

TRANSITIVITY SYSTEMS IN SELECTED NARRATIVE DISCOURSE

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Abstract

The article aims to contribute to the understanding of speech in Emecheta's texts using the grammatical system of transitivity. Traditional English grammar focuses on the verbal group while the systematic functional grammar focuses on the entire clause and on its parts. This is a challenge for many learners who were thought traditional grammar. This article applies the concept of transitivity to Emecheta's narrative discourse to describe events and experiences. The data comprises extracts of speech analysed at the levels of grammar and context. The analysis foregrounds gender themes and the meaning making potentials of transitivity in systematic theory. Emecheta often gives the female characters positive faces in order to recreate the image of woman through feminism. The analytic approach of this article makes worthy contributions to the growing research on gender by revealing how language choices bring out thematic issues in discourse.

Keywords: Event, Choice, Speech, Action, Culture, Learner, Transitivity, Gender message.

1.0 Introduction

People usually perform different functions and some people are more effective than others. Some carry out actions, others suffer the deeds. Some act purposefully, others accidentally; some move the audience, others bore them. Some cause events to happen in the real world, others just represent imaginary events. The transitivity system of grammar represents these functions and experiences in life through information got from actors, processes, goals and so on. These systems of grammar foreground meanings in the clause and in its elements. This article is studied under the following major subheadings: Features of transitivity, analysis and results.

2.0 Features of Transitivity

In the traditional English grammar, lexical verbs may be transitive or intransitive. In a transitive verb, there is a transfer of activity from the agent to the object or the action indicated by the verb has a grammatical relationship with the object. In an intransitive

verb the action or state of the verb remains with it, it does not affect any other person or thing (Fabb, 1997; Oji, 1994). Consider these examples.

- | | | | | | | |
|----|------|--|-------|--|---------|-----------------|
| | S | | P | | C | |
| 1. | Mary | | loves | | mangoes | (transitive). |
| | S | | P | | A | |
| 2. | Mary | | swims | | well | (intransitive). |

In (1) the action of the verb passes on to the object represented by the complement while in (2) the complement is absent. In the systemic functional grammar (SFG), transitivity is not only a feature of the verbal group but that of the entire a clause. Fabb (1997: 173), commenting on the work of Hopper and Thompson (1980) and Hopper (1979), shows that transitivity has many features. He makes a list of ten transitivity clauses with the degree of transitivity choices ranging from high to low. H is the high transitivity option while L is the low transitivity option.

Number of Participants: There should be two or more participants for an action to be transferred from one participant to the others. A clause is low in transitivity if it has one participant as the action in the verb is not transferred to another participant. **Kinesis:** An action performed by an actor is high in transitivity as opposed to that marking a state and not made to happen by an actor. Hence *John loves Mary* is low in transitivity because the process *loves* indicates a state of affairs.

Aspect: A completed action, in the perfective aspect, is high transitive than one still going or in the progressive aspect, for instance, *I swept the floor* is a high transitive option whereas *I am still sweeping the floor* is a low transitive option.

Punctuality: An undivided action happening at an appointed time has greater effect on its patient than one that is still going on, for instance, *he kicked the ball* is higher in transitivity than *he is kicking the ball*. **Volitionally:** An action done on purpose has more effect on the patient than one done accidentally, for instance, *he ate all the food* is high transitive than *he misplaced his car key*. **Affirmation:** A positive action is higher in transitivity than a negative one, for instance, *he killed his wife* is higher in transitivity than *he did not succeed in killing her*. **Mode:** An action that really happens in real life is more effective than one which happens in a fictional world. **Agent:** A participant that is fully agentive is higher in transitivity than one that is not effective, for instance, *he moved me* is higher in transitivity than *the price scared me*.

Affectedness of the object: A clause is high transitive if the action in the verb totally affects the object; hence *I drank all the palm wine* is higher transitive than *I drank some of the palm wine*. **Individuation of the object:** A clause is high transitive if it has an object very different from the actor, or its environment. Highly individuated things are proper names; human or animate beings; concrete, singular, count, definite or referential nouns; non-individuated things are common nouns, inanimate or abstract things, plural or non-referential things (Fabb 1997:174; Kay and Aylett, 2012). The concept of transitivity foregrounds the clause, its elements and important information. And the features of a cardinal transitive clause, with the highest degree of transitivity are: “The clause will have an agent and an object, which are distinct from one another, the agent is fully agentive and acts purposefully, and the object is totally affected by the action. The

eventuality is an action (not a state), viewed in terms of its having an endpoint and being punctual. The clause positively affirms the taking place of really occurring action” (Fabb, 1997). Fabb remarks that transitivity is relevant for the structure of narratives in that it contains storyline clauses which are fore grounded clauses.

