap in the literature, which signifies the significance of your research.

### **Critical Discourse Analysis**

This study is based on the framework of Fairclough critical discourse analysis (2001) and Systemic Functional Linguistics of Halliday & Matthiessen (2004). In the first place of the theoretical framework is critical discourse analysis which is an interdisciplinary approach to the study of discourse by using three-dimensional model, description (text analysis), interpretation (processing analysis), and explanation (social analysis) (Fairclough in Shahzadi, Hanif, Imtiaz, 2023; Mustafa, 2023; Ghani & Hussain, 2021). CDA is an approach which is used to uncover source and power, dominance, inequality, and bias through text and talk, not only in political contexts but also in other social contexts (Fairclough, 1989). CDA aims to consider language use as a social practice. Ghani and Hussain (2021) explained the Fairclough's model based on the following levels; (1) Discourse as text: the text is analyzed on grammatical level, sentence level, and cohesion. (2) Discourse as discursive practice: highlighting the relationship between participants (3) Discourse as social practice: examining the discourse as an activity in a social context.

Fairclough (2001) argued that social context cannot be separated from text and meaning production. CDA widely gains researchers' attention in revealing the discourse research. The primary advancement of Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) as a theory is largely credited to scholars like Fairclough (1992), Van Dijk (2008), and Wodak (1996). Their research emphasized examining the connection between texts independently and their association with power dynamics, suggesting a link between texts and societal occurrences. Consequently, critical discourse analysis primarily concerns itself with exploring how language, ideology, and power interrelate, as asserted by Van Dijk (2008).

### **Transitivity in Systemic Functional Linguistics and Critical Discourse Analysis**

In the second framework to this study is Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL), which offers a practical way to analyze language in use in diverse contexts such as scientific text, political texts, advertisement, stories, and other contexts (Halliday & Matthiessen, 2004). Furthermore, Halliday developed three metafunctions of language, they are ideational, interpersonal, and textual meaning (Al-Badri & Al-Janabi, 2022; Ezz-Eddin, 2024; Maria & Wayan, 2021; Bibi, Ayub, & Basit, 2023). Ideational is related to how a clause represents or communicates the meaning of a text. Interpersonal focuses on how language is used for

interaction to build social relationships and social actions. Textual shows how language is structure in a discourse to establish coherence and to connect ideas and message in a text. This study focuses on analyzing the transitivity which is the element of ideational metafunction.

Transitivity functions to represent processes or experiences such actions, events, or relations (Hallyday & Matthiessen, 2004; Darani, 2014). In ideational meaning, languages are construed through transitivity elements; participants, processes, and circumstances. Processes are classified into six categories; material, mental, relational, behavioral, verbal, and existential (Halliday & Matthiessen, 2004). Transitivity is form through the structure of agent + process + goal. Processes are divided into six types, they are mental, material, behavioral, verbal, relational, and existential process.

Fairclough applied Halliday's approach to develop his own model (Fairclough, 1989). People make use of certain linguistic choices to argue, sustain ideas, or advocate public needs in their discourse (Fairclough, 2020; Kashif, et.al., 2022). Systematic functional linguistics can be used to identify the particular language choice people use to see their intention in the language use. The discourse is not limited to politic, but many other discourses, like literature, song, speech. One of the discourses is storytelling.

### **Storytelling**

Storytelling has become a popular tool to express people's life story and experience. Storytelling can be seen in the class interaction, in the competition, and in a lot of events. Storytelling is a way to communicate message, experience, or personal life in an entertaining way. Strong (1996) defined storytelling is a method that allows people to practice organizing, categorizing, and retaining information. Hamilton & Weiss (2005) suggested that storytelling serves as a genuine method for transmitting cultural histories, traditions, and linguistic heritage. They argue that children can shape their perceptions of the world by drawing insights from stories, which also play a role in passing down historical customs and values from earlier generations. McCabe and Bliss (2003) asserted that storytelling is a cherished and instinctive approach for presenting characters and narratives, aiding children in comprehending the world around them.

