A COMPARATIVE STUDY OF THE REPRESENTATION OF MALE AND FEMALE IN SEFI ATTA’S NOVELS EVERYTHING GOOD WILL COME AND SWALLOW: A SYSTEMIC FUNCTIONAL APPROACH.

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Abstract

Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL) – the broad theory developed by Halliday (1985a) – has emphasised the relevance of language use in context to make three simultaneous meanings known as the interpersonal (realized through mood patterns), the experiential (realized through transitivity patterns) and the textual (realized through theme patterns). In this paper, the focus is on the transitivity choices drawn on by both male and female participants in Sefi Atta’s novels Everything Good Will Come and Swallow. This study is an attempt to investigate the representation of male and female personae both in their differences and similarities through their selection of process types in various circumstances in two novels written by the same author. The main objective to be reached here is to show how the comparative study of male’s and female’s experience both in Everything Good Will Come and Swallow elicits the authorial ideology. Before dealing with the practical analysis of transitivity patterns and the interpretation derived from this analysis, the theoretical framework provides an overview of the theory.

Introduction:

Language and gender is a field of research in sociolinguistics and applied linguistics that investigates varieties of speech related to a particular gender, or social norms for such gendered language use (Tannen, 2006).

The present study is premised on the Systemic Functional Approach to text analysis, developed by Halliday (1985a) and deals specifically with one of three strands of meanings, which can be simultaneously realized in a text – the experiential meaning expressed through the system of transitivity patterns. In short, this paper seeks to answer the following question: How does Sefi Atta represent experience via the male and female personae in Everything Good Will Come and Swallow? The main objective is to investigate the representation of male and female personae both in their differences and similarities in two novels written by the same author.

Transitivity theory:

The theory of transitivity – as developed by Halliday (1985a) – is the encoding of experiential meaning. Transitivity is the cornerstone of the semantic organization of experience. Then, carry out a transitivity analysis consists in determining the process type, the participants and the circumstances realized in a clause. The process types system – realized by a verbal group – is the major system, which specifies the actions, expresses the meaning of a clause and determines the roles of the associated participants – realized by nominal groups. Six main process types can be distinguished:

- Material processes with their associated participants: Actor, Goal / Range and Beneficiary;
- Mental processes with their implicated participants: Senser and Phenomenon;
- Behavioural processes with their related participants: Behave and Behaviour / Phenomenon;
- Verbal processes with their implicated participants: Sayer, Receiver and Verbiage;
- Existential processes with their implicated participant: Existent;
- Relational processes with their related participants: Carrier and Attribute; Token and Value; Possessor and Possessed.

The circumstances –expressed either through the adverbial groups or the prepositional groups– can occur with any process type to show extent (duration, distance); location (time, place); manner (means, quality, comparison); cause; matter; role and accompaniment.

The transitivity theory as developed by Halliday and being applied by scholars and students constitutes relevant theoretical backgrounds and practical analyses for the understanding of what language is, how it functions and how it is structured to make meanings about experience. Instances of transitivity analysis of a literary work are: Koussouhon (2013). Koussouhon and Allagbe (2013); Koussouhon and Koutchade (2011).