Transitivity patterns also determine the field of discourse in novels. Michael Halliday illustrated the link between field and transitivity in a study of William Goldings the *Inheritors* (1973:103-38): the Neanderthal people of the novel are generally described in terms of one-participant material, while the advanced ‘inheritors’ are described in terms of two participants, contrasting the powerlessness of the Neanderthal with the relative power of the more advanced tribe (Melrose 1995:30). Leech and Short (1985:32) note that in describing the Neanderthal people, clauses with inanimate subjects or intransitive verbs or both are used:

‘The bushes twitched again’;

‘Lok steadied by the tree’,

‘A stick arose, upright’.

They note that there are no adverbs or adverbial phrases except those of the time and place. And in order to represent the limited universe of Lok, Golding uses a limited language, particularly in the area of ‘transitivity’. The theme of the novel, as Halliday indicated “is ‘transitivity”, the linguistic pattern of choices realize a primitive pattern of cognition, which in turn is the key to the tragic vision of the novel” (Leech and Short 1982:32). Halliday’s analysis relates linguistic observation to literary effect and it locates stylistic significance in the ideational function of language. For Halliday the choice between ‘A stick rose upright’ and ‘he raised his bow’ is a question of style. The two sentences are paraphrases of each other. To Halliday linguistic choices are meaningful and stylistic. The labeling of processes in the transitivity system enables us to understand how “speaker and writer represent and classify their world” (Lipson, 2002).

2.1 Processes

Transitivity is a process-oriented grammar in the SFG. Processes facilitate the interpretation of experience. Here is a summary of the different types of processes, participants and circumstances of transitivity .

Table 1: Summary of Different Types of Processes

Process Types	Participant Types	Circumstances Types
Material	Actor, Goal, beneficiary,	Extent and Location
Mental	Range, Senser,	Manner
Relational	Phenomenon Carrier,	Cause
Verbal	(Attribute-not exactly a	Accompaniment Matter
Existential	participant) Identified,	
Behavioural	Identifier Sayer,	Role
	Quoted/Reported (one or	
	the other), receiver,	
	Verbiage, Target Existent	
	Behaver	

Melrose, 1995:Bloor and Bloor, 1995

2.1.1 Material Processes

Melrose states that material processes are processes of doing or happening. There are types, the one with one participant and the one with two or more participants as in the following examples:

The dog lay on the floor.
Actor P: material Location

The dog killed the rat with great ease
Actor P:material Goal Cir:manner

In the first and second sentences the dog performed the action. In the first sentence the dog's action is limited to itself; in second sentence the dog's action is carried to another participant and the action affected that participant.

2.1.2 Mental Processes

Mental processes involve thinking, perceiving and feeling as in the following examples:

My brother didn't trust my friend
Senser P:mental

In these processes, there is always a human participant (Senser) who doesn't act on the world as an Actor 'acts on' a Goal. There is, however, an exception as in the following example:

He saw me with my mother
Senser P: mental Phenomenon Accompaniment

He loves me because of my intelligence
Senser P: mental Phenomenon cause

My story didn't convince my husband
Phenomenon P:mental Senser

In this sentence the phenomenon acts on (or it is rather failing to act on) the Senser.

2.1.3 Relational Processes

Relational processes are processes of being. The central meaning of clauses of this type is that something is. The English system has three main types of relational processes: the intensive, the circumstantial and the possessive types. The identifying relational processes are reversible while the attributive ones are not. Examples of clauses analysed for Carrier, Attribute, Identified and Identifier participant types are:

The author of the book is Wole Soyinka
Identifier P:Relational (intensive) Identifier

The narration concerns a rich boy
Carrier P:Relational (circumstantial) Attribute

"You are just like your mother after all"

Carrier P:Relational (intensive) Attribute(identifier)

SCC, p.15

In the last sentence, Francis expresses his experience with his wife whom he says is the Carrier of the attribute of her mother.

2.1.4 Minor Processes

Minor processes are verbal, behavioural and existential processes. Verbal processes are processes of saying as shown in the following example:

Philip said some hurtful things to my sister

Sayer P: Verbal Verbiage receiver

Behavioural processes are midway between material and mental processes. They are mainly physical behaviour like yawning, coughing and dreaming which betray an inner state such as tiredness, boredom and sickness (Melrose, 1995) as exemplified below.

