



# PROBING CORRUPTION AND BRIBERY IN OGUNDIMU'S *A SILLY SEASON*: A TRANSITIVITY- BASED LINGUISTIC ANALYSIS OF LANGUAGE USE IN LITERARY FICTION

Albert Omolegbé KOUKPOSSI

[koukpossialbert@gmail.com](mailto:koukpossialbert@gmail.com)

Université d'Abomey-Calavi, Bénin

## ABSTRACT

This research paper explores the depiction of corruption and bribery in Ogundimu's *A Silly Season* through linguistic analysis, employing the framework of Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL), with a particular focus on Halliday's concept of Transitivity. By analysing language patterns used by characters, this study aims to pinpoint specific passages that exemplify the theme of corruption and examine how language constructs meaning around this topic. The chosen literary work is notably significant within the realm of African post-colonial literature, renowned for its critical examination of social issues, including corruption—a major obstacle to the development of African nations. The objectives of this research include identifying pertinent excerpts, conducting a transitivity analysis on the clauses within these excerpts to identify processes and participants, and exploring the implications of these analyses for understanding how corruption is represented in the text. The findings illuminate the content and messages communicated by the characters, offering deep insights into the portrayal of corruption in the novel, particularly through the prevalent use of material and relational processes. This analysis concludes that Ogundimu has meticulously and deliberately developed his protagonist, Kunle Bagbelu, utilising strategic verbal and lexical choices to depict an exceptional individual who resists bribery in a contemporary African society, despite his disadvantaged socio-economic status. This character remains a rare exception to date, highlighting Ogundimu's passionate and strategic narrative craftsmanship in addressing corruption.

**Keywords:** Transitivity analysis, Corruption, Bribery, processes, Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL), *A Silly Season*

## RESUME

Cette étude explore la représentation de la corruption et des pots-de-vin dans le roman *A Silly Season* d'Ogundimu, à travers une analyse linguistique fondée sur le cadre de la linguistique Systémique Fonctionnelle (LSF), en particulier sur la notion de transitivité développée par Halliday (2004). En examinant les structures de langage utilisées par les personnages, cette étude vise à identifier des passages spécifiques illustrant le thème de la corruption et à analyser comment le langage construit le sens autour de ce sujet. L'œuvre littéraire choisie est particulièrement significative dans le domaine de la littérature postcoloniale africaine, connue pour son examen critique des problèmes sociaux, dont la corruption – un obstacle majeur au développement des nations africaines. Les objectifs de cette recherche comprennent l'identification d'extraits pertinents, la réalisation d'une analyse de transitivité des propositions au sein de ces extraits afin d'identifier les procès et les participants, et l'examen des implications de ces analyses pour la compréhension de la représentation de la corruption dans le texte. Les résultats mettent en lumière le contenu et les messages transmis par les personnages, offrant des perspectives approfondies sur la représentation de la corruption dans le

roman, en particulier à travers l'utilisation fréquente des procès matériels et relationnels. Cette analyse conclut qu'Ogundimu a méticuleusement et délibérément développé son protagoniste, Kunle Bagbelu, en utilisant des choix verbaux et lexicaux stratégiques pour dépeindre un individu exceptionnel qui résiste aux pots-de-vin dans une société africaine contemporaine, malgré son statut socio-économique défavorisé. Ce personnage reste une rare exception à ce jour, soulignant la passion et l'habileté narrative d'Ogundimu dans son traitement de la corruption.

**Mots-clés** : Analyse de transitivité, Corruption, Pots-de-vin, Procès, Linguistique Systémique Fonctionnelle (LSF), *A Silly Season*

## INTRODUCTION

The field of Linguistics serves a fundamental role in studying language as emphasized by Halliday (2002: 384), a pioneer in Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL). He describes linguistics as the study of language itself, distinguishing it from natural sciences that focus on language pertaining to nature and social sciences that examine language concerning society. This definition highlights the intrinsic relationship between linguistics and literature, where language is both the subject of linguistic inquiry and the medium through which literature portrays social realities.

Viewing literary works as creations by individuals attuned to the language of their time, its social and cultural expressions, and utilising language skills to immortalise their vision of life (Akogbeto and Koukpossi, 2015), it becomes evident that analysing aspects of language use in literature holds significant linguistic interest. It is from this perspective that this study is conducted within the framework of literary linguistics, specifically employing Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL), with a focus on Halliday's notion of Transitivity. According to SFL, language functions as a system of meanings, implying that language use constructs meaning during communicative acts (Bloor and Bloor, 2004, p. 2).

This study primarily centres on the experiential meaning, analysing language patterns employed by characters to explore the issue of corruption and its manifestations in literary discourse as portrayed in Ogundimu's *A Silly Season*. The selection of this literary work as the basis for linguistic analysis is justified by Ogundimu's classification as one of the African writers of the post-colonial era, known for denouncing various social afflictions such as dictatorship, unemployment, criminality, social upheavals, political instability, and notably, corruption, widely recognized as a significant factor hindering African countries' development. Especially, the specific objectives of this research unfolds through the following steps:

- Identification of extracts in which characters employ language to construct meaning related to corruption.
- Conducting transitivity analysis on the clauses within each extract to ascertain the processes and participants involved in the situational event.