**Transitivity analysis of the excerpts from Everything Good Will Come and Swallow:**

The transitivity analysis of the excerpts from Sefi Atta’s *Everything Good Will Come* and *Swallow* requires the identification of the different process types and the statistical data related to them so as to see how the experiential meaning is realized in these novels and how far this meaning contributes to the understanding of male and female characters’ experience (refer to Tables N°1, N°2 and N°3).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Processes</th>
<th>Enitan</th>
<th>Enitan’s father</th>
<th>Enitan’s mother</th>
<th>Enitan’s husband</th>
<th>Sheri</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Material processes</td>
<td>93 [24.60%]</td>
<td>95 [25.13%]</td>
<td>165 [43.65%]</td>
<td>54 [14.29%]</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mental processes</td>
<td>76 [53.15%]</td>
<td>26 [18.18%]</td>
<td>88 [61.54%]</td>
<td>28 [19.58%]</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Behavioural processes</td>
<td>23 [38.33%]</td>
<td>13 [21.67%]</td>
<td>33 [55%]</td>
<td>12 [20%]</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Verbal processes</td>
<td>41 [27.52%]</td>
<td>47 [31.54%]</td>
<td>80 [53.69%]</td>
<td>22 [14.77%]</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Causative processes</td>
<td>03 [21.43%]</td>
<td>03 [21.43%]</td>
<td>05 [35.71%]</td>
<td>03 [21.43%]</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Existential processes</td>
<td>00 [0%]</td>
<td>00 [0%]</td>
<td>00 [0%]</td>
<td>01 [07.14%]</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Relational processes</td>
<td>24 [27.59%]</td>
<td>18 [20.69%]</td>
<td>33 [37.93%]</td>
<td>14 [16.09%]</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Identifying</td>
<td>02 [6.25%]</td>
<td>09 [28.12%]</td>
<td>08 [25%]</td>
<td>06 [18.75%]</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Circumstantial</td>
<td>08 [19.05%]</td>
<td>06 [14.29%]</td>
<td>18 [42.86%]</td>
<td>05 [11.90%]</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Possessive</td>
<td>03 [8.11%]</td>
<td>05 [13.51%]</td>
<td>15 [40.54%]</td>
<td>10 [27.03%]</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td>273 [28.56%]</td>
<td>222 [23.22%]</td>
<td>445 [46.55%]</td>
<td>155 [16.21%]</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table N°3: Gendered distribution of the process types in the excerpts from *Everything Good Will Come*

The gendered distribution of the process types in the overall excerpts –from *Everything Good Will Come*– clearly reveals that the female characters (46.55%) are the most expressive gender through the process types while male characters (23.22%) rank second and people of unspecified gender occur the least. Besides, female characters are respectively predominant with mental processes (61.54%), behavioural processes (55%), verbal processes (53.69%) and material processes (43.65%). This is to show that female characters and especially the narrator Enitan are mostly...
involved both in psychological and physiological actions about women’s plight, human conditions, which lead them to say things about some concrete and tangible actions to be undertaken by women themselves and all human beings. It is worth mentioning that other participants (14.02%), which refer to animals and things initiating the process types, are not included in this study.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Process Types</th>
<th>Tolani</th>
<th>Male</th>
<th>Female</th>
<th>Unspecified gender</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Material processes</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tolani</td>
<td>136[23.37%]</td>
<td>155[26.63%]</td>
<td>271[46.56%]</td>
<td>91[15.64%]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>99[16.54%]</td>
<td>44[7.22%]</td>
<td>190[31.43%]</td>
<td>32[12.03%]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>46[31.29%]</td>
<td>25[17.01%]</td>
<td>95[64.62%]</td>
<td>27[18.37%]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Verbal processes</td>
<td>48[18.75%]</td>
<td>79[30.86%]</td>
<td>150[58.59%]</td>
<td>27[10.55%]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Causative processes</td>
<td>08[26.67%]</td>
<td>06[20%]</td>
<td>16[53.33%]</td>
<td>01[03.33%]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Existential processes</td>
<td>00 [0%]</td>
<td>00 [0%]</td>
<td>00 [0%]</td>
<td>00 [0%]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Relational processes</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attributive</td>
<td>43[18.86%]</td>
<td>43[18.86%]</td>
<td>108[47.37%]</td>
<td>13[05.70%]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Identifying</td>
<td>03[3.53%]</td>
<td>14[16.47%]</td>
<td>10[11.77%]</td>
<td>05[05.88%]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Circumstantial</td>
<td>06[10.34%]</td>
<td>11[18.97%]</td>
<td>21[36.21%]</td>
<td>03[05.17%]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Possessive</td>
<td>08[11.94%]</td>
<td>16[23.88%]</td>
<td>32[47.76%]</td>
<td>06[8.96%]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td>397 [22.92%]</td>
<td>393 [22.69%]</td>
<td>893 [51.56%]</td>
<td>205 [11.84%]</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table N°4:Gendered distribution of the process types in the excerpts from Swallow

The gendered distribution of the process types in the overall excerpts –from Swallow– displays the female characters (51.56%) as the most expressive gender throughout all the process types and the male characters (22.69%) occur second in rank whereas the people of unspecified gender occur the least. Thus, Sefi Atta’s Swallow has diversely expressed gender roles in order to convey a specific message about them. It is worth noticing that the female characters are mostly associated with mental processes (71.43%), behavioural processes (66.62%), verbal processes (58.59%) and causative processes (53.33%). As a result, the female characters and particularly Tolani –one of the narrators– are predominantly implicated both in psychological and physiological actions about women’s plight, drug-dealing, human conditions, which lead them to say things in one way or the other and to become some agents of their own ruin or restoration.

