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A PUBLICATION OF:  
**DEPARTMENT** OF ENGLISH DRAMA,  
KADUNA STATE UNIVERSITY

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■ VOLUME 30 NUMBER | 0 APRIL, 2024

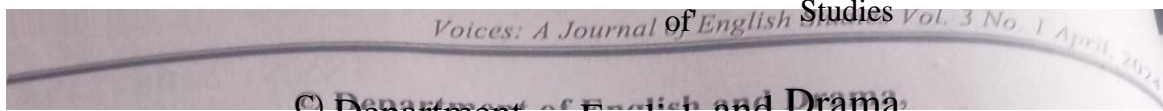
*Journal of English Studies.*

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Department of English and Dr  
Faculty of Arts,  
Kaduna State University.

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# Vol. 3 No. 1 April, 2024



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Kaduna State University.

VOICES:

A Journal of English Studies Vol.  
3 No. 1 April, 2024

Published by:

Department of English and Drama,  
Faculty of Arts, Kaduna State University.  
voicesjournal@gmail.com

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ISSN: 2408-7475

Printed by:

Izymac Fonts Ventures  
08033846421, 08090517494  
izymac@gmail.com

*Voices: A Journal of English Studies Vol. 3 No. 1 April, 2023*

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**TABLE OF CONTENTS**

The Nature of Nature in Niyi Osundare's the  
Eye of the Earth and Moonsongs  
Mu'azu Maiwada - - - - - 1

Analysis of Oral Legacy in Nupe Films  
Bala Albaji Alfa - - - - -

An X-Bar Analysis of Hausa and English Word Structures  
and Its Pedagogical Implications  
Olorunmade, Johnson E. F. - - - - -

La Femme Et Sa Virginite En Afrique Dans Tu T'appelleras  
Tanga Asseze L'africaine Et Seul Le Diable  
Le Savait De Calixthe Beyala  
Dibie Godfrey Atunu, PhD - - - - -

65

N la x rms of I •nst I'tcs\|ental Speech of l'testdent  
Muhammadu on 1 l'andetntc  
Monsurnt Arnmidе Nurudeen -

Le Devoir 1<sup>7</sup> t L •engagement Sociopolitiques Dans  
*Terre Des Hommes* Pilote De Et Le

Petit Prince D •antome De Saint-Exupéry  
Sunday Aondoavo• Gbande & Cletus Igba lhom, PhD -

A Pragmatic Study of Diverse Inscriptions on  
Commercial Buses in Kaduna Metropolis, Nigeria  
Andokari Zaku & Obi - - - - - 105  
James, Nmaduelu,

Broken  
Sa'adatu Amina Abdulkarim -

The Language of Elechi Amadi's The Concubine:  
A Syntactic Analysis  
H. D. Omenogor, PhD, & F. E. Oghiator, PhD, -

LANGUAGE OF ELF-CHI AMADI'S  
SYNTACTIC ANALYSIS

BY

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Abstract

This paper investigates some syntactic features of *The Concubine* (1966) by Elechi Amadi. The study treats the group types, mood and the transitivity patterns of the novel some of the nominal and verbal groups in the novel as they contribute significantly towards the advancement of the themes of the novel. (are extracted from the novel and analysed, the sentences; mood and the transitivity patterns in the novel are extracted and analyzed according to the model stated. The study reveals that: Amadi has used the groups appropriately, the nominal and the verbal groups dominate, different sentence patterns such as SPC, SPCA, ASP etc. are used. The indicative mood dominates in the novel. The other moods are equally applied by the novelist. The transitivity system shows that transitive and intransitive clauses are used, animate and inanimate actors and goals are also used. The transitivity system shows that Omakachi society is greatly influenced by the gods and it is the gods that always have the upper hand in any case of conflict between man and the gods. Ekwueme 's and Madume 's cases are examples. This paper investigates some syntactic features of the concubine (1966) by Elechi Amadi. This study treats the group types, mood the transitivity patterns of the novel and the information structure used in the sentences of the novel.

**KEYWORDS:** Syntax, Language, Transitivity, Mood, Nominal groups and Verbal groups.



THE LANGUAGE OF ELECHI AMADI'S *THE CONCUBINE*: A  
SYNTACTIC ANALYSIS

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**KEYWORDS:** Syntax, Language, Transitivity, Mood, Nominal groups and Verbal groups.