- Drawing implications from the findings for the construction of meanings concerning the issue of corruption in the studied texts.

To accomplish these objectives, two primary research questions are formulated:

- How do clausal elements web the different processes, participants, and circumstances together to project the issue of corruption and related topics?
- What are the implications of these processes on the creation of meanings by the narrator in the analysed texts?

Thus, the significance of this research lies in its endeavour to deepen the understanding of this phenomenon by examining how characters in Ogundimu's work portray and act through their use of language from a linguistic perspective. Transitivity, as part of Halliday's lexico-grammatical system (2004), has been recognized by scholars as an effective tool for analysing the content of characters' messages in literary works (Akogbeto & Koukpossi, 2015).

## 1. Theoretical Framework

Systemic Functional Linguistics, pioneered by Michael Halliday (1985, 1994, 2004), views language as a social phenomenon, structured around three metafunctions: the ideational (experiential and logical), interpersonal, and textual. These metafunctions reflect the ways in which language constructs experience, enacts social relationships, and organizes information, respectively. SFL posits that language's richness and complexity can be systematically analyzed through these lenses, offering valuable insights into the connections between language, culture, and society.

The experiential meaning upon which investigation in this study is based is defined as the representation of experiences and the construction of meanings in language. According to Philip Graber (2001), if one is to determine the "field of discourse of a text", the very first step is to analyse the text into its component of experiential meanings at the level of the clause. Especially the focus is on processes, participants, and circumstances. In short, in transitivity analysis, "We are only concerned with which processes occur in the text and what types of processes they are, what participants are associated with those processes and the particular semantic roles they play in relation to the processes, and under what circumstances the processes are said to occur." (Graber, 2001, p.80)

According to Halliday (2004) Transitivity refers to the grammatical and semantic representation of processes (actions, events, or experiences) and the participants involved in those processes within a clause. In other words, Transitivity deals with how language structures and expresses actions and their participants in clauses. Transitivity analysis therefore focuses on the relationship between the process and its participants, and it provides a deeper understanding of how language construes

events and experiences. It allows the linguist to examine the way in which speakers or writers choose particular grammatical structures to convey different types of actions and to highlight specific participants involved in the realization of those actions and events.

In SFL, a clause is the primary unit of analysis, and it is composed of a process and its participants. The process is the core element, representing the action or event, while the participants are the entities that participate in or are affected by the process. At this point, a question may arise: Why do we resort to a transitivity analysis while pinpointing social issues in literary fiction? In fact, Transitivity analysis allows linguists to explore how speakers use language to represent actions, events, and experiences in a nuanced way. It sheds light on how language can emphasise or downplay certain participants or aspects of a process to achieve specific communicative purposes. By examining transitivity, SFL offers valuable insights into the semantic and grammatical choices made by speakers in constructing meaning and conveying information through language. There are six main process types in Halliday's (2004) framework.

**Material Processes:** These processes depict concrete actions performed by an Actor, typically expressed by active verbs. The action has a Goal, the entity affected by the action. For instance, in "They eat rice every day," "they" is the actor performing the action "eat," and "rice" is the goal, the recipient of the action.

**Mental Processes:** Verbs of cognition (know, think, understand), perception (see, hear), affection (love, hate), and desire (want, wish) represent these processes. The central participant is the Senser, the entity experiencing the mental state. The Phenomenon is the object or concept sensed.

**Behavioral Processes:** Similar to material processes, these describe actions, but with the additional emphasis on the conscious experience of the participant. For example, "Tony is listening to them" depicts Tony's conscious act of listening. These processes offer insights into characters' psychological and physiological behaviours.

**Verbal Processes:** These processes represent verbal actions enacted by a Sayer. Verbs like "say," "reply," "confirm," and "report" exemplify verbal processes. The participants include the Sayer, the entity performing the verbal action, and the Verbiage, the content of the utterance.

**Relational Processes:** These processes establish states of being and identity, defining relationships between entities within a text. They can be attributive, such as "He is very intelligent" (He - Carrier, very intelligent - Attributive), or identifying, like "He is the president" (He - Token, the president - Value).

**Existential Processes:** These processes assert the existence of an entity or phenomenon. They are valuable for establishing scenes or contexts within a text.

## 2. Literature review

In this section, the Transitivity system and how to analyse it in sketches of languages as suggested by scholars is reviewed to shed light on this study's theoretical and methodological foundation.