Material processes:

NB: The participants initiating the process types appear in brackets and they are labelled according to the keys displayed in the appendices. The clauses that come next, are sorted out in a numerical order for the comparative analysis.

- Similarities:
  1- Entire books dedicated [Unsp] to the salvation of African women’s genitals
  2- [but my aunt (F) used her so-called powers. She (F) protected women and children in our town with the help of women of her co-op]
  3- and [Unsp] divide our country like one of their bloody tea cakes
  4- Men (M) who beat [men (M) who stole, men (M) who could kill]
  5- Government minister [Unsp] steals […] State governor (Unsp) steals, contractor (Unsp) steals. President (M) steals
  6- that nothing a woman (Female) does [justifies rape]
  7- He (M) will give us drugs [(F) to swallow … but I (Tol) did not take risks with mine]
  8- [In those brief seconds between owning and giving up my virginity, he (Male) licked the walls of my mouth clean…] he (Male) pierced my bowels
Mr. Salako (M) was rubbing his pelvis against me [I (Tol) pushed him back so hard]

Clauses (8, 9) from the two novels, depict the narrators Enitan and Tolanirespectivelyas the victims of rape or sexual harassment.

Differences:
10-[How could I (Eni) defer to a man whose naked buttocks I (Eni)’d seen? Touched?]
(Eni) Obey him [without (Eni) choking on my humility, like a fish bone down my throat?]
11-And what would I (Tol) do then? [(Tol) Remain his girlfriend forever?]
12-[(Tol) thinking about] how I (Tol)’d almost paid him (B) [(Tol’b) to marry me]

In Clauses (10, 11, 12) from the two novels, the narrator Enitan is acting as an emancipated and less submissive woman while the narrator Tolanias an indecisive and submissive woman.

Mental processes:

Similarities:
13-and I (Eni) no longer imagined prison cells because I’d seen the inside of one
14-I (Tol) couldn’t imagine going to the hospital [she (F) worked in]

Clauses (13, 14) from the two novels, indicate Enitan’s refusal to imagine prison cells because she has a negative perception of them and Tolani’s inability to imagine going to a public hospital because she has a bad experience of it.

15-I (Eni) viewed the world with a bad squint, a travelling eye
16-after that, (Eni) seeing struggles [I (Eni) could do little about]
17-then I (Tol) saw [how my mother (Tol’m) struggled after he died]

Clauses (15, 16, 17) from the two novels, denote Enitan’s and Tolani’s perception of the world and its ‘struggles’.

18-I (Eni) blamed myself for putting my child at risk for another miscarriage
19-I (Tol) blamed myself [I (Tol) should have stopped Rose and could have]

Clauses (18, 19) from the two novels, express Enitan’s self-incrimination for her child’s life and Tolani’s self-incrimination for her girlfriend’s death.

20-and yes, people (Unsp) should be allowed to say what [they (Unsp) want]
21-Women were not (M) allowed (F) to form secret societies as men did

Clauses (20, 21) from the two novels, claim freedom of thought or action for people and especially women.

22-Parents (Unsp) allow him (Male) to do [what he (Male) wants]
23-What kind of man (M) would allow his wife (F) to ride a motorcycle [when only men (M) were allowed to?]

In clauses (22, 23) from the two novels, ‘parents and ‘man’ are respectively the carefree agents of their son’s wrongdoings or deviations and his spouse’s motorbike riding within a patriarchal or conservative society.