The baby has been coughing since morning

Behaver P:Behavioural Extent

Existential processes are a kind of relational process that use *there is* to express existence.

There are many Ghanaians in Lagos

P: Existential Existent Location

The processes depict that “something exists or happens”. Melrose remarks that field, in particular, subject matter, determines the choice of options in the systems of ideational metafunction. It also determines the choice of lexical items in a text, for instance, that one can predict some words that were likely to occur in the pages of a text by reading its title. Similarly a fast moving narrative is likely to be associated with material processes and, to a lesser extent, behavioural processes and mental processes of perception. Moreover, that a literary text tends to be characterized by a predominance of relational processes and nominalization.

3.0 Analysis and Results

Language is a means of representing and defining real and imaginary events. It is a means of interpreting all the “goings-on’ – happening, doing, sensing, meaning and being and becoming’ around us (Halliday, 2000:106; Bloor and Bloor, 1995:107; Matthiessen and Bateman, 1991:72). Transitivity as a grammatical system is a means of organizing these inner and outer experiences into processes. This following analysis reflects how Emecheta represents and classifies the world she is describing. The analysis is guided by Field (and registers from the ideational resources of transitivity reflecting the subject matter of the text and activities of the subject matter) which determine ideational meaning.

3.1 Dialogue a: Adah and Francis visit Mr. and Mrs. Noble in their home in order to seek for a living accommodation.

Come in, come in, Iyawo

P: Material Cir: Location P:material Cir. Location Actor

He drew Adah and Francis towards him

Actor P: Material Goal A: Cir: Spatial

They entered the hallway

Actor P: material Cir Place

And waited for PaNoble to shut the door

P:material Cir. Accomplishment

All of a sudden another voice rose above the sound of the television

Cir: Location (spatial) Actor P:Material Cir: Manner: means

Louder than the Beatles

Cir: comparative degree Goal

The voice was a woman's, loud, authoritative and direct...

Identified P; relational (identifying) Identifier

Papa! Papa! Papa! Who is it? Who is it, Papa! Papa! Papa...pa...

Quoted

Visitors! Mr. Noble croaked,

Quoted Sayer P. verbal

His old voice almost cracking in the attempt

Cir. Accompaniment

The lump in his throat danced furiously

Actor Cir: Adverb: place P: material Cir: Adverb

Visitors, he repeated this time in a lower key

Quoted Sayer P: Verbal Cir: Adverb: manner

As he ushered the two trembling figures into the sitting room

Sayer P: Verbal Verbiage Cir: Adverb: place

Oh! she exclaimed as Adah

Quoted Sayer P: verbal Cir: manner Receiver

was setting on the chair provided

P: verbal Cir: Location

Oh! That choir is too hard for you

Identifier P: relation Quoted identifying

Adah jumped...

Sayer P: Verbal SCC, p78

Dialogue b: Naife attempts to kill Aremu. He is taken to the court of law and convicted.

The other interlocutors are Nnu Ego, his wife: Kehinde, his daughter and policemen.

"You see, you see, Nnu Ego

Receiver P: verbal Receiver P: Verbal Receiver

You see what you have done to me

Receiver Verbal Verbiage

One of your daughters is responsible for their taking me to jail"

Carrier P: rational Attribut Cir:prepositional phrase Cir:

Location

He turned once more to the senior man
Actor P: material Goal

and threatened in front of the policeman
P: material Cir: Location

“I shall be released in a day or two
Actor P: material Cir: Time

But I shall come kill you
Actor P: material Goal

Is that so?” Asked one of the policemen
Quoted P: verbal Sayer

And what has your neighbour done to you.
Quoted

He abducted my daughter and he is a Yoruba man
Actor P: material Goal Carrier P: relational Attribute

Naife replied in his whining whisper
Sayer P: verbal Circumstantial Adjunct of manner

Have you the daughter? Where is she?
P: relational identified Identifier Cir: Adverb P: relation identifier
Location Identifying

Kehinde come out from the knot of people standing in the shadows
Actor P: material Cir: location: temporal setting

Watching the whole proceedings
Cir: temporal setting

She was crying gently and begging
Behave P: behavioural Cir: Manner

the policemen to please let her father go
Extent Cir: Prepositional phrase: orientation

but we can’t let your father go
Actor P: material Goal

He almost killed a man
Actor Cir: Adverb P: material Goal

and he is threatening to kill one if he is freed
Actor P: material Goal Cir: accomplishment