### 2.1. *Literary analysis and Transitivity Profile*

In his seminal work titled *Stylistics: A Resource for Students*, Simpson (2004) emphasises the practical significance and interest of conducting Transitivity analysis on literary texts. He introduces the concept of "Transitivity profile," which involves examining certain types of processes that function to characterise the novel under study's characters within the framework of transitivity. Simpson argues that the portrayal of characters in narrative fiction is influenced by the transitivity framework, thereby making the Transitivity profile a valuable indicator of character in prose fiction (Simpson, 2004, p. 119). To achieve a comprehensive understanding of the Transitivity profile in literary texts, Simpson proposes two crucial steps or exercises (Simpson, 2004, p. 120):

(a) Analysis of Transitivity Patterns: This step involves a meticulous examination of the types of processes present in the text, identifying whether they are material, mental, behavioural, and so on. Additionally, it entails identifying the types of participants associated with each process, such as Actors, Goals, Sensors, and any other specific participant roles.

(b) Understanding Stylistic Characteristics: Simpson further recommends an exploration of the key stylistic characteristics of the literary production under study through the analysis of Transitivity. This involves interpreting the findings from the lexico-grammatical analysis to discern how the issue of the target topic is represented in the narrative and how characters are portrayed in relation to this issue, considering the processes, participants, and circumstances associated with each character.

Based on Simpson's suggestions, the establishment of a Transitivity profile for a text entails a comprehensive examination of both lexico-grammatical elements and a semantic appreciation of the findings. By adopting this approach, the current study aims to reveal how the theme of corruption is represented in the narrative and how characters are depicted in relation to this theme, taking into account the specific processes, participants, and circumstances linked to each character. This analysis will shed light on the stylistic aspects of the literary work under investigation, contributing to a deeper understanding of the text's overall structure and characters' portrayal.

## 2.2. *Practical analysis of Transitivity patterns in literary fiction*

Many scholars have concurred with Simpson (2004) regarding the methodological approach to text analysis from a Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL) perspective. This literature review explores significant works in this domain.

Akogbeto and Koukpossi (2015) conduct a linguistic-oriented analysis of Wole Soyinka's *The Lion and the Jewel*, titled "Gender Issues in the Lion and the Jewel by Wole Soyinka: A Linguistics-Oriented Analysis from a Systemic Functional Grammar and Critical Discourse Analysis Perspective." Their study aims to comprehend how gender issues manifest in the play by analysing language use between male and female characters. By applying Halliday's (1985, 2004) concept of transitivity, the authors investigate the expressions of men and women in the play, enabling them to gain insights into the characters' inner and outer worlds and their portrayal.

Koussouhon and Boukari (2018) examine Gabriel Okara's novel *The Voice* in their article titled "Transitivity Analysis of Gabriel Okara's *The Voice*." Their investigation focuses on the ideational meanings conveyed in the novel, with specific attention to Transitivity patterns. The study reveals that Gabriel Okara emphasises man's endless need for material possessions, the establishment of a fair society, and the quest for salvation. The main character, Okolo, was portrayed in this context. Furthermore, the researchers observe a contrast in the quantity of process-types in the two excerpts culled from the novel, where Material Processes were prominent in one and Relational processes in the other. This led to a deeper understanding of the texts and the encoded ideology.

In a similar functional approach, Koussouhon and Yokossi (2017) analyse Chinua Achebe's *Arrow of God* and Ngugi Wa Thiong'o's *Petals of Blood* in their article titled "Transitivity Analysis of Chinua Achebe's *Arrow of God* and Ngugi Wa Thiong'o's *Petals of Blood*: A Comparative Systemic Linguistic Approach." They notice that Material processes are frequently occurring process types in both novels, particularly Transitive Material processes, signifying concrete and tangible actions. The authors suggest that Achebe and Thiong'o express concerns about African traditional values and the consequences of Neocolonialism, respectively.

Still in the same perspective, Zijiao Song from Changchun University of Science and Technology employed Halliday's Transitivity model in his SFL study of William Faulkner's *A Rose for Emily* (2013). The analysis reveals the frequent use of Material and Relational processes throughout the text, along with a relatively high presence of Mental and Verbal processes. Song infers that the characters were involved in concrete actions, with emphasis on their state of mind and mental activities. The Mental processes were attributed to people's opinions and feelings towards Emily, the major character. The Material Processes highlight Emily's secretive quest for

happiness, even if it meant taking drastic measures. Song concludes that through the title "A Rose for Emily", Faulkner memorizes her passing away firstly, pities the aristocrat's tragic life, and salutes her brave struggle against the old tradition. In short, the practical analysis of Transitivity patterns in this literary fiction offers valuable insights into character portrayal, gender issues, thematic messages, and stylistic choices, thereby enriching our understanding of the intricacies of language use in literature.

Another important and prominent work about Adetundji Ogundimu's literary work is Gbaguidi (2018), in a work titled "Revisiting the Issue of Resistance to Bribery in A. S. Ogundimu's *A Silly Season*." This work is relevant to this study of *A Silly Season* in that it sheds light on the concept of bribery and corruption as it is encoded in the novel under study. However, his analysis is purely theoretical as it is not based on a grammatical analysis of the language use in context. In fact, Gbaguidi (2018) focuses on the issue of bribery as it is presented in *A Silly Season* as a plague that slows the social and economic power of most African countries of the postcolonial era. Additionally, this study sees corruption and bribery as a very complex behavioural structure deeply rooted in some modern African societies. For him, "It challenges the moral virtues so that almost all the citizens of the society cannot do without it in that the citizens who swim against the tide are frustrated, stigmatised, and pressured by their close relatives and co-workers." In a word, Ogundimu believe that any African citizen who dares to resist this issue is not welcome at all and is subject of any kind of rejection. Gbaguidi's (2018) study concludes that "this novel presents and contests the acceptance of a devastating plague by all workers of the civil service." (p. 73). His work, though it does not focus on a Transitivity analysis, is evidence that it is possible to carry out a literary text analysis from various angles.