Differences:
24-I (Eni) want them out of my house [about her in-laws]
25-I (Tol) don’t want [(Tol) to be one of those women who ends up old and dry because a man disappointed her]

Clauses (24, 25) from the two novels, express Enitan’s wish for marital life as an authoritarian wife while Tolani’s wish for marital life depicts her as a submissive wife ready for compromise on a lifelong relationship.

26-I (Eni) only knew how [(Eni) to think for myself]
27-I (Tol) don’t know anything about any women’s liberation

Clauses (26, 27) from the two novels, express cognition about Enitan’s self-reliance, which contrasts with Tolani’s lack of cognition or her reliance on others for ‘women’s liberation’.

28-Uncle Fatai (Male) blamed the British for the fighting: Them and their bloody empire
29-(Unsp) hope [our boys (Male) finish them off]
30-Africans not ready for democracy rule. We (Unsp) know exactly where [we (Unsp) want to go in this country]
31-I (Eni) believed [I (Eni) could live nowhere else]
32-I (Eni) hoped [to be buried (Unsp) nowhere else]
33-And I (Eni) didn’t worry [that she (Unsp) wasn’t born in a more fortunate place, like America]
34-I (Eni) have faith in Africa anyway. [A continent (Place) that can produce a Mandela?]
35-I (Tol) could not believe [I (Tol) would not see him for the rest of my life]
36-[If you (Tol)‘re looking for someone (Tol) to blame] [Tol] blame yourself
37-I (Tol) blamed myself [I (Tol) should have stopped Rose and could have]
38-but I (Tol)‘d felt the same heaviness before [when my father (M) died]
39-I (Tol) decided [as I (Tol) said the words... I (Tol) was a failure, a complete one]

Clauses (28, 29) from Everything Good Will Come, illustrate a man’s cognition about the British as the agents of ‘fighting’ in Nigeria, show the hope for Nigerian territorial integrity. Clauses (30, 31, 32, 33, 34) from Everything Good Will Come, denote Enitan’s beliefs and hope for Africa and especially her motherland as an intrepid woman. On the contrary, clauses (35, 36, 37, 38, 39) from Swallow, present Tolani’s perception and cognition about herself—not others—as the agent of her girlfriend’s death and express Tolani’s lack of belief in her father’s death as a desperate woman.

40-[At dawn I (Eni) forced myself] (Eni) to imagine my father
41-My spirit will not allow me (Tol) to be a smuggler

In clauses (40, 41) from the two novels, while Enitan is the agent who causes herself to imagine her father in custody, Tolani’s spirit (or herself) appears as the opposite agent who psychologically causes her not to be a smuggler.

42-But I (Eni)‘ve never had illusions about my father
43-I (Tol) began] (Tol) to have doubts about my father

While clause (42) from Everything Good Will Come, displays Enitan’s lack of illusion about her father, clause (43) from Swallow, depicts Tolani’s doubts about her father.

Behavioural processes:-

Similarities:
44-[Good women (Female) didn’t shout in somebody’s house. Good women (Female) didn’t come] (Female) looking for men
45-The man (Eni’h) behaves as if I’m his personal servant
46- (Unsp) to treat a woman like a person
47-(Unsp) to treat people like citizens
48-They (Unsp) treated us like cattle
49-He (M) looks for women like you and me [He (M) will give us drugs (F) to swallow]
50-Rose and I (F) were to swallow condoms of cocaine

Clauses (44, 45, 46, 47, 48, 49, 50) from the two novels, denounce women’s attitudes towards men and vice versa and the bad treatment inflicted on people.

51-I (Eni) cried [until I (Eni) soaked my pillow. Nothing is worse than the loss of a child, even if the child (Unsp) is never born]
52-I (Tol)‘d cried over my own loss, my own rage
53-and (Tol) cried, [although I (Tol)‘d heard her stories before]

Clauses (51, 52, 53) from the two novels, show Enitan’s attitude of cry for her miscarriage and Tolani’s attitude of cry for her girlfriend’s loss and her mother’s life story.

Differences:
54-I (Eni) was not looking for a compromise
55-You (Tol) look [as if you (Tol)‘re possessed]

Clauses (54, 55) from the two novels, contrast Tolani’s attitude, which favours compromise or ‘possession’—with Enitan’s attitude, which allows no compromise.