In this research, storytelling has been done in front of people or audience as to talk about personal life. The data were taken from a popular program in YouTube called TEDx Talk. Chibana (2015) mentioned that there are at least seven strategies and techniques used by TEDx storytellers that impressed the audience by immersing audience with stories, telling personal stories, creating suspense, bringing characters to life, showing not only telling, building up to S.T.A.R. moment, and ending the stories with a positive takeaway.

## **RESEARCH METHOD**

### **Research Design**

This research employs a descriptive qualitative study to investigate the storyteller's strategy to represent himself through the analysis of transitivity. The data is derived from TEDx Talk in <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=36m1o-tM05g> entitled My philosophy for a happy life. The storyteller named Sam Bern told his personal story about his life philosophy despite his physical disability of progeria disease. This video has been very phenomenal because of the content of his storytelling of his philosophy for being positive in facing his life while being suffered from progeria disease. This video has gained 52 million views and 1.4 million likes since released in October 2013, and it is still currently watched seen from the comments posted.

### **Research Data**

The data of the research is the transcription of Sam Bern's story posted on the YouTube channel (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=36m1o-tM05g>). To validate the that the transcription is correctly aligned with Sam Bern's storytelling, the authors used English

subtitles while listening to the storytelling, and do crosschecking. The data then were copied to word format which are then classified according to the SFL framework. This study applied a two-fold methodological approach Hallidayan's SFL in the analysis of transitivity analysis (2004) and Fairclough's approach (1989) on critical discourse analysis. With 52 million views and 1.4 million likes, it can be implied that the video has gained widespread attention which can mean that its message is impactful and worth examining in a research context. This video is phenomenal that indicates its resonance to the audience that can be relevant to a study of audience engagements and storyteller interpersonal strategy in a talk. These factors justify the selection of this video as valuable research material.

### **Data Analysis**

The analysis of transitivity would also uncover the participant involved in one discourse, how the speakers/writers position themselves in relation to the others (Brombal, Conti, & Szeto, 2024), and their role in the discourse (Mehmood, Amber, Ameer & Faiz, 2014). In this study, process, participants, and circumstance are analyzed to discover Bern's strategy to represent himself as a courageous person in spite of limitation he had due to his disease. The second phase of analysis is using CDA theoretical framework accompanied by Antconc software to uncover how the storytelling used as discursive practice and discourse as social practice. The analysis and the interpretation of the data is presented in the following procedures;

Phase 1: Transcription of Sam Bern's storytelling was downloaded from TEDx Talk YouTube. The researchers ensured that the transcription included verbal elements to be analyzed as the data of the research. The data are the segmented into meaningful units, that is clauses and sentences.

Phase 2: The data were analyzed using Halliday & Matthiessen (2004) framework of systematic functional linguistics which focus on the process types, the participants, the circumstances to understand how Berns constructed his identity and agency within the spoken discourse.

*Identifying the process types.* To identify the process types from segmented clauses and sentences, the verbs (process types) are then are classified according to Halliday's transitivity system categories, they are material, mental, relational, verbal, behavioral, or existential processes.

*Identifying Participants.* The participants as the entities of the process of the clauses are classified. For example, from material process, the participants can be classified as the actor (who does the action) or goal (what is affected).

*Identifying circumstances.* Circumstances provide additional information to the clauses like time, place, manner, cause, or condition of the clauses. For example, in clause "... at the age of two, I was diagnosed ...", this circumstance is classified into circumstance of time. In this phase, the frequencies of circumstance are also examined to whether the use of certain circumstance emphasizes something like challenges or limitation.

Phase 3: After analyzing the transitivity system, an interpretation is conducted to draw the dominant process types in Sam Bern's storytelling and to interpret the reason to certain dominant process types, participants, or circumstances.