We have to uphold the law now young woman
Actor P; Material Goal Cir: Location: time
Beneficiary

And did the family adduct you?
P; material Actor P: material Beneficiary

“No, no” kehinde answered slowly
Actor P: material Cir: Manner

I am going to marry Aremu the butcher’s son

Actor	P; material		Goal
Women	started to cry		
Behaver	P: Behavioural		
The voices	were	unmistakable	
Carrier	P: relational	Attribute	
They	were	those of Okpo and Nnu Ego	
Identified	P: relational	Identifier	
Naife	looked	lost	
Carrier	P: relational	Attribute	
He	Could not believe	that	
Senser	P; mental cognition		
a daughter could betray his father so...			
Phenomenon: fact			
Naife	stared	into the darkness	unseeing,
Behaver	P: Behavioural	Cir: Location	Cir: Adj Behavoioral
as the Black Maria		was slammed shut	
Goal		P: material: range	
and	then	was driven	away
	P: material	Cir: adverb	

Joy of Motherhood, p. 211

Material processes dominate the two dialogues. The processes have the transitivity structure of processes + Actor + Goal. Look at these clauses.

- “He drew Adah and Francis towards him”
- “The lump in his throat danced furiously”
- “I ran to them”.
- “The Black Maria was slammed shut”

The Actor (He) is the topical theme of clause (a). He consciously performs the action of the material process of ‘doing’ by drawing the Goal, Adah and Francis to himself. Adah and her husband experience the action of the process “drew”. As the conversation progresses, it takes a one-sided form as the Host and the Hostess do all the talking and the ‘doing’ while the visitors listen and experience the happenings. The action of the transitivity verb “drew” allows for the transfer of activity from the Actor, Pa Noble, to the Goal Adah and Francis. The action of drawing also has a high transitivity function because it has an end point. Similarly, in “The lump in his throat danced furiously, the transitivity function of the verbal group “danced” is high as the action of the process actually happened (mode) as Pa Noble tried to respond quickly when his wife took the floor suddenly, shouting, Papa! Papa...” but the clause is a “one inanimate participant” material process. The activity of the process “danced” did not extend to other entities in the clause. The circumstantial adverb of manner, “furiously”, also paints a vivid picture of the vibration of the lump in Pa’s throat. The descriptive detail symbolizes the queer behaviour of the Host and the Hostesses. In “I ran to them” (JOM, P. 211), The Actor,

Kehinde performs the action of the verbal group “running” on purpose (volitionally). Thus the clause has a high transitivity function. In “The Black Maria was slammed shut” (JOM, P. 211), the action of the process “was slammed shut” is carried out by an external agent or ergative participant. The Actor brings out the action of the verb in the external world (Halliday 2000:165). Clauses (a) and (c) are also active transitivity clauses which allow the writer the option both of placing the participants in Theme positions and of representing “concrete, physical events”, which made it possible for Emecheta to get her gender message across. Transitivity options express the main theme of the clause which is represented in the form of process with associated participants and circumstances.

Material processes like the other types of processes are realized as Nominal + Verbal + Nominal groups. **Analysis of their experiential structure** facilitates the revealing of meaning in the clauses.

In the clause “and I am going to marry Aremu, the butcher’s son”, the nominal groups (NG) are realised respectively by the assertive personal pronoun *I* and the proper noun *Aremu*. The NGs are expressed by the verbal group (VG) ‘am going to marry;’. The relationship between the participant, I, and the Goal, Aremu is that they are joined by the process. The prominence of the information falls on the Event, *to marry*, just as it falls on *come*, *betray* and *drew* in the other clauses analysed. The events *betray* and *marry* represent material happenings while *come* and *drew* represent physical material events. Kehinde represents the modern woman’s freedom to choose a husband for herself; an act which contrasts with the traditional method of getting married. The clause is also about rebellion and culture change and represents Emecheta’s ability to transfer second language meanings into English. The clauses analysed highlight features indicating cardinal transitivity clauses typical of structure of narratives with storyline clauses full of foregrounded clauses. According to Halliday (2000) both the structure of VG and NG end with the element that specifies the representational content – the verbal group ends with the Event that expresses a process – event, action, act of consciousness or relation and represents the core of lexical meaning. Things (NGs) are more highly organised than events (verbal groups) because “initial position is thematic; and the natural theme of a process or participant in its relation to the here-and-now. Final position is informative; and the news worthy component of a process or participant is some aspect of its lexical content” (197).