24 | **INTRODUCTION**

Chinua Achebe is undoubtedly a man of many facets a scientist. He as a Public

Administrator, a school master Pond! and

„ldicr. Among his novels are The Concubine (1966). The Great

and The Slave (1978). His plays include: (1973), and Ahe Dancer  
14, hannenburg (1977). He also published a social political work entitled. Ethics

Nigerian Culture (1982). The Concubine, our focus In this paper, powerful love story, written with effortless ease lucid and full prose (1966)”, as Palmer notes, the novel examines the problems of young lovers and man's relationship with the gods. At the time of the story, no destruction or distortion had been done to the African traditional heritage. The story is centered on Ihuoma, a lady with a superlative degree of beauty, highly with many positive intrinsic and extrinsic qualities. This heroine is so good that some critics describe her as a character that is too sweet to be real. Irrespective of her good qualities, Ihuoma is not able to marry successfully because of her relationship with the spirit world. Consequently, two young and promising men Emenike, and Ekwueme suffer untimely deaths because of their relationships with her.

The paper focuses on the syntactic analysis of the novel. It treats the group types, sentence types, mood and the transitivity systems of the novel. According to Chomsky, syntax is the study of the principles and processes by which sentences are constructed in a particular language (1).” Syntax stipulates or spells out a set of rules users of a given language must follow (Agbedo, 97, O'Grady 537 and Anagbogu et al. 37). From the above fact, we can conclude that syntax is the branch of language study that deals with how words are brought together to produce grammatical constructions. Syntax constitutes one of the various levels of stylistic analysis.

Our grammatical model in this paper is the Neo-Firthian systemic Functional Grammar (S.F.G.). As Butler notes, on application of systemic linguistics, 'The stylistic features of a text or body of texts may involve any or all of the levels of phonology, graphology and form (grammar and lexis). Each of these levels of scale and category model, provides theoretical apparatus, for a comprehensive description



of texts (197).' The above view shows that systemic linguistics embraces grammatical analysis of any text at any level.

## 130

### Theoretical Framework

Two linguistic theories are noted to feature when examining the text, they are: Transformational Generative Grammar (developed by Noam Chomsky (1957) and Neo-Functional Systemic Grammar as indicated in Halliday M.A. K (1961), Margaret Berry (1975), Halliday and Hasan (1976), and James (1972). The models examine human language and stress surface structure and deep structure. Deep structure is realized in systemic Grammar by recursion on sentence relation beyond the surface level.

Our choice of linguistic theory is the Systemic Grammar because under it, a clause can be combined into SPCA structure to produce as many clauses possible. This theory proposes that grammar must have bearing on experience and must not be divorced from it. A theory derives its validity or usefulness from the aggregate of experience.

### Methodology

This researcher studied the text that is the primary data for this study (The Concubine (1966) by Elechi Amadi critically and digested every part of the novel. Critical works on the novel were also consulted in order for the researcher to have a comprehensive understanding of the facts of the novel.

### Collection of Data Method

The researcher went through the novel chapter by chapter and extracted some sentences that contributed clearly towards the advancement of the theme in the novel. Expressions in the primary text that are examples of nominal groups and verbal groups are also taken for analysis.

## THE GROUP TYPE IN THE NOVEL

Tomori notes that "a group is one or more words that occupy a distinctive grammatical slot in a stretch of linguistic signals (18)." Attention is paid on the nominal and verbal groups in this paper because they dominate in the novel.

2.1 THE NOMINAL GROUP: Butler observes that we may take the 'nominal group' to be equivalent to "noun phrase". (19) "Within the noun phrase, the head is pre or post modified by other Words"... (Lamidi, 99). The primary elements of structure in the nominal group are: M(odifier) H(ead word) and Q(ualifier)""

as Butler notes (19). Still, he notes that "at primary delicacy, the Halliday's

given below would have the same structure namely. If) all the ten houses on the river Side (19)

Sts.

3- the finest old houses on the river Side( 19)

nd

Malidadi and Ilesan further note that the nominal group 'consists of a head and modifier with modification constituting its logical structure: "The modifier is optional and it includes elements, some of which precede the head and some of follow it (39)." The elements that come before the head are pre-modifiers while the ones that come after it are post-modifiers.

The nominal group features prominently in The Concubine and they represent human beings, spirits, gods and some basic concepts. They function as mostly

subjects, objects, and complements. With the aid of the instances of the nominal group, Amadi is able to present an exact copy of the village life among his people.