56-We (Unsp) will always have to look within for our own solutions

Only clause (56) from Everything Good Will Come defines Africans’ best attitude for the sustainable development of Africa as follows: “look within for our own solutions”. 
Verbal processes:

- Similarities:
  57. People (Unsp) talked about the influence of Western culture
  58. People (Unsp) talked nonstop about corruption

- Differences:
  67. and more so that they (Unsp) denounced injustices as a group, at the expense of their freedoms and lives
  68. [We (Female) would write letters to our president](Female) asking for the release of our relations
  69. [Our men (male) are free] I (Eni) said

Causative processes:

- Similarities:
  73. A few greedy people (Unsp) won’t let us (Unsp) get there
  74. The new Oba (M) should not be forcing women into marriage

- Differences:
  75. Just seeing her made me (Eni) feel guilty
  76. and she (Tol’g) made me (Tol) feel as worthless as spit
  77. It made me sad [(Tol) to think that this was how our relationship ended]
In clauses (75, 76, 77), Enitan’s mother, Tolani’s girlfriend and the circumstance of her breakup with Sanwoun intentionally make Enitan feel ‘guilty’ and Tolani ‘sad’.

- Differences:
  78-[and I (Eni’f) don’t think] you (Eni) should be making yourself so available to a man
  79-[You (Tol’b) think] I (Tol) will let you go (Tol’b) as easy as that?
- In clauses (78, 79) from the two novels, Enitan is the agent who makes herself ‘available to a man’ while Tolani is the one who does not make herself easygoing to a man.

**Existential processes:**
- Differences:
  80-There (Unstressed) are people there [in a campaign]
- Only in clause (80) from *Everything Good Will Come*, people are simply stated to exist somewhere.

**Relational processes:**
- Differences:
  81-and my mother (Eni’m) was strict
  82-She (Tol’m) was almost a man
- In clauses (81, 82) from the two novels, Enitan’s mother and Tolani’s mother are respectively qualified as ‘strict’ and defined as ‘almost a man’.

83-Your friend (Sheri) is pregnant
84-Your friend (Tol’g) is dead
- In clauses (83, 84) from the two novels, Enitan’s friend and Tolani’s friend are respectively qualified in the news as ‘pregnant’ and ‘dead’.

85-I (Eni) was desperate enough
86-What! Why are you (Tol) so desperate?
- In clauses (85, 86) from the two novels, both Enitan and Tolani were qualified as deeply desperate a time in their story.

87-Your life (Eni) means nothing to them
88-I (Tol) was the enemy
- Clauses (87, 88) from the two novels, define Enitan’s life as ‘nothing to them’ and Tolani as ‘the enemy’.

89-He (Eni’h) is the head of the house
90-I (Tol’b)m the only son in my family
- In clauses (89, 90) from the two novels, Enitan’s husband and Tolani’s boyfriend are defined respectively as ‘the head’ of his house and ‘the only son’ in his family.

91-a friend of yours (Sheri) is in trouble
92-1 (Tol’m) was in trouble
- Clauses (91, 92) from the two novels, qualify the circumstance of Enitan’s girlfriend’s and Tolani’s mother’s life: they are ‘in trouble’.

93-he (Eni’) had no time (for Enitan)
94-Rose (Tol’g) had no time for Ignatius
- Clauses (93, 94) from the two novels, present Enitan’s father and Tolani’s girlfriend respectively as the possessor of ‘no time’ for Enitan and Ignatius.
Differences:
Intensive Attributive / Intensive Identifying / Circumstantial Relational / Possessive Relational processes
95-She (F)'s beautiful
96-Now, I (Eni) was a mother
97-Our men (M) are free
98-She (Tol’g) was a bad investment, a liability
99-I (Tol) was a failure, a complete one
100-I (Tol) was not that desperate now, just grateful for his kindness
101-You (Tol)’ll be a lonely old woman

While clauses (95, 96, 97) from Everything Good Will Come, end on an optimistic note by qualifying or defining Enitan as ‘a mother’, her daughter as ‘beautiful’, men as ‘free’, clauses (98, 99, 100, 101) from Swallow rather end on a pessimistic note by qualifying or defining Tolani as a complete failure, a desperate woman, ‘a lonely old woman’ in the future another girlfriend as ‘a bad investment’.