### **3. Methodology**

#### **3.1. About the corpus**

*A Silly Season* is a novel written by Adetundji Ogudimu and published in (2008). The analysis of the novel is limited to the transitivity analysis of only two excerpts that are directly related to the issue of corruption in the novel.

Extract one is culled from the 2008 edition of the novel (pp. 20-27). The excerpt portrays Kunle Bangbelu, the appointed State Commissioner of Work, encountering a peculiar situation that embarrasses him merely three months into his service. The scene involves a discussion between Kunle and Akwa regarding whether Kunle should accept a bribe offered to him by an individual seeking to secure a contract. This extract, taken from chapter four of the novel, illustrates intense interactions between the narrator and Akwa. Akwa persistently endeavours to persuade Kunle, providing substantial arguments, to adopt the common practice in the country of

accepting the money and the bribe. Contrarily, Kunle firmly resists this option and counters Akwa's arguments, affirming that he will not compromise his principles (p. 27).

The second extract under examination is extracted from the fourteenth chapter (Chapter 14) of the novel (pp. 84-91). This passage presents a significant plot development in *A Silly Season*, involving the characters Kayode and the narrator, Kunle. Once again, the narrative depicts a series of earnest exchanges between the two characters, centring around a financial matter. However, this is not ordinary money or a legitimate salary earned through hard work; rather, it involves a bribe. The crux of the matter revolves around the dilemma of how to handle the money discreetly concealed in a "Ghana-must-go" bag.

### **3.2. Research Design and Method of data Analysis**

The methodological approach used in this study is first and foremost that of a direct qualitative content analysis which, according to Hsieh and Shannon (2005), consists of using some existing theory or prior research results to describe a phenomenon that is incomplete or would benefit from further description. The researcher's aim here is to identify key concepts or variables as the initial coding category, and the next step would be to code all highlighted passages using predetermined codes. Coding is a key part of this process, involving the systematic assignment of codes (labels or tags) to data segments to categorise them and facilitate later analysis. More specifically, this study uses Halliday's (2004) system of Transitivity in terms of processes, participants and circumstances in the narrative event represented in the extracts. Then a statistic analysis is adopted to quantify the choices made by characters to translate meanings analysis that are grammatically expressed through processes and the related participants. The analysis of these meanings in *A Silly Season* will definitely help pinpoint the kind of selections made by characters in their way of doing things, what they feel and think about the issue of corruption and related matters. That is why, in the process, each clause of the selected texts is parsed into its clausal elements in terms of participants, processes, and attendant circumstances.

### **4. Practical Analysis**

In each excerpt, clauses are assigned a number and subsequently, the process within each clause is labelled according to its functional role. These labels represent abbreviated forms of the names of each process-type and related participants. Circumstantial elements are similarly abbreviated, aiming to simplify the analysis. Identified process-types are then highlighted in bold to facilitate their recognition within the extracts. The keys to the analysis are presented as follows:

#### *Process Types*



P = Process; Pb = behavioural; TMP = transitive material; IMP = intransitive material; Pme = mental; Pv = verbal; Px = existential.

*Relational processes:*

CARP = circumstantial-attributive; CIRP = circumstantial-identifying; IARP = intensive-attributive; IIRP = intensive-identifying; PP = possessive

*Participants*

A = Actor; G = Goal; B = Beneficiary; R = Range. S = Sayer; Ph = Phenomenon. Sy = Sayer; Rv = Receiver; Vb = Verbiage. X = Existent. Cr = Carrier; At = Attribute; T = Token; V = Value; At/C = conflation of Attribute with a circumstantial element; V/C = conflation of Value with a circumstantial element. Ag = Agent ; Pr = possessor; pd = possessed

*Circumstances*

C = Circumstance; Ca = accompaniment; Cc = cause; Cl = location; Cm = manner; Co = role; Ct = matter; Cx = extent.

Utilising the aforementioned coding system, I conduct an analysis and assign codes to each extract to identify such categories as processes, participants, and circumstances. This approach allows to have insight into the types of actions occurring, who is involved in these actions, and where these actions are taking place, among other aspects. The objective is to understand the phenomenon of corruption by examining how characters are portrayed and how they act through their use of language.

## **5. Results and Discussion**

The previous section has outlined the coding and analysis of the two chosen extracts from *A Silly Season*. This section furthers the analysis by highlighting the implications of the results in terms of statistics related to the identified processes and participants within the texts. The usage of varying process-types in *A Silly Season* provides significant findings about the author's selection of processes, participants, and the circumstances of their occurrences. The way in which characters consciously or unconsciously express their thoughts indicates their personalities and attitudes (Fowler, 1986: 132).