Relational processes often feature in dialogues like the one below which represents a conversation between Adah and the Nurse when the former comes to visit Vicky her son in the hospital.

Is	Victor	your	only	child?
P; relational	Identified	Adverb identifier		
Adah	shook	her head	Vicky	was not
Actor	P: material	Goal	Identified P;	relational
	Identified			
There	was	another,	but she	was only
	Identifier			a girl
Only	a girl	what	do	you mean by

Cir: adverb Identified **Cir: adjunct** **P: material** **Actor** **P: material**
 only a girl she is a person too

Cir: prepositional phrase Identified **P: relational** **Identifier** **Cir: adverb**
 You know just like your son...

Senser **P: material** **Cir: adverb** **Cir: comparative** **Identified**
 Do you know I ‘making another one!
Quoted

She volunteered to show the nurse how good a wife she was...

Sayer **P: verbal** **Receiver** **Verbiage**

(SCC, p. 52)

The Topical theme of this dialogue centres on the value of a girl compared to a boy as symbolized by Victor and his sister. The relational processes have the transitivity functions of Process + Identified + Identifier for the identifying relational processes and process + Carrier + Attribute for the attributive relational clauses. Identifying relational processes dominate the dialogue. According to Halliday (2000: 119-120), the clauses are often reversible while the attributive ones are not. They indicate that an entity is the identity of another or ‘serves to define the identity of another.’ Emecheta uses them to describe a state of affairs that represents, in this case, the Igbo belief system which values a boy more than a girl. Using an ironic tone and identifying clauses, Emecheta represents a girl as a person equal to a boy. Look closely at these clauses.

a. Is Victor your only child?

b. She is a person, too, ... like your son.

Clause (a) presents Victor, an only male child of Adab, as a treasure. Clause (b) presents Adah’s other child who is a girl, as a person too equal to a boy.

Identifying clauses highlight the theme in that they function to express the Theme — Rheme structure in such a way as to foreground the theme by making any of the elements of the clause the theme (Halliday 2000:42). The circumstantial adverbs *only*, *too*, *like* also highlight the Topical theme. Like Adjuncts, they add extra information to the text. Closely look at these relational processes.

a. That chair is too hard for you (SCC, p. 78).

b. He who roars like a lion (JOM, p. 29).

c. Naife looks lost.

d. I am a busy man.

e. ... a man who treated his mother like a shit would always treat his wife like a shit (SCC, p. 149).

The *chair* in clause (a) represents Pa Noble’s suffering in London. Clause (b) which has the structure

He who roars like a lion
Identified **P; identifying** **Cir: adverb of manner** **Identified**

with process *roars* serving to define the identity of Obi Idayi. His speaking voice is likened to that of a lion. These clauses represent metaphorical meanings. Clause (c) is an attributive relational clause. The attribute is lost and Naife is the Carrier of the attribute.

Clause (d) is an intensive relational process. Relational processes are effectively used in context to refer to the world beyond them. Example (e) is a statement representing a proverb which sets up a relation using circumstantial adverb of manner to create a correlation between the treatment of a mother and the treatment of a wife. The process is a relational identifying one realized by the transitivity functions of participants, processes and circumstantial adverbs of manner and these are realized in turn by “sequences of group-phrase classes” represented by nominal groups, verbal groups and adverbial groups with the meaning a man who maltreats his mother will also maltreat his wife. Quoting Nwoga (1975:197), Igboanusi (1995 and 2002) describes proverbs as “living vehicles of situational statements” which have “vivid imagery and carry the culture of the Igbo language”.

Mental processes also features in situations where they are used to describe psychological events, not actions as exemplified in the following utterances indicating mental processes.

- a. I've never heard of such a wedding! the man declared, sweating in his tight collar (SCC, p. 16).
- b. Never mind about that (SCC, p. 16).
- c. He could not believe that a daughter could betray her father so
(JOMp. 211).

The process 've ... heard in (a) describes the man's reaction to the idea that the couple could be married without a wedding ring. The whole utterance could also be analysed as a verbal process with participants Quoted, Sayer and the verbal process *declared*. The mental process *mind* in (b) is also the man's reaction to Adah's agitation. The phenomenon acts on the Addressee, Adah. The mental process *could... believe* in (c) represents Naife's intense feeling of grief because he believes that his daughter is responsible for sending him to jail. The phenomenon “that a daughter could betray her father so” is that which is experienced and it acts on the Senser, Naife. Quoting Bloor and Bloor (1995:127) the system of voice plays an important role in mental processes because it allows the writer the choice to add or omit certain participants for the subject position. Senser and phenomenon may also alternate as subjects.