102-Good women (F) were at home
103-but the women (F) still appeared in the news-papers [They (F) swallowed drugs, hid (F) drugs in their private parts]

While clause (102) from Everything Good Will Come, qualifies the circumstance of good women –at home– clause (103) from Swallow, qualifies the circumstance of bad women or drug smugglers –in the news-papers.

Discussion of findings:
This study on the excerpts from Sefi Atta’s Everything Good Will Come and Swallow shows key findings about male and female characters’ experience owing to the grammar of experiential meanings.

The Distribution of the main participants initiating the process types in the excerpts from Everything Good Will Come and Swallow has revealed that the female narrators Enitan (58.46%) and Tolani (45.16%) are the initiators of most of the actions expressed by the process types. Moreover, the gendered distribution of the process types in the excerpts from Everything Good Will Come, displays the female characters (46.55%) as the most expressive gender with the various rates of mental processes (61.54%), behavioural processes (55%), verbal processes (53.69%) and material processes (43.65%) while the excerpts from Swallow depict the female characters (51.56%) as the most expressive gender with high rates of mental processes (71.43%), behavioural processes (66.62%), verbal processes (58.59%) and causative processes (53.33%). Though Sefi Atta uses similar processes of mental reactions, physiological and psychological behaviour and verbal actions undertaken by the female characters, the rates of material processes in Everything Good Will Come and causative constructions in Swallow help to draw the distinction between them in terms of the representation of female’s experience. This entails that Everything Good Will Come represents the female characters as the initiators of concrete and tangible actions about their plights while Swallow depicts them as the agents of their own ruin or restoration.

In order to show how the comparative study of male’s and female’s experience both in Everything Good Will Come and Swallow elicits the authorial ideology, this study investigates the representation of male and female personae in their differences as well as similarities through their selection of process types in various circumstances–in these novels Sefi Atta uses in a similar way material processes in Everything Good Will Come and Swallow to depict people’s or women’s actions for underprivileged people, people’s actions against corruption, fighting, divisions and killings in Nigeria, to denounce men’s practices towards women and present the narrators Enitan and Tolani respectively as the victims of rape or sexual harassment. Contrastively, both novels elicit the narrator Enitan’s action as an emancipated and less submissive woman while the narrator Tolani is acting as an indecisive and submissive woman. Sefi Atta also uses alongidementsal processes in these novels to point out Enitan’s refusal to imagine prison cells and Tolani’s inability to imagine going to a public hospital, their perception of the world and its ‘struggles’, their self-incrimination for their child’s life or girlfriend’s death, people’s claim of freedom of thought or action. These are also used to point out the carefree agents of their relatives’ wrongdoings or deviations. Both novels distinctively express Enitan’s and Tolani’s wish for marital life, their self-reliance or reliance on others, their beliefs and hope for Africa and Nigeria or their lack of belief. Regarding behavioural processes, in a parallel way, she denounces –in these novels– women’s attitudes towards men and vice versa, the bad treatment inflicted on people and reveals Enitan’s and Tolani’s attitude of cry respectively for her miscarriage and her girlfriend’s loss or her mother’s life story. Paradoxically, Tolani’s attitude contrasts with Enitan’s attitude to compromise and besides, only Everything Good Will Come points out Africans’ best attitude for the sustainable development of Africa: “look within for our own solutions”. Concerning verbal processes, Sefi Atta presents in the same way people as the sayers
of something about ‘the influence of Western culture’ or ‘corruption’, Enitan and Tolani’s mother’s aunt as the victims of people’s saying about their fate, Enitan or Tolani as the sayer of something to someone about her life or someone else’s life, Enitan or Tolani’s girlfriend as the receiver of flattering or seductive words from a man, and Enitan’s husband or Tolani’s boyfriend as the sayer of something about their relationship at a breaking point. She adversely displays people as the critical sayers of something done overtly and successfully about ‘injustices’ or something done unsuccessfully about ‘corruption’, Enitan as the ‘receiver’ of no ‘act of subordination’ to a man or Tolani as the ‘sayer’ of something – in retaliation for a man’s abuse – she would never fulfil because of her submissive attitude. As to causative processes, they are used alike by Sefi Atta to denote the few agents of underdevelopment or the obstacles to the majority’s developing actions, the agents of Enitan’s guilt and Tolani’s sadness. Antagonistically, she displays Enitan as the agent who makes herself ‘available to a man’ and Tolani as the one who does not. Identifiedly, Sefi Atta resorts to existential processes in Everything Good Will Come (92.86%) and Swallow (100%) to simply state that things exist somewhere. Except for one clause – in the excerpts from Everything Good Will Come – in which people are simply stated to exist somewhere. As far as relational processes are concerned, Sefi Atta use them alongside to qualify or define Enitan’s and Tolani’s mothers as ‘strict’ or ‘almost a man’; Enitan’s and Tolani’s friend as ‘pregnant’ or ‘dead’; Enitan and Tolani as desperate at a time in their story; the younger generation as ‘more traditional’; Enitan’s girlfriend’s and Tolani’s mother’s life as ‘in trouble’. She also uses them in similar way to define Enitan’s life as ‘nothing to them’ and Tolani as ‘the enemy’; Enitan’s husband and Tolani’s boyfriend as ‘the head’ of his house or ‘the only son’ in his family and to posit Enitan’s father and Tolani’s girlfriend as the possessor of ‘no time’ for Enitan or Ignatius. Contrariwise, Sefi Atta qualifies the circumstance of good women as ‘at home’ and ends Everything Good Will Come on an optimistic note by qualifying or defining Enitan as ‘a mother’, her daughter as ‘beautiful’, men as ‘free’, her future as ‘good’. In contrast, she qualifies the circumstance of bad women or drug smugglers as ‘in the news’ papers and ends Swallow on a rather pessimistic note by qualifying or defining Tolani as a complete failure, a ‘desperate’ woman, ‘a lonely old woman’ in the future and her girlfriend as ‘a bad investment’.