### ***5.1. Findings Derived from the Analysis of Extract One***

The examination of the first extract, via the identification of transitivity patterns, indicates that the narrator has made specific lexical and grammatical choices in the selection of process-types to depict a situational event involving characters. How these characters act, their interactions with others, and their perceptions and feelings about their surroundings are reflected through the processes, participants, and

circumstances. The processes, participants, and circumstances identified in the text are displayed in Table 1.

**Table 1:** Process-type statistics of extract one

Transitivity Analysis		Extract one	
Process-types		Number	%
Material Processes (40%)	Transitive	41	29.28
	Intransitive	15	10.71
Mental Processes		16	11.42
Behavioural Processes		12	08.57
Verbal Processes		10	07.14
Existential Processes		00	00
Relational Processes	Intensive attributive	25	17.85
	Intensive identifying	12	08.57
	Circumstantial Attributive	04	02.85
	Circumstantial identifying	00	00
	Possessive	05	03.57
<b>Total number of the processes</b>		140	100

The field of discourse in extract one is conveyed through various process types including material (transitive and intransitive), mental, behavioural, verbal, and relational processes. Transitive material processes account for 29.28% of occurrences, while intransitive material processes make up 10.71%, leading to a combined total of 40%. These processes involve actional and happening elements related to the identified participants, such as Actors, Goals, Beneficiaries, Scopes, etc., within the narrative event. The text contains 46 instances of relational processes, representing 32.85% of the total, appearing in intensive, circumstantial, and possessive forms. Verbal processes, indicative of dialogue between characters, occur at a rate of 7.14%. These processes enable participants to ask questions, make requests, or express grievances. Mental processes, reflecting the inner experiences of the participants, constitute 11.42% of the total processes in the extract. Behavioural processes, relating to the physiological and psychological states of the participants, occur at a rate of 8.57%. There are no instances of existential processes in the text.

The comprehensive transitivity analysis performed reveals that 40% of the processes serve to encode experiential meaning in the text. These processes represent actions and events, elucidating the text's nature. The text sketches an interaction between Kunle Bangbelu, the appointed State Commissioner of Work, and his colleague, Akwa. The selection of material processes reveals two types: Transitive Material Processes (TMP) and Intransitive Material Processes. Processes such as 'came', 'left', 'stepped up', 'steal', 'don't have to steal', 'improve', 'snapped', 'disappeared', 'must change', etc., which involve only one participant, are intransitive material processes and occur at a rate of 10.71%. They primarily denote happenings and movements.

Transitive material processes are identified in clauses such as (6ii) 'and cleared the center table', (20) 'If you collect such moneys', (30) 'And, if you play the game well', (37ii) 'that he would take bribe in office?'. These processes imply the presence of a second participant - the goal or the scope.

Processes depicting emotion, cognition, perception, and desideration illuminate the inner world of the characters in the text. They are relatively less frequent, occurring at a rate of 11.42%, compared to the prevalence of material and relational processes.

Behavioural processes in extract one play a significant role in establishing experiential meaning and the field of discourse, comprising 8.57% of all identified processes. They encompass phrases like "are keeping in" (2), "stared at in" (4), "was going to grease in" (5), "shook in" (8), "smile in" (12ii), "stared at in" (34), and more. These processes, indicative of the physiological and psychological states of Bamgbelu and Akwa during their debate on bribery, capture how the characters act and feel, conveying deeper meanings.

The fifth most prevalent process type is the verbal process, underscoring that the narrative revolves around characters, specifically the narrator and Akwa, and their discourse. The text contains ten verbal processes, accounting for 7.14% of the total. These offer characters opportunities to express their opinions, often in contrast to one another. Examples include "talking about in" (40), "questioned in" (73), "conceded in" (74), "tell in" (78), "says in" (79), "cut in in" (80), and "claim in" (89). These verbal processes can project other clauses in two distinct ways: paratactically, through direct speech (as in 79. "Who says you are?" I cut in) and hypotactically, via reported speech. Another observation is that verbal clauses often directly quote the speaker verbatim.

Relational processes in extract one total 46, amounting to 32.85% of the processes. Within these, there are 25 intensive attributive relational processes (17.85%), 12 intensive identifying relational processes (8.57%), four circumstantial attributive relational processes (2.85%), and five possessive relational processes (3.57%).

The most abundant within the relational processes are intensive attributive processes (25/46), providing information about characters like Bamgbelu and Akwa. Examples include "(3) You must be a foreigner landing from the moon," "(20ii) you're a thief," "(24) Am I not a public servant?" and more. In these clauses, an entity is attributed to a particular class. Intensive identifying relational processes provide clarifications about certain facts and entities, with 12 instances in the text. They appear in clauses such as (26), (29), (32), (49i), (54), and more, elucidating the explanatory nature of the text.