Minor processes with the characteristics of Verbal, Behavioural and Existential processes feature in clauses like:

- a. You see, you see, Nnu Ego (Verbal Processes)
- b. You see, you see Nnu Ego, you see what you have done to me!(Verbal Processes)
- e. 'Do you know' I'm making another one! She volunteered to show the nurse how good a wife she was (verbal Processes).
- d. 'Visitors', he repeated, this time in a lower key as he ushered the two trembling figures into the sitting room (verbal processes).
- e. She was crying gently and begging the policemen to please let her father go (Behavioural process).
- f. Naife stared into the darkness, unseeing ... (Behavioural Process).
- g. Women started to cry ... (Behavioural Process).
- h. There was another (Existential Process).

i. There are as they say many fishes in the river (Existential process). Verbal processes are to a large extent projections of speech in that they indicate actions or features of material processes. They indicate “a kind of inner speech” (Bloor and Bloor 1995). They also have the feature of relational processes and are usually cast in the form direct speech or indirect speech. The receiver and the process *see* are repeated five times in example (a) and (b) to indicate Naife’s intense painful experience which represents his thoughts and beliefs. He feels his jail sentence very badly because he believes it is caused by a loved one. The interpreted meaning is that Naife sent himself to jail for attempting to kill Aremu. Through these processes Emecheta indicates a cultural practice which blames women for the evil that sometimes befalls men. In (b) too, Emecheta chooses a passive construction with the do type of proverb in the second clause which does not allow for clarity of agency, possibly to foreground how Naife reasons in this traditional society.

The participants in the verbal process are the Sayer, Quoted, Receiver and Verbiage. The Sayer is realized as the third person personal pronoun *she* in utterance (c). The Sayer produces the utterance. The utterance “Do you know, I’m making another one!” represents another participant technically termed Quoted. The Quoted represents the actual words of the Sayer which often appears in the form of quoted statements, questions or orders. All the examples cited above are the quoted type of verbal processes which Emecheta exploits a lot. The Receiver is equivalent to the Beneficiary in Material Process and it is represented by you or the nurse in example (c). The verbalization is addressed to the nurse. Verbiage is an expression of what is said which is equivalent to Range in Material process and is used to label items that refer to what is said. Verbiage often appears in the direct object position. According to Bloor and Bloor (1995) Verbiage can also be a clause that is not a projection of speech or thought and it is usually italicized; he illustrated with this sentence He told me *what I wanted to know*.

‘Typical verbs used as verbal processes are *say, tell* and *ask*. There are, however, many other verbs which add or express “different shades of meaning” (Bloor and Bloor 1995:122) and function as speech acts with illocutionary force indicating the way the writer or speaker wants his utterance to be understood. Emecheta uses a lot of these verbs in the Quoted type of verbal Processes to influence her readers. These verbs, for instance, express illocutionary force like: *declare* (SCC, p. 52) *whisper, nod* (SCC p. 17), *draw, repeat* (SCC, P. 78), *volunteer, shake*, (SCC, p. 52). Example (i) is another proverb with the Existential type of process realized by the VG *are* and participants realized by the NG *many fishes* and circumstantial adverb of place realized by the AG *in the river and with the meaning there are many girls who can replace Nko*. We note that the clauses in this section act as techniques for indicating existence, relation, action, behaviour and reflection and as a means of placing order on events.

4.0 Conclusion

The article foregrounds how grammatical choices made in context reveal meanings. The transitivity system is shown to facilitate the interpretation of language in action, in context and portrays how the clause and its parts are potential sources of information. Transitivity as part of the systematic grammar is based on the functions language performs

and on the choice the language user makes. Grammatical items unravel how meanings are made through Emecheta's language use and how she uses language to focus on her gender themes. She chooses material processes to structure groups in such a way as to insert specific meanings in the clauses with the prominence of the information falling on the event. The high transitivity function of the clauses indicate action as she often chooses to make her descriptions direct and concrete rather than idealized, through the reporting clauses often reflect mental processes of thinking, perceiving and feeling. Situational clause enables her ideas to be focused, interesting and meaningful. There are more challenges mood systems in discourse could be explored for further research.

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