Phase 4: The fourth phase of data analysis applies Fairclough's three-dimensional model (1989) to discover linguistics features such as vocabulary or rhetorical strategies used in the discourse. This step is called the analysis of textual. Then discursive practice and social practice is seen from how the storytelling is used as social practice by identifying broader ideological implications and societal values conveyed in the spoken discourse. In this phase, the finding of transitivity analysis is related to how Bern constructs his identity and resilience in his discourse.

Then, it is also interpreted the ideological implications to whether he reinforced a positive disability narrative.

Phase 5: To discover linguistic features, Antconc software is also used to analyze the lexical and concordance analysis of how Sam Berns describe himself that can help to draw the identity and the ideology represented in his storytelling. Linguistic choices can show how the storyteller shaped his self-representation.

## RESEARCH FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

### Research Findings

Having make a detailed matrix of clauses in the storytelling, this section would elaborate the research finding based on the research questions. The analysis is started from systemic functional linguistics by parsing the function of each element. Transitivity has three major elements; participants, processes, and circumstances. As the first step of critical discourse analysis using Halliday's systemic functional linguistic. The above table is a sample matrix of how the data is analyzed from the transitivity aspects which will be then interpreted based on critical discourse analysis of Fairclough's theory.

### The Storyteller's Strategy through the Analysis of Transitivity

#### Process Types

In the following analysis, a statistical table of process type is presented to see the distribution of processes appear in the storyteller discourse.

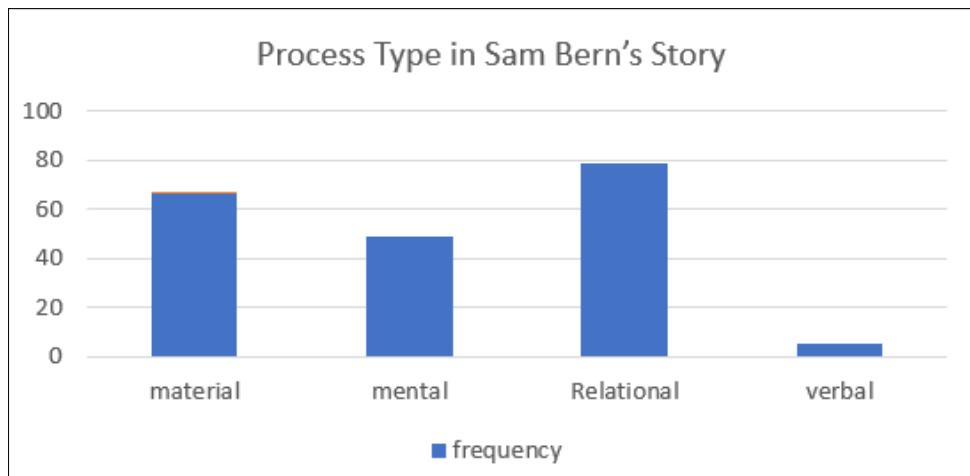


Figure 1. Process types in Sam Bern's story

It can be seen from the graphic that the most frequent process used in his storytelling is a relational process with 79 occurrences or 39.79% of the total number of processes used, followed by material process with 66 occurrences or 33.16%, and then mental process with 49 occurrences or 24.62%. The least used is verbal process with only five-time appearances or 2.51%. From the analysis, there is no behavioral process found. What can relational process provide as the explanation of its highest appearances? Relational process is the most frequently used with 39.79%. This process can mean interpersonal relationship, association, and connection between elements rather than emphasizing on the action or events. To show interpersonal relationships like seen in this sentence "I'm extremely lucky to have an amazing family". Other examples of relational process in the following table.

Table 1  
Representation of Relational Processes

NNo	Process: relational	Goal	range
11.	Now pit percussion	was	fun

12.	I	have	a very happy life
13.	The next aspect to my philosophy	is	that surround myself with people with people of high quality

In this storytelling, the speaker tried to describe himself to show the state, the condition or the attributes of himself or the entities he had. He tried to define himself to offer a deeper understanding about himself, his condition, his sickness and how he faced his struggle against progeria. In the second place of verbal occurrences is material processes with 33,16 appearances from whole verbal types used in the storytelling. The representation of material processes in the clause can be seen below.