A lower proportion of attributive circumstantial processes suggest an entity being at a certain place or state, with only four instances identified: (13iii) "I will be in money

within weeks”, (81) “Good teaching goes beyond the four walls of a classroom”, (90ii) “Is it because you want to be a role model?” and (109) “When you get to the bridge of satisfactory execution of the contract.”

There are nine instances of possessive attributive relational processes, stating an entity's possession of a quality or attribute that discloses their experiences. The use of these processes, such as in “(25ii) I will not work to deserve it?”, (72ii) “That we have problems?”, and others, complements the other relational process types by encoding the ideological positions of the characters. For instance, Bamgbelu strongly opposes corruption, reflecting what society should strive to avoid.

### 5.2. Findings derived from the analysis of extract two

**Table 2:** Process-type statistics of extract two

Transitivity Analysis		Extract two	
Process-types		Number	%
Material Processes	Transitive	36	19.35
	Intransitive	18	09.67
Mental Processes		51	27.41
Behavioural Processes		06	3.22
Verbal Processes		32	17.20
Existential Processes		01	0.53
Relational Processes	Intensive attributive	23	12.36
	Intensive identifying	10	05.37
	Circumstantial Attributive	07	03.76
	Circumstantial identifying	00	00
	Possessive	02	01.07
<b>Total number of the processes</b>		<b>186</b>	<b>100</b>

In Extract two, as indicated in Table 2, the identified process types can be grouped into six (06) main categories: material, mental, behavioural, existential, verbal, and relational processes. Of these, material and mental processes are notably the most frequent, occurring at rates of 34.61% and 27.41%, respectively. This suggests that the extract’s primary focus lies in the portrayal of entities’ actions and experiences, including their responses and perceptions of their surroundings, effectively illustrating their inner world.

Material processes within the text can be further categorised into transitive and intransitive processes, with the transitive material processes potentially being either active or passive. The third most frequent process type is relational processes, representing 22.58% of the total. These processes are utilised to express characters’ conjectures through dialogue - questioning, answering, refusing, or complying. Such processes play a crucial role in crafting the narrative as a dialogical event where characters interact. The text also includes behavioural processes, which depict the

physiological and psychological actions of characters. A single instance of an existential process was also identified within the text.

As Table 2 illustrates, material processes are most prevalent, indicating that actions and events involving characters form the core of the extract. The narrative, in fact, revolves around a discussion involving the narrator, Kayode, and Mrs. Banji, the Permanent Secretary. These processes can be divided into two primary categories: intransitive material processes and transitive material processes, as exemplified in the following clauses picked at random from the excerpt:

- (2ii) I *opened* my palms upwards
- (16) In that case, we *had to solve* the riddle together.
- (33) I *surveyed* him from his hairy luggage-carrier down to the big toes peeping out from his black leather sandals.
- (43ii) you tried to hide it from me.
- (49) I did not hide it from you.

These denote tangible, concrete actions tied to the unfolding narrative events, particularly when Bangbelu strives to discern who has taken the bribery bag. In contrast, intransitive material processes of movement aiming at making the plot flows as illustrated in the following clauses:

- (13.ii) "Ah, no; this Ghana must not go"
- (24ii) that the bag had vanished?
- (51) Kayode turned sharply.
- (102) His countenance changed
- Etc.

The mental processes, which differ from those in Extract One, are more numerous and are depicted as the second most common process type. A total of 51 verbal elements in the extract function as mental processes. These processes, related to feelings and oriented toward the internal world of the individuals involved in the narrative, encapsulate processes of cognition, perception, desideration, and affection. Some instances of mental processes of cognition include clauses

- (6ii) I *don't know* the bag you're talking about.
- (26i), 26i. If other people *knew*,
- (34i) "You *want to know*
- (42), 42. *Remember?*
- (65) "I *don't understand*."
- (79). They *knew*."

Perception processes are demonstrated in clauses (4.ii), (14), (45), (48), and (87), while processes of affection and desideration are exemplified in clauses (19), (131ii), and (23), (91) respectively.

Relational processes, which account for 22.58% of the total processes identified in the text, include 42 clauses. These processes can be intensive, circumstantial, or possessive, and they can either be attributive or identifying, as described by Halliday (2004). In the analysed text, intensive attributive processes are the most frequent, used to convey information about participants and other process types. The clauses (8), (8ii), (10), (15), (21), (21i), (29), (39), (43), (44), (44ii), etc., contain such processes, providing valuable information about Bangbelu's attitudes and status. The relational processes in the text describe events and entities in various ways, reflecting the narrator's assumptions and beliefs about the narrative's structure.

Verbal processes constitute 17.20% of the total processes in the analysed text, encompassing four grammatical elements: the Sayer, the process itself, the Verbiage, the Receiver, and the Phenomenon, following the pattern: Sayer + process + verbiage (+ Receiver). The clauses in Extract 2 featuring verbal processes include (1), (3), (5), (11), (12), (13i), (17ii), (24i), etc.