The major message of the novel is that the gods greatly influence the affairs of man. With the aid of the nominal group, Amadi demonstrates the fact that the gods are the performers of most of the actions that affect man negatively. Clear instances are the deaths of Emenike, Madume and Ekwueme.

Some examples of the nominal group in the novel are underlined in the following sentences.

i. Beauty seems to carry sorrow with it, ugly people do not suffer as much as the beautiful (35).

ii. Several Spirits swore to kill you ..(58).

M H

iii. This thing is obviously the act of a god (70).

MHM H Q

He unleashes all the powers at his command and they are fatal (196).

MM H Q

of lock-chest'

Ihuoma's late husband apparently died (195).

Madume's real trouble began after he had assaulted Ihuoma... (95).

i.

I le all (he power %

I low could he show no f e.;j

1 J I val 10).

and t h'. /

With the aid of scncnc onc above, tJjc novctJt;t ablc t') into the thoughts of his heroine, Iit10Îja. Other nominal in , represent human beings, Spirits and sorric basJC concept".

They function as subjects, objects and complement; and they are demonstrate that the gods influence the affairs of man.

2.2 The Verbal Group This group function as predicate in Butler notes that the verbal class of the unit 'group' is that grouping by its potentiality of occurrence at the Elements of clause structure (24).

nature of this group, Muir points out that it is one of the most complex areas; English grammar (41)." This complexity occurs because many Systemic take place in the verbal group and there is no one to one correspondence a term in a system and an element of structure realizing this choice. We interested in how Amadi has used the various tenses to project the 1 , the novel. Some examples of the verbal group in the novel are as we have below.

i. Beauty seems to ç QüY sorrow with it (35). (simple present tense) Several spirits swore to kill you ... (55). (Simple past tense) iii. This thing is obviously the act of the gods ...(7). (simple present tense) It would be a terrible mistake to marry Ihuoma (105). (Simple future in the past tense)

v. They don't want you to have any thing to do with Ihuoma (58). (simple present tense)

At the entrance to Ihuorna's compound, 'Ekwueme his 'wifct(1

Besides, beauty not always mean happiness (214) (Simple

That was when Ekwueme died (216). (Simple past tense)

My child, your husband Is Ill, very ill (164). (Simple present tense)

young women these days are unobservant and most insensitive (164)

re has used mostly the present tense and the past tense. The future comes in OCCasionally.

His frequent use of the present tense is stylistically significant because it makes his readers feel that the discussion of the characters being listened to. Besides, the present tense makes his presentation real because his aim is to present what occurs often in the present time. The past makes it POSSible for him to use the literary device called 'flash-back'

a) Several spirits swore to kill you Transitive

b) ... Your husband is ill (164). Intransitive

The usage Of "kill" above signifies that the gods often fashion man's fate in the

#### 4. Mood

As Omenogor notes, mood is the form of a verb which shows the manner in which an action is expressed. Three moods exist in English language. They are the indicative mood, the imperative mood and the subjunctive mood (41). According to Waldorn and Zeiger, "The indicative mood is the mood of fact, or rather of statement presented as fact, the imperative mood is the mood of command and request while the subjunctive mood is the mood of doubt, condition, wish, imagination and the like. (29)."

Butler notes that in the 'mood' options of English provided by Halliday, An independent clause (a sentence) is either (indicative) having an expressed subject or (imperative), having no expressed subject. Clauses which are (indicative) go on to select either (interrogative) or (declarative).

Interrogative clauses are either (yes/No) (polar interrogatives) or (Wh') (introduced by Wh-words such as 'who' 'what' 'where'), declarative clauses select either (assertion) or exclamation. Clauses with the feature (imperative) can be either (jussive) or (optative)... (44).

A careful examination of *The Concubine* reveals that Amadi has used mostly the indicative mood, some sentences in the imperative mood and a few others in the subjunctive mood. Amadi's major usage of the indicative mood agrees with

indicative in the imperative mood and a subjunctive major usage of the indicative mood Waldh0111's and Zcigr's obscuration on the indicative mood. The indicative mood is much the most important in English; perhaps percent of the verbs employed in speaking and writing are in the indicative mood (29).

as follows:

Instances of sentences in the indicative mood in the novel are (i) Emenike and others // tried to drag //me // across a stream// // (50).

S

(ii) Ekwe, his only son //mad (174).