Table 2  
Representation of Material Processes

No	Actor	Process: material	Goal	Circumstance
1	I	really couldn't carry	a regular sized snare drum	
2	Last year my mom and her team of scientists	published	the first successful Treatment Study	
3	So, my family and I	worked		with an engineer to design a snare drum harness

Material process construes the process of doings and happening (Martin, Matthiessen, and Painter, 1997 in Sihura, 2019). Sam Bern in his storytelling represent himself through the action he did as a dynamic and active person. Through the word “carry, work, help, and accomplish”, he emphasized that even his disease or physical disability can hinder him from doing what he could do himself or with others’ help. The participants which appear “I, my family and I, mom and her team of scientist” show that his inability to do something is also assisted by other. His style of storytelling using material processes can also be done as an engagement with the audience to build the audience’s senses and imagination. The use of a mental verb can also mean to grab the audience’s empathy, sympathy, and affection about his personal state and experience.

The third frequently used process is mental process with 24.62% appearances. The mental process called sensing helps to reveal the affection, perception and cognition of the speaker, (Agbo & Ijem, 2019). Late Sam Bern in his story had a frequent use of verb “feel or feeling” as much as 11 times like in “*I don’t want people to feel bad for me, I feel like I’m at my highest point,*” and also the verb “want” 8 times like “I don’t want people to feel bad for me, I want to be with, people of high quality.” From this mental verb, the storyteller wanted to emphasize his personal beliefs and personal thoughts about himself intending to connect with the audience on an emotional level. The storyteller’s strategy to use mental verb can be to gain the reader empathy about his belief, his thinking, and his feeling about life. Life with progeria has been uneasy for him, but he had a stance to reveal here about his intention and plan to be an inventor, and also about his choice or decision – making about his life by saying “I don’t have to think about progeria as an entity”.

## Participants

The table above shows the frequencies of participants in every process. Participants which mostly appear in this talk comes from relational process, as the highest appearances in the transitivity process, in form of carrier and token. The second mostly used participants come from material processes’ participant named actor.

Process types	Participants	Frequency of Occurrence
Material	Actor	53
	Goal	32
	Client	1
	Recipient	0
	Range	6
Mental	Senser	36
	Phenomenon	14
Relational Attributive	Carrier	14
	Attribute	20
Relational identifying	Token	17
	Value	18
Behavioural	Behaver	0
Verbal	Sayer	4
	Receiver	1
	Target	2
	Verbiage	2
Existential	Existent	6

Figure 2. Transitivity Analysis of Participants

Figure 2 shows the frequencies of participants in every process. Participants which mostly appear in this talk comes from relational process, as the highest appearances in the transitivity process, in form of carrier and token. The second mostly used participants come from material processes' participant named actor.

### Circumstance

The circumstance mostly used in the discourse is locative circumstance like seen '*in many obstacles*', '*influences in my life*', obstacles in my life. In these sample locative circumstances; Sam Bern described the influence and obstacles he faced. The second circumstances are equally shown in temporal and accompaniment with seven frequencies. The temporal circumstances are used to show his past time like seen in '*halftime a couple of years ago, last year, until last January*'.