A significant aspect worth discussing is the portrayal of characters' self-identification. How relational processes are used serves this perspective, revealing Bangbelu's positioning against bribery and corruption through his self-description and expectations for others. The characters' self-identification provides a comprehensive understanding of Bangbelu's aspirations for a corruption-free administration.

The characterization of Bangbelu in the novel reveals the narrator's ideological stance, with Bangbelu's literary character symbolising integrity. Despite being the typical Nigerian public servant, Bangbelu resists bribery and defends his position with sound arguments, reflecting his military-style upbringing and his father's influence. His character calls for common sense, public service, moral and ethical values, and a corruption-free society, emphasising the need for development. The character goes against the selfish interests of his coworkers, Akwa and Kayode, the former being a common Nigerian public servant and the latter an exception, as seen through the processes attached to each of them.

In short, the analysis of transitivity patterns in both extracts employed a content analysis design with statistical data for coding various process types, participants, and circumstances chosen by the author to describe situational events. It reveals that Ogundimu has carefully crafted the message to his readers in terms of characterisation, representation, and identification of characters. More precisely, Tundji Ogundimu has shaped his hero's life to be seen as determined, honest, fair, and possessing a high sense of public interest. Despite his financial situation, Kunle

Bamgbelu resists bribery and easy money. The focus lies on the choice and emphasis of words, phrases, and linguistic patterns serving this perspective in the novel.

### *5.3. Discussion of the findings*

The discussion of the findings from the analysis of *A Silly Season* reveals significant insights into how Ogundimu employs linguistic strategies to portray corruption and integrity through his characters, particularly focusing on Kunle Bamgbelu. This section synthesizes these insights, exploring their implications and the broader relevance to the thematic concerns of African post-colonial literature.

The detailed analysis of the first extract provides a nuanced understanding of the narrative techniques Ogundimu uses to depict situational events and character interactions. The predominance of material processes (40%) underscores a narrative focus on action and interaction, reflecting the characters' engagement with their environment and each other. This action-oriented portrayal is significant, as it situates corruption not just as an abstract concept but as a series of concrete actions and decisions made by individuals. The substantial representation of relational processes (32.85%) further enriches this depiction, offering insights into characters' identities, relationships, and statuses within the societal context of the novel. These linguistic choices construct a vivid narrative landscape where corruption and integrity are lived experiences, embodied in the characters' actions and interactions.

The transitivity analysis reveals Ogundimu's strategic use of language to illustrate the complexities of navigating moral dilemmas in a corrupt environment. Kunle Bamgbelu, depicted through a careful selection of process types and participants, emerges as a character of integrity and resistance. This not only highlights Bamgbelu's exceptional stance against corruption but also invites readers to consider the broader societal implications of such integrity in the face of systemic corruption.

The analysis of the second extract further elaborates on the thematic exploration of corruption, with a notable increase in mental processes (27.41%). This shift indicates a deeper focus on internal experiences, perceptions, and judgements, suggesting that the battle against corruption is as much an internal moral struggle as it is an external social challenge. The relational and verbal processes contribute to a dialogic narrative structure, where characters' values and beliefs are articulated, contested, and negotiated through dialogue. This dialogical approach enriches the narrative's exploration of corruption by highlighting the diversity of perspectives and the complexity of moral reasoning in corrupt environments. The presence of existential processes, though minimal, adds another layer to the narrative's thematic concerns by emphasizing the significance of being and existence within the socio-political context of the novel. This suggests a philosophical underpinning to Ogundimu's

portrayal of corruption, inviting readers to reflect on the essence of integrity and moral courage in a corrupt world.

The findings from this analysis offer profound insights into Ogundimu's narrative strategy and thematic concerns. By meticulously choosing process types and participants, Ogundimu not only crafts a compelling narrative but also engages with broader socio-political and ethical questions relevant to African post-colonial societies. The depiction of Kunle Bangbelu as a character who embodies integrity and resists corruption serves as a narrative focal point around which the novel's thematic exploration revolves. This character's portrayal challenges the normalisation of corruption and advocates for a reimagining of moral and ethical standards in the public sphere.

Furthermore, this linguistic analysis contributes to the field of literary studies by demonstrating how Systemic Functional Linguistics can elucidate the complex ways in which language constructs meaning and engages with socio-political themes in literature. The findings underscore the significance of linguistic choices in shaping narrative and thematic development, offering valuable insights for scholars interested in the intersection of linguistics and literary analysis.

In a nutshell, the discussion of findings from *A Silly Season* underscores the novel's exploration of corruption and integrity through the strategic use of linguistic processes. This analysis not only sheds light on Ogundimu's narrative technique and thematic concerns but also contributes to broader discussions on ethics, identity, and resistance in African post-colonial literature.