S

(ii) A mad son// was // as good as a dead one,// probably //

worse

S

C

(iv) 'Do//you//think //Ekwe / is //mad// (pg. 174)?" P

S P S P C

(vi) with the Sea-king, //it// is // impossible //(196).

Examples of sentences in the imperative mood in the novel are stated

(i) Accept // my sacrifice // and spare // me (59). conj. P

c

(ii). Oh! Amadioha //please help/ lour son (175).

s c (iii) 'Come' (102)!

(iv) don 't forsake//him//now (175).

(v) 'Speak // to him //ifyou want to (192).'" c

The followings are examples of sentences in the subjunctive mood in the text.

(i) Beauty // seems to carry // sorrow // with it (35).

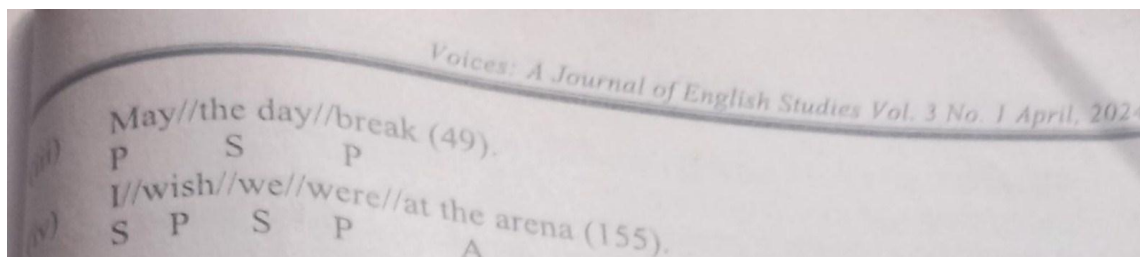
S

C

C

(ii) Well, // she // could be // someone's concubine (196).

135



sentences In the Indicative

Jic.ncc eg. among Ihuoma's the sentences spiritual the

that to the emot10n of the and the

view is supported by the of Quirk and usual function of a question In a discourse is "to request the listener the nd verbally the information that the question sccks (306)]' Arnadl

the imperative mood used Sentences enables the to express readers strong to get appeal, into the command thoughts of and the instructions.characters oh elaborate use of direct speech. At times, the readers have•. spoken to throtl= directly by the characters.

### Transitivity:

is concerned with the of process expressed in the clause; with the participants in this process, animate and inanimate, and with the various attributes and circumstances of the process and the participants (38).

Transitivity has something to do with the relations between the process of verbs and other participants. A functional relationship exists between types of processes For instance, action processes and the types of participants involved in the processes. Such processes involve for instance, the subject or the actor which performs the action and the object or goal towards which the action is directed. The ideational function of language