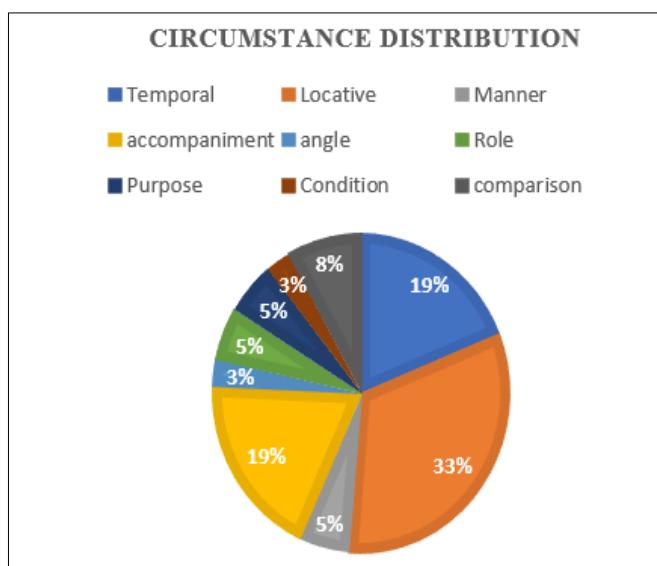


Figure 3. Circumstance Distribution

Something is unique here with the frequent use of accompaniment circumstance. "*playing snare drum with the marching band..., worked with an engineer, playing Spider-Man with the Foxboro High School Marching Band, hanging out with my friends, I was building with them*". The use of accompaniment circumstances can be interpreted that Sam Bern's limitation was completed by others, like his family, his friend, and his marching band. This can

also mean that his physical limitation or his disease is not the reason for being left alone, but he could build community and communication with other to overcome his inability.

### **The Ideology and Identity Built by the Storyteller His Personal Story Discourse as Discursive Practice**

Discourses as a discursive practice deal with the text production, text consumptions, distribution, and its interpretation (Ghani & Hussain, 2021). Like previously explained that discursive practice highlights the relationship between participants. The storyteller here was a 17-year-old teenager who suffered from a disease called progeria. He did the storytelling in a TEDx talk and the talk was published on TEDx official YouTube. This content has been watched by more than 52 million viewers since released until 2023. The other participants have been mentioned in table 7. Using Antconc software, the occurrences of certain participants, specifically pronoun, are examined. The used participants are I (91), me (21), my (31), mine (1), you (18), your (6), they (3), her (1), and we (10).

The emphasis of participant "I" highly appear in the talk. Pronoun "I" functions mostly function as an actor and as a token and carrier. In his storytelling, Sam Bern emphasized more on describing how he passed through his life with progeria disease, his feeling, and his condition with progerias. From the Antconc software, the word "I" is collocated with "I'm feeling, okay, feel, want, have, hope, know, and ignore" to describe about his present condition, his feeling, his possession, and his intention and his expectation. "I" is collocated with verb in past like "I was, wanted, had, worked" to describe about his past condition and hopelessness. "I" is also collocated with modality like "I can, may, will" to describe about what he can do and will do despite his limitation. The high frequency of using pronoun of first person singular like "I, me, my" can mean to construct a positive image of themselves if something is successful or projected to be successful (Pokhrel, 2022).

In this story, Sam Bern showed his success in accepting himself as a child with progeria. So, Sam Bern tried to negotiate his identity and resilience that could be learnt by the listeners or the viewer. When emphasizing on "*I don't want people to feel bad for me.*" , "*I'm okay with what I ultimately can't do because there is so much I can do.*" , he built himself as a successful and resilient person against progeria. Sam Bern also built an empowering discourse and attitude to himself and the audience by sharing his life philosophy in facing his obstacles due to progeria. By saying "*So I'm here today, to share with you my philosophy for a happy life. So, for me, there are 3 aspects to this philosophy*". He encouraged others, in this case the viewers or listeners through a positive outlook.

### **Discourse as a Social Practice**

Discourse as social practice examines the discourse as an activity in a social context. Through the analysis of discourse as a social practice, power relation and ideologies can be uncovered from a discourse or text. In this practice, language is not only seen as a tool to deliver information but also used as a media for social action because when people communicate, they are exchanging social meaning, identities, and relationship. The ideologies that the text is built is positivity and resilience. This is shown from several clauses that are positively encouraging: (1) "*So I'm here today, to share with you my philosophy for a happy life.*" (2) "*So with this philosophy, I hope that all of you, regardless of your obstacles, can have a very happy life as well.*" (3) "*Surround myself with people I want to be with, and keep moving forward*" From the sentences, positive nuances are shown to confidence and strength despite limitation.