## CONCLUSION

This study aims to apply a transitivity analysis to Ogundimu's *A Silly Season*, with a focus on the exploration of themes such as corruption and bribery. As previously stated, the main objective is to examine how Tundji Ogundimu addresses the issue of corruption through the character of Kunle Bangbelu and his resistance to bribery. In order to accomplish this, a systematic methodological approach has been employed. This approach involved selecting two extracts that aptly address the themes of corruption and bribery, which were then subjected to a lexico-grammatical analysis. The theoretical framework and literature review were carried out to establish the theoretical and methodological foundations for the study. A clause-by-clause analysis was subsequently undertaken to identify the different process-types present within each extract. The analysis has yielded valuable findings related to the characterisation, identification, and representation of the main character, Kunle Bangbelu. The final section of the study concentrates on the statistical data obtained from the analysis and explores their implications for understanding the underlying message of the novel.



In both extracts, the field of discourse, as exposed by the transitivity analysis, is a continuation of the narrative initiated at the outset of the novel: The journey of Bangbelu and his struggle to resist bribery and combat corruption in his immediate environment. The systematic analysis of how language is used helps to illuminate Bangbelu's anti-corruption ideology. Material processes, including transitive and intransitive processes, have served to present the texts as a situational event, featuring actions and occurrences within an exchange between Kunle and his colleagues. The transitivity analysis further reveals the psychological and physiological emotions that arise within the characters and their environment during the discussions.

In short, a literary work is designed to convey information, and authors effectively engage their readership through their unique writing style, specifically, their choice of verbal elements or lexical items to communicate their message. Recognising this, Tundji Ogundimu utilises collective African experiences and his strong sense of inventiveness and creativity to construct his novel. He depicts an extraordinary individual who is capable of resisting bribery and corruption, which seems to have become a commonplace behaviour for many Nigerians and Africans. Ogundimu's efforts present a message of hope, suggesting that it is still possible to combat the detrimental effects of corruption in contemporary African societies.

## References

- Akogbeto & Koukpossi (2015). Gender issues in *The Lion and the Jewel* by Wole Soyinka: A Linguistics-Oriented Analysis from a Systemic Functional Grammar and Critical Discourse Analysis Perspective.
- Datondji, C. A. (2020). Exploring the Language of Conflict Rise and Conflict Resolution in Elechi Amadi's *The Great Ponds*: A Systemic Functional Perspective. In *Revue Internationale de Langue, Littérature, Culture et Civilisation, Actes du Colloque International*. Vol 1, Num 1, Pp. 231-251.
- Eggs, S. (2004). *An Introduction to Systemic Functional Linguistics* (2nd edn.). New York & London: Continuum.
- Fontaine, L. (2013). *Analysing English Grammar: A Systemic Functional Introduction*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Fowler, R. (1986). *Linguistic Criticism*. London: Oxford University Press.
- Gbaguidi, C. (2018). Revisiting the issue of resistance to bribery in A. S. Ogundimu's *A Silly Season*. In *Int. J. Curr. Innov. Adv. Res.*, 1(5): 73-82
- Halliday, M.A.K. & Matthiessen, C.M.I.M., (2004). *An Introduction to Functional Grammar*, (3rd edn.). London: Hodder Education.
- Koussouhon and Boukari (2018). Transitivity Analysis of Gabriel Okara's *The Voice*. *International journal on studies in English Language and Literature*, 6, (4), pp. 01-15.

- Koussouhon, L. (2009). Process types and ideational meaning in *The Beautiful Ones Are Not Yet Born*. In *IMO-IRIKISSI*. Vol. 1: 129-142.
- Koussouhon, L. (2011). Systemic Functional Linguistics: Accounting for literature in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) contexts. In *Geste et Voix*. n°11: 15-35.
- Koussouhon, L. A. and Yokossi, D. T. (2017), Transitivity Analysis of Chinua Achebe's *Arrow of God* and Ngugi Wa Thiong'o's *Petals of Blood*: A Comparative Systemic Linguistic Approach. *Journal of Applied Linguistics and Language Research*, 4, pp. 171-195.
- Koutchade, I. S., (2015). Thematic structure and foregrounding in selected extracts from Adetunji Ogundimu's *A Silly Season*. In *International Journal of English and Literature (IJEL)*, Vol. 5, Issue 4, pp. 43-54
- Lumumba, P.L.O. (2014). Corruption: the bane of Africa. In *Corruption in Africa: A threat to Justice and Sustainable Peace*. Nduku, E. and Tenamwenye, J. (Eds.), *Globethics.net Focus N°14*, pp. 17-48.
- Ogundimu, A.S. (2008). *A Silly Season*. Lagos: Campus Publications Ltd.
- Simpson, P. (2004). *Stylistics: A Resource Book for Students*. London and New York: Routledge.
- Şimşek, M. R. (2012). A systemic-functional analysis of two short stories." [on-line article]. Retrieved January 14, 2015 from the World Wide Web: [www.e-dusbed.com](http://www.e-dusbed.com)
- Song, Z. (2013). Transitivity Analysis of *A Rose for Emily*. In *Theory and Practice in Language Studies*, 3, (12), pp. 2291-2295.
- Tunca, D. (2009). An ambiguous "Freedom Song": Mind-Style in Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie's *Purple Hibiscus*. In *Postcolonial Text*, Vol 5, No 1: pp.1-18.