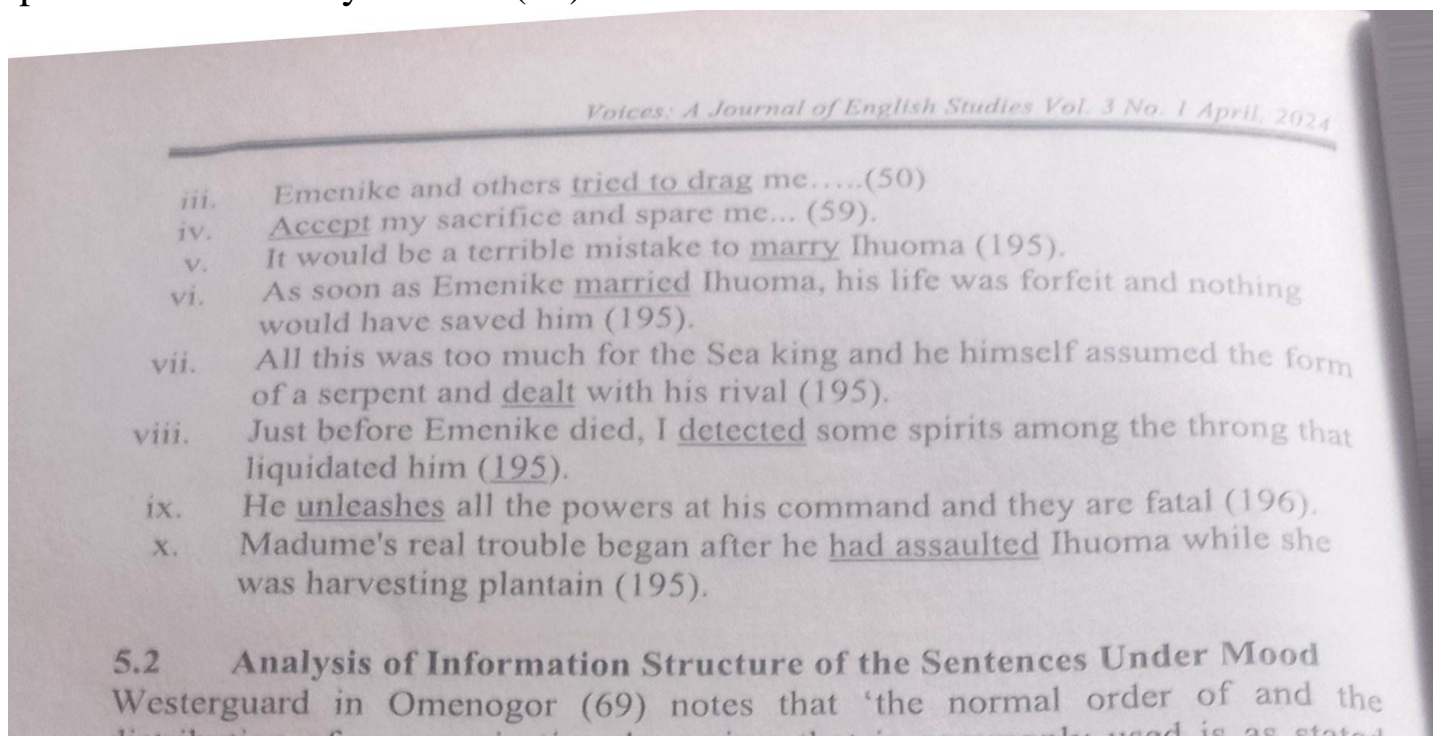
has therefore provided a structure that contains functional elements such as Actor, process and Goal.

while analyzing the transitivity system in the novel, we shall examine the clauses and the intransitive clauses and identify the participants in the

verb processes.

### .1 Examples of Independent Clauses with Transitive Verbs in the novel

- i. Beauty seems to carry sorrow with it (35).
- ii. Several spirits swore to kill you... 136(58).



distribution of communicative dynamism that is commonly used is as stated below:

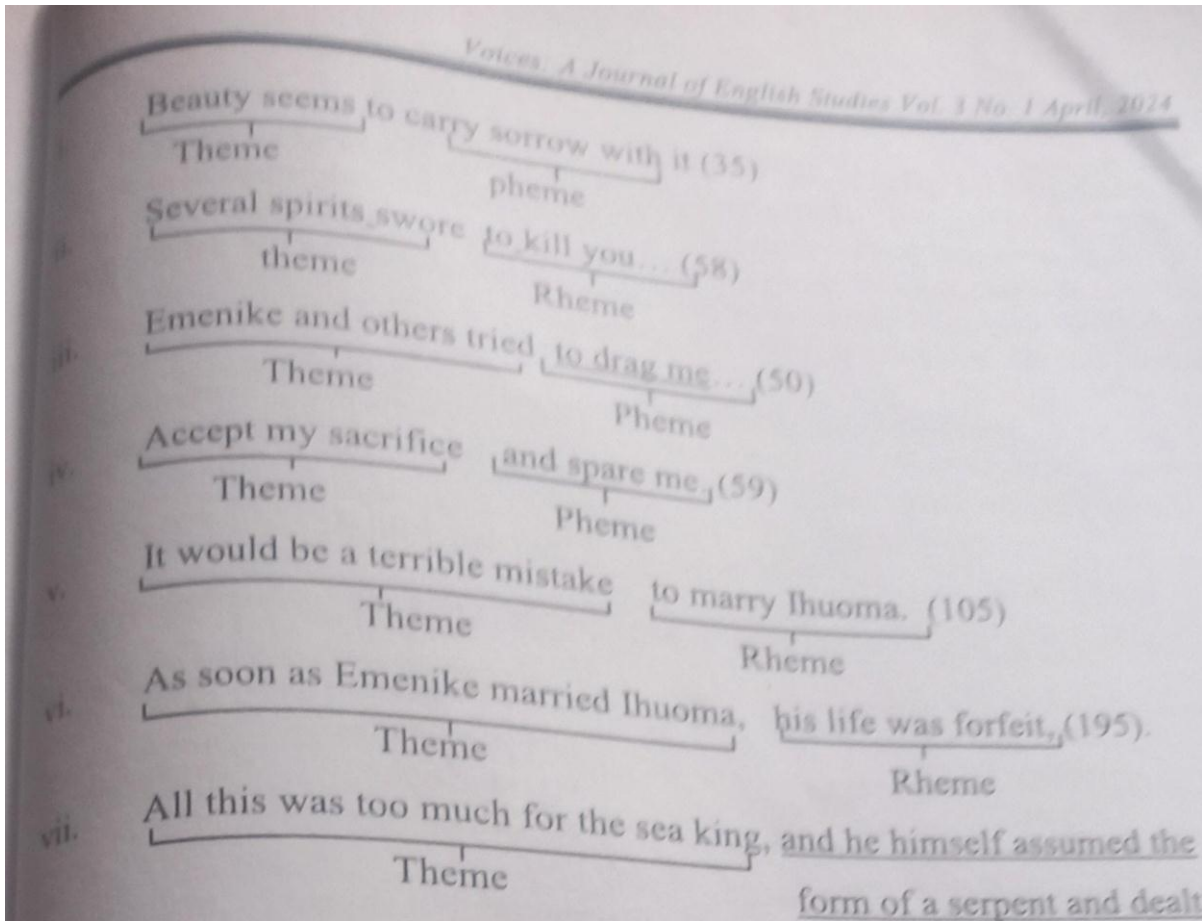
The boy kicked the ball  
Theme Transition Rheme (69)