Seeing the content of the video, the storyteller seemed to be trying to convince people to be courageous in spite of disability or disease. Sam Bern constructed his message using persuasive technique with broader social narrative about resilience, self-acceptance, and overcoming adversity. This also constructs disability advocacy. There are three aspects of his philosophies that are given; (1) *I'm okay with what I ultimately can't do because there is so*

*much I can do. (2) The next aspect to my philosophy is that I surround myself with people I want to be with, people of high quality, (3) The third aspect to the philosophy is, keep moving forward.* From the three aspects, the ideology of courage and confidence is shown. The discourse from the statements reinforces dominant social value of individual strength and perseverance, aligning with the ideal of self-empowerment. Thus, examining discourse practice allows the reader to see the discourse is build, circulated, and interpreted in society.

## Discussion

The result of the study shows that the storyteller, Sam Bern constructed his self-representation through dominant use of relational processes, which account for 39,79% of all the processes in the transitivity analysis. This finding suggests that Sam Berns Prioritizes defining his identity, attributes, and relationships rather than focusing solely on actions or events. This is in line with previous study conducted by Khalid (2024) that the high use of relational clauses could show a powerful emphasis on the connections and relationships between different people, concepts, and ideas. Jesudas (2025) in the analysis of story found that relational processes presented relationships and states of being, emphasizing the relationship between characters and symbolizing themes of love and loss.

The prominence of mental processes (24,62%) such as “feel”, “want” prompts a reinforcement on cognition, emotion, and belief (Halliday and Matthiessen, 2004; Gunawan, Kuraedah, Amir, Ubaidillah, & Boulahnane, 2023; Bibi, Ayub, & Basit, 2023; Dita, 2025). Through his story, Sam Berns wanted to inspire and be emotionally connected with the audience. In their study; Bibi, Ayub, & Basit (2023) reinforce that mental processes provide a relevance of characters’ inner thought, feelings, and comprehension, which can deepen of internal and external experiences. This means that the use of mental verbs strengthens the connection between the audience or the reader or the listener with the messengers so that they can mutually comprehend the inner intention.

Interestingly, the minimal use of verbal processes with the percentage of 2,51% denotes that Sam Bern relies less on reported speech or external validation, instead centering his narrative on personal experience and self-reflection. Verbal process is also called saying verb (Halliday & Matthiessen, 2014). Verbal processes can be expressed through verbs like refused to talk, have been arguing or can be expressed in assertions, questions, or responses (Fadilah & Kuswoyo, 2021). In another study, Maria & Wayan (2021) showed that verbal process can be expressed in the word saying such as telling, asking, and talking, for example in the use of “reprimanded” in the analysis of students short story. Ezz-Eddin (2024) in the analysis of “The Mark on The Wall Story” found that verbal process can be verbs ‘to speak’ such as speak, announce, ask, or report. In the use of verbal processes, Sam Bern tended to focused on personal experience to engage with the audience by saying “I want to share with you my philosophy for a happy life” through the use of “want to share”. This indicated that the less use of verbal processes is because of his desire to directly engage with the listeners.

Seen from the finding of Antconc software analysis, the high frequency of using first-person pronouns (I, me, my) strengthen his personal agency, allowing him to directly engage the audience and shape their perception of his philosophy. The finding of this study then offers a contribution to the field of storytelling and discourse analysis by providing a linguistic perspective on self-representation in disability narratives. The use of Halliday’s Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL) and Fairclough’s Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) intend to uncover how language choices can construct people’s identity and ideology. This suggests that linguistic features can help people inspire others despite limitation and disability. Through the use of Antconc analysis, this study offers empirical evidence on the frequency and collocation of key language features, giving a more systematic approach to comprehend storytelling strategies.