**Conclusion:**
This paper has revealed how two novels written by the same author can be analysed from a systemic functional linguistic perspective to point out the representation of male and female personae both in their differences and similarities. Transitivity patterns in Sefi Atta’s Everything Good Will Come and Swallow have contributed through the different process types, participants and circumstances – to elicit the authorial ideology about gender roles.

**References:**

**A - CORPUS**

**B - BOOKS**

**C - ARTICLES**
Appendices:
The transitivity features of the clauses in the selected excerpts have been labelled according to the following keys:

**Keys:** The participants initiating the process types appear in brackets. For statistical data, they have been distributed as follows: Enitan (Eni), Sheri, Enitan’s father (Eni’f), Enitan’s mother (Eni’m), Enitan’s husband (Eni’h), Tolani (Tol), Tolani’s mother (Tol’m), Tolani’s girlfriend (Tol’g), Tolani’s boyfriend (Tol’b), male (M), female (F), People of Unspecified gender (Unsp).

// (Double slash lines): to show clause boundaries within embedded clauses.
P= process; Pm= material; Pme= mental; Pv= verbal; Pb= behavioural; Pe= existential; Pi= intensive; Pci= circumstantial; Pp= possessive; Pc= causative.
A= Actor; G= Goal; B= Beneficiary; R= Range.
S= Senser; Ph= Phenomenon.
Sy= Sayer; Rv= Receiver; Vb= Verbiage.
Bv= Behaver; Bh= Behaviour.
X= Existent.
Ag= Agent.
T= Token; V= Value; Cr= Carrier; At= Attribute.
Pr= Possessor ;Pd= Possessed.
C= circumstance; Cl= location; Cx= extent; Cm= manner;Cc= cause; Ca= accompaniment; Ct= matter; Co= role.

**APPENDIX 1: Transitivity analysis of the clauses in the overall excerpts from Everything Good Will Come**

**APPENDIX 2: Transitivity analysis of the clauses in the overall excerpts from Swallow**
Transitivity analysis of the (1732) process clauses are drawn from the three excerpts from *Swallow* (2010): Excerpt I: pp. 7-38; Excerpt II: pp. 42-190; Excerpt III: pp. 138-295.