Greenbaum and Quirk also in Omenogor (69) define 'theme' as:

The name we give to the initial part of any structure when we consider it from an informational point of view.

'Rheme' can be seen as that part of a sentence that gives new information about the theme. In communication, we can always differentiate between old information and new information which can also be called 'given' information. As Chafe (30) notes, given information is the:

"the knowledge which the speaker assumes" to be possessed already by the hearer at the time of the utterance. "



rÁel. ( 1  
with 3 <

iii. Just before Ernenike died, I detected some through spirits among the

Theme

that liquidated him. (195)

Rheme

ie his comman

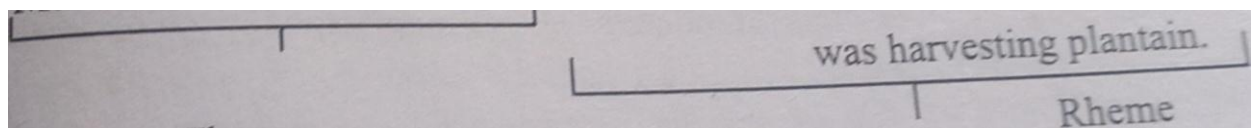
The e

unleashes all

the powers at and they are fatal. (1=96)

Rherne

Madurne's real trouble began after he had assaulted Ihuoma while



Theme

A ./OUV/(J/ o/ Em;' /i', J/

In the analysis of sentences (i) to (x), the first parts of the sentences are the 'theme' while the second parts are called the 'rheme'. As carrier theme is the 'given' information while the rheme which are the I, the ones that add most to the advancing process of communication.

the highest degree of communicative dynamism according to the information structure of the information in the sentences.

### 5.3 Analysis of the Transitive Clause

S/Nos	Participant (Actors)	Processes	Participants (Goals)	Process Types
1.	Beauty	Seems to ca	<u>Sorrow</u> with it	material
2.	Several spirits	Swore to kill	<u>You (Madurne)</u>	material
3.	Emenike and others	tried to drag	Me(Ekweueme) across a stream	material
4.	You (gods). . . You ods	accept spare	My sacrifice Me (Madume)	material
5.	What you propose (marriage)	Can bring	nothing but shame to me (Ihuoma) and regrets to you (Ekwueme)	material
6.	It	Would be to ma	a terrible mistake Ihuoma	material
7.	.he himself(Seaking) Sea-king	assumed dealt	with the form of a serpent his rival (Madume)	material

8.