This study highlights the contribution to the context of disability discourse where storytelling, talk, or speech can challenge stereotypes and promote agency rather than framing disability solely as a limitation. In his story, Sam Berns emphasized perseverance and positivity like seen in his philosophy "*I'm okay with what I ultimately can't do because there is so much I can do*". Instead of focusing on his limitation, he strategically determined agency, social support, and a forward-looking mindset that impacts to the audience perception of disabilities. This discourse study can give implication to education, healthcare communication, and disability studies to spread that narrative framing can influence societal attitudes and policymaking. Furthermore, this study would be potentially used in advocacy work and educational setting particularly in developing students' critical literacy and empathy.

In spite of providing valuable insights, this study hasn't fully considered audience reception and interaction which is also significant in understanding the impacts of storytelling to the audience's perception and emotions. Furthermore, the data used is a single TEDx storytelling, which can mean the generalizability of findings to broader storytelling contexts or speakers with different background. Future research could conduct deeper studies on multiple storytelling or speeches to see linguistic patterns and identity construction strategies among various speakers. Next, while this study applies SFL and CDA theories, a deeper multimodal analysis can be conducted that include gestures, tone, facial expression, to gain more holistic understanding of how meaning is constructed beyond languages. Examining storytelling across different contexts and cultural backgrounds would also provide a more diverse perspective on identity construction and discourse strategies.

## CONCLUSION

This study intended to uncover the strategy, identity, and ideology of a teenager storyteller named Sam Bern in his empowering story in TEDx YouTube. Adopting Fairclough's three-dimension model of CDA (1995) and Halliday's transitivity of SFL, the current study draw conclusion to answer two research questions. From the transitivity SFL, the study found the storyteller frequently used relational process with 39.79% of the total number of processes used, followed by material process with 66 occurrences or 33.16%, and then mental process with 49 occurrences or 24.62%. Relational process can mean interpersonal relationship, association, and connection between elements rather than emphasizing on the action or events He tried to define himself, his condition, his sickness and how he faced his struggle against progeria. Through material process, Sam Bern represented himself as a dynamic and active person that even his disease or physical disability cannot hinder him from doing what he could do himself or with others' the help. This is also seen from the circumstance of accompaniment he used.

Concerning discourse as a discursive practice, the study found that Sam Bern showed his success in accepting himself as a child with progeria by trying to negotiate his identity and resilience. He frequently used "I" and you as the participant in the text. Sam Bern also built an empowering discourse and attitude to himself and the audience by sharing his life philosophy in facing his obstacles due to progeria. Sam Bern also tried to build the ideology of positivity and resilience, and also the ideology of courage and confidence from three life philosophies he shared.

While this study provides insights about strategy, identity, and ideology, some limitations must be acknowledged. This study only focused on one story which can limit the generalizability of the findings. Future research can investigate multiple stories or speakers to compare their strategies and ideological framework. The second limitation is in the theory used in the textual analysis, Fairclough's CDA and Halliday's SFL, without investigating audience responses. Incorporating and examining how audience give responses could provide a more comprehensive understanding the talk impact. Further study can also explore more on multimodal aspects of the storyteller's performance that also examine gestures, tone, and visual elements that support the meaning-making of the storytelling to gain deeper insights.

section, the author(s) should give his/her comprise statement regarding the major findings and implications of the study, but not the whole study. It is not suggested to bring any new information in the conclusion.

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## INFORMED CONSENT STATEMENT

Participation in this study is entirely voluntary. By agreeing to take part, the participants acknowledge that they have been informed about the purpose, procedures, potential risks, and benefits of the study. Participants understand that their identity are kept confidential and that all information they provide are used solely for research purposes.

## DATA AVAILABILITY STATEMENT

The data utilized in this study cannot be made publicly available due to strict adherence to privacy concerns and ethical obligations that safeguard participant confidentiality. This ensures compliance with ethical research standards and data protection regulations.

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