. I(Anyika,  
the... native  
doctor) . the  
thron

detected  
liquidated

Some  
spirits.Him  
(Emenike)

material

*Voices: A Journal of English Studies Vol. 3 No. 1 April, 2024*

9.	He (the Sea-king)	Unleashes	all the powers at his command	material
10.	... he (Madume) ... she (Ihuoma)	had assaulted Ihuoma was harvesting	Ihuoma Plantain	material
11.	...Ekwueme	Met	His wife (Ahurole)	material
12.	Ekwe, you	Can't deny	It (that he was in Ihuoma's house at niight)	material
13.	...Emenike Nothing	Married would have saved	Ihuoma him (Emenike)	material
14.	I (Anyika, the native doctor)	Stumbed (stumbled)	Water spirit	material
15.	...(Native doctor)	Can be persuaded (action Not yet performed)	He sea king husband	material

The above analysis shows that abstract concepts, spirits, gods, human characters in the novel and the sea king are the actors. There are animate and inanimate actors. Contrary to the above observation, the transitive clauses with man as actor have less centrally transitive verbs with less lexical power. Examples of such verbs are 'marry' (105) 'met' (155), 'harvesting' (195) etc. Most of these clauses do not have the gods as goals. The pattern of transitivity Amadi displays makes the readers feel that the gods are the attackers of the helpless man whenever there is a conflict involving them.

The usage of the above actors, processes and goals has some stylistic significance in the novel. The transitivity options analyzed above contribute to

the reader's feeling of sympathy for man following his helplessness before the gods. A good number of the transitive clauses depict the gods as actors performing cruel actions against men. The clauses where the gods are act

contain centrally transitive verbs of lexical powerful nature like 'kill' (58), 'deals' (195), 'liquidated' (195) and 'unleashes' (196).

5.2 Examples of Independent Clauses with Intransitive Verbs in the Novel

- i. "How can a man who marries you ever regret' (92)?"
- ii. "The marriage will not work out well" (184).
- iii. She was to die untouched by men (196).
- iv. May the day break.
- v. "Why is he behaving this way' (175)?"

5.4 Analysis of the Intransitive Clauses

S/Nos	Participant (Actors)	Processes	Participants (Goals)	Process Types
1.	.... A man who (Ekwueme)	Regret	None	material
2.	She	was to die	"	material
3.	...the day	Break	"	material
4.	he (Ekwueme)	is behaving	"	behavioural
5.	The marriage	Will...work	"	material
6.	Madume's real trouble	Began	"	material
7.	Emenike	Died	"	material
8.	Ihuoma's late husband	Died	"	
9	Ekwueme	died	"	Material

of the

The analysis above sentences show that animate and inanimate actors have been used. the transitivity pattern noticed here shows that man does not take any actions (patticularly offensive ones) against the gods. Instead, the gods act

him wh  
IvAl/v)'lldlly20t2h4eIn the

the in (hat he (human in dcpljt character

, it,.ationS the

clauses lie the fact that they

why the

her and Ekwueme III goalnot

they do the to clauses be able in to express their meanings.

is not performed upon an object (34) of the intransitive an transitive is significant verb because is one denoting they express an actionthe that cannot be with transitive verbs. Besides, it makes Amadi's interesting as variety in of clause structure is enhanced.

,oov.researchgate.net) process activity is classed into existential relational,

mental and verbal groups. Further detailed classification placed creating, changing, doing(to) and acting under class.

•behaving' was placed under 'behavioural' class. Most of our actions in this novel are acting or doing things. For instance, the sea king acted, the native doctorS acted, the Ekwueme and Emenike and even Madume all acted at one time or the other. 'material' actions dominated in the novel. The significance of these actions is that the novel tells a story of actions and counter actions by the gods and man against one another. However, according to the events of the novel, the gods won indicating the fact that man is at the

Omokachi society. mercy of the gods in

## 6. Findings



Elechi Amadi has used the nominal and the verbal group types appropriately, the nominal group dominate, various sentence patterns are used, various moods are used, the indicative mood dominate are used. Transitive and intransitive clauses have been used. An analysis of processes in the clause system shows that material class of processes are mainly used.

## 7. Conclusion

To conclude this paper, we reiterate that Amadi uses the group appropriately.

The nominal group and the verbal group dominate in the novel, various sentence patterns such as: SPC S PC ASPetc, are displayed. Expectedly, the indicative mood dominates in the novel, the imperative mood and the subjunctive moods

142

7

are also utilized, Lastly, the (1Vtnsitivigy sys(ctl) the novel show case. application or transitive and ive clauses an ltnalc• and inanimate and goals. The transitivity system affirms the fact that man lives greatly inllucnced by the gods. The gods always have the tipper hand in any conflict(s). All the above features ninc in making Anv,ldl del t v, message to the audience creditably. Material type of processes dominate , transitivity patterns while in 101ma(ion structures of' the sentences arc

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